

equilibrium came about in my center-spirit (or is it Center/Spirit?) And I became more profoundly engaged with reality than either eyes or mind could penetrate.

I knew that day that I could not authentically take bread and wine into my hands and say, "This is my body, this is my blood," unless I was also saying to these people celebrating with me, "This is my body, this is my blood, and it, too, is to be given up for you." I have been gifted to share, not to keep, and this we proclaim as the mystery of faith.

Imagination's engagement in ritual can crack open the truth of the symbols we celebrate and disclose more than meets the eye. It is my contention that the art of ritual can create the conditions of possibility for knowing with transformative feeling the powerful words of the apostle, James: "True justice is the harvest reaped by peacemakers from the seeds sown in a spirit of peace" (James 3:18).

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RESISTANCE AND DEFENSE: MORAL AND STRATEGIC REFLECTIONS

I. MORAL ISSUES

A. *The Christian Vision*

The Christian tradition has recognized and continues to emphasize the priority of peace-making and the development of structures and social realities that can insure the reality of peace in the world. Recent theological and ethical reflections, evidenced especially in the Bishops' Pastoral Letter, is bringing home to us again the fact that it is violence that needs justification, not peace-making. This tradition of peace-making has received preeminence in papal teaching since *Pacem in terris*, and has been growing and developing steadily since. The teaching has been somewhat negative insofar as much of it has been towards a critique of nuclear war. Yet there is also a very positive dimension to the teaching which encourages participating in the development of structures to bring about the reality of peace. This orientation has showed up most dramatically in various aspects of the peace movement and in the lives of various people, such as James Douglas, the Berrigans, Dorothy Day, and other individuals and movements that have taken the tradition of peace-making seriously and have tried to apply it to their daily lives as well as to political realities.

Such individuals and movements take seriously the traditional theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity by trying to put them into practice in their lives, recognizing that those officially defined as enemies are also our neighbors and we are united to them in charity. Many individuals live out of a spirit of hope in the promise of God to bring new out of old, joy out of sorrow; hope in the God who will wipe away all tears. There are people

of faith who have committed themselves to a Power beyond themselves, a Power who is the source of the renewal of all things and the One who keeps promises. These virtues as well as the gospel message ground the obligation to be a peacemaker and give us the motivation and inspiration to enter our work with the promise and gift of peace.

B. A Critique of American Christian Existence

In a lecture tour of the United States two years ago, some of the questions that J. B. Metz raised were: What do we live from? Whose bread do we eat? Which food nourishes our life? Such questions are extremely relevant for a moral critique of American Christian life. When we discover the source of our nourishment, we also discover those realities in which we put our trust and hope for survival. These questions can serve as a profound examination of conscience for all of us.

I would suggest that many of us have taken our meaning of reality, success, security, hope and quality of life from the capitalistic and militaristic forces that dominate the American life-style today. I think many of us as Christians have been lulled into believing that the scenarios proposed by the Pentagon are more real than the scenarios proposed by our Christian faith. We believe that security and stability lie in ever greater weapons of destruction rather than the word of God. It seems to me that the questions which Metz raises, at once very simple, are extremely profound and can help us Christians move from where we are to where we should be: examining very carefully whose bread we share and at whose table we eat. When we as Christians have our sense of reality defined by the warriors of our country rather than by the living God, we are in grave danger of idolatry and of forgetting the one table at which we are nourished with the bread of life.

Therefore, I would argue that as Christians we need to become radicalized and restore the vision of Christianity proposed to us by the Scriptures and the moral tradition of the Christian church. Such a return to our roots will not simplify the relationship between religion and government, will not make political decisions easier or less painful, will not remove us from the strife of everyday life. Nonetheless, we as Christians will have established our priorities anew and on the basis of that reassessment and commitment to the reality that can nourish us, we might be able to make a new beginning and a new contribution to life and peace.

II. STRATEGIC ISSUES

In this section I would like to propose two concepts that I think are worthy of consideration as means of national defense that are both compatible with Christian moral principles and carry with them the possibility of success or, at least, the strong potential of not destroying the world to save the United States.

A. Civilian Defense

Civilian defense is basically a substitution of non-violent means of protest and intervention for the military defense of our country and our

system of nuclear deterrence. Civilian defense is basically a form of "transarmament"; it is not a surrender of the right of defense in any way, shape or form. Rather, it is a means of defending the country through peaceful means. It is based upon "selective non-cooperation with the machinery and purposes of the invasion and upon dealing with the invaders as people rather than as a category."¹ Civilian defense requires a high degree of preparation of the civilian population, the development of a commitment to resist non-violently, an emphasis upon the success of this strategy in the past, an analysis of the role citizens play in allowing a government to operate successfully, and the creating of the conditions for the acceptance of personal responsibility for non-cooperation with the occupying force.

In an early poem, Daniel Berrigan wrote: "Peace-making is hard work; hard almost as war."² Civilian defense requires exactly the same level of commitment, participation and cooperation that is now demanded by our current system of violent defense. For the sake of a violent defense strategy, people interrupt their lives, pay taxes, participate in risky operations, put themselves in danger of dying, put themselves at the risk of imprisonment, and allow the total disruption of their life. Transarmament to civilian defense will not be easy, but it is evident that one of the main bases on which civilian defense rests—the willingness of a population to sacrifice itself—is already firmly in place and what is required is the conviction that such a transarmament will be more effective than nuclear deterrence.

B. Resistance

A colleague of mine, Roger Gottlieb, has written an article on resistance by Jews during the Holocaust, parts of which are applicable to the Catholic community at this time in its quest for peace-making. One of the issues that Gottlieb raises is the importance of individual and social identity with a particular group as a means of organizing resistance. The question of identity becomes very important when one begins to examine public policies, especially those relating to defense, in terms of how support for these structures relate to one's membership in and identity with a particular faith community. The critical question is: Does or can participation by Christians in nuclear defense or deterrence threaten the integrity of one's identity as a Christian? Gottlieb argues that for the Jews:

the most dangerous threat was not physical annihilation by the Nazis, but their own betrayal of these principles. Such a betrayal might have been an abandonment or a weakening of their faith in the Power to which they had devoted themselves. In any case, it would have been a self betrayal of that aspect of themselves which they had—in less extreme and trying times—valued the most highly.³

¹ *In Place of War*. American Friends Service Committee (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1967), p. 48. See also the three volume work of Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Non-Violent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, 1973).

² Daniel Berrigan, *They Call Us Dead Men* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. v.

³ Roger Gottlieb, "The Concept of Resistance: Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust" in *Social Theory and Practice*, 9, 1 (Spring 1983), p. 36.

Our social identity as Christians and the values we stand for may require us to engage in significant acts of resistance to the strategy of national self-defense that is in place today. This orientation is related to my previous comments on the sources of our nourishment. It is also related to, but separable from, a strategy of non-violent national defense. My perception is that as Christians we need to proceed on two fronts: 1) to examine alternative forms of national defense; and 2) to develop a momentum within the nation to oppose further research in weapon systems and further reliance on nuclear weapons.

While underground, many years ago, Daniel Berrigan said:

We must lose more, suffer more experiment more, risk more, trust one another more. The crisis is of such enormous extent and depth, that all solutions based on the sanity and health and recoverability of current structures are quickly proven wrong, untimely, unmanageable, bureaucratically infected; the same old kettle of fish, stinking worse than ever in the boiling juices of change.⁴

Simply stated, the moment is now very propitious for the Christian community to make a new move forward. We recognize that we are at the end of the line with nuclear deterrence. Transarmament to civilian national defense along with various acts of resistance to our own government in the interrim will call for a great deal of courage, but probably no more courage than is required of a young person who may be drafted and must enter the front lines of the infantry. It would require no more courage than that of a person who will be separated from family for months or years at a time to live in a foreign nation to fight and perhaps die for unknown purposes. It will require no more than our current level of taxation. For better or worse, we have been socialized into making enormous sacrifices for war; the Christian proposal is that we can turn that socialization into a voluntary sacrifice for the cause of peace-making.

III. MODEST PROPOSALS

A. Critique of the Nuclear Utopia

One of the first acts of resistance that we as Christians must do is to reject the ideology of a nuclear utopia or soteriology. The shape of this nuclear utopia finds its clearest expression in the counter-pastoral letter of Michael Novak. Here Novak developed an ideology based on the clash of good and evil (U.S.A. versus U.S.S.R.), irreconcilable conflict (extending liberty and justice versus socialism's replacing capitalism), moral obligations (defending the innocent versus world domination), a clear goal (to remain number one versus to become number one), and means to achieve the ideology (nuclear responsibility versus nuclear irresponsibility). Such utopian perspectives clearly sanction the theory of nuclear deterrence and the continued development and deployment of larger and more destructive weapons as the only means of maintaining the peace. Of course, in this utopian scheme, the intent is never to use such weapons: it is to intend to

⁴ Daniel Berrigan, "How to Make a Difference" *Commonweal*, 92, 16 (7 August 1970), 385.

use them so as not to use them. Our purpose is not to protect our interests, it is not to support regimes favorable to us, it is not to maintain superiority, it is not to protect our position of economic privilege. Clearly, our purpose is exclusively ". . . to evoke *Novus Ordo Saeculorum*, a new order of liberty and justice for all, to extend the boundaries of liberty and justice by peaceful means, to the consent of the government."⁵ With such a vocation guiding us, how could we be but innocent and pure, good and righteous? Such is the illusion of the nuclear utopia.

Such a utopian image—strongly reminiscent of John Winthrop's sermon on the *Mayflower*—sees only the shining lights of the city on the hill. The vision does not ask what its basis is, what its real cost is, what its genuine value is, or what is required of other peoples in other countries for us to maintain our privileged position. The nuclear utopia also avoids certain questions: Why can we put our missiles on their borders but they can't do it to us? Why can we support—openly or covertly—various regimes, but they can't? Why can we sell arms to other countries, but they can't? Why can we be unbending in negotiations, but they can't? Why is our arms build-up appropriate, but theirs reckless? If one makes the ideological assumptions of Novak's nuclear utopia, the answers are clear. If one examines the role of both the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. in real history, neither is innocent, neither holds to a high standard of morality, both are protective of their interests, both determined to maintain their position and privileges.

Nonetheless, this utopia has been given the status of reality and on this basis significant decisions are being made. I suggest our first moral task as Christians is to resist nuclear utopia in every way possible.

B. Communities of Support

Another important thing that we must begin to do, especially on the parish level, is to resurrect the reality of community. I have already alluded to the importance of personal and social identity as a basis for resistance. We need a community that will help define us, that will provide us with nourishment, that will serve the food from which we take life. Such a community will have educational resources available for its members. Such a community may also, perhaps more importantly, have both personal and financial resources available for individuals as they attempt to pursue other means of employment or to take particular risks for peace at a certain time. There are examples of such funds being established in one or another diocese, both to assist people who choose not to have abortions and, in some instances, for people who are seeking new employment as a result of leaving jobs in the defense industry.

The development of such genuine communities of support can help establish a true Christian identity and a community which is willing to take risks because the members know that they can turn to one another for the

⁵ Michael Novak, "Moral Clarity in the Nuclear Age." *National Review*, 35, 6 (1 April 1983), 382.

various kinds of support that are important in developing a new orientation towards peace-making.

C. Peace Studies Program

I argue as strongly as possible that one of the major things to promote peace-making is for every Catholic college to develop at least an interdisciplinary course, if not a program, on peace studies. One of the ways in which we can begin to change the consciousness of individuals is to provide means of education whereby individuals can examine alternatives to the status quo. The course in peace studies would not necessarily be directed to turning out pacifists or resisters. Its purpose would be a study of the role of peace-making within the Christian tradition and an examination of viable non-violent alternatives to personal and national self-defense, as well as an evaluation of various means of resistance. The commitment to such programs of study or courses by Catholic colleges would demonstrate the seriousness of the reality of peace-making within the Catholic community, but would also provide the means whereby such peace-making could become a reality. Such programs could also provide appropriate training for the future leaders of various communities and would be a means whereby credibility could be achieved for various options for peace-making.

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