Just War, Pacifism, and Just Peacemaking for the 21st Century
Overview of the Week:

Yesterday:  Just War Thinking
Today:  Pacifism and Just Peacemaking
Thursday:  Contemporary Challenges to the Three Traditions:
  - Political
  - Technological
  - Environmental
Warm-up questions:

Turn to a neighbor or two and name one or two valuable “take-aways” for you from yesterday’s plenary on just war thinking.

With those same neighbors, discuss your own views on pacifism and how those views express themselves (when they do).
I. Thinking about Pacifism
Over the next 45 (or so) minutes:

- Get a sense of the history of Christian pacifism
- Explore some of the complexity and varieties of Christian pacifism
- Assess some of the strengths and weaknesses of Christian pacifism
- Attend to interesting intersections between Christian pacifism and Christian just war thinking.
Christianity in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries

- Persecutions not constant, but recurrent
- Leads to regular suspicion being focused on Christians
  - A Note on the Christians in the Catacombs
- Extended periods of preparation for church membership.
- Changing views on how to relate to society, other religious groups
Pacifism in the Early Church:

- Exclude soldiers
  - For moral reasons
  - For theological reasons
- Changing evangelical impulses
- Keep your head down and remain morally upright for political reasons.
- Distinguishing yourself from others
313 A.D: The Arrival of Constantine

Constantine vs. Galerinius at the Battle of Mulvan Bridge
313 A.D: The Arrival of Constantine

“By this sign, you will conquer”

Leads to Edict of Milan
What To Do with Soldiers: Five Distinctions

1. Inner vs. Outer
2. For Self vs. For Others
3. Private vs. Public
4. Higher vs. Lower (Priest vs. Soldier)
5. Church vs. World
Pacifism after Constantine

- The Peace and Truce of God
- Historic Peace Churches
- Contemporary movements (including Civil Rights)
- Various Sects and Individuals
- Peace after the U.S. Civil War
- Conflict Transformation Practices
Pluralizing Pacifisms

1. Legalistic (e.g., Mennonites)
2. Utilitarian (e.g., pre-WWI Christians)
3. Redemptive Witness (e.g., Gandhi, MLK)
4. Technological (really a form of Just War)

*Note: John Howard Yoder lists dozens of flavors of pacifism*
Pacifism: Benefits

1. is closest to Jesus’ ethic; it’s also probably the ethic closest to that of the early church.

2. and (3) can be effective in some cases.

All recognize that means and ends are both important.

1. recognizes that it isn’t our job to make history come out right.
Pacifism: Criticisms

(1) has trouble explaining why pacifism should be expressed in terms of non-violent resistance instead of non-resistance.

(2) and (3) may fail to accurately describe how humans behave.

All allow for coercive practices other than physical violence without clarifying how violence is different or else allow for some violence (e.g., on the part of the police) without clarifying how the violence of war is different.
Why Just Warriors and Pacifists Need Each Other (the start of a new way as of the 1970’s)

- They presuppose a common starting point: Human life is good and so there is a common presumption against violence.
- Just Warriors need Pacifists to keep them honest and remind them of this starting point.
- Pacifists need Just Warriors to give them criteria by which to rule out particular wars and to keep them safe.
Questions?
Take a break.
Get out of your chair, it's killing you.
II. Just Peacemaking
Over the next 45(ish) minutes:

- Get a sense of the origins of the just peacemaking tradition.
- Explore the practices of just peacemaking.
- Note the focus on just peacemaking in the PCUSA.
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of just peacemaking.
Advent of “Just Peacemaking”

- Designed to sit beside Just War theory and Pacifism
- Led to creation of several books, including *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices to Abolish War*, ed. by Glenn Stassen (Pilgrim Press, 1998)
- Idea is to develop international practices that make war unnecessary. Those practices are shaped around three components:
  - Peacemaking Initiatives
  - Justice Initiatives
  - Love and Community
JP I: Peacemaking Initiatives

1. Support nonviolent direct action.
2. Take independent initiatives to reduce threat.
3. Use cooperative conflict resolution.
4. Acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice and seek repentance and forgiveness.
JP II: Justice Initiatives

5. Advance democracy, human rights, and religious liberty.

6. Foster just and sustainable economic development
JP III: Love and Community

7. Work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system.


9. Reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade.

10. Encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations.
Just peacemaking and the PCUSA

- 1985: *Peacemaking Struggle: Militarism and Resistance*
- (1990’s): Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
- 2010-16: “Risking Peace in a Violent World”
**Affirmation #1:** We affirm that peacemaking is essential to our faith in God’s reconciling work in Jesus Christ, whose love and justice challenge evil and hatred, and who calls the church to present alternatives to violence, fear, and misused power.

**Affirmation #2:** We confess our complicity in the world’s violence and our failures to stand with those who suffer, even as we pray for the Spirit’s courage to unmask idolatries, speak truth about war and oppression, and respond with ministries of justice, healing, and reconciliation.

**Affirmation #3:** We follow Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace and Reconciler, and reclaim the power of nonviolent love evident in his life and teaching, his healings and reversals of evil, his cross and resurrection.

**Affirmation #4:** Learning from nonviolent struggles and counting the costs of war, we draw upon the traditions of Just War, Christian pacifism, and Just Peacemaking to cultivate moral imagination and discern God’s redemptive work in history.

**Affirmation #5:** We commit ourselves to practice the things that make for peace in our daily lives, families, and communities, to risk calling our nation back from the practices of empire to the highest ideals of our heritage, and to take part in social movements for a domination-free order.
Just Peacemaking: Benefits

Charts a “third way” that avoids some of the ideological and abstracted conflicts between just warriors and pacifists.

Strong orientation toward praxis (i.e., practices that can precede/prevent or come after/mitigate) conflicts.

Ideologically and theologically flexible (i.e., not much metaphysical baggage that comes with it)
Just Peacemaking: Criticisms

- How much of a “third way” is it? Does it claim too much?
- Good praxis-orientations tend to find stability and coherence by attending to a tradition—which JP doesn’t really have.
- It’s hard to work backwards from it to a basic theological worldview (though one can, perhaps, get a good basic moral worldview from it).
- It is, paradoxically, prone to affirmations without implications.
Questions?
A Question for You:

What should the Samaritan have done if he had come upon the man as he was being mugged?

- According to a pacifist?
- According to a just warrior?
- According to a just peacemaker?
How might Christian just warriors, pacifists, and just peacemakers respond to this?
“When it comes to how we should deal with evil doers, the Bible, in the book of Romans, is very clear: God has endowed rulers full power to use whatever means necessary — including war — to stop evil. In the case of North Korea, God has given Trump authority to take out Kim Jong-Un. I’m heartened to see that our president — contrary to what we’ve seen with past administrations who have taken, at best, a sheepish stance toward dictators and oppressors — will not tolerate any threat against the American people. When President Trump draws a red line, he will not erase it, move it, or back away from it. Thank God for a President who is serious about protecting our country.”

Robert Jeffress,
First Baptist Church, Dallas
August 8, 2017
Two More Questions for You:

How might Christian just warriors, pacifists, and just peacemakers respond to Pastor Jeffress?

How would you respond to someone who came to you and asked what you thought about Pastor Jeffress’ claim?
SOME SIGNIFICANT SYSTEM CHANGES IN WESTERN HISTORY:

- Hunter/gatherer → Agricultural
- Agricultural → Early Empire
- Early Empire → Greco-Roman Empire
- Greco-Roman → Middle Ages
- Middle Ages → Renaissance
- Renaissance → Reformation
- Reformation → Enlightenment
- Enlightenment → Modernity
- Modernity → ????
Distinguishing *Christian* just war, pacifist, and just peacemaking approaches by the questions they ask

- Just war begins with questions of anthropology:
  - What are people like? How are they valued? What kinds of communities do they make?

- Pacifism begins with questions of fidelity:
  - What does it mean to be faithful to this God? And to this community called by God?

- Just peacemaking begins with questions of efficacy:
  - What practices are most likely to reduce violence and promote peace and justice?
Time for your questions:

- New technologies and their problems
  - Drones
  - Cyber

- Teaching praxis
  - Integrating self
  - Shaping character/building moral center

- Humanizing self and other
  - Delayed effects
  - Who/what is an “enemy”?

- Religious concerns
  - Dealing with guilt
  - Conveying gospel
Making a way forward

- **Rehearse:** Explore your topic with others in your group.
- **Refrain:** Sit with your thoughts for a bit.
- **Reframe:** What are your new and/or better questions?
- **Review:** What do these new questions do that their first versions didn’t?
Discoveries?