The Peace Testimony: Does Christian Commitment Make a Difference?

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The relationship of Christian commitment to social concern has been, and is, a problem. Lovers of men and planners of social change have argued long with one another: Is Christianity an opiate of the people, a hindrance to progress? Does Christianity give the only sure foundation to the concern for human dignity? Or is social action something in which all men of good will—Christian and Jew, theist and humanist—can unite, because their religion or lack of it makes little difference in the area of social concern?

The arguments have been going on in the Christian Church, too. Roman Catholics developed a doctrine of natural law: there are natural virtues such as courage, temperance, wisdom, and justice, on which all rational beings can unite and build a good society; what Christians add are the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Luther was convinced that this view confused and confused nature and grace; the Christian should bear his cross in humble Christian love in private life, but his social and political life should be guided by Romans 13: “the powers that be are ordained of God,” and bear the sword “to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil”; therefore the Christian as citizen or as ruler, in the order of creation, must act in ways that are forbidden to him as an individual and churchman in the order of redemption. The Anabaptists accepted Luther’s views on Romans 13 and the orders of creation and redemption, but reversed his conclusions: Christians live in the order of redemption and are guided by the ethics of non-resisting love; therefore they cannot take any part in the order of creation, in the tasks of government and social change. Calvin would have nothing to do with this separation of Church and society, nor with the Catholic ethics based on human reason: scripture, as

God’s revelation, is an unbroken unity; the moral law in both Old and New Testaments, summed up in the Ten Commandments, is a sufficient guide for Christian conduct in individual life and in society.

DEVELOPMENT THROUGH QUAKER HISTORY

Early Friends made their own distinctive contribution to the problem of Christian commitment and social concern. They refused to reduce Christian ethics in society to the demands of an order of creation or to the natural virtues of rational man or even to the Ten Commandments. They proclaimed that the spirit of Christ called them to absolute perfection, in harmony with the scriptural commands of suffering, non-resisting love. But they continued to see participation in social and even governmental action as a live option in certain circumstances. George Fox encouraged Friends in Barbados to serve as constables and to “double your diligence in your offices, in doing that which is just, true, and righteous”, William Penn felt called to undertake a “holy experiment” in government, “that an example may be set up to the nations.”

The origin and history of the Quaker position can be seen particularly clearly in the case of the peace testimony. The classical statement of the early Quaker peace testimony is the so-called Declaration of 1660, in which Friends proclaimed:

We do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.

In this remarkable document Friends demonstrated their convictions about the guidance of the spirit by extensive argument from scripture. They were, indeed, trying to explain why they could not participate in rebellion, not international war. In light of this historical situation, it is especially noteworthy that they did not quote Romans 13, the classical Christian text against rebellion! The same Christian commandments applied both to action “for the kingdom of Christ” and to action “for the kingdoms of this world.”
Much of the relevant material for a history of the peace testimony as a way of relating Christian commitment to social concern can be found in Robert Byrd's *Quaker Ways in Foreign Policy*. Robert Byrd shows how the earliest Friends, with revolutionary zeal, denounced and renounced war as sin and the consequence of sin, and tried to convert even the ruling heads of government, at home and abroad, to their own faith and practice. Then came the Quietist reaction, with an eventual total withdrawal from public responsibility in order to maintain the purity of the Quaker witness. Finally has come a gradual emergence from the Quietist shell, with a corresponding increase in concern for and sense of responsibility toward the specific course of events in international relations. In Robert Byrd's own words, the chief historic trends in the Friends peace testimony have been as follows:

First, Friends' primary interest has been in the underlying causes and forces at work in international affairs.... Initially the cause was seen to be a simple lack of Christianity, Friends' remedy then being to remind those in authority of their Christian responsibilities. A dimmer view of the possibility of a more Christian attitude in public policy then set in and the remedy was to withdraw from active participation in public affairs in order to maintain, in the life of the Society of Friends at least, a bastion which the forces of evil could not penetrate and from which, in God's good time, Christian principles might go forth to control the world's affairs. Finally, there has been a gradual return to an emphasis on the immediate applicability of Christian principles to public policy. These principles come to be seen, however, as no monopoly of Christianity, and as principles which are expressed not only in the lives of individuals, but also in the working out of social and economic problems on the political plane.

Secondly, as Friends have faced the social, economic, and political problems inherent in "Christianizing" foreign policy, they have been drawn steadily closer to involvement at the centres of the decision-making process.... Friends too began to put these policies into effect themselves, in such matters as improving the channels of international negotiation and communication, in reconstruction and relief work, and, ultimately, by serving as the agents of public policy at points where such policies have been in accord with what Friends understand their religious insights to require of them.4

There are points at which Robert Byrd's helpful analysis of these historical trends falls short; and these are crucial points for any study of the problems involved in the relationship between Christian commitment and Quaker social concern. He tends to overemphasize the singleness of the direction taken by Quaker concerns for peace, since the Quietist period, by emphasizing only one side of contemporary developments. He writes, for instance:

As the policies Friends have advocated for years... have come closer to the threshold of political reality, questions of tactics and implementation tend to replace discussions on the level of broad objectives.... There is some evidence that Friends have been willing, at times, to appeal in terms that are most apt to gain results rather than in terms which will accurately reflect their own reasons for favouring or opposing the particular policy at issue.5

But he fails to present the evidence that there has been a strong trend, as well, in a divergent direction, a trend which is less inclined to modulate the more radical implications of pacifist ethics in order to gain immediate results. In terms of a frequently-stated analysis, there are, in the Society of Friends today both 'prophets' and 'reconcilers', and the differences between the two have created, on occasion, serious difficulties for the Society in its attempts to express and apply the peace testimony.

Robert Byrd also fails to take account of the implications of some fundamental shifts in the nature of Quaker religious experience and belief. Early Quakers proclaimed a radical and prophetic Christian faith, and attempted to spread it with fervent missionary zeal; their peace testimony was a corollary of this Christian faith and experience. The contemporary American Friends most deeply concerned for the peace testimony generally tend either to be frankly non-Christian in their theology or to believe that the peace testimony is based on ethical principles
more universal than the Christian faith, and that Christian missionary activity is consequently either undesirable or completely separable from peace education and action. To recognize the discontinuity of this position with that of early Quakerism is to raise a weighty question about Robert Byrd's assumption that the contemporary trend is essentially a "return" to the original Quaker emphasis.

PROPHET VS. RECONCILER TODAY

Let us turn our attention first to the tension between the 'prophet' and the 'reconciler' in the Society of Friends today. The 'reconciler', is, briefly, the Friend who sees his most urgent task to be that of bringing together the opposing sides in any international dispute. He feels that negotiation, conciliation, and persuasion are the most hopeful ways of solving conflicts short of war, and that his primary task is to help bring the policy-makers of rival states to mutual understanding. He tries not to intrude his own point of view, about the rights and wrongs on any particular question, into the conciliation process. At his most characteristic, he is likely to be found in a Quaker team at the U. N. or on a trip to Moscow or Peking, or serving as a Quaker 'presence' in some international 'hot spot' such as Berlin or the Gaza strip or as dean of a seminar for younger diplomats or parliamentarians who may some day be key decision-makers in their respective countries. The 'prophet', on the other hand, is the Friend who sees his most urgent task to be that of demonstrating the immorality and suicidal nature of the dependence on armed force as a keynote of national policy. He feels that non-violent direct action is the most hopeful way of solving conflicts short of war, and that his primary task is to show, by dramatic action, the nature and effectiveness of the non-violent alternative to armed defense. He zealously attempts to make his own point of view as widely and as thoroughly known as possible. At his most characteristic, he is likely to be found in a protest ship sailing into Leningrad harbor or the Johnston Island bomb-test zone, or leading a peace march, or cranking out a mimeographed set of procedures for organizing volunteers in a many-sided peace action campaign in a large metropolitan area.

There is a contemporary Quaker mythology that being

either a 'prophet' or a 'reconciler' is simply a matter of temperament, that the two types complement each other in the carrying out of the peace concerns of the Society of Friends, that both are needed, and that 'prophet' and 'reconciler' should recognize their need for each other and hence desist from their sometimes unprophetic and non-reconciling criticisms of each other's approach. The difficulty with this appeal is that the difference is not simply one of temperament. Fundamental differences in philosophy and in social analysis are involved in these positions, and it is not possible for either to carry out his job effectively and consistently without to some extent getting in the way of what the other is trying to achieve. The consideration of these shifts in terminology and describe the 'reconciler' as a 'liberal peace', and the 'prophet' as a 'radical pacifist'.

The difference between the liberal pacifist and radical pacifist positions can be typically seen in the series of studies on questions of international relations prepared between 1949 and 1955 by working parties for the American Friends Service Committee. The first three of these, The United States and the Soviet Union, Steps to Peace, and Toward Security Through Disarmament, are good statements of a liberal pacifist approach to current international problems. The final study, Speak Truth to Power, is a persuasive, if perhaps slightly muted, exposition of the radical pacifist position. The first three emphasize such proposals as negotiating for world-wide disarmament, submitting disputes among the major powers to mediation and conciliation, improving the atmosphere in the United Nations. Speak Truth to Power puts its emphasis on proposing non-violent national policy as an alternative to dependence on armed violence for national defense; it suggests that, in order to achieve disarmament, "in the last analysis a pacifist policy would require unilateral action if agreement could not be achieved." Negotiation and non-violence, respectively, are seen as requiring certain conditions for their full and effective exercise. The following principles of negotiation are suggested:

There is no controversy which cannot be negotiated... The test of successful negotiation is a
workable agreement, not the individual nation's gain in advantage... Negotiation requires a flexible attitude... an open mind... persistence... recognizing that opposite interests may be genuinely and deeply felt... privacy."

Non-violence, including non-cooperation and good will for its effective action, has, on the other hand, its own prerequisites: "It demands greater discipline, more arduous training, and more courage than military violence.

There is some suggestion in these studies of the social context within which the proposals for negotiations or non-violence would be relevant. Negotiation is suggested in terms of the ultimate objectives of the American people: 'In the United States we have accepted the principle that men can resolve their differences by means of free discussion, understanding, honourable compromise, and the use of recognized procedures of government for reaching decisions.'" Non-violence, on the other hand, could become national policy by first being the program of a committed and growing pacifist minority; this approach is recommended as belonging to the nature of the democratic process: "The presence of vigorous, pioneering minorities has been generally recognized as essential to a healthy democracy." The AFSC studies do not probe much further into the social analysis on which they base their proposals. We need to examine the writings of individuals, if we are to gain a better grasp of the assumptions behind the proposals of liberal and radical pacifism.

THE LIBERAL PACIFIST: THE RECONCILER

The liberal pacifist, as we have seen, tends to recommend such remedies for international conflict as mediation, conciliation, negotiation. Such processes require, as Jack Powelson indicates, an increase in mutual understanding: "It is in a greater understanding of the minds of other men and a greater faith in human ability to labor through the obstacles of disagreement... that our hopes for peace must be founded." The pacifist should work for a more mature diplomacy, "with foreign ministers who can see beyond the thought framework of their own environment and understand the thinking process that has led others of different background to approach the problem in a different manner." The emphasis is on the understanding and the action of the diplomat as an individual, in direct personal contact with his opposite number. The goal is seen by Harrop and Ruth Freeman as world community; and those nations which want community do "want, and must get, participation in negotiating. The price of community is dialogue." The essential ingredient for improving international relations, to the liberal pacifist, is dialogue, conversation; and conversation is a relationship between individual persons.

But most liberal pacifists also work actively for a strengthened United Nations, for world law or world government. Robert Byrd claims that "Friends have felt not only that the international or world community requires organizational form, but also that this organization must be based on law." Similarly, Samuel Levering insists that "the machinery of peace is law, courts and enforcement" at the international level.

Does this concern for 'building the institutions of peace' counteract the liberal pacifist emphasis on personal relationships in settling conflicts? Samuel Levering considers police action to be limited, in its sphere of application, to individuals rather than to social groups: "Police arrest individual violators to protect the community,... Nor do police fight against a whole community." Robert Byrd sees the Quaker emphasis as having been on such aspects of international law as "the principle of universal accountability of individuals before international law," that is, on those aspects of law involving relationships with individuals.

The liberal pacifist understanding of the nature and role of government in controlling international conflict is spelled out especially clearly by Kenneth Boulding. He defines the most important activity of government as conflict control. In this context, "One of the great organizational problems of mankind... is the control of violence, or more generally, the control of conflict to the point where procedural institutions are adequate to handle it." By procedural institutions, Kenneth Boulding means the regularized processes through which conflict may be resolved by "reconciliation,... compromise,... [or] award," including the results of arbitration and legal action. We can

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say that, in general, the liberal pacifist sees government, including world government, to be a complex of processes favorable to those conversations which are essential to conflict resolution — such as negotiation and mediation. The institutions of law and government are the channels through which these interpersonal processes can take place more regularly, dependably, and effectively.

How does the liberal pacifist expect to bring about the changes in foreign policy which he advocates? Phillips Ruopp suggests that the process of social change is essentially one of conversation: “Adequate communication between private citizens, and between citizens and their government, constitutes the public conversation which is so essential to the foreign policy of a democracy.” Robert Byrd similarly sees social change as primarily coming about through contacts between individuals: the

gradually increasing awareness and practice of the norms of mankind is held to be established most firmly when it takes place in one individual, then another, and then still more individuals, until a new level of awareness becomes characteristic of all.  

He does see that social groups can play a role in this process, but it is essentially the role of giving specific form to this awareness in individuals:

It is the virtue of private groups that they can begin to practice the future now, or as soon as they are ready, while governments based on popular consent must be expected to follow only when the trail has been well marked and charted to the proximate satisfaction of the population as a whole.  

The process of social change, then, is one of consagion, of giving personal demonstrations of a better way, and of educating individuals until the greater part of the population has undergone a personal change of attitude.

We are now ready to grasp the fundamental thrust of the liberal pacifist’s social analysis. He sees society, at every level, as a texture of relationships between individuals. It is the individual who forms the fundamental social units: the social group,

whether national state or local interest-group, is primarily a collection or aggregation of individuals. It either has no separate reality of its own or attains such a separate reality only by exercising a totalitarian control which threatens the dignity and freedom of the individuals making up the group. Robert Byrd takes the latter position when he states:

The function of government, for Friends, is thus fundamentally spiritual. It is to aid in the spiritual development of individuals, to eliminate from Society those things which pervert, stunt, and retard the spiritual growth of individuals, and to aid and encourage its citizens to express and live according to the most profound insights they can attain.”  

Kenneth Boulding’s analysis, somewhat more sophisticated, is based on the concept of a “party” or “behavior unit” as the primary social agent. A behavior unit may be an individual or a group, but it has a clear boundary, and is considered as capable of discrete action, separable from that of any other unit; in short, it acts like a pure individual. An organization, furthermore, is composed of individuals, and its action is that of the individuals who make it up, particularly the leaders; he defines an organization as “a structure of units that are called roles, a role being that part of a person’s behavior; and potential behavior that is relevant to the organization.” In actual practice, therefore, “The fundamental principle of behavior is much the same whether we are considering an individual acting on his own behalf or a person acting in an organizational role.” Kenneth Boulding admits, furthermore, to an “economic bias” in his approach to the theory of international and other conflict; his approach to economics is basically that of the “neo-classical” successors to Adam Smith, an approach which sees the economic universe as an aggregate of individual firms, acting in essential independence of one another. Starting from such assumptions, it is possible to derive mathematical formulas and graphs describing in quantitative terms the effects of the interaction of these units. He realizes that the use of such models for a general theory of conflict is an oversimplification, leaving out many of the complex factors of social behavior, but he affirms, “In any case, these interrelationships are likely to be of a second
order of magnitude and do not affect the usefulness of the first-order models."

The liberal pacifist analysis of the role of power in the social structure can take more than one form. Robert Byrd rejects the concept of ‘power politics’ as a fundamental factor in social analysis. The ultimate form of power in society is a moral power:

This power operates from within, and in the degree to which the God-within is allowed to move in harmony with the God-Spirit. This power is brought forth in human relations, including international relations, when individuals are able to reach through to that of God within themselves and also to that of God in others; when people are able to “speak to that of God” in others.50 Kenneth Boulding does admit that social units exercise a form of “competitive power” against each other, but this power is described primarily in quantitative units, comparable to the cost of production of economic firms, and expressed primarily in terms of the ‘loss-of-strength gradient,’ which is analogous in its function to the cost of transportation in economic price analysis. The economic concept of ‘countervailing power’ and the analogous ‘balance of power’ concept in political theory are missing from Kenneth Boulding’s analysis, as from that of most other liberal pacifists.

The fundamental weaknesses of liberal pacifism’s social theory are its failure to take into account the corporate dimension of human society, the interdependent reality of social groups and of individuals in their acts and behavior, and its consequent lack of any serious grappling with the problem of power as a primary factor in the interaction, at various levels, of social groups. On these issues the radical pacifist has something more substantial to say.

THE RADICAL PACIFIST: THE PROPHET

We have noted that the radical pacifist tends to recommend non-violent alternatives to armed violence as national policy, and to suggest that such alternatives be adopted unilaterally, if necessary. A. J. Muste has stated this as dramatically as possible:

a pacifist nation “would disarm unilaterally — at once — regardless of what other nations might be willing to do.”52 Radical pacifist proposals for unilateral disarmament are generally tied in with a commitment to organized non-violent action. Thus, James Bristol insists, “The ultimate move would have to be a Gandhian type of non-violent resistance to aggression and tyranny. Anyone who advocates unilateral disarmament now must be prepared to take this last step.”54

More recently, radical pacifists have joined liberal pacifists in proposing a program of unilateral initiatives for disarmament and reduction of international tensions. Even here, a distinctively radical emphasis can be seen, as in Mulford Sibley’s statement: “Unilateral initiatives and eventually unilateral disarmament are ways of seeking a more effective defense than military weapons can any longer provide.”55 In this statement we can note the emphasis on the potential effectiveness of his proposals that the radical pacifist is likely to make along with his insistence on the immorality of war and violence. This emphasis on effectiveness and power becomes even more marked when non-violent resistance is presented as the alternative to armed force. Mulford Sibley, for instance, writes, “The major purpose of a scheme of organized non-violent resistance would be to help provide power which would deter a would-be aggressor and to frustrate the aggression should it actually take place.”56 A. J. Muste suggests a deepening of the meaning of power in such a context, when he states:

If Stalin and the Russian people were to be confronted with the truly revolutionary spectacle of a Christian nation actually practicing the faith it professed, taking the way of the Cross — of good will, reconciliation and self-sacrifice — ... I cannot but believe they would be impressed. I think they would know they were in the presence of power — real power — power against which neither Russia nor the gates of hell could prevail.57

Does the radical pacifist differ from the liberal pacifist in the way he hopes to effect the changes in national policy which he advocates? There does seem to be some similarity in general approach. Mulford Sibley indicates:

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At present... only a small minority is convinced of the necessity for radical change. But this minority can grow and, since many of its members come from classes accustomed to articulating their views through public speaking and writing, the tendency may be for the new attitude to snowball."6

Cecil Hinshaw also emphasizes the importance of the process of persuasion; he expects "a time of slow growth at first," with the eventual likelihood that "there comes a time when a kind of bandwagon movement develops. This kind of result can be expected, however, only if the logic and evidence of the cause is persuasive."6 Even in the context of these statements, however, we can see a difference in emphasis. For Cecil Hinshaw, this process of persuasion exemplifies the "power of the logic of passive resistance."6 Mulford Sibley likewise emphasizes here "the power of persuasion in the shaping of public policy."6

The corollary of this recognition of the place of power in changing public policy is that those who advocate non-violence must organize themselves for effective action. Thus, according to Cecil Hinshaw, one responsibility immediately resting upon us is the organization of those who share these convictions into a working and effective group. Both the winning of the nation to this policy and the successful operation of the program thereafter requires [sic] such organizational effectiveness.6

This emphasis on organization can clearly be seen in the approach of such peace educators as Robert Pickus, who insist that "involving" persons in active work for peace is one of the best ways both of persuading them of the pacifist position and of increasing the effectiveness of their commitment to it.

The eventual objective, within the nation, of this process of persuasion and organized action is that the proposed change in national defense policy, as Cecil Hinshaw insists, "ultimately...would be embodied in a political program," which has as its intention "the victory (probably after initial defeats) of such a political force at the polls."6

As might be expected, the radical pacifist's fundamental analysis of the nature of man in society is quite different from that of the liberal pacifist. A. J. Muste, for instance, firmly rejects the view "that human beings are thought of as self-contained atoms never touching each other; it is an extremely individualistic, atomistic conception. The religious pacifist conception of man is, on the contrary, a profoundly social one."6 He further sees the need for attention to the distribution of power and authority among social groups: "All organs of human authority are limited. In any good society or democratic order there will be all kinds of associations each with its authority and instruments for exercising it. Authority and power will be diffused."6

The radical pacifist denial of the theory of society as an aggregate of atomistic individuals does not imply a collectivism in which the social group is the sole effective agent, swallowing up the individual. There is a living tension between individuality and corporateness at the core of radical pacifist thought. Cecil Hinshaw's analysis of one form of power in society explains one aspect of this balance:

It is this cement of desire for social approval that largely keeps society together at any time. This is the real power that makes laws workable, that makes a collection of people a society, a nation, rather than atomistic individuals.6

The radical pacifist is highly aware of the existence and operation of power as a factor in the relations between persons and groups at all levels. A. J. Muste affirms: "The mere fact of existence means to influence, to impress oneself in various ways upon another and to limit his possible choices."6 A major contribution of the radical pacifist to the analysis of the role of power in society is his insistence that power exists in various forms; it cannot be defined simply as the ability to coerce. Thus Mulford Sibley "assumes the inevitability of power relations and the centrality of power for political society. But all power is not of the same nature. There are many types of power."6 Two such types of power, operative in non-violent action, are suggested by Charles Walker: "Nonviolent direct action combines the social power of noncooperation with the moral power of voluntary suffering for others."6 Mulford Sibley indicates the
A THIRD TYPE OF APPROACH

We need to note the further point that both liberal and radical pacifism include in their numbers Friends who consider themselves Christians and those who adhere to a more universalist religious position. It thus appears that neither liberal nor radical pacifism is the simple consequence of a specifically Christian position. If the classical Quaker insights are to be relevant to the contemporary situation, then, we might seek to develop a third type of social analysis which would suggest a more direct relationship between Christian commitment and social concern in the working out of the peace testimony. In particular, we should note the rejection by the Declaration of 1660 of the traditional interpretation of Romans 13 as a basis for the Christian attitude to the structure of society. It may be productive to look into the implications of a contemporary analysis of Romans 13 which suggests a striking alternative to the traditional interpretation. This analysis is closely associated with the name of Oscar Coillmann, whose contribution on this point is, in the words of New Testament scholar G. H. C. Macgregor, "enormously suggestive and relevant."14

In Romans 13:1, Paul urges Christians to be subject to "the higher powers" (KJV) or "the governing authorities" (RSV). The Greek word translated "powers" or "authorities" is exousia; it clearly refers in this context to the Roman imperial and provincial government. The same word, however, when used in the plural elsewhere in the New Testament, has a different meaning, as can be seen in the following examples: Eph. 3:10 — "the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places"; Eph. 6:12 — "we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"; Col. 1:16 — "in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities"; Col. 2:15 — "he disarmed the principalities and powers"; 1 Peter 3:22 — "and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him"; 1 Cor. 15:24 — "after destroying every
rule and every authority and power." It is generally accepted that in these passages the term *exousia* refers to invisible, spiritual authorities or powers, of angelic or demonic nature. Cullmann goes a step further and argues that this meaning of the word *exousia* is also present in Romans 13, where the word refers simultaneously to earthly governments and to cosmic, spiritual forces or beings. By pointing out the role of folk angels in Jewish thought in the days of Jesus and Paul, he provides background for his claim that, for Paul, "the actual state authority is thought of as the executive agent of angelic powers." Clinton Morrison carries the argument further and shows that not only Jewish thought but also that of the Graeco-Roman world in New Testament times assumed an intimate relationship between invisible spiritual powers and governments on earth. Morrison concludes: There can be no proper understanding of what early Christians, Jews, and their pagan contemporaries understood as the State, in particular as the *exousia*, apart from that world view enveloping *axons* and *daimones*, providence and powers, in which the ruler was both divine by appointment and human by birth, and the boundaries between the spirit world and the world of humanity and nature were fluid and often imperceptible.

In short, as W. A. Visser 't Hooft points out, The Biblical authors consider the state as the organ of superhuman forces, forces which are in themselves neither good nor bad, which may serve the plan of God but which may also, if they run wild, turn against God. This interpretation shifts the emphasis away from the traditional view. That view has generally supposed that the approval by Romans 13 of the governing authority as "God's servant for your good" (Rom. 13:4) is opposed to and may even take precedence over the points of view of Acts 5:29—"We must obey God rather than men"—and of Revelation 13, which sees the Roman empire as the beast from the sea to which Satan, "the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority," (Rev. 13:1) and to which the Christian may have to refuse submission. But when we come to see, in the *exousia* of Romans 18, the same spiritual powers which have been disarmed by God in the crucifixion (Col. 2:15), are to be destroyed by Christ at the end of the age (1 Cor. 15:24), and against which Christians in the meanwhile have to contend, using "the whole armor of God" (Eph. 6:11-13), then we can discern the potential tension between Christians and the state even in Romans 13. Cullmann's conclusion regarding the implications of New Testament thought for the Church's task in this age is this: First, it must lovingly give the State everything necessary to its existence. It has to oppose anarchy and all Zealots within its own ranks. Second, it has to fulfill the office of watchman over the State. That means: it must remain in principle critical toward every State and be ready to warn it against transgression of its legitimate limits. Third, it must deny to the State which exceeds its limits whatever such a State demands that lies within the province of religious-ideological excess; and in its preaching, the Church must courageously describe this excess as opposition to God.

While claiming that the state is not necessarily called to be Christian, Cullmann does not fully and directly answer the question whether there may be circumstances in which Christians can at once remain obedient to the commands of Christ and take direct responsibility for government. An unequivocal answer to this question, indeed, cannot be drawn by direct inference from the New Testament. The early Christians were not faced with a social situation in which the direct application of their Christian commitment to the institutional structures of society was possible. A second problem posed for us by Cullmann is what to make of the apparently mythological New Testament understanding of the state; it is difficult for contemporary man, even as a Christian, to view the universe as one in which invisible powers — angels, daemons, spiritual hosts — abound. In order to answer the first of these questions we need to view the New Testament in the context of the whole sweep of 'holy history.' The Bible is primarily the account of the mighty acts of God in history, through which he wins his victory over the forces of sin and darkness and establishes his reign on earth.
in the twentieth century has succeeded in strengthening its call upon the religious loyalties of men. The international scene has become the battleground for rival deities, as has been cogently portrayed by so hard-boiled a realist as Hans Morgenthau:

The morality of the particular group, far from limiting the struggle for power on the international scene, gives that struggle a ferociously and intensity not known to other ages. For the claim to universality which inspires the moral code of one particular group is incompatible with the identical claim of another group; the world has room for only one, and the other must yield or be destroyed. Thus, carrying their idols before them, the nationalistic masses of our time meet in the international arena, each group convinced that it executes the mandate of history, that it does for humanity what it seems to do for itself, and that it fulfills a sacred mission ordained by Providence, however defined.57

But if the nations have thus become the true objects of worship of millions — even of many who believe themselves to be Christians — they effectively fill the functions ascribed to the 'principalities and powers' by Paul and his contemporaries. The nation-state not only governs and restrains evil within its bounds; it also attracts the nationalistic worship which makes it such an infinite menace on the world scene. Spiritual power is a reality — but not only for good.

THE PEACE TESTIMONY AND THE TRIUMPH OF GOD

What is the relationship today of these great thrones and authorities and powers to the sovereign God of history, whose triumph over them on the scene of history is assured, through the cross and resurrection, but not yet final and complete? The Biblical, prophetic perspective on history suggests three possibilities. We may, indeed, be approaching the apocalyptic end of history, in which Christ will appear in judgment on the mushroom clouds. For such a contingency the Church's task is one of prayer and waiting, in faithful obedience. Or God may have raised up the Communist powers as vessels for his wrath upon those peoples who call themselves after the name of Christ. For Western Christendom has largely denied God's commands to execute justice, to recognize the dignity of all his children, to turn aside from the way of the sword. The Communist nations may thus be instruments of his discipline much as the Assyrians and Chaldeans were upon the faithless people of Israel and Judah. In light of this the Church's task is like that of Jeremiah: with aching heart to warn its fellow-countrymen to submit to the chastisements of the Lord. Or it may be that God will bring about the miracle that will save us from destruction or tyranny. The Bible understands by miracle not a supernatural, inexplicable happening, but a sign of God's kingdom, a great and potent act of God in raising up a prophet or a people unto himself from seemingly barren ground — an act with far-reaching, if unpredictable, historical consequences. We see such acts in the conquest of Jericho, the return from the Babylonian captivity, the Reformation, George Fox's calling of the "great people to be gathered." The claim of the Christian faith is that the Church is the chosen instrument for God's mighty acts in the age of the new covenant. If such an act is to come about in our day, those who claim to be the Church are called to seek the radical renewal of this Church, purging it of its archaism and its indifference to justice and its alliance with the princes of this age. The call is to become a committed, revitalized people of God, knit together in devotion to the Christ who is present to them in comforting and awesome righteousness. Only such a people would have a faith strong enough and deep enough to displace loyalty to the nation, as the bearer of ultimate and universal value, in the hearts of their neighbors, countrymen, and fellow-humans over the whole earth.

Signs of the beginnings of such a renewal are not lacking in our generation; the peculiar task of the Society of Friends, or of those in it who catch the vision of such a Church, is, first, to relate ourselves closely to the forces of renewal that are already present. Quakerism's task is, secondly, to demonstrate in our own lives and in rigorous Christian thought how indispensable the peace testimony is for the Church, if the potential of these forces for renewal is to be realized, in this day when the Church needs to die again "to the elemental spirits of the universe"
which are so visibly guiding the destinies of the nations.

Specific practical steps, in which this task for Quakerism can be made concrete, are likely to emerge if and as a group of Friends becomes concerned to implement this approach. Only a few tentative proposals can be suggested here. The program of the Church Peace Mission, for instance, is a step in the right direction in terms of tackling the theological dimensions of this task; this program needs to be made much stronger and more extensive. Peace education conferences, institutes, and study programs could be given a new direction by centering them around the study of basic Biblical theology. Public witness projects might be moved in the direction of some form of 'prophetic symbolism.' Above all, these programs need to emerge out of the context of corporate groups of Christians who are concerned for renewal of the Church and of the world, and who have come together for common study, seeking, prayer, and social and missionary action.

Such are the outlines of a 'Christian pacifist' position, which sees society as the arena for the conflict of vast spiritual powers, suggests commitment to a radical renewal of the Church as the basis for social change, and places its hope at the international level in taming or by-passing such demonic forces as rampant nationalism through participation in Christ's victory. This position has strong points of contrast with the liberal pacifist and radical pacifist positions. The former sees society as an aggregate of individuals, suggests that social change comes primarily through changing the lives and outlooks of individuals, and puts its hope at the international level in the development of personal contacts and understanding among individual leaders in the nations. The latter sees society as a network of power-structures, emphasizes the involvement of persons in power-exercising organizations for peace as the direction for social change, and places its hope at the international level in the exercise of spiritual power through organized non-violent action. It is suggested here that such a 'Christian pacifist' position may incorporate the best insights for today's needs of the early Quaker contribution to the question of the relationship between Christian commitment and social concern on the international scene.
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unpredictable the historic failure of the church “to respond creatively to the burgeoning vistas of knowledge,” fails himself to do so when he calls for the renewal and cleansing of the church as the key to needed change. That is, he fails to relate the “great and potent act of God... with its far-reaching historical consequences” to any comprehensive theory of change which takes advantage of these new vistas. There