Presbyterians and Peacemaking

Are We Now Called To Resistance?

DANA W. WILBANKS
Iliff School of Theology

RONALD H. STONE
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Advisory Council on Church and Society
475 Riverside Drive, Room 1020, New York, NY 10115
(212) 870-3028

Commissioned and Circulated
by the
Advisory Council on Church and Society
of the
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

For study and response as part of a policy development process in preparation for the 199th General Assembly (1987)

December 31, 1985

Available from: The Advisory Council on Church and Society
475 Riverside Drive, Room 1020
New York, NY 10115

Price: $2.50 per copy
$2.00 per copy in quantities of 10 or more

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Foreword

This paper has been prepared to facilitate a particular process of inquiry and decision in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Advisory Council on Church and Society is serving as the lead agency, in consultation with the Council on Theology and Culture, to explore and recommend direction and policy to the General Assembly on a number of related issues. These issues have been raised in General Assemblies, usually by presbytery overture, and include such matters as the usefulness of traditional just war criteria in the nuclear age; withholding of taxes as an expression of resistance to military policy; non-violence as an instrument of social change; non-compliance with selective service; an ethic of just peace; and vocational withdrawal.

Taken as a whole, such questions pose the possibility that the vocation of peacemaking may lead toward more radical forms of obedience than many of us Presbyterians have yet envisioned. Certainly, deep and powerful currents have flowed in recent years as we have pursued the call to be peacemakers, as individual Christians and as a Christian community. Where is the church being led? What does faithfulness to the Lord of peace and the vision of a peaceable kingdom require of us now? Are we now called to resistance?

Such questions are not lightly considered or easily answered. Though the advisory council will finally prepare a report and recommendations for the 1987 General Assembly, it cannot answer for the church. Though the 1987 General Assembly will adopt some stance, as it does annually on similar matters, its answer will not automatically be the church's answer. Are we now called to resistance? Whatever the answer may be, it will have authenticity and effectiveness only if it is widely and deeply grounded in the church's struggle with the Word and the Spirit, and with the principalities and powers of the present age.

That is why the advisory council earnestly seeks the widespread engagement of Presbyterians in the process of developing the policy direction and recommendations for the 1987 General Assembly. This paper has been prepared to facilitate that participation. It deals with controversial and painful issues in a direct way. It invites Presbyterians to explore issues on which there will be sharp divergence of opinion and commitment, at least initially, and to trust that the Holy Spirit will sustain us in conflict by the conviction that all of us may be enlightened and changed by such hard prospecting for faithful obedience.

The paper invites us to explore the most distant precipices of obedience as our potential destination, rather than the more familiar foothills. It does so not because the advisory council is already persuaded that we are now called to resistance, but because the presumption of a cross is the general ground to our search for obedience. There is clarity as well as pain and controversy in its starkness.

As Presbyterians are invited to undertake this engagement, it seems important to make some things clear as to what this paper is and is not.

1. **The paper is not an official position paper of the Advisory Council on Church and Society.**

   Though written by two council members, it has been reviewed and revised by several groups. The advisory council has approved it as a resource to stimulate study and response, and has explicitly recorded that such approval should not be construed as adoption of its content. Most council members are themselves still struggling with these issues. In any event, the advisory council will not vote on the substance of these matters until the time comes to assess the results of the churchwide study and prepare a report for the 1987 General Assembly.

2. **The paper is not a first draft of either a background paper or a position statement for the General Assembly.**

   It is a paper to stimulate engagement with urgent issues. What is finally reported to the General Assembly must be determined on the other side of that engagement as the advisory council and the church continue to struggle with the issues. A final report may or may not draw on the paper, may or may not echo its themes and positions, but the paper has not been prepared as a test run of a General Assembly statement.

3. **The paper is not a comprehensive analysis of all the issues related to militarism, the nuclear arms race and resistance; nor of all the various opinions and positions on these issues.**

   There is a vast body of material on these very complex matters - technical, theoretical, theological, historical, analytical, etc. There are divergent and deeply held convictions concerning them, as any study group reasonably representative of Presbyterians will exemplify. It is quite probable that no one will feel that the subtleties of the issues or the convictions they hold have been adequately treated. And they will be right. The paper seeks to pose some essentially theological questions as to how Christians should respond politically to a uniquely dangerous situation, with a clear bias that such a radical situation may well require a quite radical response. It is hoped that participants will bring their awareness of the issues and their differing convictions to the study as the raw material for exploration; and not approach the study seeking affirmation or support for positions already held.

4. **The paper is not an element of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program.**

   The Peacemaking Program designs resources and strategies to assist the church in ways already outlined by General Assembly policy statements. Many of the directions and possible program responses related to a possible resistance stance contained in this paper are,

of course, not policy commitments of the General Assembly. They are discussed here because they help to focus the exploration of what new dimensions of commitment to peacemaking might entail.

The paper and the project are the responsibility of the Advisory Council on Church and Society, circulated as part of a process for developing General Assembly policy, not implementing it. The Peacemaking network is assisting the advisory council in various ways to seek the widest possible study and engagement with the issues of peacemaking and resistance, but such assistance does not imply sponsorship of the study or endorsement of the paper's content.

Finally, this paper is offered for what it is: an invitation to struggle with very difficult and controversial issues of faith and witness, and by your struggle and response to participate in shaping the corporate response of the General Assembly. We wish you well in the study and thank you for your willingness to participate in it.

Robert L. Brashear, Moderator
Dana W. Wilbanks

Dean H. Lewis, Director
Ronald H. Stone

Advisory Council on Church and Society

I. Introduction

Presbyterians have a high view of the function and responsibility of civil authority. Government and its processes and officials are given by God for the ordering and administration of the affairs of the human community according to God's purposes. Presbyterians view both participation and service in the affairs of government as a basic dimension of Christian vocation. Since government is established by God to serve the divine purposes of justice and peace, Presbyterians have believed and taught that civil authority is legitimate and is to be acknowledged and obeyed, echoing the teaching of John Calvin and the testimony of Scripture.

Precisely because of such a high view of civil authority, however, Presbyterians have regarded a government's neglect of its responsibility or abuse of its power as very grave matters. Thus, Presbyterian life and witness at its best have always manifested strong efforts toward social reform directed at changing the policies and practices of government. But our Reformed heritage also teaches - and evidences - that government may occasionally so neglect or subvert the divine purposes of justice and peace that it forfeits the presumption of legitimacy and its claim on the obedience of citizens, including Christians. When such circumstances arise, obedience to God requires resistance to civil authority. In this, Presbyterian teaching and practice also echo John Calvin and the testimony of Scripture.

We study, usually with no little pride, our Calvinist predecessors in France, Scotland, and in the American War of Independence, who undertook revolutionary action against governing authority. We have included the Barmen Declaration in our Book of Confessions demonstrating our corporate conviction that faith calls us to resistance in some contexts. In our own day, many of us would see the resistance heritage being lived out faithfully by Christians in South Africa or in the Soviet Union or in Central America.

However, for most Presbyterians in the United States, the thought that faithfulness to God might bring a call to resistance in their own lives must seem remote indeed, even though Christians have in recent years engaged in civil disobedience against unjust laws and policies in the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-Vietnam War struggle. Still, few of us have seriously imagined that at some point we might be called to question the legitimacy of policies of the United States government at so basic a level as to consider that Christian responsibility might require resistance.

The fact is that some Presbyterians are making this decision now. They have concluded that certain basic policies of the United States government have lost legitimacy because these policies perpetuate the nuclear arms race and economic injustices that impoverish the poor. They are refusing to pay taxes for military expenditures. They are leaving jobs in military-related industries. They are divesting from corporations heavily involved in military production. They are refusing to cooperate with the legal requirement to

register for Selective Service. They are engaging in acts of civil disobedience, lying on railroad tracks to protest the transportation of materials used in the production of nuclear weapons or climbing fences surrounding nuclear installations to confront the instruments of death contained within. These Presbyterians are joined by a broad range of Christians in taking such steps: Roman Catholics, Quakers, Mennonites, main-stream Protestants, evangelical Christians. And these are joined by Christians and other people of faith in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. The movement into resistance, occurring in various places in the world, is a powerful and dynamic expression of contemporary ecumenical Christianity.

What if the Presbyterian Church struggled over its corporate responsibility as a witness to and an agent of Christ's peace and concluded that Presbyterians are called, both as individuals and as a denomination, to a stance of resistance against policies of our government?

Weighty questions indeed are raised for us as we look at the list of actions above. Typically, persons engaged in various forms of non-cooperation with the government have been viewed as a radical fringe. Some of us have admired them from afar. Others have respected their courage while disagreeing with what they did. Still others charge them with naivete, or disrespect for the law, or lack of patriotism. Presbyterian General Assemblies have consistently supported the conscientious dissent of individual members on military service and military policy, but without making a judgment about the content of the dissenter's decision. What if, however, the resister's action is a more faithful response to the Gospel than our more normal and conventional responses? What if the Presbyterian Church struggled over its corporate responsibility as a witness to and an agent of Christ's peace and concluded that Presbyterians are called, both as individuals and as a denomination, to a stance of resistance against policies of our government?

This paper is offered as a resource in the exploration of such a possibility. Only a church nourished by genuine struggle with the hard edge of our times in light of the radical claims of faith can make authentic response.

II. Presbyterians and the Call to Peacemaking

In 1980 and 1981 the General Assemblies of both Presbyterian Churches, now reunited, adopted "Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling." This policy states the conviction that we are at a historical moment of "kairos," a decisive and opportune time for making peace. The response of churches seems to bear out the judgment of the General Assemblies that this is a pregnant time for the church to be an agent of peace. Indeed, it is a time when an understanding of peacemaking may be the most appropriate way to grasp what it means to be Christ's disciples. "Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling" emphasizes that peacemaking is central to the Gospel. The gift of Christ is relevant for every arena of life, from the most intimate relationship to the complexities of international relations. It is imperative that we understand peacemaking in its breadth and comprehensiveness.

Yet, it is also important that peacemaking not be generalized so much that it loses contact with the specific day-to-day realities and powers that resist peace. As peacemaking is interpreted in its breadth, the political dimensions and implications must not get lost. Peacemaking, like some incomplete expressions of popular piety, can be wrenched out of its political habitat and applied only to personal or small group experience. Peacemaking does indeed involve the personal and interpersonal but not in isolation from the social and political context in which we are to live out the Christian life. It will be critical for our grasp of the peacemaking vocation to come to grips with the nature of our contemporary context.

In the former UPCUSA, General Assemblies since 1945 called on the United States government at least twelve times to pursue arms reduction and disarmament.[1] These convictions have been communicated to government leaders over and over again for almost forty years. Many members of Presbyterian churches have worked through electoral politics, letter writing and petition drives to urge both Republican and Democratic office-holders to end the dangerous nuclear arms race, though many of us have failed to exercise our political responsibility persistently and imaginatively.

Each year the number of nuclear weapons increases, the sophistication of weapons technology is heightened, and the possibilities if not the likelihood of a major catastrophe are ever more real. When one reads through the policies of Presbyterian General Assemblies in the face of these dangerous developments, one is struck by the truth of their content, the timeliness of their adoption and the prophetic character of their witness to government. However, one must also acknowledge that their effect has been negligible on the course of American foreign policy and minimal on the engagement of our churches with the politics of peacemaking.

Historically Presbyterians have been a people who are not satisfied with the truth of words if this truth does not bear fruit in the lives of persons and societies. Our words about nuclear weapons may contain truth but they

have borne too little fruit. We need to ask now more seriously than ever before how we are to make our lives congruent with God's call to us to be peacemakers. We need to ask ourselves how long we can continue to bear witness and seek change in the familiar ways while the nuclear arms race goes on and on, holding all peoples of the earth hostage to its terror. We need to ask ourselves what the corporate posture of the Presbyterian Church toward government policies should be when for forty years the moral and theological convictions of the church are at such fundamental variance with them.

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In 1983 and 1984, a number of presbyteries prepared overtures for the General Assembly calling for fresh guidance on the validity of the traditional just war theory in a nuclear world, civil disobedience as a response to the production and deployment of nuclear weapons, withholding portions of federal taxes that support military costs, nonviolent means of seeking basic changes in American society, and on participation in the military service and occupations related to military production. All the topics contained in the overtures are facets of the question of Christian political responsibility in today's situation. They raise in various ways a common question: the nature of Christian responsibility in a society whose government seems unshakably committed to nuclear weapons as the ultimate force behind its foreign policy. That such a question must be faced by other Christians in other nations whose policies are similar does not excuse us from the rigors of examining our own witness. The church's response - in the United States and elsewhere - will clearly depend on what we believe to be theologically true about our calling to be peacemakers in a society and world so heavily invested in weapons of unprecedented destructiveness.

III. Visions of Peace in a War-Oriented World

Each generation of Christians must struggle with the meaning of the Gospel in its own historical context. In the specific challenges and opportunities of our time, we encounter the living God and are called to be God's representatives. As we seek to understand our responsibility in a world oriented toward war, we turn to those affirmations of our faith which speak to our situation. In the Reformed tradition we have emphasized not only the depth of human sinfulness which resists the love of God, but we have also testified to the redemptive activity of God which is transforming human life and history. We have no illusions about the tenacity and pervasiveness of human sinfulness, but we do not resign ourselves fatalistically to it because our confidence is in the active sovereignty of God who is "making all things new." (Revelation 21:5)

A. Theology of Reconciliation

In 1967, the United Presbyterian Church adopted a confession of faith which lifted up the theme of reconciliation as an especially important way to understand God's activity in Jesus Christ and the responsibility of the church today. Reconciliation had not been a primary doctrine in earlier church confessions, although in many ways it was implied in statements about redemption. Still, given the importance of reconciliation in the New Testament, it is surprising it has not been more prominent before. For our time, reconciliation obviously speaks powerfully to us because strife, division, enmity, hostility, and separation are so deeply evident.

A major biblical text in which the significance of reconciliation is developed is Colossians 1:15-20. Here we encounter a hymn of the early church which sings of the Lordship of Christ. No principalities and powers can claim our absolute allegiance and loyalty. They are subordinate to and dependent on Christ as the agent of God's creation and redemption. How is the Lordship of Christ over all things manifested? Not through coercive power but in reconciliation. Everything in the cosmos, not just individual to individual, but groups and peoples and nations, even nature itself, is subjected to the transforming power of Christ's reconciling Lordship. The church, consequently, is set in the world as the sign of the sufficiency of Christ's atonement for universal reconciliation. Paul Minear writes: "Christ's headship means that his body (the church) continues the work of reconciliation, continues its participation in his sufferings, continues his ministry of love as a sign to the world of Christ's victory over all its gods."[2]

In II Corinthians 5:16-21, we find the clearest statement about the responsibility of the church to be Christ's ambassadors in the service of

reconciliation. Christ's crucifixion and resurrection have created something new, and those who respond to Christ are made new too. We are empowered for the ministry of reconciliation which is as boundless as God's love. Such a ministry requires believing that the power of Christ's reconciliation is at work in us and in the world. It will require prophetic witness in society against everything that divides and dehumanizes, especially the most potent evils of our day.

It is from such an understanding of God's reconciling activity in Christ that the Presbyterian General Assemblies recently adopted "Peacemaking" as "the Believers' Calling." In our time, we are to understand peacemaking as "essential to the church's faithfulness to Christ." Peacemaking is the vocation of all Christians "in a warring world." Thus, theologically, the Presbyterian Church has developed the biblical vision of "peace" as a way of making even more pointed and specific what the ministry of reconciliation entails for our church now. Although peacemaking extends to every realm of personal life and relationship, it calls Christians especially to confront the powers of injustice and death that most directly rage against God's reconciling intention for creation.

B. Biblical Meanings of Peace

It is not only in the Presbyterian Church that peace has emerged as central to the church's ministry. Increasingly an ecumenical coalescence is occurring around "justice and peace" or shalom, as the most compelling way to understand the mission of the church at this time in history. Shalom is the Hebrew word translated into English as peace but which contains a richness of meaning often not fully captured by this familiar word. The turn to shalom shows that the biblical vision of righteousness and reconciliation speaks powerfully to a world in need of release from the captivity of a constricting and destructive present reality. In shalom, we encounter a vision of human community, intended and empowered by God, which shapes not only our view of the future but also our view of the present. Shalom is becoming for the contemporary church a profoundly significant way to grasp the truth of God for the world, with implications of the greatest import for its mission.

Shalom requires interpretation in part because it is all too easy to permit words like peace to float around in the air of unreality. Who can be against peace? But all too often peace is regarded as a remote and distant goal that is so far removed from the conflicts of this world as to be irrelevant. Or peace might be identified with a polyanna hope that a few good deeds and a few nice words will bring about an idyllic society, a naive sentimentalism that is illusory. Shalom is used in a variety of ways and with various meanings in the Old Testament, and Eirene, the Greek word translated peace in the New Testament, generally picks up the meanings of shalom and includes some additional ones.[3]

1. The biblical vision of peace is eschatological. It is a vision of the peace God promises in the future. But this is not the future of a static goal

or far-distant ideal. It is a future that becomes present in Christ. The power for that future has come into our present, loosening the bonds that hold us captive to all that resists peace. The vision is incarnate in Jesus who projects us into the future when "people will come from East and West, and from North and South, and sit at table in the Kingdom of God." (Luke 13:29)

Walter Brueggemann comments that for the prophets the vision of shalom was not understood as a romantic ideal but was enunciated precisely at the most discouraging and difficult times for the covenant people. Shalom was most, not least relevant, in those times of greatest discouragement, injustice, and hostility. Persons then and now tend to become so accustomed to the world as it is that they assume it has to be this way. Shalom helps us see that things are not eternally ordered to be the way they are now. The world can and will be transformed.[4] As a vision, shalom is a way of seeing this world in light of a future that we are invited to live toward, a future that is opened up over and over again through the resurrection of Christ and the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit.

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2. The biblical vision of peace includes justice as integral to its meaning. Shalom contains the meanings of both justice and peace. Peace means much more than the absence of war, pointing rather to a quality of interrelationship among persons and nature and God which requires justice for its fulfillment. Old Testament prophets were very clear that there could not be peace without justice. It is an ancient and enduring practice for the powerful to maintain their positions by calling for peace. But true peace will not stand for, much less cloak, the existence of injustices. If there is to be peace, injustice must be faced and rooted out. Those who most threaten peace are not those who challenge the injustice of the existing order but those who seek to maintain an unjust order and who will do so with massive institutionalized violence. Contemporary struggles for justice and peace must not permit themselves to be pitted against each other, but at both conceptual and strategic levels the biblical vision of their necessary interrelationship is critical for the days ahead. War-making and oppression go hand in hand. So also then must go peace, justice, and liberation.

Brueggemann helps us to see that the edge of shalom in biblical tradition cuts two ways. First, it means freedom and unity for the "have-nots" of the community. Here the Exodus tradition governs our understanding. For those who are oppressed or otherwise excluded from the community, the vision of shalom is an invitation to take the risk of acting on the basis of a new historical possibility. Second, however, shalom means, for the "haves", the establishment and nourishment of a just order. Here the royal tradition of

David is normative. Shalom may be manifested in order when the power of authorities is exercised justly. But when the established order contradicts the justice of God, the vision of shalom subverts order for the sake of justice.[5]

3. The biblical vision of peace encompasses both individuals and their communities. In the New Testament, eirene takes on a meaning not present in customary Greek usage. It bespeaks an inner peace which is a consequence of faith in Christ.[6] Peace in this sense is not complacency nor apathy but an internal peace which overcomes the troubled and fearful characteristics of the old self. One who thus experiences the peace of Christ is no longer immobilized by the wars and insecurities within and is capable of genuinely free, courageous, and joyful action. Yet, the biblical vision of peace is not only that of profound security for individuals but also communal well-being. The model for such community is the covenant relation between God and Israel in which community relations are to reflect the righteousness and mercy of God.

4. The biblical vision of peace sees the realization of peace as both divine gift and human task. The vision of peace is a divine gift given to us over and over again, depicting often in poetic form the character of human destiny in the reconciled community of God. "Yahweh shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isaiah 2:4) The possibility of responding to the gift of shalom is offered to us as Christ is proclaimed and encountered and as God's creativity in history makes possible options for peacemaking. We do not create possibilities for peace out of nothing, but out of the networks of relationships and events in which the reconciling reality of God is operative.

Nonetheless, dreaming the dreams of peace and discerning the creative openings toward peace are human tasks as well. We are given the responsibility to be representatives of God in the world, seeking to fashion the world according to the vision of its fulfillment. Peacemaking is an art. It requires an appreciation of novelty, a capacity for creativity, a gift for discerning the appropriate time and response. Peacemaking also requires gratitude for the material with which we work and the creative vision which comes through faith. The responsibilities God has gifted to us are enormous. Though peace be a divine gift and possibility it is also a human responsibility, and that responsibility may weigh more heavily on us in this age than in any heretofore. Although the choice for humans is not simplistically between utopia and suicide, it may very well be between a future opening toward shalom (peace, justice, beloved community) and the death of the future through nuclear holocaust.

5. The biblical vision of peace requires witnesses and agents. In our churches there have often been debates about whether the church's responsibility in the world is to model the reconciliation God brings in Christ or to extend it intentionally in all areas of common life. In New Testament teachings both emphases are present. Christ is the power of reconciliation who "has broken down the dividing wall of hostility" between Jew and Gentile in the church. (Ephesians 2:14) The church is to manifest in

its own life the peace that is the human destiny in God, being a sign or foretaste of the shalom which God intends for all. This means that the church needs to give substantial attention to its own life, interpersonal and institutional, to manifest the presence of peace in a warring world.

The vision of peace is not alone for the church, however, but for the world. The church and its people are called to be ambassadors of peace in the midst of political struggle. "All this is from God, who through Christ, reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation." (II Corinthians 5:18-19) The reality of God in the world is fundamentally that of reconciliation. It is therefore the Christian task to identify the power and presence of peace in the world and seek to be its representative and agent. Indeed, the work of peace is frequently costly. It requires becoming vulnerable to the hostilities of war-making and oppression and to the pain and suffering of the victimized.[7] There is no promise of easy success but rather the recognition that peacemaking does not occur without risk-taking and suffering. Yet, it is in the discipleship of reconciling witness and action that we are faithful to the God of shalom.

IV. Reading the Signs of the Times

Jesus spoke of how important it is to discern the signs of the times. He told the Pharisees that they might be able to predict the daily weather, but they could not see what was really going on right before their eyes. (Matthew 16:1-3) It is the prophetic task of the church to look beneath the normal and comfortable to see in depth what is going on and what God is calling us to do. We do not first analyze our situation and then put on the spectacles of faith to look for an answer. The spectacles of faith also are to be worn as we interpret what is happening, for it is there and here that we encounter the living God who is calling us to obedience.

Today, there are many patterns of conflict and injustice which stand against God's will for peace. The church's prophetic responsibility and reforming energy should extend to all of them. In this paper, however, we shall focus on nuclear weapons specifically and their enveloping context of militarism more generally as dimensions of our present situation which may well cry out for singular and extraordinary Christian interpretation and response. We search for understanding of these matters shaped by the vision of peace on earth which the Christ brings into the world as God's intention for creation, not controlled by nationalistic sentiment or professional pride or political allegiance.

A. Nuclear Weapons as a Theological Issue

Few books have had more impact on persons' thinking about nuclear weapons than Jonathan Schell's, The Fate of the Earth.[8] By providing such an unrelentingly horrible picture of the devastation nuclear war would bring, Schell has penetrated our inclination to deceive ourselves about the character of this weaponry. Surely, as Schell emphasizes, it is not because we are callous about life that we ignore the dangers of nuclear arms. It is because we care so much that we cannot bear the pain or cope with the fear that life might be obliterated. Facing the truth about what the use, accidental or otherwise, of nuclear weapons would mean for God's creation is a fundamental requirement for understanding our situation. Even if one comes to the conclusion that holding nuclear weapons for deterrence is necessary, it can only be credible morally if the likely consequences of nuclear war are faced with brutal realism.

Schell pushes us in such realism not only to face the consequences of mass suicide through nuclear war ("first death") but also death of the future ("second death"); that is, the death of unborn generations, of historical memory, of both past and future creativity. Whereas Schell assumes the probability of an all-out nuclear exchange if the use of such weapons are introduced, Carl Sagan has helped us see the likelihood of a "nuclear winter" in which we would freeze to death by the environmental effects of far fewer nuclear explosions.[9]

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What is the theological meaning of this annihilating power that we have brought into the world? Is there any greater danger to human life and the future than that posed by nuclear weapons? Why are we so fascinated by them and attracted to them that we cannot give them up? Perhaps, for Christians, concepts such as blasphemy and idolatry most clearly explain the global network of destruction that humans have constructed in which God's creation, Earth, is placed at such risk. A scientist-theologian, William Pollard, has reflected on these questions in contemporary words reminiscent of the Psalmist's:

> It is awesome to contemplate the immense creative investment that has gone into bringing the Earth to her present stage of beauty and fulfillment. The slow but ever-accelerating elaboration of information coded on DNA over an unimaginably vast reach of time has by now produced, suspended in the alien reaches of space, a magic garden and placed within it that strangest achievement of any of the manifold DNA codes -- man [humankind]. That was possible because of a most delicate balance of gravity, heat, and light realized on the Earth, a balance achieved only very rarely, if at all, on other planets. This uniqueness and the wonder of the creative achievement that it has made possible mean that the Earth is a rare gem of fantastic beauty, and that its desecration or destruction by any being is an act of awful sacrilege against which the heart of all meaning and purpose in the entire universe must cry out in anguish.[10]

Gordon Kaufman, a theologian at the Divinity School of Harvard University, has wondered why religion scholars have not given more attention to the theological significance of nuclear weapons. Certainly, Christians should not accept uncritically the frequent appeals to "national security" but ask what this newly developed system of second death means for our views of God, and of human sinfulness and responsibility. Kaufman comments:

> For traditional eschatology, there was always some positive meaning--some humanly significant meaning--in the consummating events of history. But our situation is different. The potential catastrophe that we are here called upon to contemplate is empty of any human meaning whatsoever.[11]

> We cannot expect God to intervene miraculously to stop the nuclear warheads as they leave the launching pad.

We cannot expect God to intervene miraculously to stop the nuclear warheads as they leave the launching pad. The capacity to commit planetary holocaust is in human hands--already--and the decision to use it or not is the responsibility of human minds and wills. The power of God is available for a future different from annihilation if we open our eyes, receive it in faith and respond to it; but we have no reason to believe that God will intervene to prevent us from engaging in the ultimate act of rebellion through nuclear destruction.

B. Just War Theory and Nuclear Weapons

The unprecedented dangers posed by nuclear weapons have prompted several presbyteries in the last few years to overture the General Assembly for guidance on the applicability of the just war theory in a nuclear age. Are there any circumstances in which the use of nuclear weapons can be justified? Is it morally acceptable to base a national defense policy on nuclear deterrence which requires the intention to use these weapons in a variety of situations?

Reformed Christians have historically met government decisions to engage in war with approval or disapproval, depending on the circumstances. Automatic support of a war policy by constituted authorities cannot be given. But neither are Christians required categorically to refuse to participate in war if desperate circumstances warrant it. This historic position is based on an understanding of human sinfulness which accepts the realities of injustice and aggression in political life and regards the use of violence as sometimes necessary to confront greater evils in an ambiguous world. Probably the greater historical sin of Calvinists has been to be too zealous in engaging in war than to be too reluctant to wield the sword. Although there is a strong and vigorous presence of pacifists in the Presbyterian Church, neither their view nor their influence has been dominant.

If the Reformed tradition has not been drawn to the pacifist position that views all war and participation in it as unChristian, neither has it been drawn to the crusader position that views war and participation in it as a holy obligation on occasion. The Reformed tradition has more characteristically dealt with these questions from a "just war" perspective. Just war theory is based on the assumption that war is never a preferred state in itself but may on occasion be justified to protect people against aggression or to overcome gross injustice so that a more genuine peace can be established. The "just war" theory has been developed most thoroughly and systematically in the Roman Catholic tradition of moral theology, but Presbyterians have often drawn on aspects of this theory as they examined questions of war contextually.

In just war thinking, criteria have been developed for assessing both when resort to war may be justified and also which means of fighting a war are morally permissible. In considering whether resort to war is justified

- the purpose for engaging in war must be just;
- it must be carried out by legitimate authority;
- there must be a reasonable prospect that the purpose for going to war can be achieved; and
- war should only be a last resort after other means for resolving the conflict have been exhausted.

In considering whether the means of conducting a war are justified, the criteria of proportionality and discrimination are paramount. Proportionality requires that the means be restrained so that the evils of warfare do not outweigh the moral goods in the justifiable objectives. Discrimination requires that the means of war must be directed only at combatants and not non-combatants. If civilians cannot be rendered relatively immune from the violence of war, the means of warfare cannot be justified.

Just war theory has provided a basis for making contextual judgments about when participation in war is justified. Its intent is not to "bless" wars in a blanket fashion nor to make it easier for wars to be justified by government leaders. Historically, the intent of this theory is to provide a severe moral restraint on leaders' inclinations to commit their peoples to war and to prevent war from being waged with unrestrained cruelty and destructiveness. Therefore, in theory, it should restrain resort to "unjust wars" as well as rationalize the pursuit of "just" ones. However, critics argue that regardless of this balanced purpose of just war theory, it has much more frequently been manipulated to support all kinds of wars than to limit their occurrence or restrain their cruelty.

Although in previous historical eras the theory was intended primarily to guide the rulers of states in their decisions, just war critria have been used increasingly by people in recent years for moral evaluation of their government's war policies. For example, in the Vietnam War years many young men in the United States used aspects of its reasoning to resist participation in the war even though they may never have studied the theory. In these same years, the Presbyterian General Assemblies explicitly adopted just war thought to support the case for selective conscientious objection. In 1969 the United Presbyterian General Assembly clearly enunciated the position, consistent with its heritage, that it is possible conscientiously to oppose particular wars without necessarily being opposed to all wars.

Just war theory seems still to be helpful in making decisions about the justifiability of force in revolutionary situations and in rare circumstances in which the violence of war might be limited. Even here, however, greater attention needs to be given to the rigorous application of just war criteria, thus rendering the incidences of justifiable resort to war far fewer than the number of actual wars.

But what about just war theory and nuclear weapons? Can the use of nuclear weapons conceivably be permissible within the criteria of a justifiable war? In their recent Pastoral Letter, the American Catholic Bishops expressed "profound skepticism" that any use of nuclear weapons could be justified. Therefore, they concluded on the basis of just war reasoning, that possession of weapons for nuclear deterrence is morally untenable as a long term policy for seeking peace, though they were not willing to foreclose such a policy in some unspecified short term.[12]

The actual destructiveness of each nuclear weapon and the potential for planetary catastrophe in any use of these weapons renders nuclear war an event so finally and monstrously destructive that no imaginable cause could justify it. It would have no meaning except the death of meaning.

Many others utilizing just war theory believe that both the actual use of nuclear weapons and the intention to use them as an inherent element in nuclear deterrence policy are immoral. No one knows what would happen if nuclear weapons were to be introduced into a conflict under current conditions of nuclear policy and current magnitudes of nuclear armament, but no other weapon in human history has had the capacity to bring both first and second death to humankind. The actual destructiveness of each nuclear weapon and the potential for planetary catastrophe in any use of these weapons renders nuclear war an event so finally and monstrously destructive that no imaginable cause could justify it. It would have no meaning except the death of meaning. Accordingly, Kermit Johnson states:

> In sum, nuclear war could obliterate any moral understanding of discrimination or proportion. By applying just war criteria to the strategy of nuclear deterrence, both in the reasons for "going to war" and in the conduct of "fighting the war" we reach a negative verdict. Nuclear deterrence is immoral.[13]

Ronald Stone reaches the same conclusion by relating the just war criteria to the intention to use nuclear weapons in the strategic planning of contemporary nations.

> The targeting policies of all of the nuclear powers are necessarily, given the weapons, too indiscriminate to be moral. Deterrence, because of its intention to do unjust acts under certain conditions, fails to meet the worldly criteria of the just use of military force. Christian ethics, in our understanding, using the traditions of just war thinking says no to nuclear deterrence as it is now practiced and as it is projected by the nuclear powers.[14]

In an era of nuclear weapons and so-called conventional weapons oriented toward "total war," traditional pacifists and just war proponents are moving closer and closer together in their convictions that the use of nuclear weapons and other massive systems of destruction cannot be justified. The importance of this development in ecumenical Christianity can hardly be overstated. Doubtless the just war theory will continue to be the most useful ethical perspective on war for non-pacifists. Its applicability for nuclear weapons is negative in function. It cannot be used to validate the justice of nuclear war but instead clearly and unambiguously demonstrates its terrible immorality.

C. Human Sinfulness and Nuclear Weapons

Whether or not we hold the view that nuclear weapons are immoral, all of us need to try to understand their hold on us and struggle with what our responsibility is. It is too easy to attribute reliance on nuclear weapons simply to human sinfulness, as true as this may be. We know the human tendency to make nations into an idols. We know our human inclination to trust too much in military might for our security. We know that power corrupts and that we often fail to look critically enough at the ways our own nation abuses its power in the world. In the Reformed heritage these insights about the sinfulness of persons and the idolatrous pretensions of states are familiar.

This paper advances the premise that the kind of sinfulness that manifests itself in reliance on nuclear weapons is profoundly unique because it portends the possible end of history and God's story with us on this planet.

But merely to attribute humans' attachment to nuclear weapons to our common sinfulness, without providing further interpretation, seems to suggest a resignation to the necessity of nuclear terror. It implies that nuclear weapons are little different from other instruments of violence that humans have devised and that they can be subjected to the same kinds of conditions and restraints. As we have seen, however, nuclear weapons bear the possibility of destroying life entirely and irretrievably. Our other idolatries of nation, of possessions, of fame, separate us from God and the abundant life made possible by God's grace. But the possibilities for repentance and new life are always available. The reconciling activity of God is opening up possibilities for peace, justice, and inclusive community in the midst of a sinful world. This paper advances the premise that the kind of sinfulness that manifests itself in reliance on nuclear weapons is profoundly unique because it portends the possible end of history and God's story with us on this planet. The paragraphs that follow attempt to provide the rationale for this interpretation.

In some respects, it is not so surprising that nuclear weapons have been an irresistible temptation. In these inventions, we encounter the combination of awesome scientific knowledge and technological skill that produces a power so incredible it could only have been viewed by previous generations as divine. The awe with which this newly developed power is often regarded is illumined by these words of a witness to the first test of an atomic bomb:

> The effects could well be called unprecedented, magnificent, beautiful, stupendous, and terrifying. No man-made phenomenon of such tremendous power had ever occurred before. The lighting effects beggared description. The whole country was lighted by a searing light with the intensity many times that of the midday sun. It was golden, purple, violet, gray, and blue. It lighted every peak, crevasse, and ridge of the nearby mountain range with a clarity and beauty that cannot be described but must be seen to be imagined. It was that beauty the great poets dream about but describe most poorly and inadequately.[15]

Here we see a new and perhaps final act of the drama begun in the Garden when Adam reached for the apple of knowledge in order to become God-like. The will to mastery and control, to overreach our creatureliness through the illusory quest for absolute security, is clear enough in human history. But the fantasies of God-like power have never before been capable of such dangerous realization as is now possible in a nuclear age. Nor has the aspiration of humans for self-deification been so clearly exposed before as leading to death. In our nuclear weapons policies, we deliberately pursue actions of such ultimacy that they are legitimately God's alone. The desire to possess and control the power to destroy history is a usurpation of the position of God. The nuclear apple is a unique idol because of its apocalyptic power, and our grasp of it is a unique form of idolatry because we thereby assume for ourselves ultimate power over life and death on earth.

In our sinfulness, we have not only fashioned instruments of awesome destructiveness, but we declare them good. We deceive ourselves by trusting in gods of death for our security. We label our development of suicidal technologies as responsibility. We devote our energies to the service of nuclear necessities and call it life. In few historical moments has there been a clearer contrast between a God of grace and life whose judgment even is exercised for the sake of redemption, and a human will to power and mastery which leads not to security and life but global insecurity and death.

Theologians have often used the word "demonic" to describe forces of evil that affect our world. John Macquarrie has defined demonic as the "escalated evil that springs from idolatry."[16] In the face of the idolatrous character of nuclear weapons and their potential for apocalyptic destruction, it seems insufficient to evaluate the policies which plan for their use as merely immoral. Here is something capable of enormous evil that is widely deemed useful, in some sense even "good." When evil is declared good, it is beyond immoral; it is demonic. In our idolatry, we have created a massive and unprecedented force of evil. All idolatry is destructive of those who trust

> In our nuclear weapons policies, we deliberately pursue actions of such ultimacy that they are legitimately God's alone. The desire to possess and control the power to destroy history is a usurpation of the position of God.

in the false god. Nuclear idolatry is demonic because it is a social force oriented toward the destruction of many and could result in the destruction of all. The policies of nuclear nations which involve elaborate strategies of nuclear war-fighting therefore constitute an evil of such magnitude that perhaps only the concept of the "demonic" can convey adequately the theological meaning of the situation we face.

Demonic in such usage is not to be identified with a "devil" theory in which the evil is attributed to an alien being of some kind. Paul Tillich emphasizes that the demonic is powerful in history precisely because it is not external to life but is the corruption of the creative dynamic at work in all things. "The demonic is the perversion of the creative."[17] Forces which are good in life can become demonic if they are unchecked. The demonic is the distortion of a force of life to such an extent that it promotes death. For example, industrial development may destroy nature, the grazing of cattle may cause the expansion of the desert, the production of energy may create environmental havoc, and vibrant cultures may in imperialistic dominance destroy other cultures whose corrective they need. The demonic is destructive of humanity, using our very creativity in the service of the destructive. Its course is rebellious against the very meaning of history which is the Kingdom of God.[18]

In nuclear weapons, we see precisely such perversion of the creative by the destructive. In the development of nuclear weapons and in further ingenious inventions of scientists and technologists are immense creative energies. The humanly enriching potential of such creative capacities are distorted into designs for death. The demonic character of nuclear weapons can be seen further in the ways positive goods in human life are marshalled into the service of this evil: governments, businesses, scientific communities, occupations, and educational institutions. Demonic does not refer to particular peoples or nations or institutions, for all are characterized by mixtures of good and evil. Rather, demonic applies to forces that corrupt the good even as they claim our loyalty.

We have been exploring the possibility that nuclear weapons have come to exercise demonic power, with reliance on them rooted in humans' idolatrous self-deification. In the face of such unparalleled evil, there is a serious question as to whether the possession of nuclear weapons is not so rebellious against God's will for peace that Christians may be called to speak a clear and unambiguous "no" to them. Frequently, the unfaithfulness of Christians in history has not been overt rebellion but blind accommodation to demonic forces in the very name of the God whose authority is being usurped. Biblical faith

confronts us at such times with either-or, not both-and: "Choose this day whom you will serve..." (Joshua 24:15); "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29); "You cannot serve both God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24); "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life, that you and your descendants may live." (Deut. 30:19)

The definitive question of faith for us today may indeed be whether a "yes" to God requires a "no" to nuclear weapons and the policies built upon their possession and contemplated use.

D. Human Sinfulness and Militarism

As we seek to understand our responsibility in relation to nuclear weapons, we discover a more general obsession with military approaches to human conflicts that also requires our attention. Indeed, the increasingly powerful role of military establishments, goals, and values in international relations and national cultures points to the ascendancy of militarism in today's world. Militarism refers to the dominating influence of military ideologies and institutions in all facets of contemporary life.[19] It is manifested in various global developments: the nuclear arms race, the production and proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction, the massive trade in weapons, the reliance of governments on force and the threat of force to deal with conflicts of interest, the use of military forces and techniques of violence as instruments of internal repression, and the influence of military priorities in civilian sectors of society. Militarism is the context and cradle in which the demonically dangerous capacity and willingness for nuclear war is nurtured and nourished.

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How does "militarism" differ from "the military"? In a sinful world, the security and safety of life, liberty, property and community peace and order cannot be trusted to the vagaries of voluntary human good-will. Societies have laws, with police forces and courts to enforce them, in order to regulate, coerce, and defend the community from itself, as it were. Most Presbyterians do not view this as the ideal way to organize society, but accept it as both necessary and legitimate, if organized and used justly, under the conditions of human existence in history. In the Reformed theological tradition, the possession and, under some circumstances, the use of military capability has been understood in the same way: necessary and legitimate when held and used in a just way. That view is still appropriate.

How then do we grapple with the difficult question of when and how legitimate concern for "military capability" can become a quite different and demonic "militarism?" Perhaps the analogy of "tools" and "technology" helps us. The human race has fashioned and used tools for a long time. But in the recent development of highly industrialized societies, a "technological era" has emerged. "Technology" is a way of organizing human endeavor and human society; it influences and permeates every basic dimension and institution of the society, including its values. In a very real way it can be said that the distinction lies in this: we were masters of tools; we are servants of technology.

That does not necessarily suggest that technology should be seen as demonic, though a number of Christians and others have done so. This paper simply asserts that from time to time valid functional and instrumental aspects of communal endeavor develop into powerful forces that come to dominate society and its resources and values, becoming ends rather than means. This study further suggests that militarism is such a development, particularly demonic in the context of potential nuclear holocaust.

Militarism is an increasingly world-wide phenomenon, characterizing both Third World countries and international superpowers. Many countries are arming themselves to the teeth both as a means to exercise influence on other countries and as an instrument of internal control. In today's world, military forces are no longer kept at a minimum to ward off unexpected aggression. As Edward Long puts it, "...most of the economic priorities and the prevailing psyche of the nations more nearly resemble a state of war than a condition of peace."[20]

The awesome technology of war is wedded to the powerful pulses of nationalism to produce a militarization of nations and the world under the ideology of "national security." Although the interests of only a relatively small minority of the world's peoples are secured in this arrangement, the influence of militarism has become pervasive--dominating occupational opportunities, gobbling up the world's resources, siphoning human energies and determining relations between nations. It is expected that in 1985 military expenditures throughout the world will reach one trillion dollars.[21] Such expenditures

> now support 25 million in the regular armed forces, another 22 million in the paramilitary forces, and 24 million in the reserves. With an additional 25 million civilians employed in military-related jobs, the world military population has reached an unprecedented number for a time when no major war is being fought. It is larger than the combined populations of Mexico and Canada.[22]

Not only has such militarism rendered the world less rather than more secure, it is often aligned with repressive policies that trample human rights and block struggles for justice.

Although militarism is not restricted to superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union are leading and largely controlling this dangerous international development. These two nations control almost all research into

nuclear weapons and new weapons technologies, and they foster the process of militarization in the Third World by supplying "80 percent of the weapons sold in the international arms trade."[23]

Richard Barnet has traced militarism in the United States to post-World War II developments in which the memory of Hitler was dominant. From this point the United States "has operated on the assumption that it faced a permanent national security emergency that had to be handled primarily by military means."[24] Previously, the United States had kept its military budget and forces low during peacetime. Now, however, military preparation became permanent and the whole society became enlisted in the project. Militarism has been articulated into a national security ideology and has been embodied in the government institutions of a national security state. Moreover, the heavy orientation of the U.S. economy toward military needs has led some to speak of a "permanent war economy," and President Eisenhower to warn the American people about the influence of the "military-industrial complex."

War preparation has become a major, perhaps dominant, societal undertaking that involves all of us in various ways. It is by no means just the business or responsibility of our military leaders, some of whom are as worried about militarism as any others. Our taxes, our occupations, our investments, our political involvements, and our educational institutions are interrelated in complex and subtle as well as clear and direct ways with the dynamics of militarism. Militarism has a momentum of its own that, once launched, seems irreversible despite its irrationality and danger. Our industries have become dependent on military contracts for their viability quite apart from genuine requirements of international peace. Alan Geyer points to the "bureaucratic momentum of military technology" in which the cycle of research, development, production and deployment is repeated over and over again, quite apart from any rational purpose.[25]

When Paul spoke to the Colossians about principalities and powers, it was this kind of dominating and pervasive power to which he was alluding. He was warning these early Christians against the popular views of his day that certain supra-human forces and powers determine what happens in the cosmos and are beyond the influence even of God. In our day, the ideology and structures of militarism have this character of a supra-human power. Some persons readily grant sovereignty to it, trusting in its power, while others concede sovereignty out of a feeling of despair about being able to do anything about it. Paul counters this deterministic view with a vision of Christ's shalom-making power which extends to all things. To be agents of Christ's reconciling power today surely requires conscious refusal to submit to the deterministic course of militarism and a search to discover appropriate ways to resist its fatal influence.

Earlier we suggested that nuclear weapons may and perhaps should be regarded by Christians as demonic. Their context of militarism also possesses the characteristics of the demonic. It is a force of evil embodied in structures of human existence that leads to death, not life and peace. It is a corrupting influence in domestic institutions and international relations. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.) stated this forcefully

in 1982 when it called churches to

> challenge the military and militaristic policies that lead to disastrous distortions of foreign policy sapping the capacity of the nations of the world to deal with pressing economic and social problems which have become a paramount political issue of our times.[26]

Rooted in humans' sinful will to power and dominance, militarism wars against God's intentions for human community. Militarism represents the ascendancy of the destructive potentiality of human beings in our history. But we Christians do not believe humankind is fated to remain in the demonic grip of nuclear weapons and militarism even as we do not underestimate the power of these evils. We believe a different future is possible because the power of death and evil has been overcome by Christ in his death and resurrection.

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E. Theological Interpretation of "Enemy"

A driving force behind the militarism of societies and their willingness to contemplate even nuclear war is the identification of other peoples and nations as enemies. "Enemies" seem to necessitate a permanent state of war readiness and are frequently portrayed in ways that would make their destruction acceptable. For the Soviet Union, the United States is such an enemy. For the United States, the Soviet Union is such an enemy. As Christians how are we to understand the meaning and influence of "the enemy" on the ways we seek peace?

On Sundays we listen to Jesus' radical teaching to love our enemies and to pray even for those who persecute us. The rest of the week we readily identify the Soviet Union and its people as our mortal enemy and prepare to obliterate them if it is deemed necessary. These two orientations are so fundamentally antagonistic it is not surprising that we relegate Jesus' teaching to inward feeling and interpersonal relationship while regarding it as irrelevant to world politics. They cannot coexist any other way; yet, of course, the teaching of Jesus may be more relevant than we want to admit.

The enemy is one who is both hated and feared. Relationship to an enemy is marked by hostility in which one seeks to do harm to the other, usually

justified by the conviction that harm is intended toward oneself. It is not merely ill feeling but the kind of hatred and fear that manifests itself in hostile action. In history, Christians have all too often identified their adversaries with God's enemies, thus justifying a holy war or a crusading mentality. Religious wars have frequently been especially cruel because each side believes it is fighting with God on its side against God's enemies. This same mentality continues to exert its influence in American religion and politics. The Soviet Union is labelled as the power of darkness which spreads the virulent force of godless communism in the world. The United States is regarded as the nation chosen to be God's providential arm in history defeating the enemies of God and securing the victory of the Free World. Soviet policy is grounded in a similar set of convictions and fears about the United States and a similar set of convictions about itself.

There seems to be a deep human need, perhaps arising out of various fears and insecurities, to identify enemies on which to project the worst so we can feel justified in identifying ourselves with the best.

This is not to say that there are not genuine conflicts between the United States and the Soviet Union - or, for that matter, between the United States and Japan or New Zealand or the Federal Republic of Germany or Mexico. Conflict over goals and values, tension because of differing interests and needs are enduring dimensions of human existence in history - in families and congregations; among friends and co-workers; between communities, classes and nations. The realistic acknowledgment that "opponents" or "adversaries" exist springs simply from this awareness of diversity and divergence in life. When the term "enemy" is assigned to some of these divergences, the psychology shifts, as we know well in our personal relationships. People and governments are encouraged to view mere divergence in ultimate metaphysical terms - as an elemental struggle between right and wrong, good and evil.

This division of the world into light and darkness is deeply rooted in American religious consciousness as well as in many other places in the world. It is a manifestation of the Manichean heresy, repudiated early in the history of the Christian church as false doctrine. Robert Jewett has shown how popular culture in the Unites States exhibits such dualism drawing on traditions in Daniel, Deuteronomy and Revelation to undergird a "zealous nationalism."[27] The adversary becomes the enemy who is pictured as a grotesque, nonhuman creature who can only be hated and destroyed, and with whom one cannot enter into relationship. It is ironic how fundamentally the identification of the enemy can be changed.[28] In the 1940's the Russians were our allies and the Germans and Japanese were our enemies. In a relatively short period of time the Russians became our enemies and the Germans and Japanese our allies. There seems to be a deep human need, perhaps

arising out of various fears and insecurities, to identify enemies on which to project the worst so we can feel justified in identifying ourselves with the best.

Making adversaries into enemies distorts both ourselves and them, denying and dissolving the bonds of common humanity which alone make future resolution possible. George Kennan has shown how making the Soviet Union into an enemy has lead to portraying the nation and its people in grossly exaggerated stereotypes and creating implausible scenarios of fantastic monstrosities.[29] Kennan has no illusions about the cynical use of power by the Soviets and their own grossly exaggerated stereotypes of the United States, but he believes our dehumanization of the Soviet Union makes it difficult if not impossible to fashion a realistic policy based on recognition of common fears and interests. Moreover, our distorted view of the Soviet Union prevents us from looking at ways the U.S. is a contributing partner to the mutual hostility. Kennan comments on the recently accelerated hostility toward the Soviet Union:

> ...this seems to me to suggest something much more sinister than mere intellectual error: namely, a subconscious need on the part of a great many people for an external enemy--an enemy against whom frustrations could be vented, an enemy who could serve as a convenient target for the externalization of evil, an enemy in whose allegedly inhuman wickedness one could see the reflection of one's own exceptional virtue[30]

There are various meanings given to the term enemy in the Bible. In the Old Testament enemy not only designates national adversaries of Israel, usually also identified as enemies of Yahweh, but also describes God's relationship to Israel when it is unfaithful to the covenant. Love of enemy is found most explicitly in New Testament teachings, of course. According to James Sanders, however, it is also manifested in the Old Testament in the enunciation of "a spirit of international good will under the universal sovereignity of God."[31] Perhaps the key biblical insight is that we are own worst enemy. The sin is in us. The chief builders of walls of hostility are ourselves. Perhaps we are even God's worst enemy as we pervert God's humanizing intention for the world into a rigid division of the world into friends and enemies.

As we are all created for friendship with one another and God, it is incumbent on the church to protest vigorously the dehumanizing stereotypes of national adversaries. The prospect of change, even reconciliation, must not be blocked. As John Bennett has often wisely taught, the church can at least press vigorously to ensure that people to people relationships among nations are possible, even when governments are in conflict, in affirmation of the common humanity under God that is more fundamental than estrangement among nations.[32]

F. The Question of Christian Responsibility

In our present situation, we live in a world seemingly dominated by powers of death and destruction. Yet as Christians, we are a people who seek to be responsive to the vision of peace. How are we to act toward this vision when there is so much in the world, indeed in our day-to-day life, which seems to make a mockery of our faith that shalom is the truth of God for the world? The tension between human experience and the intentions of God is neither new nor surprising, but the magnitude of destructive power now in the hands of persons confronts us today with a challenge of unprecedented gravity. The scope of the potential destruction that hovers over us is so awesome and so awful that we are made numb by its contemplation. We cannot truly comprehend it so we are easily recruited into a conspiracy of denial, a massive silent agreement not to notice its momentum or dwell on its dimensions. What is the shape of Christian responsibility in such a time as this?

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If indeed we are facing manifestations of human sinfulness so evil that they are demonic, we must ask if we are called to forms of Christian discipleship that are new for most of us. Our response to policies of nuclear annihilation and militarism may not be one among many political decisions, but a matter of fundamental faithfulness to God and God's boundless love for humankind. Let us now move to a consideration of what faithfulness may require of us. The exploration is cast in terms of "peacemaking and resistance," not because the conclusion is fore-ordained but because the authenticity of our engagement is better assured by posing with clarity the challenge at its limits.

V. Peacemaking and Resistance

The previous analysis suggests that our situation today may call for new and deeper levels of engagement with nuclear weapons policies and the dynamics of militarism. This involves most of us in a struggle we might wish to avoid. There are clearly many risks and uncertainties in seeking a peacemaking path commensurate with the depths of such a predicament. This is all the more reason why our struggle with faithfulness needs to involve the whole church--the Presbyterian Church at every level, and the wider ecumenical church both in the United States and around the world. Our predicament is common, and we need each other for support and insight as we seek to be a people who manifest God's love for the world in both word and witness.

A. Obedience and Resistance in the Reformed Tradition

One source of theological insight is the Reformed tradition which has shaped the character of Presbyterian churches. In Reformed theology, originating especially through the influence of John Calvin, there has been a profound realism about government and politics. The state is viewed as necessary to provide order, and this is a good which should not be underestimated. The state also carries out positive tasks which contribute to the quality of society and the livelihood of its peoples.

Yet, at the same time, the state is led by sinful people and will manifest sinfulness in its exercise of power. The state is prone to idolatry and imperialism. For Reformed Christians, politics and government are valued vocations. Indeed all Christians have the obligation to be politically involved, to take seriously their responsibility for the wider community to which they are related. But Reformed Christians are instructed to have a healthy critical relation to the state, refusing to absolutize its authority and persistently seeking its reform. Reformed Christians relate to civil authority with both a "yes" and a "no," joining with Christians and non-Christians alike in assuming responsibility for the quality of the order which the government provides.

The Protestant Reformation originated as a movement to recapture authentic biblical faith and Christian community in opposition to perceived corruptions in the Roman Church. It was soon involved, however, in the sweeping revolutionary challenge to the entire medieval political, religious and social order. John Calvin cautioned against political revolution, emphasizing the God-ordained authority of rulers.

> Subjects ought to be induced to submit to princes and governors, not merely from a dread of their power.... but because the obedience which is rendered to princes and

"But in the obedience which we have shown to be due to the authority of governors, it is always necessary to make one exception, and that is entitled to our first attention — that it do not seduce us from obedience to God to whose will the desires of all kings ought to be subject, to whose decrees all their commands ought to yield, to whose majesty all their scepters ought to submit." — John Calvin

> magistrates is rendered to God, from whom they have received their authority.
>
> Subjects approve their obedience to them in submitting to their edicts, in paying taxes, in discharging public duties and bearing burdens which relate to the common defense, and in fulfilling all their other commands.
>
> If there is anything in the public administration which requires to be corrected, let them not raise any tumults, or take the business into their own hands.... but let them refer it to the cognizance of the magistrate who is alone authorized to regulate the concerns of the public. [33]

Yet Calvin also taught that civil servants had a duty to resist the "violence or cruelty of kings." Though he was very careful in admitting challenge to the properly appointed authorities, he recognized that God had overthrown rulers, and dropped a thinly-veiled hint:

> But whatever opinion be formed by acts of men, yet the Lord equally executed his work by them when he broke the sanguinary scepters of insolent kings and overturned tyrannical governments. Let princes hear and fear.

In the remarkable concluding section to the Institutes, Calvin makes clear and explicit the exception he recognized to the presumption of obedience. The section merits extensive quotation:

> But in the obedience which we have shown to be due to the authority of governors, it is always necessary to make one exception, and that is entitled to our first attention -- that it do not seduce us from obedience to God to whose will the desires of all kings ought to be subject, to whose decrees all their commands ought to yield, to whose majesty all their scepters ought to submit. Indeed, how preposterous it would be for us, with a view to satisfy men, to incur the displeasure of God on whose account we yield obedience to men!.... If they command anything against God,

> it ought not to have the least attention; nor in this case ought we to pay any regard to all that dignity attached to magistrates, to which no injury is done when it is subjected to the unrivalled and supreme power of God. On this principle Daniel denied that he had committed any crime against the king in disobeying his impious decree, because the king had exceeded the limits of his office and had not only done an injury to people but, by raising his arm against God, had degraded his own authority.

Calvin was not dealing with abstract theological principles. He understood well the political consequences of fidelity to the exception he recognized:

> I know what great and present danger awaits this constancy, for kings cannot bear to be disregarded without the greatest indignation; and "the wrath of a king," says Solomon, "is as messengers of death." But since this edict has been proclaimed by that celestial herald, Peter, "We ought to obey God rather than men," let us console ourselves with this thought: that we truly perform the obedience which God requires of us when we suffer anything rather than deviate from piety.

This posture of "yes" and "no" in the thought of its founder has led Reformed Christians in different contexts to move in different directions. Calvin's followers, often confronting religious persecution and political tyranny, have emphasized and further developed his theological grounds for resistance. In Germany, the Netherlands, Scotland, France, England and the United States, Reformed Christians have been on occasion a revolutionary people, resisting unjust government and going beyond reform of the existing order to seek a transformed society. John Knox of Scotland argued that "when the magistrates and other officers cease to do their duty, they [the people] are as it were without officers...."[34]

John Calvin did not approve of all of John Knox's revolutionary activities, but then as now disagreement on such issues was common and expected. The extent to which the zealous Knox was willing to carry Calvin's exception is illustrated precisely on one occasion when Knox was called before the Privy Council of London. Knox was told that his judgment opposed the "common order." "I am more sorry," he replied, "that the common order is contrary to the institution of Jesus Christ."[35]

The Calvinist recognition of the Christian duty of resistance in certain circumstances had considerable influence on subsequent political thought. The Old Testament conception of covenant between Israel and God was extended in application to the relation of a people and their governing authorities. If a ruler violated the covenant, then the people would be justified in overthrowing the sovereign. The ethical basis for popular revolution was developed with particular force by John Locke in his Two Treatises on Government. Covenant theology and political theory came to particular

historical expression in the American Revolution and, subsequently, the Constitution of the United States. The Bible, the classical authors of Rome, and Locke were the main sources of the political theory preached throughout New England in the 18th century. Though the influence of the clergy may have declined from 17th century New England, its role in spreading the outlines of Christian resistance theory was considerable through political sermons, lectures, writing, serving in government and organizing the resistance and later the rebellion.[36] To the Congregational and Presbyterian preachers, the Reformed traditions taught not only that obedience was the norm but also that resistance to authority was obligatory when the government betrayed its role.

It remained the work of the contemporary church of the twentieth century to incorporate motifs of resistance within their confessions. The Presbyterian Church's Book of Confessions records in the older confessions only the respect of the church for God's working through the civil officers. In the Barmen Declaration there is, as Karl Barth has said, no doctrine of complete resistance to National Socialism. But it was nevertheless an act of resistance to National Socialism's capture of the church. In the fifth article of Barmen, the church in 1934 confessed:

> Fear God. Honor the emperor (I Peter 2:17). Scripture tells us that in the as yet unredeemed world in which the church also exists, the State has by divine appointment the task of providing for justice and peace....
>
> We reject the false doctrine as though the State over and beyond its special commission should and could become the single and totalitarian order of human life, thus fulfilling the Church's vocation as well.[37]

Barth's judgment on his own handiwork remains convincing.

> It was not a total resistance against totalitarian National Socialism....In proportion to its task the church has sufficient reason to be ashamed that it did not do more; yet in comparison with those other groups and institutions it has no reason to be ashamed; it accomplished far more than all the rest.[38]

Jack Rogers in 1985 captures the spirit of Barmen in his handbook on Presbyterian creeds:

> The attitude expressed here is the same as that in the Scots Confession: obey legitimate government, but resist illegitimate tyranny. In the Barmen Declaration, not the order of the state but it's task is primary. The state "has by divine appointment the task of providing for justice and peace."
>
> The theological Declaration of Barmen is characteristically Reformed in its polemic against idolatry.[39]

Our own Confession of 1967 is the most explicit of the confessions on the need to struggle against authorities as well as to support them.

> The members of the church are emissaries of peace and seek the good of humanity in cooperation with powers and authorities in politics, culture, and economics. But they have to fight against pretensions and injustices when these same powers endanger human welfare. Their strength is in their confidence that God's purpose rather than man's schemes will finally prevail.[40]

As the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approaches the writing of a statement of contemporary faith, its handling of idolatry and resistance to world destruction by government action will become a central issue.

Thus, confessional recognition of Reformed respect for order and government is now paralleled by confessional recognition of the need for resistance. As the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approaches the writing of a statement of contemporary faith, its handling of idolatry and resistance to world destruction by government action will become a central issue.

For Reformed Christians, when the state fulfills its role in providing a reasonably humane order amendable to reform, the ethical presumption for obedience is clearly stronger than the option of resistance. However, when the state becomes oppressive, impervious to reform, Calvinists have not been timid in adopting the stance of resistance. Clearly the state and its officials are viewed critically by Reformed Christians - God alone is sovereign, not human authorities. At what point in time the responsibility to obey changes to the responsibility to resist is a contextual decision that must be made by Christians as they struggle with conscience and particular circumstances, guided by Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

B. Obedience and Resistance in the Biblical Tradition

Christians who largely benefit from the polices of government are inclined to read the Bible in a way that stresses obedience to civil authorities rather than permission or obligation to resist. However, it is important to recognize the existence of both motifs: obedience and resistance. Some time ago, the Old Testament scholar G. Ernest Wright wrote:

> The greatest figures of Scripture were all objectors in one way or another, on the grounds of conscience or the will of

> God, to some established order, so as to lead them to leave it. Abraham left home and kindred. Moses vs. Pharaoh was a conscientious objector. Joshua vs. the established order of the Canaanite civilization. Jotham in his wonderful parable vs. his brother's first attempt at monarchy in Israel. Samuel vs. Eli and then vs. Saul. Nathan vs. David, and every prophet until Ezekiel, and after Ezekiel there is Malachi, who delivered the word of God vs. the corrupt clergy of the time.[41]

Other traditions of resistance can be cited as well. The Hebrew midwives resisted Pharaoh's murderous order to kill male babies by secretly protecting them. (Exodus 1:15-22) Micaiah ben Imlah is sent to prison for his negative, though true, prophesy regarding King Ahab's battle plans while the other prophets tell Ahab what he wants to hear. (I Kings 22) Esther acts against the law in order to save her people: "I will go to the king, although it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish." (Esther 4:16) Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and Daniel were willing to die rather than submit to the command of Nebuchadnezzar to violate their faith. Similarly in the New Testament civil authority is hardly given absolute authority over persons' actions. When there is a clear conflict between obeying God and conforming to civil authority, Peter's affirmation is central: "We must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29) In the powerful words of Mary in the Magnificat, we encounter the revolutionary force of God's shalom in the world:

> God has shown strength with God's arms,
> and has scattered the proud in the
> imagination of their hearts,
> God has put down the mighty from their thrones,
> and exalted those of low degree;
> God has filled the hungry with good things,
> and the rich God has sent empty away.
> (Luke 1:51-53)

From the birth narratives of Jesus to his execution as "King of the Jews," Jesus was apparently regarded as threatening and dangerous by the religious and political authorities of his day.

Yet it is also important that we give attention to those Biblical texts which have most frequently been cited to oppose Christian political resistance. First is Mark 12:13-17 (also Matthew 22:15-22 and Luke 20:20-26) in which Jesus responds to a questions about tribute to Caesar with: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." In this text, as George Edwards puts it, the motive "is not a quest for enlightenment" about paying taxes, "but the entrapment of a mouse in a game of cats."[42]

Jesus' adroit escape from the question does reveal something of Jesus' view of civil authority, however. First, Jesus recognizes Caesar's right to collect taxes. In this response Jesus separates himself from the Zealots who granted no such authority to Caesar. But, second, Jesus does not regard Caesar's authority as absolute. The sovereignty of God relativizes Caesar's

claim without invalidating it. In Mark's account, Edwards argues, Jesus' answer intentionally keeps taut the tension between obedience to earthly rulers and the ultimate authority of God which was expected to be manifested soon.[43]

The second frequently cited text is Romans 13:1-7, particularly vs. 1-2: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment." Victor Furnish's reconstruction of Paul's argument is helpful:

> In verses 1 and 2 Paul is saying that the authority of the governing authorities has been granted to them by God. The next thought, verses 3-4, is that earthly rulers function as servants of God to employ the authority granted them for the common good. Verse 5 advances a third point, and in doing so repeats the opening admonition: one should "be subject" not only for fear of punishment, but "for the sake of conscience." Finally, in verses 6-7, it is said that, in the specific instance of taxes, one should comply with the demands of the governing authorities.[44]

Paul responds to the issue of paying taxes with a theologically grounded appeal to obedience. It is important to remember that at this particular historical moment Christians were not subjected to the kind of systematic persecution they experienced later. The Roman government which Paul referred to was regarded as providing a reasonably humane order. His counsel may arguably be regarded as contextual and not intended to provide a general truth to cover all situations.

Yet, beyond this recognition, Paul's theological view of civil authority remains pertinent. In this text Paul clearly does not regard this authority to be "self-generated and self-validating,"[45] but derivative from God and subordinate to God. The central biblical teaching that the primary allegiance of believers is to God, not to earthly rulers, is not contradicted in this text. Earthly rulers are placed in positions of responsibility by God to serve the well-being of those who are their subjects. Furthermore, when Romans 13:1-7 is viewed in the context of Romans 12:9-21 and the remainder of Romans 13, the authority of rulers is further relativized. Christians are enjoined to conform to God's order of love, not the present age. There is no question at all that Christ is Lord, and all particular questions have to be worked out in ways that accord with this central allegiance.[46] Commenting on this text, Lamar Willamson, Jr., a biblical scholar and tax resister, gives a personal testimony to this interpretation:

> In the present situation, I perceive my national government to be fulfilling, in most of its functions, the constructive role presupposed by Romans 13:1-7. I therefore willingly pay taxes to support it. In the current arms buildup, however, and in our various military interventions around the globe, I perceive not "God's

Resistance is not motivated by disrespect for government but by profound respect for the legitimate purposes for which government is established.

> servant for your good" but a powerful nation intent on preserving its wealth and political advantage at whatever cost. This part of my tax I withhold, therefore, in the same way that Christians a generation after Paul refused to obey the state's command to worship the Roman emperor (Revelation 14:9-12).[47]

Such resistance is not motivated by disrespect for government but by profound respect for the legitimate purposes for which government is established.

C. The Meaning of Resistance

We have seen that in biblical and Reformed traditions persons of faith have believed obedience to God may require resistance to government in certain situations. But what does resistance mean? Is our own situation one of those times when resistance is required? In this section and the next (C. and D.) we shall consider the first question. In the following section (E.) we shall consider the latter question.

Resistance often suggests "standing against" or "opposing" something. As such it is often regarded as a negative action of some kind. To some, resistance implies a form of non-cooperation with civil authorities and the social order characterized by withdrawal or separation, perhaps in order to avoid compromising personal moral integrity. Judith Stiehm defines resistance as "refusing to acquiesce in the requirements of policies, laws or practices of a political order and the people who, in their public capacities, execute them."[48]

Yet this common understanding of resistance is not complete for Reformed Christians. Resistance is, first of all, a <u>stance</u> or an <u>orientation</u> toward the present situation, not specific actions. If the stance is genuine, actions will surely follow; but it is the stance which represents the heart of resistance. Theologically, the stance is characterized by two movements. The first is repentance, and the second is commitment to transformation.

The decision to embark on the path of resistance is not a tactical political judgment but a fundamental matter of conversion and faith. It emerges from the conviction that the person - or church - has been serving idols rather than the true God, and that faithfulness to God calls for a

radical "turn-about." The recognition of idolatry calls the church or Christians to repentance, to acknowledge complicity in the evils that flow from allegiance to false gods. At this stage, resistance surely means naming and standing against the dynamics of evil and refusing any longer to cooperate with them. Faithfulness to God is the fundamental dynamic in resistance. Opposition to government is simply the inevitable consequence.

From genuine repentance comes, through the work of the Holy Spirit, the power of new life. The grace of God which frees persons from idolatry frees persons for a life of faithfulness. Persons can now participate in the liberating and reconciling activity of God rather than serving the gods which oppress and destroy. At this stage, resistance means not only to stand against but also to stand for and to become agents of the transforming activity of God in history. Theologically, the primary thrust of resistance is positive: it is the yes to God's call to be about God's work, which requires the no to that which fundamentally subverts and resists God's purpose.

Let us now explore this understanding of resistance in relation to the earlier analysis of our current situation. If nuclear weapons and world-wide militarism are indeed demonic, resistance may be called for as a matter of faith, not merely as a social action strategy. The church would be called to repentance for its failure to engage vigorously and persistently in political activity to counter these dangerous developments, indeed for its acquiescence in and frequent support of policies which have escalated the evils. Resistance would be a stance characterized by repentance and the commitment to transformation. It would involve standing against the policies of government which perpetuate reliance on nuclear weapons and promote militarism, and it would involve political struggle to transform these policies in fundamental ways that more clearly correspond to God's intentions for humankind.

Resistance clearly does not mean a disengagement from politics; rather it involves political responsibility at a different level.

What is the political expression of a theological stance of resistance? Resistance clearly does not mean a disengagement from politics; rather it involves political responsibility at a different level. Politically, it may be viewed as an approach to the civil order along a spectrum between reform and revolution. In the United States, Presbyterians have generally adopted the political style of reform. When we have disagreed sharply with particular laws and policies, we have opposed them and sought to replace them with more just laws and policies. We have regarded the political order as relatively moral and deserving of our support even as we attempted to correct certain specific wrongs and to secure certain specific rights. The politics of reform, for Christians, is based on the assessment that the political order and its basic policy commitments are morally legitimate. When an order is legitimate, Christians seek changes within the order, utilizing the political

process that is available to them. In common usage reform often means "to fix" or "to repair," suggesting primarily the responsibility to correct problems within a basically moral order or to seek better ways of achieving a legitimate policy end.

The politics of revolution has had considerable influence in shaping our present age. Christians have supported and opposed revolution, sometimes in the same situation. As we have seen, the right to revolution has strong religious roots in the Reformed tradition. The moral basis of revolution is an assessment that the political order is illegitimate. It cannot be repaired - it must be replaced. For Christians, the political option for revolution is reserved for extreme situations in which the government and the system which supports it must be uprooted and replaced if the legitimate functions of civil authority are to be fulfilled.

The politics of resistance is based on an assessment that the civil order is morally legitimate but that some aspects of the order are demonic. Another way of putting it is that the political order is legitimate but that some of its basic policy commitments are not. "Reform" is not of itself sufficient to drive to the heart of the evil which is corrupting a basically legitimate order. Resistance is neither satisfied with fixing or repairing the order nor oriented toward its overthrow. Instead resistance seeks the transformation of the order by naming and standing against demonic policies that corrupt it and by political action aimed at fundamental political and social change. Indeed this orientation toward fundamental and transformative change is the very deepest meaning of "reformation." The translation of the theological stance of resistance into the political realm involves refusing to cooperate with demonic policies and seeking their transformation as a decision of faith in a God whose judgment is redemptive. It is indeed a conversion to authentic faith.

The political expression of resistance does not necessarily require leaving reform behind. Resistance is not so much defined by specific actions as by an orientation toward the present situation. In a reformist stance, the church can say about nuclear weapons policies: "We can go along with them for the time being but will seek to change them." In a resistance stance, however, the church would say: "We cannot go along with nuclear weapons policies because acquiescence in them constitutes a betrayal of our faith. We shall not rest content with merely reducing the number of warheads on nuclear missiles but seek the transformation of national defense policies." The stance of resistance would call on Christians to move beyond reform in exercising political responsibility but not to dismiss reform when it can serve transformative goals.

D. Issues in Decisions for Resistance

The stance of resistance may be expressed in varied forms of action: legal or illegal, individual or corporate, non-violent or violent. Current examples, by no means exhaustive, are: withholding taxes used for military

purposes; withdrawal from military-related occupations; boycotts of and divestments from corporations involved in military production; marches and demonstrations at military-related institutions; vigils at military or government sites; symbolic acts of witness against weaponry; resistance to draft registration; sanctuary and underground railroad strategies for resisting the policies of the United States government toward Central American refugees; and public confrontation with military, business and government officials who have special responsibilities related to military policies and their implementation. Several issues are raised by these actions that need to be considered as we seek to explore what resistance would mean for the church today.

The powerful example of Jesus who in love made himself vulnerable to violence without retaliating in kind provides a picture of obedience to God that remains central to the church's life.

1. Assertive Nonviolence

Clearly in Christian ethics there is a strong presumption for nonviolent methods of resistance, even if one is not a pacifist. The powerful example of Jesus who in love made himself vulnerable to violence without retaliating in kind provides a picture of obedience to God that remains central to the church's life. If the Reformed tradition has regarded the resort to violence as justified in some circumstances to combat a particularly oppressive order, its emphasis on the reconciling activity of God requires the choice of nonviolent means in most circumstances. For the overwhelming majority of Christians involved in resistance in the United States today, nonviolent means are regarded as normative if not absolute. There are many modes of nonviolent resistance that are appropriate to the ends of a just peace, that are life-affirming, and keep open lines of relationship between resisters and adversaries. Employment of such means not only provides a dramatic counterpoint to the demonic momentum of violence in current policies but also influences the minds and hearts of peoples, and affords more promising prospects for generating widespread and politically effective support.

Fortunately, some of the sharp lines which have divided principled pacifists and political realists in the peacemaking witness of churches in the past have blurred in recent years as the context has shifted. Issues like those of participation in World War II are no longer central; instead the focus is systemic oppression in various countries, the worldwide dynamics of militarism, and the threat of global nuclear annihilation. In this new context, some traditional realists have become much more critical of military policies while traditional pacifists have become more contextual in their approach to situations of revolutionary violence. Today, there may be disagreement over the morality of violence against property (e.g. hammering dents in the nose cone of a nuclear missile), but there is widespread

agreement among absolute pacifists and political realists that the resistance struggle requires the adoption of nonviolence strategies in relation to persons.

With increased interest in Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., it has become ever more clear that nonviolent resistance is not to be equated with "passive resistance" (that is, nonconformity without intentional confrontation). Nonviolent resistance in the mode of Gandhi and King is militant and politically astute. It seeks engagement, confrontation and transformation. It seeks to wed the humane rationale for nonviolence with a sensitivity to pragmatic politics. With the Reformed heritage's concern for the fruits of action as well as the motives behind actions, Presbyterians would have special reason to pursue nonviolent actions and strategies as pragmatic options for transformative resistance.

We cannot insist, however that our analysis and reasoning in this matter should be definitive for Reformed and other Christians in other circumstances in other places. Even as we consider the power of Gandhi's life and teaching, we must remember that his own witness was initially shaped in the crucible of South African racism. Non-violent resistance has been so strong an element in the struggle against apartheid that two of its remarkable African Christian advocates, Chief Albert Luthuli and Bishop Desmond Tutu, have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Yet faced with decades of implacable rejection of just change and increasingly brutal government repression, South African Christians today confront the question of non-violent or violent resistance in ways we can scarcely comprehend. If they are led to embrace the Reformed option for revolution against a government which so thoroughly corrupts the purposes of God in its essential nature, we dare not think of them as unfaithful.

There are a number of elements in the definition of civil disobedience that the church has generally accepted. The refusal to obey or the overt violation of laws must be rooted in conscience and not mere self interest; the disobedience must be open, not hidden; the means of expression must be non-violent; and the action must be taken with awareness of the penalties and willingness to accept them if finally assessed.

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2. Civil Disobedience

Although there are numerous forms of resistance which do not involve the violation of laws, a corporate commitment to resistance would bring the church closer to the likelihood of civil disobedience as one of its compelling expressions. The Presbyterian Church has long supported the conscience of individual Christians who believe themselves compelled by their faith to disobey laws. The historical grounding for this stance is provided in the

Westminster Confession: "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship." (C.XX,2.) (6.101.) There are a number of elements in the definition of civil disobedience that the church has generally accepted. The refusal to obey or the overt violation of laws must be rooted in conscience and not mere self interest; the disobedience must be open, not hidden; the means of expression must be non-violent; and the action must be taken with awareness of the penalties and willingness to accept them if finally assessed.

The General Assemblies of both former denominations specifically supported civil disobedience during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and '60's. In 1965 for instance, the General Assembly of the PCUS said that the church "should give the support of Christian conscience to any member who, following his conscience in obedience to the Word, engages in civil disobedience." [49]

Presbyterians have not only supported the conscience of individual believers when it comes into conflict with state authority but have also advocated legal protection for acts of conscience. Civil disobedience may be justified theologically as an expression of the central authority of God for the Christian life. It may be justified politically as the kind of morally courageous dissent society needs for its moral health and vitality.

The clearest support for civil disobedience in recent Presbyterian history was enunciated in 1969 in the context of the Vietnam War. Through actions of the General Assemblies, both denominations supported, by policy and with legal and pastoral assistance, young men who conscientiously refused to participate in this war. They further recommended that the federal government provide a legally available option of selective conscientious objection to war in addition to the legal protection made available to those who oppose all wars. In that year, the 181st General Assembly (UPCUSA) stated:

> While granting the authority of the state, with its legitimate powers, we also acknowledge the freedom of the individual conscience under God which may lead a person, when he judges that the pretensions and injustices of the civil authorities endanger human welfare, to reject, ignore, or oppose the authority of the state.[50]

Current manifestations of civil disobedience are similarly based on Christians' ultimate accountability to God for their actions. Some may believe a particular policy or law is in conflict with their loyalty to God. Others may believe a particular law or policy is itself illegal and employ civil disobedience as a way to uphold the law. For example, persons giving sanctuary to Central American refugees claim that their actions are legal both in United States refugee law and by virtue of the adoption of the United Nations' convention on refugees by the United States Senate. They assert that the current administration is in violation of those laws, while their own actions conform to it.

Still others believe they are called to disobey selectively laws and policies supporting and perpetuating the dynamics of militarism and the

nuclear arms race as a way to confront the evils and seek fundamental change. In these instances there is not one law or policy alone which is the focus of civil disobedience. Indeed, for some, these actions are better identified as civil resistance than civil disobedience in order to clarify the difference in this type of conscientious action. Disobeying a law becomes an act of resistance against a whole range of government policies and practices, challenging their legitimacy.

The primary point of conscience for some is the payment of taxes which support military policies, and so they refuse to pay this portion of their taxes. Others have violated trespass laws by illegally entering nuclear weapons sites in order publicly and dramatically to express their opposition to such weaponry. This form of civil disobedience is less a challenge to a specific law than it is a way of saying a clear and uncompromising no to nuclear weapons policies. It communicates the message: "We shall no longer acquiesce in government policies and practices which perpetuate the nuclear arms race and worldwide militarism. We shall seek to stand against these policies in open confrontation." For these Christians the danger to be feared and avoided is not so much an anarchic disregard for law as a timid accommodation to the sovereignty of a civil order seemingly committed to a demonic course. Civil disobedience in this sense is often incorporated into a general strategy of resistance seeking the transformation of policies and not merely their revision.

3. Witness to Truth and Means of Transformation

Should a resistance decision be grounded primarily in the intention to provide a clear witness to truth or to seek social transformation? This is another issue that has been a matter of considerable debate among Christian activists. For some, frequently those related to traditions of historic peace churches and radical Catholicism, the primary task of Christians is to witness to the peace of Christ by standing over against the government's military policies. For them there is a sharp conflict between what faithfulness to Christ requires and the military policies of major world powers.

Stanley Hauerwas has provided a bold and clear presentation of this position in The Peaceable Kingdom.[51] Here he argues that the task of the church is to embody in its own life the truth of nonviolence, not to try to transform the world. It is through the faithful witness of the church that God works in the world. It is arrogant and misdirected for the church to see its mission as shaping the course of history through political action. In this interpretation resistance is primarily a matter of clear and persistent refusal to cooperate with the forces of militarism and a commitment to embody in communal form a peaceable alternative. Resistance, accordingly, might well include tax refusal, selective service noncooperation, withdrawal from military-related occupations, symbolic acts of confrontation with militarism, and liturgical acts of prayer, worship and fasting.

The more pragmatic approach to resistance has generally been characteristic of the Reformed tradition and other branches of the Catholic tradition. In this view, resistance is deeply concerned with effectiveness,

Because Christians are also a Resurrection people they may hope in the possibilities for transformation in history and, therefore, struggle in confidence that government policy can be restored to its morally legitimate purposes.

though grounded in the conviction of faithfulness. How can the dominating influences of militarism be checked and eventually transformed? How can our societies be released from the demonic influences of nuclear weapons policies? In this view resistance requires a political strategy to confront the evils in current government policies in order to transform them in ways that correspond to God's redemptive purposes for the human community. Such a resistance stance does not necessarily entail an expectation of success, because for a people of the Cross there can be no such guarantee. But because Christians are also a Resurrection people they may hope in the possibilities for transformation in history and, therefore, struggle in confidence that government policy can be restored to its morally legitimate purposes. Resistance is expected and shaped not only to call attention to what is wrong, but to weaken the hold of that which is wrong so that qualitative change may be given a chance.

It is likely that some degree of tension will remain between these two views of resistance. However, when the tension is overemphasized it is misleading. Generally, those who seek to witness to the truth of Christ against a warring world also want to find effective ways to influence people and policies. Moreover, acts of witness themselves are not without inherent pragmatic consequences. They sustain persons and communities in their commitment to resistance and thwart the corrupting influences of the demonic in the body politic and the minds and consciences of persons. In a narrowly pragmatic age, acts of witness expand the awareness of what it means to be effective and how to be effective. They open up possibilities for action that the conventional pragmatist would disregard, and they make us aware of the potency of the symbolic in human community. Finally, they remind the church of its responsibility to model in its own life the peace it seeks for the world. A resistance stance for Christians today would require living out the kinds of individual and corporate life styles that witness to the vision of shalom.

At the same time there is no need to de-emphasize the importance of political effectiveness in resistance activity. For most Presbyterians, non-political styles of resistance would be incomplete. They must be accompanied by politically astute strategies for impacting public policies. In this understanding, Christian resistance requires political involvement; indeed, it is a union of witnessing life-style and political action. This, then, means participation in groups and movements that are struggling against militarism and nuclear weapons policies. Resistance movements have been particularly important in bringing about fundamental social change in the

United States. We can recall the Boston Tea Party; Black resistance against slavery and racism, including the Underground Railroad; the Abolitionist Movement; the Suffragettes; the labor organizing era; the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s; and the struggle against U.S. policies in Indochina.

As Christians seek to give political expression to their theological convictions, they will necessarily join in coalition with Christians and non-Christians alike in struggling for transformation. Only as Christians join with others in a concerted movement can their resistance be directed toward an alternative future for humankind that is, for Christians, responsive to the reality of a reconciling God.

4. Individual and Corporate Resistance

In the past, Presbyterian General Assemblies have supported the conscience of individual members who felt called to resist government authority. But they have almost always done so without making a judgment about the individual's stance. It would be quite consistent with previous actions if the General Assembly were to support the consciences of individual members who believe Christian obedience calls them to engage in acts of resistance against nuclear weapons policies and militarism. Such resistance could include both legal and illegal actions. With this kind of policy, the General Assembly would be saying that resistance is a defensible Christian stance in our contemporary situation and that the church needs to support and learn from those persons who feel called to live out this difficult vocation.

Another option, however, is for the General Assembly to make a corporate judgment on the truth of the claim that Christian peacemaking calls the Presbyterian Church and its members to a stance of resistance. It could adopt policies which not only support individuals but would commit the church corporately to resistance. There are at least two ways to approach such a corporate commitment.

First, the General Assembly could take the path of the German Confessing Church in the Barmen Declaration and declare the present time a confessional situation (status confessionis). In such a declaration, the corporate church asserts that a particular stance is of the essence of faith in the particular situation. The Christians at Barmen believed they were in "a time when no one and no church could any longer say, 'We affirm both Christ and Hitler';it was rather 'either Christ or Hitler, but not both.'"[52] In 1982, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches similarly drew the line between Christian faith and the apartheid doctrine and policy of South Africa. It suspended some South African Reformed churches from membership because they would not abandon the apartheid heresy.

Presbyterians have been understandably reluctant to draw such lines. They recognize the temptation to self-righteousness and to identifying one's own fallible views of Christian faith with the truth of God authoritative for all. They recognize that, in most issues of faith and ethics, respect for the integrity of differing convictions is vital to the community of faith. Yet

If nuclear war did indeed occur, devastating much of the earth, who among us that might survive would not believe the church's witness to have been too little and too late?

they also recognize that there are occasions when the faithfulness of the church's witness is so clearly challenged that no compromise is possible. Although the church may draw a line between either/or prematurely, it may also miss the moment when its witness might contribute strategically to the possibility of desperately important change. If nuclear war did indeed occur, devastating much of the earth, who among us that might survive would not believe the church's witness to have been too little and too late? If the General Assembly were to declare our own time to be a confessional situation and opposition to nuclear arms a status confessionis, it would be out of the conviction that the responsibility to resist nuclear weapons policies and militarism is essential for authentic faith and not merely commended as one among several valid expressions of Christian witness.

Second, the General Assembly could make the corporate judgment that peacemaking today requires corporate and individual resistance but not make this stance a test of authentic faith. In this approach, the General Assembly would not only suppport the conscience of individual resisters but also be institutionally committed to resistance in its own policies and programs while leaving the truth of this stance open for further discussion and debate within the church. Accordingly, the General Assembly could call on members of Presbyterian churches to heed the call to resistance in one or several of its various forms. It could fund efforts to educate and train persons in the theory and practice of nonviolent social transformation. It could include institutional advocacy and support for tax resisters and for those who leave military-related occupations. The decisive import of this approach, however, would be that the church corporately had decided that the peacemaking vocation of Christians should lead toward the stance of resistance.

No one knows exactly what it would mean for the General Assembly to call the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be a resistance church. The adoption of a resistance stance would launch the church on a course, on an adventure of faith. The import of moving in such a direction would be clear enough. There would be risks and costs, conflict and hostility, suffering and great vulnerability, both within the church and in the relation of the church to the civil order. Such an undertaking cannot be lightly requested; it should be embarked on only if the church is broadly convinced that authentic faithfulness to God requires it. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in a reflecton entitled "After Ten Years" asked, "are we still of any use?":

> We have been silent witnesses of evil deeds: we have been drenched by many storms: we have learnt the arts of equivocation and pretense: experience has made us suspicious of others and kept us from being truthful and

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> open: intolerable conflicts have worn us down and even made us cynical. Are we still of any use?... Will our inward power of resistance be strong enough, and our honesty with ourselves remorseless enough, for us to find our way back to simplicity and straight-forwardness?[53]

It is exceedingly tempting for Christians to join in the massive denial noted earlier, to live day-by-day without facing the depth of evil which worldwide militarism is unleashing. What does Christian discipleship mean in such a time? Are we of any use? It may be that the answer is a simple and straightforward one: NO -- unless we end our equivocation and compromise and begin resisting in the name of God who wills life and hope and shalom. Indeed the vocation of resistance requires a depth of faith and courage that many of us doubt we have. Yet, as with God's call to reluctant prophets, the power of God is sufficient for those who move out secure in the knowledge that God will be with them. The decision for resistance is both individual and corporate, and the struggle to discern God's call must take place in the community of faith where persons seek together to be a faithful people.

5. Summary

We have suggested that resistance is a stance toward the present civil order rooted theologically in repentance and commitment to transformation. It requires a conversion of the church's orientation to government policies that is based on its responsibility to be peacemakers. Resistance should not be regarded as synonymous with particular actions, as though engaging in certain deeds prove the authenticity of a resistance stance. Yet resistance would surely be manifested in the lives of churches and persons. The characteristics of resistance actions for Christians in the United States would likely include the following: noncooperation with government policies which are so destructive as to warrant the designation of demonic; assertive nonviolent actions intending both to witness to the truth of Christ and to change at fundamental levels government policies and practices; and individual and corporate actions and life-styles that publicly confront the evils of government policies and intend their transformation.

E. When Resistance May Be Required

How might Christians decide when the presumption for obedience no longer holds and the moral obligation to resist becomes compelling? Let us recognize that faith will not dictate a clear and unambiguous answer to this question. Yet Christian theology and ethics can provide guidance for the church as it seeks to make decisions about its responsibility.

We have suggested that the biblical and theological basis for the church's peacemaking calling is a vision of peace. This basis has been developed with particular clarity and intensity in The Confession of 1967 and in Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling. Indeed, Ulrich Mauser claims that C-67 makes "a bold step into a new direction" because, unlike previous confessions, it "does not mention either a right or a necessity to wage war." Instead, the characteristic task of the church is to pursue peace.[54]

This vision of peace provides the theological basis for normative conceptions of a just peace. Historically, considerably more attention has been given to the question of when Christians may participate in war than what kinds of responsibilities are entailed in making peace.[55] This recognition is leading the church to give increasing attention to theories of just peace. The ethic of just peace is concerned with the political tasks of peacemaking in a war-oriented world and evaluating the goals for which Christians yearn and struggle in responding to their theological vision of peace.

In Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling, the criteria for policies of a just peace are identified as justice, freedom and compassionate order. According to an ethic of just peace, the politics of peacemaking would pursue the primacy of justice in securing order rather than the primacy of power. Edward Long comments:

> The doctrine of a just peace directs attention to the needs, hopes and aspirations of people, and is concerned to think how their needs can be cared for, their personhoods and communities respected, and their liberties cherished. In peace thinking, justice becomes the means of eliminating conflict before it erupts, of avoiding the conditions that lead to rancor and hostility if allowed to go uncorrected.[56]

Politics oriented toward a just peace would give priority to the development of international institutions appropriate to an interdependent world rather than to concepts of security based narrowly on national self-interest. The United States, for example, professes to be international in outlook but cynically disregards the authority of the World Court to deal with the Nicaraguan case against the United States, refuses to affirm the Law of the Sea Treaty, fails to ratify United Nations covenants on human rights, and blocks attempts by Third World countries to press for changes in the international economic system.

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The politics of a just peace also involves vigorous and habitual pursuit of diplomacy and negotiation in dealing with international conflicts rather than primary and habitual reliance on military power.

than primary and habitual reliance on military power. Currently the militarization of relations between Russia and the United States is so pronounced that disarmament is "unthinkable." The build-up of armed forces and the use of military power is currently the instinctive approach to nearly every policy objective from Iran-Iraq and Russia-Afghanistan to Ireland, Central America and the Middle East. In an ethic of just peace, as nuclear deterrence is repudiated, the pursuit of disarmament through negotiation is regarded as a compelling policy objective.[57] As Ronald Stone puts it:

> An ethic of a just peace and politics of peacemaking can lead us forward into a day when two ideological systems can compete without threatening each other's children while most of the nations of the world find their own way in a world characterized by a rich diversity of religions, philosophies, values, economics, and social systems.[58]

The primary criterion, therefore, for determining when the stance of resistance is required is the openness of government to the normative vision of a just peace. When government is open to the dynamic forces that bear the possibilities for a just peace, then reform is the responsible mode of Christian political participation. Following World War II, Reinhold Niebuhr made such a judgment, contending that the flexibility of the American democratic system of government provided significant possibilities for qualitative reform through pragmatic political strategies. Yet if such openness is absent and government policies are corrupted by dehumanizing forces not amenable to reform, then Christian responsibility shifts beyond reform toward resistance. If government becomes not a promoter of peace but a fundamental threat to peace, if government becomes not a protector of security but a grave danger to security, then the government's policies lose their legitimacy and resistance finally becomes morally compelling.

In some countries of the world, the reign of militarism and its elites may so thoroughly corrupt the social order that resort to revolutionary action may be clearly justified. In the United States, however, fundamental democratic freedoms and human rights are a secure basic framework, needing only to be protected and expanded. The governments of this country provide numerous services which are beneficial to particular persons and the common welfare, thus fulfilling the moral purposes for which governments are established. From the perspective of the analysis advanced here, it is simply not possible to argue that the political order is so thoroughly corrupted or so fundamentally lacking in legitimacy that revolutionary action to replace it would be justified.

We face another question, as indeed Christians in many other nations do. Have certain policies of our government become such a threat and an obstacle to a just peace that resistance is required?

Earlier we suggested that the nuclear weapons policies of certain governments, including our own, and the militarism suppported by the policies of many governments may be so destructive as to be regarded as demonic. A decision for resistance would rest on the judgment that, in fact, government policies have become so possessed by the forces of destruction that they must be repossessed for the ethically compelling values of a just peace. In the United States, resistance oriented toward such values could lay claim to vital elements in the American heritage itself -- liberty, justice and peace.

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In seeking to determine the openness of government to a just peace, there are several factors that need to be considered. The following discussion shows how an assessment of these factors can lead to the conclusion that such openness is absent and, therefore, resistance may be required.

First, has the reformability of the government's military policies been tested over a period of time? Efforts to reform United States military policies have been attempted persistently, especially since the Vietnam War. Often they have focused on such objectives as stopping the development of particular weapons or supporting the negotiations of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) process. However, even when particular reforms have been adopted, their impact on the basic character of military policies seems to be minimal. Piecemeal attempts to stop arms escalation and to reduce the dependence of countries on military might have not altered the basic dynamics of militarism. Our historical experience gives us little reason to hope that mere modifications of military policies will provide the fundamental transformation required by responsiveness to the norms of a just peace.

Second, how grave are the present dangers fostered by government policies? The capacity represented in nuclear weapons and awesomely destructive "conventional" weapons endangers the future of human life in unprecedented ways. The possibilities of catastrophe, accidental or intended, are all too real and threatening if nations persist in their present military policies. Indeed the danger of continuing militarism is so grave that this factor alone might be sufficient grounds for Christian resistance against current policies. If nuclear weaponry and worldwide militarism are demonic, they cannot be "neutral" forces in the world, capable of being used for good or ill, but are themselves so evil that Christians may fairly regard accommodation to them as a betrayal of their faith.

Third, how pervasive are the obstacles to a just peace? Some wrongs can be corrected through direct and focused efforts at reform. For example, a public transportation system may not be easily accessible to persons with certain disabilities. Political action may be directed toward changing this injustice by seeking a policy which assures equal access. Militarism and nuclear weapons policies, however, are different. They are not perpetuated by a limited and identifiable set of policies which, if eliminated, can eradicate these obstacles to a just peace. A comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, though important, would not by itself be sufficient, nor would a significant cut in the Pentagon budget. Instead, there is a range of complex policies integrated into and supported by a political network of institutions often referred to as the military-industrial complex. If the breadth and depth of militarism in American life makes isolated reform efforts to alter single policies ineffective, then fundamental change is required to remove the obstacles to a just peace. Resistance is an orientation which seeks both to confront the policies which threaten the possibilities for just peace and to establish new policies which would genuinely serve human security.

Fourth, is the direction of present military policies consistent with the ends of just peace? The momentum behind United States military policies, indeed that of many countries, is awesome. Whatever the public debates about alternatives may be, nations continue on a militarized course that seems unstoppable. The direction of this course is one in which George Kennan says he can see "no hope at all."[59] There tends to be an assumption of historical determinism in present military policies which does not admit the possibility of any alternatives. In this context militarism itself would be the aggressor against the future, dictating its course and threatening human security ever more dangerously. The direction of military policies gives no realistic hope that the future will be open to the normative vision of a just peace; rather it wars against the redemptive work of God in history. In the face of such a threat to the future, resistance becomes a way to stand in the way of it and stop its momentum, and to become agents of a different future.

Summary

Christians may find it necessary on occasion to resist government policies as a decision of faith in the Lord of history. This requires a careful evaluation of present circumstances in light of a theological vision of peace and the ethics of just peace. If government policies do not serve the ends of a just peace but are serving forces of destruction, they may be regarded as demonic and, hence, illegitimate. Christians, then, may be called to a stance of resistance against these policies, though the basic structure of government may still be supported and obeyed as legitimate.

In the current situation, the policies against which Christians may be called to resist are most clearly those that involve the possession and manufacture of nuclear weapons. If the use of nuclear weapons is inherently immoral, then the development of policies which intend their use can fairly be considered immoral also. Nuclear deterrence as well as the use of nuclear

weapons would then require Christian resistance.[60] Christian responsibility would be directed toward creating the circumstances in which nuclear weapons could never be used, asserting that the power to end history is reserved for God alone.

Resistance to demonic militarism is not an invitation to embrace utopianism; it is a call to restore military capability to its appropriate instrumental use in an imperfect and sinful world.

The recognition that militarism may also be demonic in its impact on the possibilities for justice and peace in the human community involves extending the range of illegitimate policies beyond nuclear weapons alone to its symbiotic context. Militarism is manifested in the dependence of the economy on the manufacture of weaponry, the reliance on military power rather than diplomacy in dealing with countries like Vietnam and Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Cambodia, and the trade in arms that makes international conflicts more destructive and dangerous as well as fostering internal repression. Policies which support and perpetuate militarism may also be regarded as illegitimate, because they are an assault on the legitimate purposes of government to promote just peace.

Such a conclusion would not in itself require a pacifist stance or opposition to military capacity generally. The dividing line between legitimate "military capacity" and "militarism" has been noted earlier. The judment as to when and if that line has been crossed is difficult, contextual and subjective for individuals and communities of faith. The societal movement back from militarism to a situation in which military capability and policy serve their legitimate ends is especially difficult to contemplate, but should continue to be recognized as the policy goal of transformation. Resistance to demonic militarism is not an invitation to embrace utopianism; it is a call to restore military capability to its appropriate instrumental use in an imperfect and sinful world.

When military policies are genuinely subordinate to the political and ethical ends of just peace, they should be supported by Christians. But when they contribute to the ascendancy of militarism, they should be resisted and rendered subject to fundamental transformation.

VI. Forms of Resistance and Implications for General Assembly Policy

What are some of the forms that resistance can take and what are the kinds of policies the General Assembly might adopt with regard to expressions of resistance should the church's struggle for faithful response to its peacemaking vocation lead us to readiness for resistance? We shall identify several forms that Christians are already engaged in and that are being widely and vigorously discussed in the church. It is important to repeat that resistance should not be identified with any one or several of these forms. Resistance is a stance of faith that may be expressed in many different ways. Indeed one of the characteristics of resistance is the wondrous range of behavioral forms it may take, often stimulating the creative imagination born of faith to envision ever new possibilities. The ones that are highlighted in the following pages are by no means exhaustive but are representative of the forms resistance is taking in the contemporary engagement of Christians with government policies.

A. Sanctuary

Sanctuary was initiated publicly by the Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson, Arizona, in March 1982, on the anniversary of Archbishop Romero's murder by assassins in El Salvador. Since that beginning, about 200 Protestant and Roman Catholic churches in the United States have declared public sanctuary. Twenty of these churches are Presbyterian. Sanctuary is a way to provide protection for refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala who are coming to the United States to escape the violence in their countries, which is intensified especially in El Salvador by policies of the United States. Very nearly all are denied legal status as refugees; the overwhelming majority, when apprehended, are deported to their home countries where they may be subject to persecution and even death. Churches that declare sanctuary commit themselves to the protection of the refugees from deportation and to caring for their needs while they remain in the United States.

Such actions are illegal in the eyes of the United States Government, and several persons who are involved have been arrested. Sanctuary workers argue that it is the United States Government that is acting illegally. Citing the Refugee Act of 1980 and the 1968 action in which the United States signed the United Nations Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, they argue that the United States, including its citizens, is obligated by its own laws to grant asylum to Central American refugees. Providing sanctuary is an act of resistance to protect vulnerable refugees and to challenge the government's illegal applicaton of a just law.

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immoral and illegal policy of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service by declaring their churches to be sanctuaries for refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala" (194th General Assembly, 1982), and committed itself to the support of those involved. (195th General Assembly, 1983; 196th General Assembly, 1984). In urging as well as supporting sanctuary, the General Assembly has already adopted one form of a resistance stance. Sanctuary is the clearest current example of corporate resistance, both at the General Assembly level and in congregations. Sanctuary calls on church members not only to act compassionately as individuals but to act also in compassionate resistance as the community of faith.

Sanctuary could also be seen as a corporate act of symbolic witness against the destructive dynamics of militarism in the Central American policy of the United States Government. Sanctuary reveals the brutal relation between current United States policy and the very personal stories of the people who have experienced the terror and destructiveness it fosters. In a statement at a Consultation on Sanctuary for Presbyterians, The Rev. John Fife, pastor of Southside Presbyterian Church made the following comment:

> We have no middle ground between collaboration with the U.S. betrayal of faith and our resistance to that betrayal. We can take our stand with the oppressed or we can be silent and stand with the oppressor. But we cannot do both. If we choose to stand with the oppressed, then we will have to run the risks of doing certain acts which our government considers illegal....But I remind you, law-abiding protests only train us to live with atrocity.[61]

Sanctuary manifests solidarity with the poor and vulnerable persons in Central America. In expressing the ministry of Christ to persons desperately in need of protection, sanctuary reveals that loving service can itself be an act of resistance. In the time ahead sanctuary might be extended to include a broader range of persons who need harboring and protection from destructive policies. For example, if the General Assembly were to adopt a resistance commitment, it could also call on churches to give sanctuary to its members who heed this call, e.g. tax resisters, AWOL service-persons, those who climb fences into nuclear weapons installations to protest government policies. The sanctuary movement is a powerful expression of Christian love toward those who are regarded by governments as "enemies." It could be imaginatively developed in ways few have yet conceived.

B. Tax Resistance

Increasing numbers of persons are expressing their noncooperation with government military policies by withholding a portion of their income taxes. Some, in order to avoid paying taxes to support military expenditures, maintain their income below a taxable level. Others withhold a certain percentage of their taxes and inform the Internal Revenue Service of what they have done and why. A strategy some are now proposing in order to widen the base of tax resistance is for masses of persons to withhold a small symbolic amount to express their opposition to military spending. There are many varied ways in which persons might participate in tax resistance.

Advocates often speak of tax resistance as a fundamental matter of conscience. They cannot any more accept contributing money to weaponry than they could actually use the weapons in war. For some, then, it is closely linked to conscientious objection to participation in war. For others, it is linked to a stance of nuclear pacifism and deeply held convictions about the evil of nuclear weapons. Tax resisters cannot bear to see their money helping to pay for policies they believe to be contrary to God's will. Until recently tax resisters have not been as inclined to speak about tax resistance as a part of a political strategy. Efforts to build a mass movement of tax resisters have a more clearly developed political objective: to confront current military policies with widespread civil disobedience.

Critics of tax resistance as a way to counter militarism argue that generally the IRS collects the money anyway and sometimes even more than the original tax with fines and penalties. Moreover, the government will find the ways to finance its military policies. Tax resistance, unless it is practiced on a massive scale, is ineffective in counteracting the dominance of militarism in government policies. In a society so heavily infected with military influence, there is no way to avoid some compromises. For critics, the chief need is to develop more politically effective ways to resist military policies rather than to emphasize acts of personal conscience that may not have much impact on these policies.

In addressing the issue of tax resistance, the General Assembly could extend its position on conscientious objection to wars to the support of the conscience of tax resisters. It could more aggressively seek the establishment of a World Peace Tax Fund which would provide a legally available channel for conscientiously motivated tax resisters to pay into an alternative fund the portion they would otherwise withhold. Further, the General Assembly could organize legal help and support for tax resisters. It could call Presbyterians to consider engaging in this form of action, or with more corporate assertiveness, actually encourage members to engage in tax resistance. The Assembly could advocate massive civil disobedience through symbolic withholding of a certain amount; or hold corporately in escrow the money individuals withhold so that legal liability for such acts of disobedience would be the national church body rather than individual members, pastors, or sessions of churches.

C. Noninvestment and Disinvestment

One way that persons and institutions are related to military policies is through their investments. Many corporations in which investments are made are involved in substantial ways in the manufacture of armaments. Consequently, the stance of resistance, whether expressed corporately or individually, can take the form of not investing in military-related corporations or divesting from those in which investment portfolios are currently held.

In 1982, the General Assembly of the former United Presbyterian Church adopted a policy for the denomination's investments which required noninvestment in or divestment from corporations heavily involved in military production. Three standards were adopted for determining which corporations would be excluded from denominational investments:

> (1) those that are among ten leading military contractors (measured as dollar volume of military contracts in the most recent years); (2) those that, among the one hundred leading military contractors, are dependent on military contracts for more than 25% of their sales (measured as the average ratio of military contracts to sales in the most recent 3 year period); (3) those that make the key nuclear components for nuclear warheads.[62]

This is a clear example of a corporate institutional policy of noncooperation with highly militarized corporations. With a denominational call to resistance, this investment policy could be expanded and made more rigorous. The point is not the purity of the church's investments. There is no way the church could withdraw from every kind of complicity with military related economic activity. In fact, the rationale for the policy presents a conscious attempt to mix witness and hope for effectiveness. By its action, the General Assembly hoped to draw attention to the enormous size of the military budget, the growing dependence of the economy on military spending, and the danger of nuclear war, and thus increase opposition to those policies. The church could now be called to follow the lead of the 1982 Assembly and adopt and implement an investment policy at every level that fundamentally and comprehensively embodies the stance of noncooperation with major military-implicated corporations.

Moreover, the General Assembly could promote vigorously the further implementation of a divestment policy at other levels of church life, including individual church members. Members could be challenged to understand noncooperation with and public protest against a militarized economy as a matter of Christian discipleship and stewardship, and not merely partisan political preference. Similarly Presbyterian churches and members might be encouraged to adopt boycott strategies against the products of certain corporations extensively involved in military production, especially nuclear weapons. When there is not a clearcut choice between purity and complicity in the church's relation to militarism, this does not mean that ambiguity renders the church's selective resistance meaningless. Rather the church would need to develop strategically wise policies for resistance

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against corporations, focusing on those in which the evils of militarism are most blatantly and dangerously manifested.

D. Occupational Withdrawal

Another form of resistance is occupational withdrawal. Roman Catholic Bishop Matthiesen of Amarillo, Texas drew public attention to this action when he encouraged Catholics working at Pantex to consider leaving their jobs at this nuclear weapons plant.[63] From a resistance stance, such counsel deserves serious consideration. There have always been occupations the church has regarded as unsuitable for Christian work, recognizing in its theology of vocation that work is to be an expression of stewardship of talents and energies for the well-being of the wider community.

Yet to raise the question of Christian withdrawal from military-related occupations provokes tremendous controversy. Today there are many conscientious Christians working in military plants, indeed many who are centrally involved in nuclear weapons industries. Persons need to have jobs, and to earn a living and to support families. Persons trained in certain scientific and engineering disciplines often find few alternatives to military industry as they seek employment.

The consideration of such employment makes clear again how pervasive and systemic the influence of militarism is. It is not enough to counsel Christians not to take military-related jobs when public policy engenders a militarily dependent economy. Resistance would have to be at the political level to rid the economy of its current addiction to weaponry. Political and economic activity aimed at converting the economy to civilian production would certainly be mandatory to deal with the systemic issues.

Nonetheless, it is not enough to focus only on systemic issues and leave the question of occupational noncooperation alone. The General Assembly in its policy could encourage members to consider leaving jobs directly related to military research and production, especially nuclear weapons, and generate a strategy for aiding persons who have made such decisions. A group of Presbyterians in Boulder, Colorado, have covenanted together to help workers at the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant make the transition to other jobs. They are tithing from their own income to provide financial help for these persons. This is a model of what Presbyterians could practice more widely. The General Assembly, presbyteries, and local churches could establish funds

and programs to help meet job retraining and relocation expenses for members who leave their occupations out of a resistance stance. Moreover, it may be possible for members to discover faithful forms of resistance within occupations, living out styles of noncooperation while engaging in non-nuclear and non-militaristic types of work. Members in similar occupations could support and encourage each other in creating faithful ways to resist and share their commitments more broadly in the church.

The General Assembly could be even more direct in actually calling on Presbyterians to leave employment in nuclear weapons industries in particular. If the General Assembly should declare not only the use of nuclear weapons immoral but also deterrence policy itself, then participation in the production of these weapons could also be regarded as a morally unacceptable occupation. The implementation of such a policy, if it were adopted, would clearly need to be carried out with pastoral sensitivity, with an absence of self-righteousness on the part of members who are not employed in these industries. It would require an effective strategy of corporate responsibility for those who are personally affected by the church position, an expression of the Christian commitment "to bear one another's burdens."

E. Noncooperation with the Military Service

Another form of resistance clearly could be withdrawal from or refusal to cooperate with the military service. This includes a number of possible decisions: refusal to register for the draft, refusal to submit to the draft if one were reinstituted, refusal to join the military service voluntarily, assisting young men in finding alternative jobs, withdrawal from military service by career personnel, refusal by military officers to implement nuclear weapons policies, or discovering ways within the military service to resist the influence of militarism.

Presbyterians have traditionally regarded military service as an occupation Christians can enter in good conscience. But if the vocation of peacemaking were to be understood as now calling for a resistance stance, then Presbyterian corporate policy would possibly change. There are, to be sure, many complexities here. There are those who join the military service "voluntarily" often because of the absence of other employment opportunities. In large proportion, these are poor and nonwhite persons. Vincent Harding makes the point clearly:

> For if the America that does not yet exist is not brought into being soon, we will be rapidly creating a generation of poor and non-white mercenaries who will fight other poor and nonwhite people partly because they are deceived by the poison of anti-communism, partly because they will be given prominent and high level models of nonwhite "achievement" in the military and partly because the nation provides no other way for them to earn a living.[64]

On the question of voluntary participation in military service, the General Assembly could encourage its members not to join the service and could develop a comprehensive social strategy to assist persons to find other employment, especially those who currently have few available alternatives. In this connection, the General Assembly could note that campus ROTC programs are an attractive source of scholarship assistance for such young people and an important source of students for financially pressed church colleges. The Assembly could provide scholarship support to Presbyterian schools willing to end their association with ROTC.

On the question of the draft, the General Assembly is on record for opposing its reinstitution. But the issue of draft registration is somewhat more difficult. The corporate church could, on the basis of its support of Christian conscience, support those members who in conscience refuse to register for the draft at age eighteen. This action could be considered a justifiable act of civil disobedience, and the General Assembly could seek ways to provide legal assistance to the young men and to limit the penalities imposed by civil authority on these persons. Yet, since registration is not the same thing as registration for the draft because the draft is not in existence, this may not be a clear enough point of resistance to warrant a corporate church position advocating nonregistration. If the draft were reinstituted, then the situation would clearly be different; and the General Assembly might adopt a policy advocating draft resistance.

There are Presbyterians who are making a career of military service, including both chaplains and other kinds of military personnel. The debate about the appropriateness of Christian ministers serving as officers within the military service in addition to serving as clergy within church denominations is not new. But the debate takes on a different cast if the corporate church calls its members to a resistance stance. Then noncooperation with militarism might warrant or even require that the General Assembly no longer certify military chaplaincy as an acceptable form of ministry. Certainly ministry to military personnel would need to be affirmed but not through the instrumentality of clergy who serve as officers of the armed services. Again the General Assembly would need to insure that there were suppport systems available for persons affected by this policy. There may also be ways that military chaplains could provide a ministry within the service that is faithful to a resistance stance. This would require substantial attention, especially by chaplains themselves, to be clear about what such a ministry would involve.

Finally, there are other career military personnel who would need to be encouraged to examine their occupations carefully. If the General Assembly were to declare nuclear weapons policies immoral, even demonic, then it might call on military officers to resign rather than carry out the nuclear weapons policies of the government. Similar counsel might be given with regard to United States military interventionism in places like Central America. Whether or not there can be military occupations in the contemporary situation which are consistent with the criteria Presbyterians have traditionally affirmed needs to be a matter of substantial debate. But the burden of proof may shift from assuming the suitability of certain kinds of military careers to the presumption that such occupations may be incompatible with the

Christian vocation of peacemaking. All the previous references to pastoral sensitivity and corporate church support would need to apply here as in other cases of occupational withdrawal.

F. Demonstrations and Protests

A further type of resistance would be public demonstrations or protests of various kinds. This could include acts of symbolic witness, legal or civilly disobedient forms of confrontation, marches, sit-ins and public rallies. Of course, each requires assessment in its own context. Yet the General Assembly could call on Presbyterians to express their convictions through such public acts of resistance, and could lend support to those who participate in civil disobedience. Although the General Assembly would not necessarily urge all members to become civilly disobedient, it could advocate massive public nonviolent resistance against nuclear weapons policies and militarism and commit resources to the support of such efforts.

Public demonstrations could draw attention to the influence of militarism and weaken its hold on persons' allegiance. The experience of persons participating in such events is often a genuine sense of empowerment. Whereas before they felt fearful and anxious about engaging in such actions, they now discover a new kind of courage and commitment to be about the vocation of peacemaking. While individual and small group actions might claim the church's support, the corporate church's advocacy of massive public resistance to seek the transformation of United States military policies could be even more important.

G. Involvement in Organizations

Resistance could also be expressed through participation in organizations engaged in resistance activity. Involvement in organizations is the most responsible way to seek political effectiveness and to maintain commitment over the long haul. There are any number of contemporary organizations seeking in various ways to challenge and change fundamentally United States military and nuclear policies. The growth of these organizations in the span of a few short years constitutes a significant movement in American society, and in other places in the world as well. Alan Geyer has pointed to the strategic priority of nongovernmental organizations over conventional government bodies in the contemporary struggle for disarmament.[65] These organizations are a vital point of strategic activity for those who want to make their convictions politically effective.

Presbyterian governing bodies at all levels could be urged to lend support to the broad based movement of resistance that is building here and abroad. This kind of movement is necessarily coalitional, which heightens its political significance. As surely as Presbyterians are concerned to make clear the specific theological reasons that lead to a resistance stance, they also are concerned to ensure that these convictions are not a barrier but a

bridge to other religious or non-religious groups whose commitment to peace rests on different foundations. Liberation theologians have emphasized that Christian discipleship must be embodied concretely in the historical period given to us, ambiguous as it may be.[66] Today, Christian participation in historically available channels of peace organizations and movements would be an indispensable form of resistance.

H. Other Forms

Resistance can find expression in many other specific forms and actions. Numerous Christians from the United States have travelled to Nicaragua as part of the Witness for Peace movement. They live with Nicaraguans in war-zones for a period of time sharing their vulnerability in the face of attacks by United States supported contras, praying and worshipping with them. In Witness for Peace, Christians from the United States are saying with their presence that they will stand with the Nicaraguan people in resistance to the United States Government's intent to overthrow their government.

Many Christians are also adopting personal and corporate life-styles that manifest a commitment to nonviolence, expressing a stance of resistance against the world's violence. This may include relationship to long-existing Christian pacifist groups or newly formed intentional communities that model an alternative style of life. The Sojourners community in the inner city of Washington, D.C., is one of the must influential of such communities. Sojouners provides a biblically based model for Christian struggle for peace and justice that is inspiring and providing leadership for many other Christians across the United States and elsewhere.

When resistance is adopted as a matter of faith it has a life-changing impact on churches and Christians. Everything is affected, from the most visible public confrontations to the most undramatic and routine areas of living.

The stance of resistance would surely express itself in some distinctive activity, yet the range may be quite broad. The defining characteristic is an orientation of "no" to nuclear weapons policies and militarism and a "yes" to policies which open outward toward a just peace. This "no" and "yes" would affect all aspects of life, not just specific actions. It represents a whole way of seeing and responding to government policies. For example, persons and communities might seek certain reforms such as the nuclear freeze, but this political activity has a different meaning for those engaged in resistance than for those who believe a nuclear freeze alone is a sufficient reform. When resistance is adopted as a matter of faith it has a life-changing impact on churches and Christians. Everything is affected, from the most visible public confrontations to the most undramatic and routine areas of living.

Conclusion

This essay is written to help stimulate discussion and debate in churches on the question of whether or not Christian peacemakers are now called to resistance. Before any of us can be very confident about what we believe the church's corporate stance should be, we need to struggle together with this question. It is only as we engage each other in many parts of Christ's church in the United States and around the world that we shall know what God is calling us to do. The question is difficult, and the issues are exceedingly complex. But we know that we are empowered by the grace of God to be the church and to explore the challenges that confront us as we seek to be faithful to our calling as peacemakers.

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