

I. Pacifism

A. Types of pacifists

1. Universal Pacifism
 - a. Killing or violence is always wrong.
2. Christian Pacifism
 - a. Christians are prohibited from practicing violence or killing, but unbelievers are not.
3. Private Pacifism
 - a. Personal violence is always wrong but a nation may be justified in going to war. (Augustine) [least common view]
4. Antiwar Pacifism
 - a. Personal violence may be justified but war is never morally justified.

B. Arguments for Pacifism

1. Non-biblical
 - a. Historical
 - i. The overwhelming majority of original Christians were pacifists
 - b. Sacredness of life
 - i. Life is sacred and should not be extinguished by another human being.
 - c. Immorality of killing
 - i. Right to life
 - d. Moral exemplars
 - i. Our lives should serve as examples of how things should be
 - e. Condition of the soul
 - i. Gandhi argued that the soul is innocent and the use of violence pollutes the soul
2. Scriptural
 - a. Position from/on the OT
 - i. The 6th Commandment (Ex. 20:13)
 - ii. The OT criticizes warfare and prepares for the NT ethic
 - iii. The historical context of the OT does not apply to Christians today
 - 1) The Christian Promised Land, physically speaking, is heaven not a geographic earthly location inhabited by pagans
 - 2) Even though the OT is filled with war, God is actually trying to lead his people away from violence to peace
 - b. Position fro/on the NT
 - i. A Christian attitude toward war should come from the NT
 - 1) Warfare is rooted in the fall of man (the OT)
 - 2) Sermon on the Mount is normative for Christian conduct today
 - a) Matt. 5-7

- 3) Apostolic writings speak of living in peace
 - a) Paul - Rom. 12:18; 14:19
 - b) General - Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 3:11
- c. Citizenship in the kingdom of God
 - i. While we must be subject to government, we do not obey it blindly
 - ii. Duty to God supercedes duty to government (Acts 4:19).
- d. Ethical implications of the cross
 - i. Christ died for man not vice versa
 - ii. Killing someone who has not heard or accepted the gospel robs them of future opportunities to do so
- e. The church is a global community
 - i. This could result in Christians killing Christians of another nation
- f. Wars are most often fought to protect property
 - i. Jesus warns against valuing possessions above people (Matt. 6:20-21; James 5:1-6; 1 Timothy 6:11)
- C. Objections to Arguments for Pacifism
 - 1. Non-biblical
 - a. Historical
 - i. Persecution and idolatry
 - b. Sacredness of life
 - i. What if the taking of one life preserves the lives of countless others?
 - c. Immorality of killing
 - i. If there is a right to life then there is also a right to defend that right.
 - d. Moral exemplars
 - i. What if I have to use violence to defend another moral principle?
 - e. Condition of the soul
 - i. The premise is faulty. The soul is not innocent but guilty (Rom. 3:23; 5).
 - ii. At the heart of this argument is the idea that the use of force corrupts the soul. How much force? Is limited force acceptable in the pursuit of a just cause.
 - 2. Scriptural
 - a. General
 - i. The Bible is authoritative for Christians but not Muslims, Buddhists, New Agers, or other pagans
 - ii. Thus Christian pacifism fails the test of universalizability
 - b. OT
 - i. The term in the 6th Commandment is *rasah*, which is best translated as "murder"

- 1) Such an interpretation would make God guilty of “murder” as well as conflicting with his command in Gen. 9:6
 - ii. God commends warriors such as Abraham, Joshua, Gideon, and David
 - iii. God not only permitted Israel to wage war but commanded it (35x)
 - iv. God used wars/violence against Israel to serve the purpose of turning his people back to him ()
 - v. While God is moving his people to a time and place of peace, he is doing so through violence and force (righteous)
 - vi. Passages such as Micah 4:3 refer to the time of Christ’s reign upon the earth rather than the period of time following his incarnation
 - vii. In regards to ethics, whatever is commanded in the OT is still applicable to NT believers unless the NT either explicitly or implicitly abrogates it
- c. NT
- i. Texts that pacifists cite have to do with private personal duties, not public or 3rd party duties
 - ii. Sermon on the Mount is given to hyperbolic speech to get the listeners attention => it is difficult to apply a consistent literal interpretation
 - 1) Self mutilation (Matt. 5:29-30)
 - 2) Hating one’s parents (Luke 14:26)
 - iii. Soldiers who converted to Christianity were not told to resign their positions
 - 1) Luke 3:14 (John the Baptist & soldiers)
 - 2) Matt. 8:10 (Jesus & centurion)
 - 3) Acts 10 (Peter & Cornelius)
 - iv. Apostolic writings teach subjection to government
 - 1) One of the functions of government is protection of its citizens and punishment of the unjust
 - a) Romans 13, specifically 3-4
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:13-17
- d. Citizenship in the kingdom of God
- i. The two kingdoms are not necessarily mutually exclusive
 - ii. Responsibilities accompany benefits
- e. Ethical implications of the cross
- i. One of the lessons from the cross is that injustice must be punished
- f. The church as a global community & Wars are most often fought to protect property
- i. Just War theory

- 1) Sees war as evil. The point at issue is not whether war is good, but whether it is unavoidable and whether it can be conducted in a just way.
- 2) Presuppositions
 - a) Some evil can't be avoided
 - b) Normative for Christian and non-Christian alike
 - c) Does not seek to justify war
 - d) Private citizens have no right to wage war, only governments do
- 3) Criteria for a "just war"
 - a) Proper legitimate authority
 - b) War must be a last resort
 - c) A formal declaration of war is necessary
 - d) Reasonable hope of success
 - e) The good sought must outweigh the devastation to be wrought
 - f) The cause must be just
 - i) Redressing a wrong
 - ii) Retributive punishment
 - iii) Self-defense
 - g) Must be fought with the right intention
 - i) Revenge, conquest, economic gain, ideological superiority are renounced