PEACEFUL CHRISTIANS

What Does the Bible Say About War?

Peaceful Christians:

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Introduction

Christians follow the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, who was crucified by the state for preaching a counter-imperial message that quickly grew in a short span of three years.

2,000 years later, many have forgotten that following the Prince of Peace means being against war and violence.

No matter the alleged reasons a government promotes war, Christians are to stand up against empire, especially when it commits violence in the name of goodness. It takes courage to stand against the prevailing opinion of the day and say no to war, even when it is popular.

The essays in this ebook are written by courageous Christians standing up against unpopular wars.

Join the courageous in standing up against every war.

Christians Must Love Peace, Even Now
By Dr. Norman Horn

    With over 14,000 dead and many thousands more injured or displaced, the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a present-day horror. Urban bombardment has devastated population centers, flattened hospitals, and driven people from their homes. Unlike conflicts in previous eras, the terrifying details of Russo-Ukrainian War can be observed as they transpire, through the lenses of millions of privately owned smartphone cameras broadcasting to viewers around the world. Many such recordings have shown civilian preparations to defend against the invaders, including the manufacture of Molotov cocktails and the arming of grandmothers with Kalashnikov rifles.

    This frightful threat against Ukrainian civilians has inspired popular support from all over the world. According to Candid, nearly $400 million in private charitable donations for Ukraine were raised during the first two weeks of the conflict. *The New York Times* and others have documented the efforts of many military veterans now traveling to the region to offer their assistance.

    National governments are also taking action. The United States government alone has provided more than a billion dollars in security assistance to Ukraine since the start of the conflict. This assistance has largely taken the form of weapons, ammunition, and armor, as well as military training and intelligence sharing.

    These states have also imposed economic sanctions on Russia in response to the war. Russian exports have been barred in whole or in part by a number of former international trade partners. International transfers involving the estimated $140 billion in Russian gold stores have been frozen by such sanctions, though the domestic market for gold in Russia is booming as the Russian Ruble has crashed. Even the private assets of wealthy Russians abroad have been frozen, notably including the Chelsea Football Club owned by Roman Abramovich since 2003.

    Increasingly, there have been calls for the United States and other members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to directly engage Russian forces in defense of Ukraine. This is not a hot war quite yet, but it's getting close.

    Christians don't need to feel conflicted about this.

    We can recognize the right to self-defense and decry the aggression of Russia, while also recognizing the faults of Ukraine and the complicity of NATO in fomenting the situation over the years. Ukraine, for instance, has an extremely corrupt government, rated as the second worst in Europe by Transparency International. (Of course, Russia is ranked even worse!) This can even simply be seen in Zelensky's crackdown on free speech of private media outlets.

    While Russia clearly is the aggressor here, we cannot ignore how NATO's posture has stoked the embers of Russia's ire for years. As the Cato Institute's Ted Carpenter has observed: "Vladimir Putin bears primary responsibility for this latest development, but Nato's arrogant, tone-deaf policy toward Russia over the past quarter-century deserves a large share as well." There is no doubt that had diplomatic relations been better executed, this conflict would have been averted.

    We Christians ought to be able to see this more clearly than the worldly non-believers among us precisely because we see through the lens of allegiance to Christ. The intrinsic evils of statism and the the institutional momentum clashes of these massive states inevitably will lead to the horrors of war.

    As such, Christians should never call for the expansion of war. There is no redeeming quality to it. Participation will inevitably lead to certain sin, and we are called never to initiate sin so that good may result. War is the health of the state, so why would we ever promote it when it leads to so much evil and supports the continuing evils of statism?

    Remember that no individuals, not even small groups, can initiate *wars*. At worst, regional conflicts occur when distributed peoples, what amounts to gangs of thugs, decide they want to come to blows. Real war occurs when rival governments clash over what they both want and will kill to get.

But Christians, both in America and across the world, often are deceived by leaders philosophizing how the killing in war is good because it is organized by their leaders and not the small groups. It is now "just" because "we" did it "by the rules." But "we" are not the government, and such language is ideological camouflage for those who desire power and domination over others.

Don't fall into the trap. War is simply mass murder at even larger scale. Many of our Christian forebears, even in the United States, understood this. From thinkers such as Alexander Campbell and David Lipscomb in the 19th century Churches of Christ, to famed preacher Charles Spurgeon, to the early church fathers, consistent Christians have always realized that our faith calls us to eschew such violence. Self-defense may be permitted, but we do not participate in the ratcheting up of aggression at the whims of corrupt world leaders. By refusing such calls to kill, we fulfill the call of Christ to be a blessed "peacemaker."

We Pray for Peace as we Revel in War
By Mike Maharrey

Bloodshed Leads to More Bloodshed
Whatever happened to the rifleman?
I've got a job for the rifleman.
He really knew how to settle the score
When mercy knocked on the Devil's
When I pray for peace and revel in war.
- Steve Hindalong

I thought of these lyrics this morning as I read comment after comment from people who claim to follow the Prince of Peace condemning President Trump for pulling U.S. troops out of Syria.

I could go into a multitude of political reasons the U.S. government shouldn't keep killing people in the Middle East. I could talk about the extraordinary cost in both lives and treasure. I could explain how past interventions led to new interventions that will lead to future interventions in a perpetual cycle of violence. I could explain the concept of blowback and how foreign intervention and occupation actually makes Americans less safe. But there are a lot of people out there who can make those arguments far better than I. For a start, I recommend this recent interview Tom Woods did with Scott Horton.

But as a Christian, I reject the U.S. warfare state – and every other warfare state, for that matter – for a more fundamental reason. I submit to a king who claims the title "Prince of Peace." He rules over a kingdom that promises to beat swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.

How can I revel in war?

Being a Citizen of the Kingdom of Light

Isaiah 9 offers a glimpse at the coming kingdom and the king who will rule over it. The prophet proclaims, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned." This implies a new kind of kingdom – a kingdom of light – a kingdom where "every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire."

This kingdom of light is a kingdom of peace. Earthly kingdoms founded and maintained by force and violence spin forever in darkness. They exist in the shadow of death. Jesus came to establish something new – something contrary to the kingdoms of the world that all ultimately belong to the Devil.

Isaiah writes, "you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor."

And how did Jesus do this? Did he lead a mighty army to victory? Did he smite his enemies with fire and wrath? No. He submitted to them. He died on a cross and rose from the dead. He willingly became the scapegoat, the sacrifice. As Paul wrote, "He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:8)

The Pattern of Peace Found in the Bible

During the Christmas season, we celebrate the dawning of the Kingdom of Peace. Isaiah writes:

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."

John the Baptist was the prophet who paved the way for Jesus. He fulfilled the prophecy proclaiming "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" At John's birth, his father, Zechariah, spoke a prophecy he of his own. He foresaw his son paving the way for this Kingdom of Peace.

"You, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace." (Luke 1:76-79)

Serving Opposing Masters

If Jesus guides our feet on the path of peace, how can we revel in war?

The problem is we've relegated the Kingdom of God to some future time and place. We don't recognize that the Kingdom of God entered into the world the night Jesus was born. We don't comprehend that the Kingdom of God was fully established the moment Jesus uttered the words, "It is finished."

The kingdom of God has come. It is our job as citizens of that kingdom to live according to its precepts, to conform our lives to its value system, to extend its reach into the cold dark world, to cast away the shadow of death by shining the light of Christ through our words and actions.

America's wars belong to another kingdom – a kingdom that stands in direct opposition to the Kingdom of God. We can't serve two kingdoms.

But we try. We pray for peace but we revel in war. We cheerlead the bombings, and the drone strikes, and the foreign invasions. We claim "it's necessary in the world we live in." If you pledge your allegiance to an earthly kingdom, maybe it is. I don't know. But as citizens of the Kingdom of God, we're called to a different standard, a different ethic, an altogether different way.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." I have to assume he meant what he said. He didn't say blessed are the drone pilots. He didn't say blessed are the presidents who send in the troops. He didn't say blessed are the soldiers that maintain the American empire. He said blessed are the peacemakers. I wish more of his followers would heed his call.

The Things that Make for Peace
By Doug Stuart

If you were to take inventory of what you see in the world around you, what do you think our world needs most? What grieves you when you watch or read the news? What makes your heart ache?

What is your reaction to hearing about yet another mass shooting or a devastating hurricane in a developing country? What is your reaction to the political responses to these tragedies? I'm deeply frustrated by what I see. I wish gun control advocates would avoid hasty actions and thoughtless proposals. I wish gun rights activists would humbly acknowledge that arming more people is not the easy solution to a deeper problem. I shudder when I read that climate change is causing hurricanes and therefore the poor are in danger if we don't stop using fossil fuels instead of equipping them with the fossil fuel-based technology to protect them from climate danger.

When we get past our initial reactions and look deep inside to ask what we're really looking for in this world, the answer is so profound it is often treated as cliché, and we don't do cliche. So we look for another answer. In the movie Miss Congeniality, Sandra Bullock's character, a no-BS undercover agent who needs to infiltrate the Miss United States pageant, is asked, like all the other candidates, what the most important thing our society needs. Every other candidate, who is caricatured as mindless, vain females wrapped up only in their appearance, says, "World peace!" After each of their answers, the crowd erupts with applause. The scene illustrates how far-fetched and idealistic the desire for world peace is. Bullock's character, true to her authenticity, replies, "Harsher punishment for parole violators." Crickets. It is not until she reluctantly adds, "And world peace!" that the crowd erupts in applause for her. The scene illustrates that the answers provided by all but Bullock's character were of the same makeup as the characters themselves: plastic.

Libertarians Value Peace

As trite as it may sound, seeking peace is not something libertarians are against. We are certainly for peace. Just consider Larry Reed's book title: Anything Peaceful. If it is not done in peace we are against it. We want to eliminate the use of coercion and force in our world, and we are highly critical of the state because force is its modus operandi. We believe that conflict can be resolved through conversation, cooperation, and collaboration, whether it be between individuals or institutions or nations.

This commitment to peace is most succinctly described as an outworking of the non-aggression principle. No aggression is permissible except in cases of self-defense. Offensive aggression is just that: offensive.

But for Christians, there's more meaning to peace.

Christians Value Peace

Just like any word, "peace" may not adequately capture the biblical concept of peace. The Bible starts with the world being spoken into existence instead of appearing as a result of the warring gods of Babylon. The Israelites, both in slavery, in their own land, or in exile, were a people longing for shalom. And we see God actively working to get his people there, culminating in Incarnation – Jesus. That's why Jesus is so important. The heart of the Christian message is that God in Christ has come to bring peace to the world. Not just the absence of violence, but the presence of Shalom, a thoroughly Jewish theme.

Let's define shalom.

Cornelius Plantinga defines shalom as "…the webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight…Shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness and delight – a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed. Shalom, in other words, is the way things ought to be…the full flourishing of human life in all aspects, as God intended it to be."

So, think Eden. Original goodness as declared in the beginning.

What results from shalom? Hugh Whelchel from TIFWE believes real shalom will produce the following:

1. Prosperity (Psalms 72:1-7)

1. Health (Isaiah 57:19)

1. Reconciliation (Genesis 26:29)

1. Contentment (Genesis 15:15; Psalms 4:8)

1. Good relationships between the nations and peoples (1 Chronicles 12:17-18). This means that peace has a social as well as a personal dimension.

The specific outcomes and results of such a world does not imply that everyone makes a particular wage, that income inequality is nonexistent, or that nobody ever owns a weapon of any kind (what would we do with rocks?). Perhaps in such a world there is a "living wage," though how that comes about is probably through a combination of market forces and generosity instead of State-issued mandate. Perhaps in such a society health care will be affordable, but not because of a single-payer system for 100 million people but because basic needs are affordable through market efficiencies. Perhaps in such a world income inequality will be minimal or unproblematic, but because of genuine prosperity and thriving of all in society, not because of redistribution.

That last point, "good relationships between nations and peoples," is important to focus on for a few moments. In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul identifies Christians as "ministers of reconciliation." What does that mean? What God did in Christ was reconcile the world to himself. Christians have inherited that ministry. I know most people think of this as a mission to convert individuals, but I think it goes further than that. The world needs the gospel because the world needs peace. I believe that Christians have a unique role to play in the world of politics if we are careful and deliberate.

If the gospel of Jesus were merely about personal spiritual awakening, Pilate and Caiaphas would not have colluded to crucify him. Yet Jesus was a threat to the Roman empire, and it was not because Jesus was a king like Caesar. It was because somehow what happened when people turned their allegiance to to King Jesus, it became a threat to the Roman empire. Identifying as Christian today poses little to no threat to the American Empire, but it should. Ron Paul, for instance, poses a serious threat with his prophetic admonitions to end the Federal Reserve System.

If allegiance to Jesus Christ does not in some way pose a threat to the empire, the gospel has been diluted to suit our consumeristic palates. Believing the gospel – being saved – is not a consumption good of eternal significance. It is a radical reorientation against empire and toward shalom.

Both Christian *and* Libertarian

The commitment to peace is a minimum commitment to qualify as a libertarian. Libertarianism is by and large a philosophy about what one may not do to others and the logic that unfolds from that premise. However, deciding on what is prohibited, even if based on the non-aggression principle, does not go far enough for the Christian. If we are going to couple the term "Christian" and "libertarian" together, there's something about the term "Christian" that modifies the kind of libertarians we are to be in the world.

Think about the second greatest commandment according to Jesus: Love your neighbor. Certainly not harming your neighbor by advocating freedom is included, but it does not capture the essence of love. Likewise, the essence of shalom is not captured by non-aggression alone. There is more to life than making sure people are simply nice to each other, though that's enough of a task as it is!

When we confess "Jesus is Lord," we are not simply affirming a religious dogma. We are declaring the counter-truth against the empires of this world, which say, "We rule you, bow to our demands." We are declaring that Jesus is the rightful ruler of the world, and we can stand against the empire and say, "No, you've got it backward. You're really not in charge, no matter how many weapons you wield."

The empire is not inclined toward peace, but toward violence. Yes, modern empires have become particularly cunning in promising peace, but only at the expense of unwavering commitment to its agenda. And many Christians, Left and Right, succumb to its alluring aroma of power, endorsing it under the guise of the common good, establishing a "Christian nation," or serving the kingdom of God. The result is the nearly cult-like fashion many Christians look for a leader that will set the tone for the nation. They look for perfect regulation that will stave off evil. They glorify or even worship the military instead of treating its rightful role as a protecting institution. They enthusiastically embrace so-called rights bestowed by the state because they feel entitled to the property of others.

The Christian commitment to peace starts with allegiance to the Prince of Peace. Allegiance to Jesus Christ is a threat to empire. The message of liberty is a threat to empire. Christian libertarians are armed with both messages and are capable of speaking truth to power in a fresh way to a generation discontent with the current scope of allowable opinion. The world must be rescued from violent regimes.

How is the world rescued from violence? This is a big question, one that Christians have wrestled with for centuries. Part of the answer lies in reading our Bibles and finding our place in the ongoing narrative of history to see where God is taking us.

"How is the world rescued from violence?" A big question deserves more time than a talk or a few articles, but in order to get at the answer we need to understand the narrative of Scripture and a theological concept called telos.

Shall We Smite with the Sword?
By Philip Mauro

Philip Mauro (1859-1952) was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and educated at Columbian University in the nation's capital, now known as George Washington University. He was a member of the bar of the U.S. Supreme Court and one of the foremost patent lawyers of his day. Mauro maintains offices in Washington DC and New York. Among his regular clients were American Telephone and Telegraph and Bell Telephone. He was a personal friend and patent counsel for Alexander Graham Bell. Mauro was converted to Christ at the Gospel Tabernacle in New York in 1903. In 1905 he published his first of about forty books and at least eighty shorter writings. He was on the Carpathia in 1912 when it rescued survivors from the Titanic, and later wrote "The Titanic Catastrophe and Its Lessons." In July of 1917 he wrote a small booklet titled Shall We Smite with the Sword? In the Christian Workers Magazine, published by the Moody Bible Institute, for August (p. 923) and September (p. 1) of 1917, there appears an ad for Mauro's work reading: "Plain words regarding the teaching of the Bible as to the Christian's position and attitude toward war. If you are not clear as to your position; if you have no settled convictions regarding a Christian and war, be sure to read this. It will give you the help you need. Just the thing for placing in the hands of fellow-Christians. After World War I was over, Mauro added an eight-page "Part II" to his treatise. The whole work, which is reproduced below, was later published by the Scripture Truth Depot of Boston. – Laurence M. Vance

Part I

"When they that were about him saw what would follow, they said unto Him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" (Luke 22:49)
The question which heads this article was put to the Lord Himself by His disciples. We discuss it in the following pages solely for the benefit of the few who "belong to Christ," and who, owning Him as the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, hold themselves bound to obey His every command, at whatever cost.

The question is of much importance at this present time. Many are discussing it just as if the Lord had left it unanswered, or as if His answer had left the matter as much in doubt as before. We seek therefore to set forth the Lord's answer as clearly as possible; for none other can speak with authority upon such a matter, and if He has not decided it, then everyone is left to do that which is right in his own eyes.

War Not A Remedy For Any Evil

The purpose, for which the disciples were minded to draw the sword, and for which one of them did actually use that weapon, was in defense of the Lord's own Person against the enemies who came with swords and staves to take Him. There could not be a better cause than this for resorting to violence, and the shedding of blood. Hence we must conclude that, if the followers of Christ are not to fight for Him, they are certainly not to fight for Gentile rulers, and for the aims for which the nations of the world go to war.

The Lord's answer to the question is found in Matthew's Gospel. Speaking to that disciple who had used the sword He said:

"Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matt. 26:52)
Here the eternal Wisdom gives us, not a command only, but also a principle that governs the whole subject. War is not a remedy. It settles nothing. It works untold harm and misery and breeds further wars. And the nation that takes the sword to gain its end invites its own destruction by the sword.

Christ's Kingdom Not Of This World

A little later the Lord stood before Cæsar's deputy, and He gave there an example of that respect for the Gentile civil authorities which His word commands to His disciples. But our immediate concern is with His will in regard to fighting. So we note His statement to Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews" (John 18:36)

Again we have not only the statement of the Lord's will for His servants in regard to fighting, but also the reason underlying it. The words are too plain to need any explanation.

Is it conceivable that the Lord, while teaching His disciples that they were not to fight for Him, would give them commandment, or at least permission, to fight for Cæsar, or for Herod or Pontius Pilate, or any other Gentile ruler under whose authority they might chance to be? Had Pilate seen fit at that time to make war upon Herod, can we suppose that Christ would have joined the rants, and bidden His disciples to do the like?

No. Christ's kingdom is not of this world. His servants do not fight by His command, even for Him. Wars and fighting belong to "this present evil world." They come from the lust of men (James 4:1). Lust of gain, lust of power, ambition to be great and to exercise dominion in this world are the things that cause wars. With those things the disciples of Christ have nothing to do. They are not of the world, even as He is not of the world.

The words of the Lord already quoted (though there are more to the point) leave no room for uncertainty; for there is no warrant in all Scripture for those who teach (alas that there should be any who so misrepresent the doctrine of Christ!) that the followers of the Lamb ought, in some circumstances at least, to join the armies of the nations, and devote their energies to the spilling of human blood. But seeing there are those who teach thus (and they are not a few), it is needful for us to seek all the light afforded by Scripture on this subject, and particularly to examine those passages of the Bible which are cited as giving Divine sanction to participation, by the saints of God, in carnal warfare.

Buying A Sword

Going back a little further in the Lord's parting instructions to His disciples, we find Him saying: "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said He unto them, But now he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one" (Luke 22:36).

These words have given rise to much discussion, and we cannot assume to settle their meaning beyond doubt. But this much at least is certain, and it suffices for our present purpose, that the "sword" which Christ's disciples were to buy, – even parting with their garments if need be to do so, – was not a carnal sword. The next words make that plain; for when the disciples said "Lord, behold, here are two swords," He said unto them "It is enough." Two were quite "enough" of that sort. Moreover, from the moment Peter put up his sword at his Lord's bidding, and the Lord performed the miracle (the last before His death) of healing the wound caused by His own servant, we do not read of any disciple using, or even possessing, a sword. On the contrary, they suffered all wrongs, persecutions and cruelties, even unto death, without resisting evil. They followed the teaching which the Spirit, through them, has given to the Church of Christ: "Recompense no man evil for evil;" "avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath;" "overcome evil with good;" "If when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: for Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: * * * who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Also the words of the Lord Himself "But I say unto you, that he resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also: (Rom. 12:17-21; 1 Peter 2:20-23; Matt. 5:39).

What then did the Lord mean by the words "But now, he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise his scrip, and he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one"? The words "But now" were a warning to the disciples that a great change was at hand, and that they were to look for experiences of

a totally different kind from those they were accustomed to while the Lord was with them in Person. Their daily lives had been quiet and peaceful. They went unhindered from place to place, enjoying His presence and protection, hearing His words, directed by His wisdom and guidance, and having every need supplied without care or anxiety. "But now" – all that was to be changed. Christ had already warned His disciples of this change saying, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake" (Matt. 24:9). "They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for My names sake. * * * And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death" (Luke 21:12, 16).

When, as recorded in Luke 10:4, Christ had sent them forth without purse, or scrip, or shoes, though they went as lambs among wolves, yet they had need of nothing; not did any one harm them or offer violence. "But now" conditions were to be very different; and the difference was to be in two things chiefly, (1) they were to experience lack of necessities of life, and (2) they were to experience conflict. The words "take purse and scrip" express figuratively the coming time of need; as frequently, by a figure of speech, what a person would ordinarily do under certain conditions is mentioned instead of describing those conditions. How literally this was fulfilled appears by the testimony of the Apostle Paul, who, speaking of necessities, says: "For I think that God hath set forth us, the Apostles, last, as it were appointed to death: * * * Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled we bless; being persecuted we suffer it: being defamed we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day: (1 Cor. 4:9-13). Again he speaks of "approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; * * * as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6:3, 4, 5, 10). And yet again he tells of the stripes, imprisonments, deaths, and perils of many sorts, concluding with the words, "In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. 11:23-27). The Lord's words, "take purse and scrip," would judicate, by a concise, figurative expression, the experiences of privation and need that awaited the disciples.

But above all things, the life of the Apostles, after the Lord's departure, was to be a life of incessant conflict, not carnal, but spiritual. To the Colossians Paul writes, "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you" (Col. 2:1). And he says in another place, "For though we walk in the flesh, we war not after the flesh. (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds)" (2 Cor. 10:3, 4). And in the familiar passage wherein the saints are exhorted to put on the whole armor of God, one item of the equipment is "the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6:10-17).

Furthermore, Paul exhorts Timothy to fight the good fight of faith, and to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. On the other hand in the very same chapter he says "the servant of the Lord must not strive but be gentle unto all men" (2 Tim. 2:3, 4). Paul also says of himself "I have fought the good fight." These passages clearly tell us the nature of the believer's warfare; and they exclude that in which the nations engage.

These Scriptures also indicate the meaning of the Lord's words concerning "buying a sword."

The spiritual warfare in which the disciples were to find themselves would be so fierce and deadly that a sword would be, so to speak, more needful than a garment. So intense was the conflict to be that no price would be too great to pay for the weapons of war that were needed to defeat the principalities sand powers arrayed against them.

Not Peace On Earth, But A Sword

When the Lord said: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace but a sword," He was not speaking of a literal sword. He used that word figuratively to stand for the variance, divisions and strife which He and His Gospel would cause. In this case He has given us the

explanation, saying, "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt. 10:34, 35). There is, therefore, as good ground for saying that, according to this Scripture, a man should take up the sword against his father, and the daughter should take the sword against her mother, as for saying that the disciples of Christ should engage in carnal warfare.

"What Spirit Are Ye Of"

Going back a little further in the history of our Lord's closing days on earth, we come to another important word bearing upon our subject. The Lord was then upon His way to Jerusalem, and to the cross which awaited Him there, and which He had plainly in view. As they journeyed they came to a certain village of Samaria whose inhabitants would not receive them, because they were on their way to Jerusalem, for which the Samaritans cherished intense hatred. "And when James and John saw this they said, Lord wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?" (Luke 9:53-56).

This incident has a special instruction for those who refer to Old Testament history in justification of carnal warfare as an occupation for saints in this dispensation. Is not what Elijah did a safe example for us to follow? What says the Lord about this?

> *"But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."*

Here is a decisive word, and coupled with it is a reason or principle which conclusively settles the matter. Old Testament precedents have no application in this case. "He that is joined to the Lord is ONE SPIRIT" (1 Cor. 5:17). And "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). The Spirit of Christ is "the Spirit of love." The purpose of His coming to earth is - not to destroy men's lives, but to save them, even at the cost of His own. The emblem of Christ's character in this dispensation is the lamb; that of His Spirit is the dove.

The Power Of Death

On the other hand, the work of the Devil is to destroy. War differs from ordinary murders mainly in that it is on an enormous scale. Every invention and contrivance that men can devise, every deception and stratagem to which they can resort, every cruelty and atrocity which they can perpetrate, are legitimate elements of warfare. Hence it is not merely a questionable proceeding - not merely a thing which it were perhaps better to avoid. War is the thing of all things that is farthest removed from the work of Christ. And to teach that believers may properly, under any conditions whatever, take a hand in warfare is to go as far as it is possible to go from the truth of God and the doctrine of Christ. War is the great, all-inclusive, sum-total of everything that is devilish. Its object is to destroy as many men's lives as possible; and the Devil is the destroyer.

When General Sherman tersely said "War is hell" he uttered a truth. Heaven is peace. Hell is war. Christ gives peace; He made peace through the blood of His cross; He is the Prince of peace; He is our peace; and He came and preached peace to them that were far off, and to them that were nigh.

Our Duty To "The Powers That Be"

The teaching that saints of God may, when required by the civil authorities, join the ranks of the army, and perform all the "service" that is demanded of enlisted men, is usually supported by reference to those Scriptures which define the believer's duty to the State. The Lord Himself referred to the duty which men owe to the state, summing it up in the well-known words, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). The Apostles Paulo and Peter have, moreover, dealt with the subject in detail. We will refer presently to their teaching.

In considering the Lord's words we would seek to ascertain whether military service is counted among the things which believers are to render unto Cæsar. When those words were spoken Christ and His disciples were, like nearly all the world, under the dominion of Cæsar. The soldiers of Cæsar filled

the land, and enforced the authority of the Roman Emperor. Those very soldiers, only a few days later, in obedience to the orders of the Roman Governor, Cæsar's representative, nailed the Lord Jesus to a cross. It was simply their "duty" as soldiers of the State.

Did Christ then teach His disciples that, if required by the civil authorities, they were to enlist as soldiers and were to do whatever things soldiers are commanded by their officers to do?

A glance at the passage shows in the first place, that the Lord was not instructing His own disciples, but was speaking to the emissaries of the Pharisees and Herodians; and secondly, that the question was simply as regards paying taxes. His answer confounded those who put the question. Their sole purpose in asking it was to entangle Him in His talk, and to elicit some word that could be used as an accusation with the Roman Governor. His answer also settled the question that it was lawful to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor, and hence to any Gentile rulers who are over us. It has, however, nothing whatever to do with the question whether it is lawful for disciples of Christ to enter upon the study and practice of the art of slaughtering their fellow-men.

Let it be borne in mind that the essence of a soldier's "duty" is to render instant, absolute, and unquestioning obedience to every command of his superior officers. He is put under oath to do so. It is daily instilled into his mind. And it is constantly impressed upon him that the penalty of failure to obey orders is death. The soldier has no discretion, no will of his own, no conscience. He cannot parley with his superior officer, or ask any reasons, or test his orders by any standard, human or Divine. His one duty – admitting of no exception or modification – is to obey orders. The man who enlists for military service, whether voluntarily or under the pressure of conscription laws, surrenders entirely and unreservedly of his own power of choice and freedom of action. He repudiates his individual responsibility to God and man, and pledges himself blindly, by an oath and under penalty of death, to obey the commands of his officers, whoever they may be and to whatever work they may send him. Hence, in joining the rants, a man agrees beforehand to commit any and every atrocity which may possible be commanded under the stress of "military necessity." And notwithstanding that the hideous details are kept out of print, we have heard something during the present war, of the deeds of horror and diabolical wickedness which have been perpetrated under the plea of "military necessity."

But the details of military service are not put before the eyes of men when they are commanded to enlist are urged and (when conscription laws are being enforced) are commanded to enlist. Far from it. The hideous facts are concealed, and the act of enlistment is represented as a noble and courageous deed, – an act of devotion to one's country, the act of a patriot and a hero. The true nature of war is concealed. The imaginations of young men are inflamed by misrepresentations, and their hearts kindled by enthusiasm. Their minds are turned by the uniforms, the parades, the flags, the bands of music, the plaudits of the crow, the admiration of women. These act upon the emotions and feelings of the young men; and under these influences they take the step that leads to what they never dreamed of.

The truth is, and let us look the ugly fact squarely in the face, that the man who enlists commits himself in advance – though few in fact realize it – to the perpetration of every unnamable atrocity that war is held to justify. All this must be taken into account when we seek the answer of God's word to the question "Shall we, who belong to Christ, smite with the sword?"

Whatever be the Lord's teaching as to the duty of His people to the State in time of war, it is and must necessarily be the same for every century of the Christian era and for the saints of every nation. It cannot be one thing at one time and a different thing at another; or one thing in one country and a different thing in another. Believers in Germany and in Turkey owe precisely the same duty to the civil and military authorities of those countries, that believers in England and America owe their governments. The German and Turkish governments are just as much "powers that be, ordained of God," as are the governments of England and America. When Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, defining our duties to "the powers that be," the tyrant Nero was on the throne. If it is according to the doctrine of Christ that saints who are subject to the American government should kill Germans and Turks, then it is equally according to the doctrine of Christ that saints who are subject to the German and Ottoman governments should kill Americans. If military service be among the duties which

believers owe the State, then it is according to the teaching of Christ that His people who happen to be in the German and Turkish armies should take active part in every atrocity commanded by the German and Turkish military authorities in Belgium and Armenia.

The words of Paul that speak of our duty to the State are found in the 13th chapter of Romans. In verses 6-8 we read: "For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law: Also verse 10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

It is difficult to understand how anyone can find in this Scripture a command, expressed or implied, for followers of Christ to engage in the slaughter of their fellow-men. The essence of the exhortation is to be faithful in the discharge of every just obligation, to be in debt to none, and in particular to show respect to all rulers and to pay all taxes levied by the State. Render unto all their dues. Owe no man anything. Work no ill to your neighbor. These commandments are very broad. Certainly we do not owe it to any man to shed his blood, nor to make his parents childless, his wife a widow, his children orphans. And moreover, right in the heart of the passage are the words "THOU SHALT NOT KILL." "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law."

There is nothing here, or anywhere else in the Scriptures, to suggest in the remotest degree that God sanctions the doing of any one of these forbidden things at the command of a human ruler. Love is the fulfilling of the law, and love is "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

Clearly this passage (Rom. 13:1-10) defines our righteous obligations to rulers and other men in normal times of peace. It has nothing to do with the matter of war. If commanded by the civil authorities to do anything forbidden by God we must say as the Apostles said in like circumstances: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts 4:19).

But if any desire a word that tells us plainly how we are to treat enemies, it is to be found in the very same passage. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink" (Rom. 12:18-20). And to the same effect are the words of Christ, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:43, 44).

Finally, the servants of Christ are "put in trust with the Gospel," and are debtors to all men, whether Greeks (civilized) or barbarians, to give them the Gospel (1 Thess. 2:4; Rom. 1:14). If we then are to go forth to kill our fellow-men, whose lives shall we take? Shall we slay the unsaved, to whom we owe the Gospel of Christ? If not those, then are we to slay our fellow-saints, to whom we owe our love and service? The Gospel is god's call to perishing sinners to look to Him for pardon and life; and it is His power unto salvation to everyone that believes. War and the Gospel are as far apart as the east is from the west; as far as hell is from heaven.

"Non-Combatant Service"

It is sometimes asked if a saint may not enlist for some service which does not call upon him to shed the blood of his fellow-men. As to this it is simply to be said that an army is a complex machine, which is put together for the single object of destroying the lives of men. Not every part of it does the actual killing; for there are many services which those in the firing-line cannot perform. But every part is instrumental in accomplishing that for which an army is created.

Even according to human law, the man who furnishes the weapon, knowing the purpose for which it is to be used, is equally responsible with the one who uses it.

There is but one course that is right in the light of God's Word: "Be ye separate. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Touch not the unclean thing."

The Wars Of Israel

The history of the Jewish nation is frequently referred to in support of the teaching that followers of Christ ought to take up arms when commanded by the authorities. Israel was an earthly people, having a country of their own, and surrounded by idolatrous nations. The wars against the wicked inhabitants of Canaan were at God's own command; but He postponed the punishment of those nations for years, for the express reason that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full (Gen. 15:16). God in that case, used Israel as His instrument in executing a righteous judgment that was fully due. On the other hand, He used at a later day, the armies of Assyria and Babylon for the punishment of His own people Israel. There is no parallel to this state of things in our era. God's people now are not members of one nation, but are strangers and pilgrims, scattered through all the nations. They could not possible band themselves together to fight even if they wish to do so.

The experiences of the Israelites are types and shadows of the experiences of the saints. They had an earthly country and citizenship; we have a heavenly. They had carnal enemies, we have spiritual enemies. They used carnal weapons, whereas it is written, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10:4). "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places: (Eph. 6:12).

Whom Shall We Follow?

Serious consideration should be given to the fact of Satan's agency in leading the nations into war. That great enemy, with whom the people of God are called upon to wage incessant spiritual warfare, is the one who wields "the power of darkness" and "the power of death." Those are the powers that area let loose, and that do their very worst in time of war.

Satan is also the Deceiver of the nations; and it is through deception of one sort or another that nations are led to wage war. Hence there will be no peace for this earth until the thousand years during which Satan shall be shut up in the bottomless pit, and sealed therein, to the end "that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years shall be fulfilled" (Rev. 20:3). At the end of that period of peace and blessing for mankind, and as soon as Satan is released from his imprisonment, he resorts immediately to his congenial work of leading the nations into war; as it is written, "And when the thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle" (Rev. 20:7, 8).

Moreover, deception is an important element in the art of war itself. It is easy, therefore, to trace the origin of wars, – with their deceptions, lies, desolations, destruction and miseries – to that evil being, who is a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him, and who, when he speaketh a lie, speaketh of his own, because he is a liar, and the father of it.

According to the words of Christ Himself, and of other Scriptures there are two from the unseen world who come to men in the capacity of leaders, – Christ and Satan. They are the exact opposite one of the other, and their aims with respect to men are in the greatest possible contrast. One of these leads men into light, the other into darkness; One leads into life, the other into death; One leads into peace, the other into war. It is simply an impossibility for a man to follow both. To the extent that he follows one, he of necessity, departs from the other.

The Lord Himself speaks of these two leaders who come among men, and He tells us plainly what their aims are: "THE THEIF COMETH not for to steal and to kill and to destroy" – and by war those ends are attained on the largest possible scale – "I AM COME that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Christ brings to the world life, light, love, peace, joy, blessing: Satan brings death, darkness, hatred, enmity, sorrow, misery, War is the epitome of all these. Hence war raises sharply the great issue, and

presents to every believer the solemn question "Whom shall we follow?" In the light of Scripture and of all the knowledge we have of the nature of war, can there be any doubt at all as to whether the people of god should take part in it?

What shall we then say to these things? Shall we smite with the sword? Certainly not. Why not?

Because Christ commanded His disciples to put up his sword again into its sheath and said "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

Because it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong.

Because Christ commands His disciples to love their enemies.

Because while we were the enemies of God He did not send His armies to destroy us, but reconciled us to Himself by the death of His Son.

Because Christ came into this world not to destroy men's lives but to save them.

Because the mission of Christ is to give life, whereas the Devil has the power of death, and the destruction of human life is the work of the evil one.

Because Christ commanded His servants to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

Because Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world then would My servants fight."

Because wars proceed from the lust of men, who seek thereby to gain supremacy or advantage in this present evil world' and war is the crowning evil of the world from which we have been delivered.

Because every believer has the Spirit of Christ. Being joined to the Lord he is "one spirit" with Him; and the Spirit of Christ harms none, but seeks the good of all men, being content to suffer every ill rather than inflict the slightest injury upon any man.

Because every believer is "under the law to Christ;" and the law of Christ is, in one word, LOVE.

Because love suffereth long and is kind, beareth all things and endureth all things; and love is the fulfilling of the law of God.

July 7, 1917

Part II

The late World-war was a test of the Christianized nations, of the church, and of individual "Christians." It showed clearly what the advanced nations of the world really are underneath the thin veneering of so-called "Christian civilization." It showed also the true condition of the professing church; and it showed how much (or how little) of the Spirit of Christ there is in those who claim to be His. For both the world and the church were taken by surprise. They had been lulled into a state of unreadiness by the pleasing and man-flattering doctrine that the human race had progressed so far from its primitive state of barbarism, and had so advanced in the promotion of good will and the brotherhood of man, that wars on a large scale were now a thing of the past. True there were some shrewd political observers who sounded the alarm from time to time, calling loudly for "preparedness;" and there were also a few who, in the light of the word of god, predicted the imminence of such a catastrophe as has now taken place. But their warnings were disregarded and they themselves derided as "pessimists."

Thus it came to pass that, when the young men of England and America were confronted with the conscription laws, those among them who truly belonged to Christ were, for the most part, wholly unprepared by teaching from the Word of God, as to the stand they ought to take. This neglect of practical teaching is the cause of many of the evils which afflict the saints of god at the present time. Instead of being taught how they ought to walk and please God, how to fulfill the law of Christ, how to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age, and to adorn the teaching of God our Saviour in all their actions, the people of God are mainly occupied, by those who assume to teach them, with guesses at unfulfilled prophecy, dis-pensational theories, and discussions of passages of Scripture

which are without effect upon their conduct. Study of the Bible is mainly in order to increase knowledge which "puffeth up," and very rarely indeed with a view to learning the will of God in order to do it.

The sad result of this neglect was that thousands of young men who truly belong to Christ - having been redeemed by His blood - and who owe their "service" to Him, took service in the armies of the nations, for the doing of the devil's work of death and destruction. Our heart goes out to these; for surely they are rather to be pitied than blamed. The responsibility lies more with those who, being themselves safe by reason of age from enforced military service, failed to instruct the young men in the truth of the Word, and to encourage them to stand true to their Lord. But that is not all; for one of the saddest, and at the same time one of the most alarming features of the war-period, is the fact that many leaders and teachers among the Lord's people, including not a few who are sound and evangelical, actually lent themselves to the cause of Satan in counseling and urging Christ's young men to accept military service under pressure of the conscription laws.

There are however, bright spots in the dark picture; for there were a number of young men - all honor to them - who, against all pressure, all taunts, all persecutions, all deceitful advice of false teachers, refused to bear arms or to take any part whatever in the devilish business of war. I have talked with many of these, and have corresponded with others; and my heart has been thrilled and also warmed to thanksgiving and praise, for the grace given them to endure such cruel tortures and hardships for Christ's sake, and for the faithfulness of the Lord in manifesting himself to them and sustaining them through their time of trial. There is not one of them but would, if faced again by the same alternative, gladly make the same choice. Theirs was the true courage; for it is far easier to run with the crowd of those whose feet are swift to shed blood, and who received the plaudits of the admiring world, than to face and endure the consequences of standing true to Christ.

And now that the war is over, and the excitement has died down, the people of the world are again going to sleep, and are dreaming dreams of an era of reconstruction and of an all-powerful League of Nations which will promptly suppress any outbreak of war, and insure peace to the world henceforth and forever. But let none of God's saints be deceived by such delusive notions. There will be war to the end of the age; and it is likely that it will take the more horrible form of class-war, a war of the propertyless class against the owners of wealth and property in general. And let it not be forgotten that, among "the lessons of the war," the one which has been best learned by men is the development of methods and apparatus for destroying human beings - combatants and non-combatants alike. Thousands of inventive minds are at this very moment engaged in perfecting such methods and means insomuch that it is safe to predict that the next war will be marked by horrors and atrocities far exceeding anything that has yet been known.

Therefore, now is the time for the saints of God, young and old, to learn the teaching of His word on the subject of taking part in war; and it is with the desire to render, if possible, some little help toward that end that this tract is now republished in revised and enlarged form.

"The Powers That Be"

It is highly important that the saints should clearly understand their relations to "the powers that be," that is to say, to the civil authorities of the country wherein their earthly lot is cast. The fact that these authorities have been appointed by God (Rom. 13:1) carries with it certain conclusions which should be grasped by all the people of God. And chiefly should we realize that "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; He turneth it withersoever He will" (Prov. 21:1). This means that civil government, with all its imperfections, and civil magistrates with all their faults and failures, exist for the protection and welfare of God's people. It follows that, when the saints are walking in obedience to the will of God, they can count upon Him to overrule any decrees of the authorities which would coerce them to wrong doing. For rulers are not constituted by God to be a terror to good works, but to the evil(Rom. 13:3). They may, indeed, and often do, fail in that for which God has clothed them with brief authority, and may lend their support to the doing of evil works. Nevertheless, we are to keep in mind God's purpose in vesting them with power; and we are to support them in all the lawful exercise of that power, to pay fully all taxes

levied upon us, to submit to all ordinances that do not demand disobedience to the law of God, and above all we are to be faithful in praying for them, to the end that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty (1 Tim. 2:1, 2). If we keep these things in mind, and do accordingly, we shall doubtless find that the civil ruler is indeed, "the minister (servant) of God to thee for good" (Rom. 13:4).

An illustration of this control which God maintains over the actions of the civil rulers is seen in the fact that the authorities of the United States, during the late war, did not demand that the saints of God should accept military service, but provided exemption and considerate treatment for all who, because of conscience toward God, refused to don the uniform or to put themselves under military orders. It is true that subordinate officials did not always carry out these merciful provisions, and that some young men in consequence suffered ill treatment and hardship. But exemption was nevertheless provided; and had our young men been taught how to act, namely, to show all respect for the tribunals, but to refuse (for Christ's sake) to take part in military service, many a valuable young life might have been spared. Heavy indeed is the responsibility in this regard of those to whom the saints look for instruction in the ways of God.

In connection with the subject of our relations to "the powers that be" we quote from a periodical read by many of the saints the following paragraphs with which we are in full accord:

"Subjection to authorities, in all they are authorized to demand, and submission in all legislation they are at liberty to enact in their sphere, is plainly enjoined in the Scriptures cited, as indeed in the general teachings of the Word. If rulers exceed their authority and demand obedience in such things as involves direct disobedience to God, then their claims are not to be submitted to but rejected. Only supreme ignorance of the principles of the Word of God, or judicial blindness – which comes through trifling with them – can cause any professed teacher to say that subjection to unrighteous claims is to be given, and that acceptance of them is justification for the rejection of the higher claims of God. Not so, thought the three Hebrews in the day of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image (Dan. 3), nor Daniel in the day of Darius' prohibition of prayer (Dan. 6). Nor did England's martyrs in the time of the Marian persecution, or Scotland's covenanters in the time of Claverhouse, yield such blind submission) age to discover, and for men with less grit to formulate the sophism, that the State is a fetish to be worshipped, and that obedience to its claims in all things is the equivalent of obedience to God. We know that many Christian young men have been entirely misled by such reasonings, and the Lord may yet have something to say to those who have stumbled them by their evil counsel. The doctrine of blind subjection to all that the ruling authorities – civil, military, and ecclesiastical – may demand and compel, is one that ought to please Antichrist well, for when he comes, it will be to find a submissive, 'patriotic' people ready to receive and own his rule, to obey him as their master, and to worship him as their God."

"Whose Image?"

The false teaching by which many of our beloved young saints were misled to their death was based mainly upon the plea that whatever the authorities commanded was to be done, because to refuse obedience would be to "resist the power." It should be enough to say, in reply to this shallow plea, that all Scripture bears witness that we should refuse any command, no matter how exalted its source, which requires us to do anything contrary to the revealed will of God (Dan. 3:16-18; 6:10; Acts 4:19, 20, etc.). Not to resist the authorities and the ordinances they may lawfully make is one thing; but to accept service under those authorities for the execution of whatever commands they may see fit to issue, it quite another thing. The servants of Christ are not put themselves in any "service" where they cannot obey their Lord and Master, and glorify Him in all they do and say. He has given them such commands as this" "And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him" (Col. 3:17). We have only to ask then if a saint of God can, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, plunge a bayonet into the vitals of a human being, sending him to hell with curses on his lips perhaps; or can he, in His Name, fire a machine-gun into the quivering flesh of his fellow-men; or can he drop a bomb into a crowd of women and children, giving thanks for the havoc wrought thereby

to God and the Father by Him? Those who accept military service commit themselves in advance to the doing of these very things - and worse. So we cannot see how any excuse can be found for those who, having assumed the grave responsibility of teaching the saints of God to walk in His ways, actually lead them into "the paths of the Destroyer."

But, in order to keep within moderate limits, we will confine our further remarks mainly to the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ (briefly referred to in Part I) found in Matthew 22:18-21:

> *"But Jesus perceived their wickedness and said, Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Cæsar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's."*

These words are marvelous in their depth, breadth and clearness. They cover the entire cases, leaving no room for uncertainty on the part of any who will to do the will of God. It needed the wisdom of Solomon to decide to which claimant the disputed infant belonged; and behold! a Greater than Solomon is here! The Lord draws a line between the things which are Cæsar's and the things which are God's; and He expressly commands that the former are to be rendered to Cæsar, and the latter to God. Furthermore, He makes the "image and superscription" (or inscription) the test of ownership. Have we in our possession that which bears Cæsar's image and inscription? Then we must render it to Cæsar when he demands it. That means among other things that, no matter how oppressive the taxation, even though it should take our last penny, we are not to resist the payment of it. But how about our ransomed bodies and souls? Whose "image" is impressed upon them? Have we been "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him Who created us" (Col. 3:10). Have we been inscribed with the Spirit of God and made living Epistles to be known and read of all men (2 Cor. 3:2)? If so, then we need no further light or information. We are not to render our souls and bodies to the State, but are to yield ourselves unto God as those who are alive from the dead., and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God (Rom. 6:13); we are to present our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service (Rom. 12:1).

In the light of these Scriptures it is clear that, when a saint of God, sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ Whom Cæsar's soldiers crucified in obedience to orders and as a soldier's duty - yields his own body to Cæsar, to wear Cæsar's uniform, and to obey Cæsar's orders, even to the killing of those who Christ came to save, he acts in plain disobedience to the Word of Christ, for he renders to Cæsar that which is God's. And not only so; but the service which he thus accepts calls him to do that which is of all things most contrary to the purposes for which Christ shed His own blood.

Little children, it is the last hour. The Epistle to the Romans, which enjoins submission to "the powers that be," was written when the tyrant Nero was on the throne of the Cæsar's. Soon the authority of Cæsar will be wielded by a worse tyrant than he; for the last to exercise Cæsar's authority will be the Antichrist, the son of perdition. Let us then give heed to this solemn matter. Do we realize that, if the false teaching which lately lifted its head among us to the destruction of some of our choice young men be not thoroughly exposed and rooted out, it will prepare the way for God's own saints to accept the mark of the beast? Do we realize that every argument that has been urged for inducing our young men to accept military service in the late world-war would be equally valid as a reason for accepting serviced under the last and greatest of earth's rulers – Antichrist?

Let us not think then that, because the armies are just now to a large extent abandoned, there is no need to urge this subject upon the saints of God at the present time. This is, on the contrary, the very time to bring it forward, to the end that they who desire to walk in God's ways may know His expressed will about it, and may not again be caught unawares.

ISIS, the Crusades, and Religious Violence
by Joel Poindexter

Christians Resorting to Violence

With the savage violence being reported daily from the Middle East, and with news of the recent Christian martyrs in Libya, what to do and how to respond has been a hotly debated topic. In most conversations, the only points of debate are how much military power needs to be exerted and how swiftly these powers should act. While this is expected of mainstream political players which are essentially characterized by their use of force, such attitudes are becoming increasingly more common in Christian circles.

How Christians ought to respond to persecution is clearly outlined in scripture, see Matthew 5:38-40, 1 Peter 3:14, and 1 John 3:13 for examples. Nevertheless, even devout believers are tempted to eschew these teachings and give in to militaristic tendencies for a variety of reasons, among them pragmatism and expediency. This ungodly mentality is not only dangerous in the short run due to the often unexpected and brutal consequences of militarism, but it also brings trouble for the church in the long run.

Take for example the Crusades, which have long been used as a cudgel against Christianity. President Barack Obama recently mentioned them at a prayer breakfast. As one might expect, he was quickly criticized for bringing them up.

Some Christians were offended he would reach so far back into history to dredge up stains on the church. They said that, after all, the Crusades in no way represent their faith, and clearly run counter to the gospel. They resented being lumped into one group, indistinguishable from the murderers and plunderers of Medieval Europe.

Still, if Christians resent this characterization, how can they turn around and conflate crucifiers and cannibals with everyday Muslims who neither engage in, nor condone, the practices of the Islamic State? Whatever the Koran tells followers must be done with infidels, it's telling that of the 1.6 billion Muslims in the world, so few actually engage in terrorism.

Who Has the Right to Justify Violence?

Other Christians were indignant because such statements about the Crusades seemed to draw a moral equivalence between Islamic terrorists and Christians repelling invaders and retaking the Holy Land. They argue that such a comparison ignores key distinctions between the groups and their motives. Sure, the Crusaders sinned, but it was not as bad as what Islamic terrorists do and thus the Crusaders are justified. We know from scripture, however, that any such distinction is irrelevant in God's eyes, that none are blameless, and indeed there is a moral equivalence regarding sin. See Romans 3:9-20 and Romans 3:23. This is why His grace is extended to all who accept it, regardless of their past life. Can a Crusader repent and be saved? Yes, and so can a terrorist.

A third group of Christians was outraged because they see nothing wrong with the Crusades, and in fact consider them something to be celebrated and repeated. This is reprehensible. There can be no reconciling the Crusades with any part of Jesus' teachings. Endorsing such brutality against innocents denies the Lordship of Christ and overturns the whole of the New Testament's witness to Jesus.

A misconception pervades these debates regarding so-called "religious violence" wherein only "The Other Religion" engages in atrocities. Islamic terror groups such as al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and the Islamic State come easily to mind. But so too should certain Irish militias, and undoubtedly the groups now marauding through the Central African Republic are considered "Christian" terrorists.

Fighting Fire with Fire

Worse still, most methods of combating terror groups are in fact indistinguishable from terrorism. This is especially evident when innocent civilians are targeted - wittingly or unwittingly - by military forces. In

the past six years, more civilians have died in drone bombings than died on 9/11, not to mention the estimated <u>one hundred fifty thousand</u> Iraqis killed during the last war. Commonly referred to as collateral damage, this euphemistic term devalues the lives of those it affects, in direct contradiction to <u>scripture</u>.

Millions live in horror of US weapons. <u>Adults are paralyzed</u> by the stress, and children long for cloudy days when the drones do not fly. Many Christians describe the United States as being a Christian nation, founded upon Christian values. If this is true, how should the US be perceived by those who are targeted, other than state-sponsored Christian terrorism?

More is Expected of Us

Such violence does not reflect true Christianity, but that fact does not negate the perception others might have, and promoting more conflict only reinforces the idea that it is acceptable and desirable for Christians to wage war.

Supposing the Islamic State's armies are bent on exterminating all Christians everywhere, we can be confident in scripture <u>this will not happen</u>. Still, the attempted genocide of early Christians quite literally built the church. Persecuted Christians introduced the gospel across Europe and Asia, and persecution reinforced how Christ's death and resurrection was to be the Church's one foundation.

This does not mean things will be easy, far from it. Nevertheless, <u>Brian Zahnd explains</u> that "as Christians we persuade by love, witness, Spirit, reason, rhetoric, and if need be, martyrdom, but never by force. Christ followers are called to embody the peaceable kingdom of the Lamb." Christ did not come to condemn the world (John 3:17), and neither should Christians.

Pro-lifers for Mass Murder
By Laurence Vance

"Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh." (James 3:10-12).

All Life Matters

Pro-lifers are dedicated to the idea that God values all human life, they are committed to educating women about the dangers to their physical and emotional health if they undergo abortions, they are relentless in pointing out the horrors of abortion – and they are some of the most bloodthirsty warmongers on the planet.

Beginning in 1984, the Sunday in January closest to January 22 has been designed by many pro-life and religious organizations as Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. This is designed to coincide with the anniversary of the infamous Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision in 1973 that overrode most state abortion statutes and effectively made abortion a fundamental constitutional right.

Every year on Sanctity of Human Life Sunday churches of all denominations observe this day with special sermons, prayers, and presentations, testimonies from former abortionists, recognition of pro-life organizations, denunciations of pro-choice politicians, Planned Parenthood, and the Roe v. Wade decision, calls for legislation to restrict abortion, and distribution of anti-abortion literature.

As both a Christian and a steadfast opponent of abortion (see my articles "For Whom Would Jesus Vote?" and "Is Ron Paul Wrong on Abortion?" and "The Pro-Life Assault on Ron Paul and the Constitution"), I sympathize with the pro-life cause. But I go much further than the typical pro-lifer. I don't think abortion is okay after the third trimester; that is, I believe in the right to life for everyone – including adults and foreigners.

Anti-Life Pro-Lifers

How many churches on the recent Sanctity of Human Life Sunday mentioned the right to life of countless numbers of Iraqis and Afghans who have been killed by American bombs and bullets in unjust wars instigated by the United States? How many churches mentioned the right to life of U.S. soldiers who have died in vain and for a lie in senseless foreign wars? If the pro-lifers in churches that observed Sanctity of Human Life Sunday care about innocent children then surely they mentioned children in Iraq and Afghanistan who have lost their parents because of the U.S. waging war on their countries, children born with birth defects due to the U.S. military using depleted uranium, and children in Iraq killed by brutal U.S. sanctions? Surely they mentioned the orphaned and emotionally scarred children of dead and injured U.S. soldiers?

Although some churches may have mentioned these things, I suspect that the number is rather small or, in the case of most evangelical churches, very insignificant. And if it be argued that the churches that observed Sanctity of Human Life Sunday should be excused because the day is just about abortion then what about the rest of the year? Do not adults have the same right to life as unborn children? Do not foreigners who are not a threat to this country have the same right to life as American babies? Do not U.S. soldiers have the same right to life that other Americans have?

Warvangelicals

But in some churches it is even worse. Not only is no mention ever made of these things, the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are defended and celebrated. Although they may call themselves evangelical churches, they are warvangelical churches. They are churches that worship God and

venerate the institution of the military; they are churches that preach Christ and promote warmongering Republican politicians. They are pro-lifers for mass murder.

It is only natural that most pro-lifers love Republican politicians. At the Family Research Council's Values Voter Summit held in Washington DC this past September, Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN) was the top choice of conservative activists. This same group named abortion as the top issue they were concerned about. Pence was also the top pick for vice president.

The German Nazis fought for the fatherland. The Soviet Red Army fought for the motherland. Mike Pence wants Americans to fight for the homeland. He "supported creation of the new Department of Homeland Security, the largest reorganization of the government since the beginning of the Cold War." Because of the Department of Homeland Security, "our ability to defend the homeland is more effective, efficient and organized." Pence is a committed supporter of the bogus war on terror. He even repeats the ridiculous canard that "we must take the fight to the terrorists overseas so we don't have to face them here at home."

The runner up to Pence in the Values Voters straw poll was the former preacher Mike Huckabee, who won the top spot last year. Huckabee not only supported the sending of more troops to their death in Iraq, he actually maintained that we should not withdraw from Iraq because "we are winning." This advocate of perpetual war in the Middle East had only one criticism for Bush regarding his handling of the war in Iraq: he was too timid and not sufficiently bloodthirsty.

Pence and Huckabee are no different from DeMint, Romney, Gingrich, Giuliani, McCain, Graham, Palin, and Santourm – they are all ardent supporters of war, empire, and police statism. Yet, any one of these individuals would get the support of most evangelicals as long as they played the pro-life card. Once a Republican candidate passes a pro-life litmus test (applied to just American babies), nothing else about them seems to matter. They could call for bombing Iran, Pakistan, or Yemen back to the Stone Age and it wouldn't change anything.

When Will Christians Learn?

Why are pro-lifers so indifferent to, and in some cases so defensive of, war, militarism, and nationalism? I think the main reason is ignorance. Ignorance of the Republican Party. Ignorance of U.S. foreign policy. Ignorance of history. Ignorance of the military. Ignorance of the Bible they profess to believe. This is especially true if all one does is listen to SRN News on radio, watch Fox News on television, and read news by the American Family Association on the Internet. The importance of LewRockwell.com must here be mentioned. I have lost count of the number of Christians that have written me about how LRC has been instrumental in changing their thinking.

Pro-lifers should be just as concerned about their government sanctioning the killing of foreigners on the battlefield in an unjust war as they are about their government sanctioning the killing of babies in the womb in an abortion.

It is hypocrisy in the highest degree to talk about the sanctity of life and the evils of abortion and then turn around and show contempt for, or indifference to, the lives of adults and foreigners.

Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. Pro-lifers, these things ought not so to be.

Originally posted at LewRockwell.com.

Invading Iraq Was Wrong, And It's Wrong To Do It Again
By Jeremy Mack

The Insanity of Interventionism

If insanity can be defined as doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results, then perhaps the United States' foreign policy truly is insane. Let's admit we have been wrong in Iraq and stop making the same mistake.

What is that mistake, you ask? It is to claim very vaguely that American interests are in danger (what those may be we are never told), and then to intervene militarily in the affairs of another nation. I realize that in Iraq's case it will be difficult for us to walk away, since we are largely responsible for the current mess that the nation is in, but will further intervention ultimately bring the type of change that we want to see there? If modern history holds true, the answer is clearly no.

First, after decimating Iraq's infrastructure twice in the last two and a half decades in expensive wars, they are no more free and stable now than they were under Saddam Hussein. They are arguably in even worse shape now than they were before the U.S. arrived. Twenty-three years of U.S. involvement in Iraq has given us what we are watching unfold on our television screens right now. Since 2003, we have spent 1.7 trillion dollars, lost over 4,000 U.S. service personnel in battle, and sent home over 35,000 wounded soldiers from Iraq. There are estimates that as many as half a million Iraqi civilians were killed between 2003 and 2014 as well. These have been destructive, expensive, bloody, and extremely sad years for both Iraq and America. While we bombed Iraq in the name of freedom over weapons of mass destruction that did not even exist, our government has removed precious liberty after precious liberty, spent us into the ground, and printed money into oblivion. America and Iraq are less secure and less stable due to our reckless disregard for the truth, human life, and the laws of economics. It is time for a change in U.S. foreign policy.

America's Actions Have Consequences

We need to become acquainted with the roots of our own liberty again. Liberty is not forged in a vacuum. Securing and maintaining liberty takes "eternal vigilance". Liberty, in America specifically, and the West generally, was more than 2,500 years in the making, going back as far as Greece. Our understanding of liberty was forged in the fire of history, and we are still refining it. Constitutional republics are not instant pudding or microwaveable popcorn. They are not produced on a whim with few ingredients. The idea that we were going to waltz into Iraq, topple a dictator, write a constitution, erect voting booths, and have long-standing democracy was foolish and short sighted. The intentions may have been good, but good intentions are not enough. The Iraq War was naïve, and reflects a poor understanding of our own roots.

Iraq is also less safe for minorities now. Some of the oldest Christian communities in the world were in Iraq. For the most part those Christian communities had lived peacefully side by side with Muslims for centuries. But due to America's interventionism, those communities have all but been destroyed. Why? When America stationed its troops in Iraq, Iraq became a lightening rod for Islamic extremists. Radical Muslims poured into Iraq to fight America on the ground. As radicals fought Americans, they killed Christians along the way. Before America arrived in Iraq there was not a single verifiable Al Qaeda cell in that country. Before the fall of Mosul and Tikrit to ISIS, Al Qaeda backed forces controlled about 20% of Iraq. Iraq went from a nation without Al Qaeda at all in 2003, to a nation faced with being controlled by Islamic radicals in just over a decade. This obviously bodes very badly for minorities in Iraq like Shiite Muslims and Christians.

Instead of stabilizing the region, American wars have destabilized it. Now there is the very real threat of Iraq, Libya, Egypt, and Syria all being controlled by Sunni radicals at the same time. All these states were once secularized Muslim nations. They were once our friends. Now, due to America's intervention in these nations, they all have fallen, or have nearly fallen, into the worst of hands. These places will

now be safe havens for more and more terrorists to train, receive funding, and even gain state sponsorship.

A Foreign Policy for Peace?

I suggest at this point we take a step back, admit that America's foreign policy of aggression in Iraq has been wrong, and seek a new way forward, one that promotes free markets and liberty, but does not involve the U.S. military. Let's try friendship and becoming a beacon of peace and prosperity again. Perhaps we should secure our own borders, make citizenship and work visas easier to gain, and try trading with nations instead of invading them. Economic sanctions should be lifted from nations like Iran. Sanctions only serve to hurt the people of a nation and allow the real problem, dictatorial governments and thugs to use us as a scapegoat. Let's get out of bed with every tin-pot dictator in the world. Let's love freedom, let's promote liberty, but let's do it without violence. Liberty that is spread by the sword is not liberty at all. That was the problem with Iraq's liberty all along, it wasn't real. It was only an illusion, one that would be ill-fated to try and manufacture again.

Just War? Christian Leaders Must Avoid Becoming Court Prophets
By Jeff Wright

Disappointingly (but not surprisingly), a prominent evangelical leader has once again provided alleged moral justification for war in the Middle East. Russell Moore is to be commended for the cautious and thoughtful manner in which he approached this crucial question. However, even as he claimed that "[he doesn't] have a definitive answer to offer," his conclusions on how Just War principles relate to Syria nevertheless lead one to conclude that war with Syria would be just.

The Context of U.S. Engagement with Syria

The topic at hand came on the heels of the U.S.-led missile strike on the Al Shayrat airfield in Syria on April 7, 2018. People had been asking Moore, who heads a prominent Christian ethics commission, if a broader war with Syria would be just. Moore rightly noted that there already is a war raging in Syria. This points to a broader fact that many evangelical leaders often fail to address. The most recent military action against Syria did not occur in vacuum. Escalation into a broader war with Syria would not emerge from a vacuum, either.

American aggression in the Middle East can arguably be traced back to the U.S. and British-led Iranian coup d'état of 1953. The desire for regional transformation continued through the decades and was accelerated during the administration of President George W. Bush (e.g., Iraq, Iran, Syria, Hamas). The agenda of reshaping the Middle East through "regime change" continued through the Obama administration (e.g., Libya, Syria) and appears to still have life in the Trump administration (e.g., Syria, Yemen). Any discussion of Just War in Syria ought to consider the just or unjust nature of the broader agenda of regional transformation through regime change.

Just War Principles

Moore laudably notes that [Just War] "theory holds that war brings with it tremendous moral consequence" and holds that "war should be a grave exception to the norm, which should be peace and order." He then addresses "the first principle of a just war, that of a just cause" which, he claims, has "clearly" been met with Syria. This is a stunningly-cavalier assertion in light of the fact that many observers were highly suspicious of the claim that Syrian President Bashar Assad used chlorine or sarin gas on his own people. This is especially important in light of the fact that U.S. officials have admittedthat there is no evidence the Syrian government gassed its own people as alleged in 2013 and 2017.

Moore supported his conclusion regarding "just cause" by declaring:

1. The Assad regime is lawless and murderous, guilty of war crimes against the people of Syria themselves;

1. Assad has defied international law in a way that fully justifies action against his forces.

He commended the leaders of the U.S., U.K., and France for "not yielding to the morally bankrupt vision that emerges from time to time in history, arguing that defenseless people should fend for themselves as they are being slaughtered."

Issues with "Supporting Evidence" of a Just War with Syria

I recognize that we should not expect that a fully-detailed and validated case be made in every brief, 1,000-word blog post. On the other hand, it seems that all we ever get when it comes to Just War discussions are brief, unsubstantiated assertions, so it would be nice to occasionally see a more robust case. That being said, I want to take issue with the supporting evidence provided for a supposedly just cause.

"The Assad regime is lawless and murderous…" This certainly cannot be the Christian standard for the just use of military force against a foreign nation, as the U.S. would then continually be at war with multiple nations at all times. Similar judgments have made against dictators such as Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi. As I have pointed out, these men are not what we would call 'virtuous leaders.' Christians in the West would certainly not want to live under their regimes. However, history has proven that secular dictators have often provided Christian minorities with a measure of protection from violence and persecution, along with a degree --- however limited --- of freedom of worship. Once 'regime change' occurs, this protection disappears and persecution sharply increases.

We cannot look at Syria in isolation. What has occurred in Iraq and Libya is likely to occur again in Syria. We have brothers and sisters in Christ living in Syria, Iraq, Iran, Libya and elsewhere. It often seems as if some evangelical leaders consider the interests of the state that wants to intervene more than the interests of the Body of Christ which bears the brunt of being intervened upon.

"Guilt of war crimes against the people of Syria themselves…defied international law in a way that fully justifies action against his forces." At this point, it appears as if we have completely abandoned the traditional standard of defense against aggression as the minimum just cause for war. Now, instead of defending against aggression, initiating aggression against another nation is routinely accepted (so long as a case can be made for coming to the defense of people who are being victimized).

Again, it is not clear that the Assad regime used sarin gas against the people of Syria. More substantial verification is needed before using this event to claim 'just cause.' And even if it were proven, does the violation of international law automatically qualify as justification for the use of U.S. military force? If so, then why do Christian leaders not call for military intervention in those African nations outside the Middle East when international law is (routinely) violated? Or is our ethical guidance merely reactionary depending upon the proposed agenda of the state? It is also worth noting that if a violation of international law is a 'just cause' for military aggression against a sovereign nation, then we must deal with the fact that the presence of U.S. forces and its operations in Syria have not been sanctioned by either Damascus or the United Nations Security Council, and Syria claims that U.S. presence is an illegal aggression against its own sovereign state. The U.S. would claim the same if the situation were reversed.

If it is a "morally bankrupt vision" which says "defenseless people should fend for themselves as they are being slaughtered," then would it not follow that the Church should actively call for military intervention wherever and whenever 'slaughter' occurs? Do not stop at condemning non-intervention as morally bankrupt; go on and make the Christian case for U.S. military intervention wherever violence is committed against defenseless people. Such would certainly be in the purview of a ministry dedicated to Christian ethics.

When is Regime Change Warranted?

Moore has determined that the Assad regime is "illegitimate." He does not say on what basis he has come to this conclusion. He also endorses the controversial interventionist policy of regime change by asserting, "Regime change is certainly warranted in Syria." This is a very troubling statement coming from a Christian leader. In addition to being morally vacuous, regime change makes matters worse.

> "By now the U.S. foreign-policy elite should understand that regime change is a bad idea. The three most recent cases–Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya–are far from models of success. Afghanistan is now America's longest-running war with no end in sight. Iraq is a close second and yet another example of the folly of trying to impose Western-style democracy in a tribal society with a Sunni-Shia divide. Moreover, deposing Saddam Hussein created a vacuum that first gave rise to al Qaeda in Iraq and then ISIS. Libya has turned out to be a smaller-scale version of Iraq. Another dictator deposed, but even President Obama had to admit regime change 'didn't work.'"

American evangelicals can do better than naively serving as a rubber stamp to a morally dubious (at best) interventionist foreign policy. By continually offering ethical cover for aggressive regime change, evangelical leaders become court prophets, offering worldly leaders the words they want to hear. This is strange from someone who, like Moore, has otherwise been so critical of the current president.

We would do well to consider the words of our fellow Christians in Syria (whom Moore called our "brothers and sisters in Christ in mortal jeopardy there"). The Patriarchates of Antioch and all the East for the Greek Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, and Greek-Melkite Catholic churches condemned the "brutal aggression" of the most recent strike against Syria, declaring in part:

> "We call upon all churches in the countries that participated in the aggression, to fulfill their Christian duties, according to the teachings of the Gospel, and condemn this aggression and to call their governments to commit to the protection of international peace."

Which comes closer to fulfilling our Christian duty: condemning interventionist aggression or rubber stamping it as 'just?' As did Moore, I also call upon us to "pray for peace and order and justice and righteousness in Syria." But how to justly achieve this peace remains up for debate.

Simple Arguments Against the Iraq War
By Dr. Norman Horn

On the eve of the exit of President Bush, it seems appropriate to review what will most likely be the lasting legacy of this President - the Iraq War. The Christian conservative community has largely been accepting of whatever has come from the Bush Administration, and most of all his foreign policy decisions, often because of President Bush's claimed Christian faith and the belief that he must be honest and well-intentioned. Libertarian Christians, on the other hand, have seen through this fog and call the President to repent of his abuse of power. In the following, I will review the three common arguments from the pro-war side and explain how these cannot be adequate justifications. Hopefully, you can remember them the next time you have a chance to talk to your conservative brother or sister in Christ.

Arguments for the Iraq War and the War on Terror

Argument #1: Saddam Has WMDs

The initial reason given for starting the Iraq War was that Saddam possessed all sorts of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). That is, if Iraq has WMDs they are in a position to kill us all. First off, if you still believe that Iraq had WMDs, you are mistaken. President Bush doesn't even use that argument anymore; he has now accepted the fact that there were none. A "slam dunk" case, as Donald Rumsfeld and Karl Rove said? I think not. Second, let's play devil's advocate. Suppose Iraq had a few WMDs – does it actually matter? At the Soviet Union's pinnacle of power they had over 10,000 nuclear weapons at their disposal and yet were unable to "blackmail" the US into doing their bidding. Do you seriously think that a country with few weapons (including North Korea and Iran, incidentally) could threaten us? Don't be naive. Even a rogue country knows that using a WMD would get them blown sky high in under a minute by the U.S. arsenal of nuclear weaponry. Our God-given survival instinct is a powerful thing. Yes, suicide bombers do exist, but a country is not a suicide bomb. Saddam Hussein had more to worry about than the hopeless extremism of suicidal terrorists and the supposed heavenly virgins. It is a well known fact that Saddam was not a fundamentalist Muslim. He had an entire country under his thumb, and if you know anything about dictators throughout the history of the world, you know they do not just give away their kingdoms (i.e. let themselves get blown to smithereens), to support fanatical religious ideology. The United States should focus simply on protecting our borders, which is easily more important, demonstrably more efficient, and far more moral than trying to play policeman throughout the world. But now, the war hawks continue to play the WMD fear card against Americans regarding other Middle Eastern countries. It's high time we stop believing this garbage and demand that the government cease foreign interventions on the basis of WMDs.

Argument #2: The Threat of Terrorism

The second argument proffered from the pro-war side is the "threat of terrorism" claim. In other words, Iraq was the most important target in the war on terror, and taking them out was the only way to win. But the supposed threat of terrorism from Iraq is not justification for launching a full-scale war. In fact, the argument on its face shouldn't have even made sense to the well-informed. It was well known before the invasion that Iraq had no connection to Al Qaeda. The evidence for Saddam supporting international terror was slight at best and is laid out entirely in the 9-11 Commission Report. The evidence points much more strongly towards Iran and even Saudi Arabia than Iraq.

Furthermore, one cannot possibly know the consequences of an invasion with respect to terrorism. Will an intervention deter or inflame terrorism? How will the intervention affect uninvolved civilians? You cannot know beforehand. But supposing we could judge on the results, then we must conclude the invasion has had the exact opposite effect as was intended. (You will find that this is the unintended consequence of the overwhelming majority of government actions.) Numerous reports from 2005 to

2009 suggest that terrorism has actually increased as a result of the Iraq occupation. There are other reports, even from within the Bush administration, saying the war is actually attracting many terrorists into Iraqfrom outside countries. If Iraq was really the hotbed of terrorism in the world, how is it that after the U.S. sponsored nation-building effort terrorism flourishes all the more? I can tell you why. By eliminating the state of Iraq, the U.S. unintentionally created a brand new, rich breeding ground for international terrorism to develop. How a conservative can argue that the threat of terrorism has been reduced through the Iraq War simply cannot fit either evidence or reason.

Many people have told me that if we were not fighting the war on terror abroad, we would be fighting it in our homeland instead. I think they overestimate the power of terrorism. Consider what would happen if the nation that spends more money and manpower on their military than *any* other country in the history of the world decided to pull out our soldiers from all corners of the earth, stop policing the world, and then *truly* protect the U.S. borders. After reorganizing the military in this way, ceasing to enact aggressive foreign policy, do you seriously think we would *still* have terrorists destroying our cities from Los Angeles to Manhattan? If so, I think I have much more faith in the military than you do. Enacting neutrality in foreign affairs, exercising free trade, and protecting our borders is a much more reasonable course of action rather than attempting to meet the threat abroad.

Argument #3: Liberation of the Iraqi People

Finally, there is the "liberation of Iraqis" argument, which currently is the most often used argument of the Bush Administration and many other supporters of the war. For a more complete explanation, I refer you to this article by Dr. David Gordon of the Mises Institute for more information. Gordon uses Robert Higgs's book Resurgence of the Warfare State to explode the so-called humanitarian argument for the Iraq War. This argument does not justify the Iraq War on the supposed presence of WMDs, and in fact it admits that the WMD defense must be rejected. (Of course, the fact that this argument was the invented justification long after the WMD argument was given up should say something as well…) Rather, the argument claims that humanitarian considerations supported the overthrow of the tyrannical regime of Saddam Hussein. The U.S. has killed innocent people in the process, but the good somehow outweighs the bad. Quoting the argument of Gordon and Higgs:

> *"Their deaths have been accidental, and these must be weighed against those who would have suffered and died had Saddam's government continued in power. Higgs rejects completely this sort of moral calculation… [Higgs says that] In the present case, making such a judgment with anything approaching well-grounded assurance calls for powers that none of us possess. How does anybody know, for example, what the future harms caused to innocent parties by Saddam or his henchmen would have been, or that those harms, somehow properly weighted and discounted, would be greater than the harms caused by the U.S. armed forces in the invasion of Iraq? (p. 167)"*

In short, you cannot know what harm you will cause, and you can't say without literally knowing the future that the harm you most surely will cause will be less extensive than if you do nothing. You cannot let your ends (liberation) justify your means (unintentional mass killing). An ends-justifies-means argument should be on its face morally reprehensible, and a Christian should know this better than anyone else on earth – "shall we do evil that good may result?" (Romans 3:8) Why should an action that is wrong for an individual to do become right when a group of individuals, or even a state, does so? The Apostle Paul says people who think like that deserve condemnation. The humanitarian argument fails simply because God is God, and I am not. I cannot go strutting around the world causing havoc, then answer critics by saying "I meant well."

One might ask, "How many Iraqis would have to die at Saddam's hand before a liberation war is justified?" I respect the empathy in this question, but I disagree that it is valid in the first place. You cannot make this sort of moral calculation because you cannot know the future consequences. But, perhaps we can learn something from history.

Some experts estimate that there are literally untold tens of thousands of people killed in Iraq. Even if the controversial Lancet report is off by as much as 50%, we are still talking about 50,000+ Iraqis dead or maimed. And you can't tell me that all the 50,000+ are the "evil enemies." This doesn't even count

the Americans soldiers and civilians dead or maimed. If history is any indication at all, we must reject the humanitarian argument. It begs the question from the "noble liberator": how many more Iraqis and Americans will have to die before we can agree that a pre-emptive, interventionist war is never justified? How many more will have to die before we agree that this cannot work? The question is impossible to answer. You see, neither the "noble liberator" nor I can play moral calculus here - it leads to nonsense and the abandonment of rationality. The liberation argument must be rejected from the outset.

Even so, the humanitarian argument fails for another reason. Once Iraq's threat to America is invalidated as a reason for war, leaving only the humanitarian justification, every other tyrannical regime in the world today becomes fair game for American intervention. One must then ask: was Saddam really the worst of the worst? What about the evil governments in Africa, where children are forced to rape and murder family members so that those children will be brainwashed and shamed into remaining servants and soldiers of the state? What about the hundreds of thousands of people in North Korea who die because of malnutrition, etc., and all the people executed or put into concentration camps for political dissidence? What about communist China, where they have in the past forced women to have abortions? Are we really willing to put America on the line for "preserving democracy in the world" to the point of starting virtually world-wide war? I highly doubt it.

This argument could go on indefinitely, for there are many more arguments against the war. Iraq has not only been a failure, it was wrong to enter in the first place. Our problems simply will not be solved by war. Ron Paul, the only true anti-war candidate in 2008 from either party, has said, "A real solution to our problems will require a better understanding of, and greater dedication to, free markets and private property rights... If we hope to restore any measure of constitutional government, we must abandon the policy of policing the world and keeping troops in every corner of the earth. Our liberties and our prosperity depend on it." Neutrality abroad, in the manner that George Washington, who would likely side with today's libertarians, would have the United States follow, is a much better way of protecting ourselves than causing foreign interventions abroad.

Future Prospects

The pro-war conservative can only be pleased from the 2008 election, for he was given multiple choices for escalating the conflict. Barack Obama has claimed to be a "peace" candidate, but his rhetoric about the Iraq War, Israel, and further Mideast interventions betray that he is no different than a neo-con. Furthermore, choosing Washington war hawks as cabinet members indicates that he continues to seek advice from those who seek others lives for political gain, such as Hillary Clinton and Robert Gates. He clearly cannot be expected to do anything but escalate the conflict in Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and perhaps other completely unrelated countries such as Darfur that he thinks we should "liberate."

There will always be "wars, and rumors of wars," but we must refuse to participate in what is so clearly against the message of the Prince of Peace.

The Deadly Cost of Interventionism
By Dr. Norman Horn

For many years, Christians all across America have sincerely believed that the Federal Government and the military need to "promote freedom" through active aggression against other nations – this is the philosophy of "interventionism." I once numbered among those supporters. Eventually, I realized how flawed this view truly was, and how this philosophy is responsible for so much needless, fruitless violence against the innocent.

The history of America's interventions in the Middle East is fraught with blunder, murder, lies, destruction, and chaos. It is completely embarrassing to think that the United States Government is responsible for so much of the Middle East's problems and the problems we have today with terrorism and America's reputation, but it is unequivocally true. The days of American "innocence" are over, and this history must be accepted because the facts are clear. Whether or not the government learns from this history to stop meddling in the affairs of other nations has yet to be seen. I doubt that we will see a shift in foreign policy anytime soon. However, if we libertarian Christians learn what happened back then, perhaps we can expose the lie of interventionism to our brethren and make a difference in Christendom today.

The next time you are conversing with someone who thinks that interventionism is necessary, tell them of this history. Arm yourself with knowledge, and it will bring truth to light.

1949 – Syria

Syria joined the Palestinians in the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, attempting to prevent the establishment of Israel as a state. Their humiliating defeat in the war discredits the ruling French-allied civilian regime, and then the U.S. government take the opportunity to set up Colonel Husni al-Zaim in a coup against the civilian regime. American agents even call al-Zaim "our boy," but when they arrive to inform the new dictator whom to appoint as his ambassadors and cabinet, al-Zaim orders them to "stand at attention" and to address him as "His Excellency." Syria turns against the United States and descends into a series of coups and counter-coups and police-state government by quasi-military regimes. In other words, the U.S. policy completely backfired and Syria spiraled into chaos.

1952 – Egypt

American influence and assistance backs the conspiracy of Gamal Abdel Nasser's Free Officers to oust the Egyptian royal family, the British post-colonial client regime in Egypt. The U.S. expects Nasser to support Washington's anti-Soviet alliance in the Middle East, dubbed the Baghdad Pact, but he turns against the U.S. American agents support Colonel Mohammad Naguib's attempt to overthrow Nasser, as well as later assassination attempts. In 1956, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles rescinds pledges of foreign aid for the Aswan Dam project. In response, Nasser uses this as a pretext to nationalize the Suez Canal, and uses its toll revenue to fund the dam. Britain, France, and Israel in response launch a joint invasion of Egypt with plans to occupy the Suez Canal. Arab support for the U.S. reaches its highest point when President Eisenhower, out of a distaste for European colonialism and European intervention in the Middle East, pressures the invading forces to abandon their invasion of Egypt.

1953 – Iran

In 1951, the Iranian people democratically elect Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh as premier, partly because of his opposition to the current government granting the Soviet Union a territorial oil franchise in Northern Iran. Mossadegh pushes to nationalize all foreign-owned oil facilities. Mosaddegh's popularity and influence increase to the degree that the shah appoints him prime minister.

Faced with economic and political turmoil, the shah attempts to remove Mosaddegh but is met with mobs and mass public demonstrations, causing the shah of Iran, Reza Pahlavi, to flee the country. The CIA then backs Mosaddegh's opponents, who then overthrow his administration and sentence him to house arrest for the rest of his life. The shah is restored and becomes America's best friend and now controls the nationalized British oil facilities as well. Eventually, opposition to the shah's autocracy and U.S. political domination, as well as the Savak – the U.S.-trained Iranian secret police – culminates in a nationalist revolution that ousts the shah and the West. In 1979, Iran too turns against the U.S. in what is known as the Iranian Hostage Crisis.

This is one of the best examples of blowback to foreign policy, second only to September 11th.

1958 - Iraq

In opposition to the British-client Iraqi regime, and in opposition also to Egyptian President Gamal Nasser's growing influence in Iraq, the bloodthirsty Colonel Qassim spearheads the American-supported military coup to overthrow the Iraqi royal family. The king and crown prince and most of the royal family are executed, and the prime minister is murdered by a mob. Years later, after Qassim has alienated all his allies except the Soviet Union and is overthrown and executed in 1963, United States support swings to none other than the Ba'ath Socialist Party. After years of twists, turns, coups, elections, and revolutions, Saddam Hussein emerges as president of Iraq in 1976.

1958 - Lebanon

After the Iraqi monarchy is overthrown, the president of Lebanon requests U.S. military intervention to save his tottering regime from insurrections of United Arab Republican sympathizers. U.S. Marines arrive the next day in Beirut in what is known as "Operation Blue Bat". 14,000 troops in total are eventually sent over. Lebanon enters into a thirty-five-year period of instability and civil war.

1979 - Iranian Hostage Crisis

Remember what happened in 1953? It comes back to bite us, and with a vengeance. The Shah was a brutal ruler, and eventually the Iranian people realized that the U.S. was behind the fall of the popular hero Mossadegh. Obviously, this didn't make the Iranians very happy.

On November 4, 1979, a group of militant university students took over the diplomatic mission in Tehran. The students were supported by Iran's post-revolutionary regime that was in the midst of solidifying power. This revolution has become known as the "Islamic" or "Iranian Revolution." Sixty-three U.S. diplomats and three other U.S. citizens were taken hostage.

The ordeal reached its climax when the United States military attempted a rescue operation on April 24, 1980, called "Operation Eagle Claw." This failure resulted in the deaths of five U.S. Air Force Airmen and three U.S. Marines. Many historians think that the Iran Hostage Crisis is the reason Jimmy Carter lost the 1980 presidential election to Ronald Reagan.

The crisis finally ended with the signing of the Algiers Accords on January 19, 1981. The hostages were formally released into United States custody the following day. The release took place just minutes after Ronald Reagan was officially sworn in as Carter's successor.

1980 - Iraq and Iran

The Iranian Revolution transformed Iran from a monarchy under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, to an Islamic republic under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of the revolution and founder of the Islamic Republic. Mind you that under Mossedegh, Iran was essentially a secular regime. The CIA then sponsored the coup and installed the fundamentalist Shah, and now the Iranians form a republic with a theocratic constitution.

With the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the Hostage Crisis underway, U.S. favor tilts toward Iraq and Saddam Hussein, believing that they might be useful for dealing with this blowback. Iraq and Hussein

become America's front line in its attempt to crush the Islamic revolution in Iran. The U.S. Federal Government arms and finances Saddam, and in 1980 Iraq begins an invasion of Iran. Iraq is given advice and intelligence from the CIA and the Pentagon, and even perhaps more unbelievably, the U.S. and British administrations provide Iraq with chemical and biological weapons-making knowledge and material to use against the Iranians. Note that this goes against the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention treaty, signed by the United States and Britain, in which 158 states agreed to prohibit the development, production, and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons. However, although it is certain that Iraq used chemical weapons in the conflict, there there is some doubt that Iraq actually used bio-weapons. They certainly used the opportunity to build up their capability for doing so, if anything. Incidentally, these same materials that were sold and given to Iraq at this time were used as supposed justifications for invading Iraq in 2003.

The war would last for eight years, cause an estimated $350 billion in damage to Iran alone, and result in the deaths of nearly one million people.

1983 – Back to Lebanon…

With the country invaded by Israel and under threat of Syrian domination, American Marine "Peacekeepers" are shipped to Beirut. Opposition to their presence leads to the suicide bombing of the barracks. Some 309 Americans are killed, including the CIA's Mideast staff. In 1985, Lebanese CIA agents detonate a truck bomb in Beirut in an attempt to assassinate Sheikh Fadlallah, leader of the Hezbollah faction suspected of blowing up the American barracks two years earlier. Eighty-three civilians are killed and 240 wounded; Sheikh Fadlallah walks out of the mosque fifteen minutes later.

1986 – Libya

In retaliation for the terrorist bombing of a Berlin nightclub that killed a U.S. soldier, President Reagan bombs Libya, causing 130 deaths including civilians near the French embassy. Khadafi's own residence is targeted, killing his adopted infant daughter, in an attempt to assassinate him. Libya is deliberately chosen as the target because it lacks defenses against air bombing. A few months later, the U.S. admits to arms-trading with Iran, a state that the U.S. openly calls an instigator of "international terrorism," and one that is an ally of Libya. Is it any wonder that Arab cynicism about U.S. intentions and trustworthiness increases? Incidentally, the bombing of Pan Am 103 is considered revenge for these attacks.

1986 – Osama vs. the USSR

U.S. government enters into an indirect partnership with Osama bin Laden and other Islamic radicals to resist Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The U.S. government furnishes these newfound partners with advanced weaponry, including Stinger missiles. However, there is obviously some controversy about how involved the U.S. became in this instance.

Robin Cook, former leader of the British House of Commons and Foreign Secretary from 1997-2001, wrote in The Guardian on Friday, 8 July 2005:

"Bin Laden was, though, a product of a monumental miscalculation by western security agencies. Throughout the 1980s, he was armed by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and funded by the Saudis to wage jihad against the Russian occupation of Afghanistan. Al-Qaida, literally 'the database,' was originally the computer file of the thousands of mujahideen who were recruited and trained with help from the CIA to defeat the Russians."

At the very least, it seems fairly certain that there was significant taxpayer money funding these resistance efforts in Afghanistan.

1991 – Iraq & Kuwait

In 1991, Saddam Hussein contends that Iraq's neighbor Kuwait is stealing Iraqi oil through slant drilling and is also violating contractual agreements in OPEC. Saddam tells his partner, the U.S.

government, of his intentions to invade Kuwait to resolve the dispute. U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie, expresses no serious objections, stating, "We have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait… The issue is not associated with America." Some resources indicate that this statement was qualified with a diplomatic warning against violent conflict, but many critics have said that Glaspie effectively gave approval to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

President George Herbert Walker Bush now turns on Saddam and declares him to be a new "Hitler," and effectively dissolves the decade-long partnership between U.S. government and Saddam. Bush declares intention to attack Iraq with UN assistance to repel Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. UN forces, led by the U.S. government, quickly route Iraq and remove them from Kuwait. The U.N. and President Bush leave Saddam in power but require him to dismantle his nuclear facilities and chemical and biological weapons – of course, many of these were furnished to them by the same countries…

Over the next few years (as will be discussed in a moment), the U.S. government establishes illegal no-fly zones over Iraq, resulting in repeated U.S. bombing campaigns against Iraq, lasting over a decade. The illegal bombings kill hundreds of Iraqi people, including civilians.

1995 – Afghanistan

The U.S. covertly aids the Taliban militia in its drive to end the post-Soviet-Afghani civil war. The U.S. sides with fundamentalist forces in Afghanistan–but not in Egypt, Algeria, or Saudi Arabia, where they are tortured and suppressed–in a foreign theater of the U.S. drug war. The U.S. government and the fundamentalist opposition to drugs would conjoin in an alliance to drive out Central Asian opium production.

1996 – Osama bin Laden's Fatwa

Osama bin Laden turns against former partner U.S. government and declares war against United States, stating in part, "More than 600,000 Iraqi children have died due to lack of food and medicine and as a result of the unjustifiable aggression imposed on Iraq and its nation." He also cites other attacks in Tajakestan, Burma, Cashmere, Assam, Philippine, Fatani, Ogadin, Somalia, Erithria, Chechnia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

1998 – The Sudan & Afghanistan

President Clinton, in the midst of his impeachment hearings, rocket attacks various camps in Afghanistan and a pharmaceutical plant in the Sudan, allegedly to punish former friend Osama bin Laden for his involvement in the bombing of two American embassies in Africa.

1992-2000 – Iraq

Following the end of Desert Storm in 1992, the Federal Government "unofficially" continues the war. In the minds of many people in the Middle East, what we call the First Iraq War never truly stopped.

President Clinton in 1996 instructs the CIA to support and aid the Iraqi opposition forces in an operation to finally do away with Saddam Hussein. Iraqi exiles and refugees are trained and armed in the northern no-fly zone to descend on Baghdad. Sympathetic army generals within the regime are cultivated to assassinate Hussein, and efforts to destabilize Iraq begin – such as random car bombings as well as bombings of civilian public places. This plot collapses, however, as Saddam's spies managed to infiltrate the Kurds. Many Kurds back Saddam and turn on the U.S.-Kurdish faction. CIA agents in Kurdistan run for their lives, abandoning allies and tons of equipment and documents, and the network within Iraq is exposed and eliminated. This catastrophic failure leads to the firing of CIA chief John Deutch.

What's worse, the U.S. government also attempts to remove Saddam from power through a U.N.-enforced military-economic blockade, or "sanctions", against the Iraq economy. Iraq is effectively cut-off from trading for essential food and medicine with much of the industrialized world. According to U.N.

officials, these sanctions contribute to the deaths of massive amounts of Iraqi civilians (but as you might expect, not the government), and estimates of this death toll from five-hundred thousand up to a million.

When interviewed on 60 Minutes in 1996, Secretary of State Madeline Albright – then the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations – was asked if the deaths of a half-million people in Iraq was an acceptable consequence. Her answer says it all: "I think this is a very hard choice. But the price, we think the price is worth it."

That, my friends, is some impressive moral gymnastics.

2001 – The World Trade Center Attacks

And so we come to September 11th, 2001 - the day that shocked America.

Now, let me be crystal clear. No one blames the people in the World Trade Center buildings for these attacks. No one blames the American people for these attacks. But let us be frank, what happened back then motivates terrorists now. Bad foreign policy leads to blowback. It happened in Iran from 1953 to 1978, and it is happening now.

The results of this attack, besides the precious lives lost, are that the U.S. government declares a perpetual "war on terrorism" and begins an indefinite campaign to restrict rights and freedoms of the American people in the form of legislation such as the Patriot Act and the Military Commissions Act. The military-industrial machine soars to new levels with incredible increases in spending that would make even Bill Clinton blush in embarrassment.

2003-2009 – The Second Iraq War and Occupation

And so the cycle begins again. Bush repeats his father's words that Saddam is the new "Hitler" and that he must be removed from power, a mere 12 years after the Gulf War. He claims that Saddam hates America for its "freedom and values". Bush cites Saddam's acquisition of nuclear components and biological and chemical weapons (which include those weapons that were obtained from the U.S.) as proof that Saddam is a threat to the United States.

In 2002, Saddam files updated nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons report with the UN Security Council. U.S. government objects to public release of identities of suppliers of nuclear components to Iraq. UN turns report over to United States, which releases censored summary that deletes identities of nuclear suppliers, but information on suppliers nevertheless leaked to press. The United States is among suppliers of nuclear components to former partner Saddam.

Barack Obama says that the war will end, yet there will still be over 100,000 troops in Iraq. His rhetoric sounds identical to Bush after "Mission Accomplished."

What the Future Holds

America's blunders in the Middle East is not the fault of the American people, but rather the fault of poor foreign policy. This policy has not merely not worked, it has been an abysmal failure. It is not effective, not moral, not "conservative" (for the Republicans reading this), and certainly not libertarian.

Thus, we see clearly the cost of interventionism. Do you think all this is worth it?

"In time it will become clear to everyone that support for the policies of preemptive war and interventionist nation-building will have much greater significance than the removal of Saddam Hussein itself."

~Ron Paul

I am greatly indebted to Adam Young and Jacob Hornberger for the basis of this chapter, and I readily admit their influence on this content.

What if Iraq had Weapons of Mass Destruction?
By Laurence Vance

It Was All a Lie…

The recent revelation that the man most responsible for the myth that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction – Rafid Ahmed Alwan al-Janabi, a.k.a "Curveball" – lied should forever put that falsehood to rest.

It was Curveball's fabrications that formed the basis of Secretary of State Colin Powell's claims about Iraq's alleged weapons programs in his speech before the United Nations Security Council in February of 2003 on the eve of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. That is the speech that Lawrence Wilkerson, a former colonel in the U.S. Army, a decorated Vietnam vet, and a lifelong Republican who served as Powell's chief of staff, called "a hoax on the American people, the international community, and the United Nations Security Council." That is the speech that Powell himself said, in a February 2005 interview with Barbara Walters, was a "blot" on his record.

As the world knows all too well, one of the main justifications for the unconstitutional, unjust, and unnecessary war of aggression against Iraq was that Iraq had "weapons of mass destruction." In the "Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002," there are six references to Iraq's supposed "weapons of mass destruction."

The King Hears What He Wants to Hear

Before that resolution was passed, Vice President Dick Cheney had stated that there was no doubt that Saddam Hussein had those weapons and was amassing them "to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us." And soon after the resolution was passed, President Bush himself insisted that Saddam was lying to the world about not having weapons of mass destruction because "he's got them."

We know, of course, from the Duelfer Report – the final report on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction by the Pentagon and CIA-organized Iraq Survey Group – that Iraq had no deployable weapons of mass destruction on the eve of the U.S. invasion in March 2003, and had not produced any since 1991. Bush even admitted as much in 2005 when he acknowledged that "most of the intelligence turned out to be wrong."

And we also know that the whole idea of Iraq's having weapons of mass destruction was a ruse anyway. We know this not only from sources like the Downing Street Memo, made public in 2005, that Bush wanted to invade Iraq soon after the 9/11 attacks, but also from Bush's secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld. In Rumsfeld's new book, Known and Unknown: A Memoir (Sentinel, 2011), he writes about meeting with President Bush just fifteen days after 9/11 and being asked to "take a look at the shape of our military plans on Iraq." According to Russ Baker, author of Family of Secrets: The Bush Dynasty, the Powerful Forces That Put It in the White House, and What Their Influence Means for America (Bloomsbury Press, 2008), before he was even elected president, Bush was fixated on the political capital that fighting a war would bring, political capital that his father had "wasted" after he invaded Iraq the first time.

Because the evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction was so shaky, a wide variety of other ruses were given in defense of the war. A study back in 2004 documented 27 rationales given for the war by the Bush administration, war hawks in Congress, and the media between 9/11 and the October 2002 congressional resolution to use force in Iraq and concluded that it was "the Bush administration, and the President himself" that "established the majority of the rationales for the war and all of those rationales that make up the most prominent reasons for war."

Many Americans actually believed, and perhaps still believe, that the invasion of Iraq was in retaliation for the 9/11 attacks. But as Bush himself even acknowledged in 2003: "We have no evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved with September the 11th."

But What If?

But what if Iraq had weapons of mass destruction? What if every other rationale for the war against Iraq was a lie, but Iraq really did have weapons of mass destruction.What should the United States have done? Should the U.S. government have allowed Saddam Hussein to possess such weapons? Should it have allowed him to threaten neighboring Muslim countries? Should it have stood back and allowed him to brutalize the Iraqi people? Should it have allowed him to be a potential danger to U.S. ally Israel? Because of the gravity of the matter, should the United States have risked invading Iraq just in case weapons of mass destruction might have been there?

The answers are so what, nothing, yes, yes, yes, yes, and no.

First of all, with no navy or air force, and an economy in ruins after a decade of brutal U.N. sanctions, Iraq was never a threat to the United States. Iraq was not even a threat to the United States when U.S. and coalition forces invaded it the first time in 1991.

Second, if Iraq's neighboring Islamic countries didn't think it necessary to invade Iraq because of a perceived threat, then why should the United States have even considered it?

Third, Israel had enough tanks, helicopters, fighter jets, ships, bombs, and bullets to destroy Iraq many times over if that country actually posed a credible threat to its security. If Israel did think it necessary to launch a preemptive strike against Iraq (like it had done in 1981 when it took out an Iraqi nuclear reactor under construction), then why should the United States have even considered it?

Fourth, the United States cannot right every wrong in the world. It is not in the interests of the American people for the U.S. government to expend blood and treasure to take sides against those regimes that are persecuting or mistreating their own people or foreigners. It is not in the interests of the American people for the U.S. government to take sides during a civil war. Any American who wants to do these things on his own dime and in risk of his own life is perfectly free to do so. He should just not expect other Americans who prefer to keep their money in their pocket and their loved ones out of a flag-draped coffin to do his bidding.

And fifth, and most important, even if Iraq possessed nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, there is absolutely no reason why the United States would be justified in attacking and invading Iraq or any other sovereign country – no matter what we thought of that country's rulers, system of government, economic policies, military capabilities, treatment of women, religious intolerance, violations of civil liberties, human rights record, or nuclear program.

And on this last point in particular, who is the United States to say that a country should or shouldn't have nuclear weapons? When did the countries of the world appoint America to be the world's policeman or guardian? Why does the United States tolerate the massive amount of nuclear weapons stockpiled in France, China, Russia, Israel, India, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom? Shouldn't the United States invade those countries as well? Isn't every country in the world justified in obtaining nuclear weapons to protect themselves against the one country that was the first and only country to actually use them – the United States of America?

What should the United States have done if Iraq had weapons of mass destruction? Absolutely nothing. I think that 4,438 U.S. soldiers who died in Iraq in vain and for a lie might agree – if they still had the chance.

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Do you Still Have a 9-11 Mentality?
By Anthony Gregory

Eye for An Eye

On the eve of September 10, 2001, I went to sleep a libertarian, distrustful of the state, holding both major political parties in contempt, seeing the federal government as the primary enemy of the American people, their lives and liberties. The next morning, watching the horrific news of the murderous attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, I found myself on the side of the government for the first time in years. That is to say, I thought it would be appropriate for the government to find the culprits behind 9/11 and bring them to justice. I thought capturing and executing the ringleaders would be appropriate. I favored raising a bounty to catch Osama bin Laden, or maybe even sending in commandos on a pinpointed mission to apprehend him.

This is not the course the government took, nor the approach supported by most Americans. In particular, I saw almost the entire conservative movement, which I had felt a closer affinity to than the liberals and leftists surrounding me in college, becoming bloodthirsty collectivists calling for total war. The overwhelming majority of progressives joined in the cause, elevating Bush's approval rating to about 90%.

On Fox News the night of September 11, a commentator said, "it's time to let loose the dogs of war." This sounded like insanity to me. How could a full blown war possibly be justified? The bad guys were a small group and the direct killers died in the attacks. Needless to say, although I went to sleep the night of September 11 believing the government should carry out its one primary function, defending life and liberty, I never embraced this collectivist ideology that allowed for the killing of foreigners who happened to live in the same part of the world as terrorists.

The Cycle of Blood-thirst and Bloodshed

Indeed, the 9/11 attacks were obviously blowback for U.S. foreign policy. This seemed completely clear to me, especially when our leaders pointed the finger at Osama, seeing as how he had always made clear that his grievances were rooted in U.S. policy in the Middle East. Sanctions on Iraq, military aid for Israel, troops in Saudi Arabia, and other U.S. interventions in the area had contributed to the deaths of over a million people in the last couple generations. Anyone paying attention had to know this.

And yet, of course the attacks of 9/11 were unjustified. They were terrorism. They were evil. They were murderous. Why can we say this? Because despite what the U.S. government had done to innocent Arabs and Muslims, these crimes could never justify acts of violence that predictably hurt innocent people. Yet the corollary of the very principle that renders 9/11 attacks evil is that the response to 9/11 must also at all costs avoid killing the innocent. Arabs responding to American crimes in their part of the world by attacking innocents is terrorism. Similarly, Americans responding to Arab crimes in our part of the world by attacking innocents is also terrorism. The bombing of Kabul, Afghanistan, in October 2001 was therefore murderous, no less so than the 9/11 attacks. The Iraq war that began in 2003 was, if anything, even less defensible.

This is not moral relativism. It is moral clarity. It is applying the same moral standards to all moral actors. Pro-war Americans lambaste anyone who dares have a "pre-9/11 mentality." But this is an untenable criticism. It actually smacks of moral relativism itself. Acts that were immoral before 9/11 continued to be afterwards. Human rights are universal and timeless. 9/11 did not change the morality of killing civilians any more than it changed the nature of government.

The Biggest Terrorist Organization in the World

The nature of government, of course, is coercive and authoritarian. Even though I favored a forceful response to 9/11 to apprehend the guilty, I continued to see the government as the primary threat to liberty. This pre-9/11 mentality is informed by thousands of years of history. All those thousands of

years of governments subjugating their peoples, more often exposing them to foreign threats than protecting them, should weigh at least as heavily as the emotional power of September 11, 2001. Much more happened in the world before 9/11 than after.

The week after 9/11 I remember thinking about how, even after the murderous attacks of 9/11, the U.S. government still had a far greater American death toll to answer for. It had killed many, many thousands through the FDA. It had killed hundreds of thousands in its wars, conscripting men to die for causes they might not believe in. In terms of liberty, the terrorists could never take that way. Only the government could. And it did, through airport security theater, destruction of the Fourth Amendment and habeas corpus, warrantless wiretapping, indefinite detention and torture, and trillions in taxes to pay for it all.

We have come to where perpetual war abroad, even in pursuit of bin Laden's ghost, is accepted as a natural component of American reality. We surrender our dignity at the airports without thinking. We see the militarization of local police and figure it must be necessary and wise. We forget about the many prisoners locked up in American dungeons in Guantánamo and Afghanistan, people whose only crime could have been being in the wrong place in the wrong time, or daring to fight back against an invading force that was laying waste to their neighborhood and family. They sit there, languishing in barbaric conditions, totally neglected as unpersons, and the pure immorality of this neglect never registers in the mainline political discussions.

9/11 Changed the Rules

Before 9/11 I saw government as a necessary evil, the greatest threat to its own subjects' life and liberty, but an essential bulwark of protection against domestic criminals and foreign aggressors. The experience shortly after 9/11 challenged this important element to this thinking. Bush's wars in Afghanistan and, via the Patriot Act, on the American people demonstrated that even at its one most celebrated function, the state is the opposite of what it pretends to be. It doesn't stop threats; it exacerbates them. It doesn't shield freedom; its every action, particularly in the name of protection, undermines freedom. It does not defend life; it treats human life as an expendable commodity for its own ends. I no longer saw government as necessary or effective in defending its people.

Four years ago, a new presidential candidate won the presidential election. Here we are at the end of his first term and there is no sign of the stampede toward the total state letting up any time soon. Two major wars based on lies and propaganda that have hurt more Americans than 9/11 did, to say nothing of millions of foreigners killed, maimed or displaced from their homes; myriad military operations throughout the globe; thousands rounded up without justice and dozens tortured to death; the presidency adopting the absolute power over life and death over any individual on earth, and priceless liberties shredded on the altar of power without anything to show for it. But the experience has surely disabused me of my pre-9/11 mentality. Before 9/11, I was naive enough to think that government, however clumsy and dangerous at home, might protect us from foreign threats. Now I realize that is perhaps the biggest lie in human history.
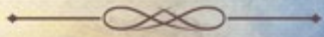
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PEACEFUL CHRISTIANS

What Does the Bible Say About War?