

THE EVANGELICAL AND WAR

WILLIAM E. NIX, A.M.*

It is quite obvious to the knowledgeable Christian of the twentieth century that the Old and New Testaments place great stress on social ethics, but the practical application of this emphasis has resulted in a morass of confusing and even contradictory claims by leading spokesmen in the church. The problem of war exemplifies these divergent claims in a way unmatched by any other social issue.¹ While the particular problem of Vietnam is of vital interest to the Christian community, the present study will concern itself with the broader problem of war in general. An attempt will be made to determine whether the conflicting claims for Christian behavior are based upon the teachings of Scripture or upon personal prejudices growing out of vested interests or the misapplication of exegetical principles. This study will look into the scriptural teachings on the subject of believers and war in an attempt to clear the smog-filled air and to cast more light than heat upon the subject.

It is the very advancement of scientific and technological innovation which has made the horrendous results of war so observable to modern society. The countless constructive discoveries and innovations—such as sulfa drugs, penicillin, radar, food packaging and preservation, television, and the like—which have led men beyond the frontiers of space, have been accompanied by their destructive counterparts. The very concept of “total war” is barely over a century old, and the “technical surprise” of World War I has been followed by additional devices of destruction created during and since World War II. Buzz bombs, block busters, incendiaries, saturation bombings, precision bombing, napalm, nuclear weaponry and a host of sophisticated missiles have threatened man’s very existence, and have underlined the urgency for making at-

*Assistant Professor of History, Trinity College, Deerfield, and Ph.D. candidate at University of Oklahoma.

1. Hutchinson, Werner, “Birds of Vietnam,” *His*, 28, No. 9, June, 1968, 12-13, has attempted to clarify the situation as he classifies the various attitudes toward Vietnam according to the basic attributes of the hawk, “superhawk,” ostrich, lovebird and culture. He could have profitably added the classifications of the owl (the “wise” predator) and the chicken.

tempts to discover the immediate as well as the long-range effects of war.²

The transformation of warfare during the past century has extended the problem of participation in war from active "involvement" to include those who make "support" contributions. Thus, scientists and technicians have become as involved in modern war as those who actually "press the buttons." Engineers, researchers and others have come to realize that they share in the moral implications of the application of their work as do the young men and women who actively serve in the military forces of their country.

For the evangelical, with his commitment to a higher moral and ethical code, the need for responsible involvement in seeking solutions to the problem of war is at the critical stage. Surely the Christian rests in the "blessed hope," but the prospect of man's future has been painted in grim and somber tones by Carl F. H. Henry in a recent article entitled, "What's Next?"³ Let it not be said that evangelicals have been sleeping watchmen during these dark hours.

A spate of articles and chapters in books has appeared in recent years concerned with the problem of the Christian and war. In them there has been a tendency to sift the evidence about wars (and the options available with regard to personal activity toward them) on the basis of each author's own attitude toward American involvement in Vietnam. Although this is an immediate problem, there is a much more basic consideration which must be addressed, *viz.*, what should be the Christian's attitude toward warfare in general? After all the subtle differences have been erased, there are three basic positions.

The first of these three positions is that of the *pacifist*. John Yoder⁴

2. See the following paperback titles for an introduction to the relationship of science, engineering and technology to modern civilization, warfare, and the moral implications thereof: John U. Nef, *Western Civilization Since the Renaissance: Peace, War, Industry and the Arts*, New York: Harper and Row, 1963; Friedrich Klemm, *A History of Western Technology*, translated by Dorothea Waley Singer, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1964; and Raymond Aron, *The Century of Total War*, Boston: The Beacon Press, 1955. For the practical concern of Christians and an urgent plea for their active participation and involvement, see the excellent volume by Robert G. Clouse, Robert D. Linder, and Richard V. Pierard (editors), *Protest and Politics: Christianity and Contemporary Affairs*, Greenwood, S.C.: The Attic Press, Inc., 1968. In the last named work is a chapter pertinent to the present study by William W. Cuthbertson, "The Christian, the American Military Establishment, and War," pp. 66-93. In addition to the items cited in the article, the reader should be acquainted with William J. Nagle (ed.), *Morality and Modern Warfare: The State of the Question*, Baltimore, Maryland: Helicon Press, Inc., 1960. In that work is a chapter by Noel J. Brown, "The Moral Problem of Modern Warfare: A Bibliography," pp. 151-167. This bibliography includes some 500 titles of periodical literature, books and pamphlets, and some select continental publications.
3. Henry, Carl F. H., "What's Next?" *Eternity*, January, 1970, 13-15, 48-50.
4. Yoder, John, "Vietnam: A Just War," *His*, April, 1968, 28, 1-3, and "Vietnam: Another Option," *His*, 28, May, 1968, 8-11.

and J. A. Toews⁵ reflect this position when they advocate total dissociation from war of any kind, whether it be as aggressor or as defender. At the opposite end of the spectrum are stalwart evangelicals who argue that Christians are to be involved in war whenever their country takes such a stance. This is especially true for Americans, they would argue, since it is a well-established fact that the United States does not fight wars of aggression. In the present study this position will be referred to as *activist*. It is represented by such writers as Sherwood E. Wirt⁶ and Carroll R. Stegall.⁷ A mediating position between these two poles is that held by such staunch evangelicals as Emery J. Cummins⁸ and George Ladd.⁹ This *mediative* view acknowledges the responsibility of all Christians to be obedient to the state, but it cautions against a "my country right or wrong" mentality. The weight of this problem is so great that the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod—has recently adopted a resolution to petition the government to grant new legislation which would provide for equal protection under the law for conscientious objectors to specific wars as is granted to those who are conscientious objectors to all wars.¹⁰ Each of these positions will now be surveyed in more detail.

THE PACIFIST POSITION

The pacifist position is espoused by such groups as the Anabaptists, the Mennonites, and the Society of Friends. It states categorically that Christians should avoid all wars. Its proponents base their view on the Sermon on the Mount for the most part,¹¹ with its admonitions to love one's enemies, go the second mile, turn the cheek, make peace, not worry about the day to day affairs of living, etc.¹² Stressing the notion that love is the supreme law of Christ, they gather support for their teachings from other New Testament passages.¹³ Citing I John 3:15 they show that hate is equivalent to murder. In I John 3:16 they find support for their passiveness which leads them to the position that they cannot even take up arms to defend themselves, since Christ laid down his life as an example for them to follow. The New Testament teaches, they argue, that believers are to follow Christ's example (I Peter 2:21-23) and teach-

5. Toews, J. A., *True Nonresistance Through Christ*, Winnipeg: The Board of General Welfare and Public Relations of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, 1955.
6. Wirt, Sherwood E., *The Social Conscience of the Evangelical*, New York: Harper and Row, 1968.
7. Stegall, Carroll R., "God and the U.S.A. in Vietnam," *Eternity*, March, 1968, 12, 15-16, 40-41.
8. Cummins, Emery J., "God and the U.S.A. in Vietnam," *Eternity*, March, 1968, 13-14, 28-29.
9. Ladd, George, "The Christian and the State," *His*, 28, December, 1967, 2-6, 16-18.
10. "A Statement on Conscientious Objection," *Convention Report*, 1969, p. 11. The Missouri Synod has also published two helpful reports entitled, *Guidelines for Crucial Issues in Christian Citizenship*, 1969, and *Civil Obedience and Disobedience*, 1969.
11. Bainton, Roland H., *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace*, New York: Abingdon, 1960, p. 61.
12. See Matthew 5-7.
13. Cf. Matthew 5:39 with Mark 12:30-31; Luke 6:35 and Romans 13:10.

ings, and that the military allusions and analogies in the New Testament (e.g., Eph. 6; II Timothy 2; and Rev. 1, 13, 19) apply only to spiritual and not physical warfare. They virtually cancel out the teaching of Romans 13:1-7 with Acts 5:29, and then stress the message of Romans 13:8-10. At best, this is a matter of exegetical gymnastics, since it compels them to argue that the Sermon on the Mount cannot be applied to society as a whole or even to a majority of a society.

Turning from the Bible to history they argue that there are examples in the early church where Christians practiced nonresistance rather than to enlist in the armies of Rome.¹⁴ "When Christianity was made the state religion in 323 A.D. [sic]," says Toews, "ritualism and formalism came into the Church and spirituality went out."¹⁵ He goes on to say that war soon became an instrument of 'church policy.'¹⁶ Yoder says that the attitude of Christ was taken before the times of Constantine and, "in more recent times, various monastic groups, the earliest Waldensians, Mennonites, Quakers, Brethren and many individuals have taken the same attitude."¹⁷

Enough has been presented to show the heart of the pacifist position. It is very logical and based on the supreme law of love. Given its basic premise this theory is irrefutable. Yet, for all its valid logic this position is too simplistic to be a practical solution to the problem of the Christian and war. Several points may be raised to illustrate the irreconcilability of this position with the facts of life for a Christian living in the mass democracy of the United States.

In the first place, the pacifist position is based on a notion that its ethic may apply to individual believers but not to a society as a whole. In short, it assumes that believers must be a minority group within society and be without political responsibility for the actions of the state.¹⁸ Operating within a society where they have no responsibility for governmental decisions, pacifists are able to enjoy the blessings and shelter of that society while regarding themselves as completely free from the responsibility of having to give an account for the involvement of that society in a war. Whether a war be defensive or aggressive becomes quite immaterial to the pacifists, and they look back through history and into the New Testament to applaud those believers who have refused to take an active role in governmental or military affairs.

But how do they account for the military and political activities of Abraham, Joshua, David, Daniel, Nehemiah, Nicodemus, Theophilus, the Centurion, or Cornelius? In their criticism of Peter, who drew the sword and struck one of those coming to take the Lord in the Garden, they

14. Toews, *op. cit.*, pp 54-57.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

17. Yoder, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

18. Henry, Carl F. H., *Christian Personal Ethics*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957, pp. 322-323.

argue that the Lord by precept and example shunned physical violence. Yet, the Lord himself drove traders and money changers from the Temple on two occasions.¹⁹

To view the Sermon on the Mount as the pacifist position advocates, implies that there is a qualitative difference between its teaching and those of the Old Testament and other portions of the New. As a result, Carl F. H. Henry incisively observes, this approach undermines the essential continuity of biblical ethics.²⁰ It does so by implying that there is a moral development in God, since He had issued contradictory commands in the Old Testament. It would also separate morality from God's commands and undermine the absolute character of a divine commandment.

During the period before the fourth century, Christianity was often regarded as subversive and its adherents were frequently persecuted. But even allowing that believers refused to enlist in the army before the triumph of Christianity (an argument which, incidentally, rests on scanty records), the very nature of the problem changed in the fourth century. Prior to that time, Christianity was a minority religion and the believers assumed that those who adhere to the faith should not be involved in the political process. Then, when Christianity became the dominant religion, its very role in society was changed by the practical situation. Instead of a great spiritual "sell out," leaders in the church recognized they could not shun their responsible roles in society. For a singular example of how men responded during the early years of this new situation, one needs only to look to the Bishop of Milan, Ambrose. He was the spiritual father of Augustine, later Bishop of Hippo and the object of the pacifist charge for having made the rationalization for "holy war." But it was Ambrose who, in 387, disagreed with the policies of Maximus and urged him to forego an invasion against Valentinian II. In 389 this same Ambrose again opposed the policies of the government and directed a poignant sermon at the person of The Emperor Theodosius who was in the congregation at the time. In fact, Ambrose refused to proceed with the service until the Emperor rescinded an order to have Christians rebuild a Jewish synagogue which had been destroyed during a riot. On a third occasion, in 390, Theodosius carried out a general massacre in Thessalonica after a mob there rose up and murdered an imperial commander named Botheric when he had executed a popular charioteer for immoral behavior. Seven thousand were killed by Theodosius' troops, and Ambrose is reported to have rebuked the Emperor who then did public penance.²¹ Hence, here is an example of a major figure standing up to oppose the state when it is deemed to have been in error because of the application of the principles of Romans 13:1-7 and Acts 5:29.

19. See John 2:13-25; Matthew 21:12-17 and parallels.

20. Henry, Carl F. H., *Christian Personal Ethics, op cit.*, pp. 304-308, 322-323, 333.

21. Jackson, Foakes F. J., *The History of the Christian Church from the Earliest Times to A.D. 461*, 6th Edition, Cambridge: Deighton, Bell and Co., Ltd., 1942, pp. 426-428.

The pacifist position with regard to war leads to "dropoutism" in all areas of political activity. In actuality it has raised the question of refusal to pay taxes as a form of conscientious objection to war among the Mennonites themselves.²² In America where the concept of mass democracy is the basis for political ideal, the problem of "dropoutism" is especially disastrous. If the American Christian is to submit himself to higher authority—and there is no dispute over the fact that Paul was referring to the state or government when he wrote Romans 13:1-7—he is duty bound to become involved in the governmental process. This view is set forth with candor by John Warwick Montgomery in a recent article entitled "Demos and Christos."²³ By implication the American believer is involved in governmental policies whether or not he takes an active role. This responsibility in governmental policies includes the problem of war and the payment of taxes which finance the buildup of the American war machine.

THE ACTIVIST POSITION

At the opposite pole from the pacifists stand the activists. This position is espoused by the great majority of evangelical Christians and is based on the notion that the believer is bound to submit himself to government because it is ordained of God, as taught in Romans 13:1-7, Titus 3:1, and I Peter 2:13. Turning to the Gospels, activists find support for their position in Jesus' response to the Herodians in Matthew 22:21 and its parallels. Operating on the assumption that the government of the United States is based upon Christian principles as well as self-evident truths which make it the enemy of tyranny and injustice, these advocates of patriotism are convinced that their loyalty to the state in time of war is essential both politically and spiritually. Looking back to World War I with the sense of mission that it was to "make the world safe for democracy," and World War II with its righteous indignation at the atrocities perpetrated by Nazi Germany, they tend to regard American involvement in any war whatsoever as if it were by definition "just" and justifiable on moral grounds. While Sherwood Wirt advocates the same basic position, Carroll Stegall states it with regard to American involvement in Vietnam when he writes,

Somehow, as has often been the case in our history, the silent American populace has found its way through the masses of verbiage and obfuscation to the real issues and the real facts and has concluded: *the war in Vietnam, however bitter to endure, is the right thing for us to be doing.*²⁴

With this assumption he goes on to defend justifiable war from the Bible and from the great documents of history. He argues for the correctness

22. Schmidt, Melvin D., "Tax Refusal as Conscientious Objection to War," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, July, 1969, 234-246, Vol. 43.

23. Montgomery, John Warwick, "Demos and Christos," *Christianity Today*, 13, July 18, 1969, 10b-11b.

24. Stegall, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

of the American position in Vietnam because three presidents and their defeated opponents were all agreed that it was the right thing to do. This sounds amazingly like "two hundred million Americans can make no mistake." Stegall supports the cause of justifiable warfare, having already assumed the stance that this is the existing situation, from the example of Abraham in Genesis 15, "*that God approves wars which are for the protection of the peaceful from the aggressor.*"²⁵ While this latter point is not at issue, Stegall's argument that a particular war (Vietnam) is a justifiable war of protection is an issue open to debate. He views Vietnam as America's most noble and selfless war since it has nothing whatsoever to gain save the possibility that by stopping the communist aggressors in Asia a later showdown on American soil might be averted.²⁶

This notion that it is the responsibility of one nation to wage a war in behalf of the international community as a means of curbing evil and protecting society is the extension of the role of government to act as a restraint against evil on the internal level. Hence, the use of the sword is extended to cover international violence in the world community just as it is within a given state when rebellion and violence threaten its stability.

As with the case of the pacifists, the logic of the activists position is irrefutable given its basic premise. But, just as the pacifist notion is too simplistic in the face of the practical situation, the activist view is too simplistic to adequately guide believers with regard to their role in a given war. Their total and unlimited submission to the state leads to a "my country right or wrong" attitude. Although this attitude has the ring of patriotic fervor, other implications reach far beyond the scope of acceptable behavior for the individual Christian. It was this blind obedience to the state, it will be recalled, which gave rise to the horrible activities practiced by the Nazis during World War II. The inherent danger is to be found in the notion that whenever the state in general, and the United States in particular, engages in a war of whatever variety it is *ipso facto* "right" and "just." Only recently a Louis Harris poll has revealed the vivid forebodings of such a view among Americans. As a by-product of a poll on a particular incident with regard to Vietnam, Harris observes that, "in practice, most Americans seem to go against the international law established at the Nuernberg trials following World War II. . . that no individual member of the armed forces of any country could be excused for engaging in a war crime simply because he had been ordered to commit the act by his superior officer."²⁷

The gist of this kind of situation brings into focus several moral and theological problems which the informed believer must address for himself. In the first place, the notion that a believer must always submit

25. Stegall, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

26. Stegall, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

27. Harris, Louis, "Public Opposes My Lai Trial," *Chicago Tribune*, January 8, 1970, Sec. 1B, p. 1; the poll was conducted between December 10 and 15, 1969.

himself to the government in general, and to that of the United States in particular, implies that his country is a "chosen nation." The tenor of Scripture teaches that this situation cannot be the case. The writings of Paul clearly indicate that God's chosen nation Israel has been set aside and that the Church is comprised of a "kingdom of priests." No nation, regardless of the theological similarities its founding fathers may have shared with the teachings of Scripture, can legitimately claim to be the theocratic kingdom, *i.e.*, "the chosen nation of God." This fact itself militates against the assumption that such a nation as the United States can never err in calling upon its citizenry to wage a war. William W. Cuthbertson has well indicated the perils of militarism and its threat to oppress and repress the lower classes, to endanger the strong humanitarian tradition of America, and to threaten the very existence of American society and even Western Civilization with destruction.²⁸ In addition to his statement of the restrictions militarism places upon the believer, there are other problems it raises for evangelicals. Among these is the simple fact that total submission to the state is in actuality a form of *idolatry*. In such a situation, the believer surrenders his primary loyalty to God in favor of devoting his loyalties first and foremost to the state. In short, he is giving total allegiance to something that is less than absolute, and the state comes to replace God as the object of his devotion. Not only is this contrary to Scripture, it is also contrary to the lessons of history. Babylonia, for example, demanded such a devotion from the children of Israel. Under a Seleucid ruler, Antiochus Ephiphanes, Israel rose in revolt at such a prospect. It was this same situation which caused Christians to refuse to serve in the armies of Rome. Furthermore, this notion runs contrary to the teachings of democracy as practiced in American history. All one has to do is witness the record of the colonists in North America during the decade of the American Revolution to observe the reasons underlying the second and third amendments to the *Constitution*. Finally, this notion of unquestioned loyalty to the state leads to moral bankruptcy. The thoughtful, illuminating and deeply moving account of personal life under the totalitarian tyranny of the Nazi regime by Helmut Thielicke indicates how Hitler and his associates made free use of the vocabulary of Christians and the Bible in their drive to gain total control during their struggle for power against all opponents.²⁹ The gross atrocities committed by the Nazi regime so startled the world that nations rose in "righteous indignation" to destroy Hitler and his war machine. The verdicts at Nuernberg merely underlined this indignation.

THE MEDIATIVIST POSITION

Between these two poles is the mediative position. It recognizes the teachings of the pacifist with regard to the value and importance of human life and the need for the exercise of love rather than hatred as

28. Clouse, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-86.

29. Thielicke, Helmut, *Between Heaven and Earth: Conversations with American Christians*, translated and edited by John W. Doberstein, New York: Harper & Row, 1965, pp. 112-145.

the believer's motivation. It also recognizes the fact that there have been, and indeed may again be, times when morality demands the call to arms. The mediative view also acknowledges, however, that there is no simplistic "rule of thumb" which will always and in every case provide a handy guide to personal action with regard to involvement in a given war. In addition to the Sermon on the Mount, Romans 13:1-7, and other pertinent passages cited by both pacifists and activists, still other portions of Scripture are used to determine the tenor of God's word for principles of personal behavior. There are, for example, distinctions between foreign and domestic rulers (Deut. 17:15); different kinds of rulers within a given state (*e.g.*, Tiberius Caesar and Nero ruled Rome at the time of the Sermon on the Mount and Romans 13, respectively); the statement of Peter in Acts 5:29: "We ought to obey God rather than men"; Paul's word to Titus (3:1); and Peter's injunction for Christians to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake (I Peter 2:13-16). Finally, the mediativist cites numerous examples from the Scriptures where God enjoined his people to make war and where men of God on many occasions openly and actively opposed their governmental authorities (assuming the responsibility for whatever judgment that government might deem expedient to administer to those who opposed it). In short, the mediativist assumes that the moral teachings of the Sermon on the Mount do not militate against "just" war, nor that the directive of Peter in Acts 5:29 automatically excludes war altogether. Instead, he maintains that the believer is obligated to submit himself to authority until and unless that authority compels him to place that authority before God. The mediativist argues that it may be obligatory for him to support his government if the cause be truly "just" and the activities he is called upon to perform do not compel him to be separated from worship of or fellowship with God. Nor does it compel the believer to condone every individual nation within a war, even if that war be "just."

It is from the teachings of Romans 13:1-7 and II Peter 2:13-16 that the mediativist is compelled to consider the philosophical basis for his government. For the citizen of the United States that basis is found in the explicit statements of ancient Greece, the implications of the New Testament, and the practical developments of Western Civilization, England and the United States.³⁰ The Lord himself admonished men to "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21; Mark 12:7; and Luke 20:25). Neither the activist nor the pacifist disagrees with this statement in terms of taxation, but they do take exception with one another on the matter of rendering unto Caesar when it comes to involvement in war. For the present study, however, it is important to determine just what things are Caesar's in the philosophical premises of modern mass democracy.

The classic statement of the role of the individual citizen in a democratic society occurs in the "Funeral Oration" of Pericles at the end of

30. Montgomery, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

the first year of the Peloponnesian War which broke out between Athens and Sparta in 431 B.C. In that speech Pericles said,

Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters; for, unlike any other nation, regarding him who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious but as useless, we Athenians are able to judge at all events if we cannot originate, and instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all.³¹

In this statement the evangelical Christian finds the rational basis for the government which he is admonished to obey. From this foundation several additional implications are derived as far as the mediative position is concerned.

In the first place, according to Pericles' statement, all citizens of a democracy are under obligation to contribute whatever creative leadership they can to their state. If they are unable to contribute creative leadership, they are to be so well informed that they are able to make intelligent and insightful decisions whenever they are asked to vote on a given issue. Since the United States government is based on the foundation of democracy (it is called a *mass democracy* by political scientists), all eligible citizens are obliged to contribute whatever creative leadership they can. The evangelical is under an even greater moral obligation to provide either creative leadership or to be very well informed about the issues in preparation for the time when he is to cast his vote, since the Lord Himself enjoined men to "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," and His disciples admonished believers to obey every ordinance of man. For the evangelical, then, the ideological basis of democracy takes on a moral force. For him to be *uninvolved* is not only to be useless as a citizen, but to be *disobedient* to the teachings of Scripture.

Coupled with these explicit teachings with regard to authority and to every ordinance of man, the believer is told to "do good." On many occasions the believer is admonished to promote all kinds of good things. Political and social goods are kinds of goods which should engage the believer. The old saying, "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing," is especially true in a democratic society. Hence, in modern American society, political good is something to be desired. As Senator Mark O. Hatfield rightly observes, there is a two-fold challenge to the citizen-Christian in the United States. "First, it is to redeem the citizens of our society and thereby to build a better foun-

31. *Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War*, trans. Richard Crawley, New York: Random House, n.d., pp. 103-104. Rex Warner's translation, *Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War*, London: The Bodley Head, 1954, ii, 4, p. 119, says, "We do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say that he has no business here at all."

dation for government. . . . The second challenge is to be willing to serve God in politics and government if that is where He wants you."³²

The second challenge is based on the premise that the best way to promote something is by participation in it. Because the believer is to promote all kinds of good, he is to promote political and social good. Since he is to seek political and social good, he ought to participate in political and social good. Thus, the evangelical should seek opportunities to participate in politics just as he should in social matters. When he does this, he will be applying Hatfield's observation about "Daniel Webster [who] summed up the attitude of the nation's early leaders by saying that 'whatever makes men good Christians, makes them good citizens.'"³³

Just as there are problems attached to both the pacifist and the activist positions, there are problems concomitant with the mediative position. But, unlike those other views, the mediative position is not simplistic. Instead, it is too complex to provide an easy guide for believers who want to avoid personal responsibility for their own decisions.

One problem faced by the mediative position is the similarity between the teachings of Christianity and democracy. This has provided an easy mark for radical groups who seek to exploit these similarities and to further their own causes by filling their ranks with believers who base their religious faith on their fundamental convictions about God and his word. Richard V. Pierard indicates the result of this situation's propensities saying,

One of the most disturbing aspects of the Radical Right is its close relationship with American Protestant Christianity. . . . In turn, the prophets of the Right direct many of their appeals to these people and identify their work with Christianity. They speak of "Christian Americanism" and of the struggle against "godless communism." The new Christian patriots declare that "our side is God's side" and equate American capitalism with Christianity itself.³⁴

While there is a danger that the Radical Left could appeal to the social consciences of believers having basically fundamental convictions, the merging of the ideals has several virtually insurmountable obstacles to overcome and tends to be less a threat at the present time.³⁵

32. Hatfield, Mark O., "How Can a Christian Be in Politics?" In Clouse, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

33. Hatfield, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

34. Pierard, Richard V., "Christianity, Democracy, and the Radical Right," In Clouse, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

35. Karabenick, Stuart A. and Wilson, R. Ward, "Dogmatism Among War Hawks and Peace Doves," *Psychological Reports*, 25, 1969, 419-422, is based on Wilson's M.S. thesis at Eastern Michigan University. It indicates that contrary to prediction based on Rokeach's Dogmatism Theory, dogmatism was shown to be significantly related to Viet Nam war attitudes. Although Hawks (pro-Vietnam War) and moderates in their attitudes about the war had virtually the same level of dogmatism, those Doves (anti-Vietnam War) tested showed a significantly lower level of dogmatism.

The Radical Right attracts many into its ranks by tactics such as making insinuations, equating "communism" with sin, and by addressing its own efforts as a crusade with a high moralism and asceticism.³⁶ The Radical Left counters by similarly over-simplified nuances against the industrial-military complex and the threats to individual freedom posed by militarism and law enforcement slogans. These, the Left argues, must be opposed by evangelical Christians "for conscience's sake."³⁷ While the Radical Right would seek a "hard line" against the possibility of the United States falling into another "Munich," the Radical Left would seek to take a "soft line" as if the incident had never taken place. Thus, the mediativist is left on the horns of a dilemma when he is confronted by either radical view. Having made a distinction in his own mind between Americanism and Christianity, and recognizing that capitalism is a materialistic philosophy just as is communism, the mediativist is left with the problem of making moral decisions in a world filled with secular values.

In a recent article Richard K. Kenn has challenged the conventional labeling of certain activities as religious and others as secular since many of the traditionally religious institutions have revealed that they are of only proximate significance while many of those ostensibly secular activities have an ultimate significance to those who participate in them.³⁸ By opening this line of reasoning, the role of the believer involved in scientific, technological, or engineering activity becomes much more significant than it has been in the past. For instance, the believer involved in creating, developing or producing a device used in the destruction of human life realizes that his activity is *not secular* in the traditional sense, *but religious*. As Fenn indicates, "serious problems arise only when we encounter a group for whom proximate values have the greatest significance in all areas of life-interest."³⁹ For the believer, then, obedience to a given authority is no longer to be considered as absolute, and resistance is brought into focus as a practical and live option. Individual human acts must be scrutinized and have applied to them scriptural criteria which will guard them against subjective misjudgment.⁴⁰ It becomes essential for individual believers to reinsert their morality into their ostensibly secular activities.

To put it another way, William J. Stroud argues that because of the old battle between religion and science, "technology has developed without values."⁴¹ Hence, a new resolution is needed which will bring

36. Pierard, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

37. Cuthbertson, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

38. Fenn, Richard K., "The Secularization of Values: An Analytical Framework for the Study of Secularization," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Spring 1969, 13, p. 124.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

40. Dymale, Herbert R., "A Theology of Resistance," *Christianity Today*, 13, August 22, 1969, p. 10.

41. Stroud, William J., "Values and Technology: New Emphasis Needed in Science-Religion Conflict," *The Churchman*, 182, December, 1969, p. 8.

religion and science together in a united quest for a system of values adequate for a technological world. An all inclusive philosophy may be possible, Stroud argues, but it is "improbable as long as the vast majority of people don't understand the issues and our educated elite are denied the opportunity to deal with them. Reconstruction in popular philosophy is long overdue, but, let's define the issues."⁴² In defining the issues, it is of paramount importance for the evangelical to take into account his place of responsibility as a believer in a mass democracy.

In such a situation the believer can no longer enjoy the protective cocoon of the pacifist position, which is too simplistic in its denial of Christian responsibility. Nor can he any longer cover his head in the sands of moral ostrichism by completely submitting himself to a less than ultimate authority in the state. Instead, he must follow in the footsteps of those who have stood fast to their moral convictions throughout history even when their very lives were threatened; they suffered punishment; and many paid homage to their convictions with their lives. The examples of the midwives in Egypt just prior to the Exodus, Elijah, the Hebrew Children in Babylon during Daniel's time, Jeremiah (who seems to have spent more of his adult life in jail than out because of his opposition to his government), the Apostle John (who spent time in exile on Patmos), and the countless Christians who have resisted authority when it demanded allegiance before God, have earned the esteem and respect of believers throughout history. Even in the twentieth century the blood of martyrs seems to be the seed of the church. Surely today is one of those times in man's history when the "Church's image is undergoing a radical change. The world seems tired of the system, but there is a great interest in the dynamic life qualities concentrated in Jesus Christ and his new life."⁴³ These dynamic life qualities are to be beheld in the lives of courageous men and women who are committed to the higher moral principles of Christ's teachings rather than to some simplistic obscurantism which has contributed to institutional stagnation.

CONCLUSION

The Christian man of science should be directing his most creative contributions to the concerns which daily fill the pages of the world's newspapers—concerns which many times result from the continuing challenge of the fruits of science. Instead of being characterized as Christian men of science who "love to retreat from the sinful unpleasantness of the secularized world around the church into the sinful pleasantness of self-gratification,"⁴⁴ they need to face up to their responsibilities as members of the leadership community of the United States as well as of the church. This will provide their necessary guideline for functioning in a mass democracy, and it will assist them in focusing in on a proper

42. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

43. Dymale, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

44. Bube, Richard H., "Christian Responsibilities in Science," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, 21, March, 1969, p. 8.

order of priorities among the demands of life on the most basic level. In addition, it will enable them to solve the moral dilemma confronting Christians in science who are seeking and dependent upon research funds. Instead of falling prey to the fact that "the choice of research subjects and the direction of research efforts tends to be more or less directly influenced by the military needs of the country,"⁴⁵ they will come to a personal realization of their individual roles in their technologically advanced society. Then, and only then, will they be able to experience the realization that, "The law of God which is given to us in Scripture calls on us, both in its summary and in its diverse particular commandments, to serve God and our neighbor in a radical and all-encompassing way."⁴⁶ They will also be able to recapture that pleasant experience of Elijah, who found that God had seven thousand other faithful men in the land.⁴⁷ "In the last analysis, therefore, the deepest motive of the Christian religion is expressed in the phrase '*soli Deo gloria.*'"⁴⁸

45. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

46. Dengerink, Jan, "The Word of God and the Temporal Structures of Society," *The Gordon Review*, 11, Summer, 1969, p. 202.

47. I Kings 19:18.

48. Dengerink, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING*

Bainton, Roland H. *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace*. New York: Abingdon, 1968.

Clouse, Robert G., Lindner, Robert D., and Pierard, Richard V. (eds). *Protest and Politics: Christianity and Contemporary Affairs*. Greenwood, S.C.: The Attic Press, Inc., 1968.

Henry, Carl F. H. *Christian Personal Ethics*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1957.

Nagel, William J. (ed.). *Morality and Modern Warfare: The State of the Question*. Baltimore, Maryland: Helicon Press, Inc., 1960.

Thielicke, Helmut. *Between Heaven and Earth: Conversations with American Christians*. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

Toews, J. A. *True Nonresistance Through Christ*. Winnepeg: The Board of General Welfare and Public Relations of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, 1955.

Wirt, Sherwood E. *The Social Conscience of the Evangelical*. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.

**Society in Turmoil: Science, Christianity and Contemporary Issues*, Gary Collins (ed.) includes the above article under the chapter title "War" (to be published in 1970 by Creation Press, Carol Stream, Illinois.