Christian Identity in the United States After September 11th, 2001: Christian Nationalism and the Alternative of Nonviolence

By

Kyle B. Hey

A Project in American Studies
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Master of Arts Degree
In American Studies
The Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg
May 2016

Author’s Signature: ________________________________

Kyle B. Hey

First Reader’s Signature: ________________________________

Charles Kupfer, Ph.D.

Second Reader’s Signature: ________________________________

Anthony Buccitelli, Ph.D.

Program Chair’s Signature: ________________________________

Simon Bronner, Ph.D.
Abstract

Christian Identity in the United States After 9/11: Christian Nationalism and the Alternative of Nonviolence

Kyle B. Hey

M.A., American Studies; May 2016
The Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg
Charles Kupfer, Ph.D., First Reader

Modern scholarship is only now developing that attempts to tackle the use, interpretation, and application of religion in a post September 11th America. The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of Conservative American Christianity in the justification of military violence in the Middle East, as well as present scholarship on an often over looked area of American religious study; the theology and use of nonviolence in modern American Christianity. Religion, specifically Christianity, has played a historic role in shaping the culture and politics of the United States. The terror attacks on September 11th, 2001 created a political and social environment in which many Conservative American Christians rekindled a spirit of Christian nationalism and identity. This resulted in the use of theology, belief, and religious identities to justify American military force in the Middle East.

Despite the pronounced role of Conservative Christianity in American politics, alternatives to the narrative of Christian nationalism exist within American Christianity. Following the September 11th terror attacks, groups of Christian Pacifists sought to apply the ethics of nonviolence in the new political and social world created in the wake of the terror attacks. Theology, such as that created and
promoted by pacifist theologians like Stanley Hauerwas and Ron Sider was
popularized by cultural figures such as Shane Claiborne. Actions by groups such as
the Christian Peacemaker Teams, tax resisters and other war resisters put into
action a renewed and relevant version of Modern Christian Pacifism. The future
effectiveness of this theology may depend not only on faithful adherence to pacifism,
but also work done with proponents of Just War in order to reduce the occurrence
of war. Modern Christian Pacifism represents the extenuation of a traditional
Christian theology in America, as well as represents an alternative to political
ideology promoted by some nationalist Conservative Christians in a post
September 11th America.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1. MODERN CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM ................................................. 1

  Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 1
  The Rise of Christian Nationalism: A Brief History ....................................................... 12
  Considering the Sword .......................................................................................................... 19
  The Christian War Hawks .................................................................................................... 21
  Questions of Just War after 9/11 ....................................................................................... 31

Chapter 2. MODERN CHRISTIAN NONVIOLENT THEOLOGY ....................... 37

  The Third Way ..................................................................................................................... 37
  Modern Nonviolent Theology ............................................................................................ 40

Chapter 3. MODERN CHRISTIAN NONVIOLENT ACTION .......................... 55

  Modern Nonviolent Action ............................................................................................... 55
  Christian Peacemaker Teams and the MCC ...................................................................... 56
  Veteran Outreach .............................................................................................................. 63
  Pacifism and Protest .......................................................................................................... 69
  Conclusion .......................................................................................................................... 72

REFERENCES ...................................................................................................................... 79
Chapter 1 MODERN CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

Introduction:

The 2016 presidential election cycle officially kicked off on March 23, 2015 when Republican candidate Ted Cruz announced his intention to run for the party’s nomination. The location of Cruz’s announcement, Liberty University, speaks volumes about the relationship between religion and American politics. Cruz elicited raucous applause from the crowd, which consisted of mostly college-aged conservative evangelicals, by affirming American exceptionalism, the political relationship between the United States and Israel, and his support for military efforts to combat “radical Islam”. Clearly, Cruz’s choice of location and statements sought to reinforce the ideal held by many conservative evangelicals that United States was, and is, a “Christian nation”. Included in Cruz’s speech was a discussion on the belief of a providentially blessed United States, saying that “God’s blessing has been on America from the very beginning of this nation, and I believe God isn’t done with America yet.” Cruz clearly intended to rekindle the belief held by many conservative American Christians that America’s economic and political success are a result of “God’s blessing” on the nation, and that the perceived role of America in the world as an agent of the will of God on Earth.

Ted Cruz was not the only 2016 Presidential Candidate to endorse a Christian nationalist perspective. Cruz’s conservative rival Marco Rubio impassionedly stated that “God’s hand is upon America” and that “For over two centuries, America has been an exceptional nation”. Clearly, ideas of American exceptionalism and Christian nationalism continue to captivate particular segments
of American society. Christian academic and American Historian John Fea, an opponent of the Christian American exceptionalism narrative, stated that Cruz “wants to ‘restore’ the United States to what he believes is its original identity: a Christian nation”.

Like many modern Christian nationalist politicians, Cruz’s ideas and campaign rhetoric were in part influenced by the version of history promoted by conservative activist David Barton, who has worked to build favor in conservative political circles for decades. Barton has written books, educational curriculum, and started an organization named Wallbuilders to promote a Christian nationalist narrative to American History. Christian nationalists, including Barton, understand the current state of American Society as in the midst of a shift away from its supposed “Christian underpinnings”. This narrative often gathers political clout when a politicians view their policies as a path back to a “Christian America”.

Modern conservative pundit Glenn Beck has also publically promoted the idea of a “Christian nation”. An adult convert to Mormonism, Beck often uses his popular media outlets to promote his view of a historic and divine connection between Christianity and the American republic. Christian academic and critic of Christian nationalism, Warren Throckmorton points out that Beck publically stated that the U.S. Constitution, as well as the Bible, are God inspired texts. While not all, or even many, American Christians view the Constitution as divinely inspired, Beck’s statements exemplify the conservative politics associated with the modern Christian nationalism, which pursues a return to the Christian nation myth. However, the work of Christian Academics such as Warren Throckmorton and John Fea readily
show a strong resistance, even among American Christians, to the Christian nation myth. Like Fea and Throckmorton, many 21st century American Christians disagree with the characterization of the United States as an exceptional, Christian nation blessed by God. In fact, there is a large contingency of American Christians in the United States that find the Christian nationalist perspective troubling and antithetical to their own interpretation of how their Christian values are to work in the political world.

Despite resistance to its pull, the narrative of American exceptionalism and Christian nationalism has seeped into the American zeitgeist. American exceptionalism often has a basis in religion, namely Christianity. The idea that America is unique or set apart has a long theopolitical history on the continent. The “Christian nation” myth has long been a driving force for the American religious public, and politicians seeking popular election. Presidential prayer meetings and religious advisers have been regular staples of presidential custom. Congressmen and other politicians often have to appeal to the religious persuasions of their constituents. With each passing election this dichotomy seems to be further entrenched in the American political system.

Not only have political leaders become accustomed to promoting their religious ideals, some religious leaders, on all sides of the spectrum, have also become increasingly political. Exemplifying this turn, as well as the diversity of Christian political opinions, are two recent religious leaders, Jim Wallis and Jerry Falwell. Jim Wallis’s scholarship promoted political activism, economic, and social causes often associated with left wing politics. The late Reverend Jerry Falwell, a
prominent evangelical pastor and educator, has often been associated with conservative political efforts. Though these religious leaders tried to allow their theological beliefs to inform their politics, critics often accuse politically active religious leaders of allowing their politics to guide their religious message. This theopolitical divide leaves many American Christians scattered across the political spectrum, some feeling that their nation carries a heavy divine burden, while others are left lamenting the marriage of Christianity and American politics as corrupting and restricting to the mission of the Christian Church.

Throughout the 1970s and 80s, the influence of Jerry Falwell grew as he became a leader in what became known as the “Religious Right”. Both religious leaders and politicians in the Religious Right often adhered to the belief of American exceptionalism. Sympathizers with the ideology of the Religious Right often felt this exceptionalism promoted the idea that God’s will on Earth would, or at least could, be achieved through American action. America’s role in a divine plan as promoted by a Christian view on American exceptionalism often implies a covenant between America and God. Many American Conservative Christians who follow the idea of American exceptionalism often promote military action or international political pressure as a possible way to promote the aforementioned divine covenant. A far less studied response to the theopolitics associated with the Religious Right is the Religious Left. Members of this group, such as the Jim Wallis felt that social and economic justice could be achieved, or at least promoted, through liberal government action and often refute the existence of a divine covenant between God
and America. Political responsibilities are highly valued on either side of the theopolitical divide.

One of the major difficulties in the fair discussion of modern American Christianity is its aforementioned close marriage to American politics. Often the terms Religious Right and Religious Left are entirely insufficient to legitimately discuss intricacies of the Christian Faith in the United States. Christians often split the divide on social and economic issues. A Christian could oppose abortion; yet support taxes increases for the purpose of providing social programs for young single mothers. In this way, many American Christians do not strictly, or cleanly, fall into the categories of “Right” and “Left”. Many Christian theologians are just as difficult to categorize on a political spectrum. John Howard Yoder’s theology called for the protest of the Vietnam War, yet many would characterize his Mennonite upbringing, which was highly influential in his theological work, as socially conservative. Furthermore, Anabaptist groups such as the Mennonites can create political ambiguity, as some are apolitical. To many theologians and apolitical Christian groups, being categorized on a political spectrum would be troublesome. The purpose of belief for politically distant Christians is not to accrue secular political power, but rather to work toward the kingdom of God outside of the worldly, broken system of political structures.

Despite many prominent Christian theologians and Christians groups falling outside of normative political characterizations, the myths and narratives of Christian nationalism and American exceptionalism have penetrated the ethos of American Christianity and have popularly created a sense that righteousness is
found in American ideals. Politicians and policy makers have successfully mobilized the ideals of Christian nationalism and American exceptionalism into political will. This sense of purpose and righteousness has greatly impacted our national policy action, especially that which pertains to violence.

Few events in American History have garnered as much support for the Christian nationalist narrative as the September 11th terror attacks. For many Americans this moment clarified America’s position as a “Christian” nation, under siege from Radical Islam. Many Christians may not have used such direct language to describe the relationship between American political and military action and the Christian faith. However, writer and cultural critic Mark Soluka, deftly noted that Americans reacted with far more emotion to terrorist attacks on American soil than they did to violent tragedies with far greater human cost in other areas of the world. Soluka hyperbolically and sarcastically explained the reaction by noting,

In our nation’s heart of hearts... the conviction that we were different, apart, a City on a Hill remained untouched... lest we forget, we Americans had been commissioned by God himself to bear the light of liberty and religion throughout the Earth. Rwanda? Bosnia? Couldn’t help but feel sorry for those folks: but lets face it, Rwanda did not have a convent with God. And Jesus was not a Sarajevan.8

Soluka readily admits that only the most politically conservative of the Religious Right would use vocabulary as direct as he does in his cutting narrative of the American subconscious. Yet, Soluka argues, the spiritual questioning and national soul searching following the September 11th attacks showed the ideal of American exceptionalism remained in tact as Americans, religious and secular, questioned how God could allow such a tragedy to happen on American soil.
It must also be acknowledged that there are many American atheists, agnostics, Muslims, Hindu, Jews, and others who support many America’s Military efforts. Many Americans who are not willing to call the United States a “Christian nation” still feel that it has a strong societal, judicial, and political sense of morality. Scholars, such as Robert Bellah, feel that Americans have used a quasi-religious ethic to unify national interests. This ethic is known as Civil Religion, which “is expressed in a set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals... The inauguration of a president is an important ceremonial event in this religion. It reaffirms, among other things, the religious legitimation of the highest political authority.” Bellah felt that the politics of American Civil Religion had “borrowed selectively from the religious tradition in such a way that the average American saw no conflict between the two.” Still, the underlying morality that defines much of Civil Religion derives from roots in Christianity and Judaism. The relationship between the United States and Israel, the nation’s past treatment of Native Americans, and the support for South Vietnam would all be examples of American Civil religion being used to moralize national interest. Bellah notes the power and reach of Civil Religion by explaining how a dictatorship in South Vietnam was re-characterized as the freedom fighters struggling to become part of the “free world” in order to moralize American action in Vietnam.

President Woodrow Wilson's view on America's role in the world was defined by a strong moral undertone that manifested itself in secular actions. Wilson, a one-time pacifist, began his Presidency supporting the traditional America foreign policy stance of isolationism. However, as war become became more likely,
Wilson’s stance turned toward intervention, which dovetailed with his Progressivism. Historians Richard V. Pierard and Robert D. Linder discussed Wilson’s personal and political justification for American military involvement as his belief that America was a Christian nation and Christianity stressed “obligation, duty, and service”.¹¹ Wilson viewed the American involvement in World War One as an act of Christian service. The mission of America in the world was to promote a new political gospel, which moralized the values of the United States through the promotion of democracy and free trade. While few question the earnestness of Wilson’s personal or political stances, his moralization of war is a clear example of American Civil Religion. In his sincere passion to enact his moral vision for what he believed was the Christian mission of the country, Wilson repressed civil liberties and opposed the vision of Christian Pacifism that was popular prior to the war.¹²

Just as in Wilson's justification for U.S. involvement in WWI, and the moralizing of support for dictatorships in the Vietnam War, the American moral justification for military actions following September 11th, 2001 blurred the line between Christian nationalism and Civil Religion.

Wilson’s example of Civil Religion, that verges on Christian nationalism, is especially helpful to understand the differences and similarities between the two ideas. Much of Wilson’s ideas about America’s mission in the world were informed by his sincere and thoughtful Christian faith. However, non-religious ideals of democracy and self-determination were the manifestation of Wilson’s belief in the Christian mission for America. Therefore, even though many Christian nationalists would have agreed with Wilson’s vision for the country, it was also possible for non-
religious supporters of democracy to support and agree with Wilson’s vision for the country. In other words, Wilson came to his political conclusions, in part, through his faith, however, others could come to the same political conclusions without invoking the ideal of a national Christian Mission. Christian nationalism is often defined by its necessity to invoke an explicitly, and solely, Christian vision for the social and political ideals promoted by the nation.

As shown by the Wilsonian vision of America’s role in WWI, cultural critic Mark Soluka also mentioned the impending violence that would be justified through Christian nationalism and American exceptionalism, a stance that holds America up as a purveyor of God’s will in the world. In Soluka’s critique, the American public united to defeat an evil enemy and in doing so helped restore America’s subconscious identity as the promoter of justice and democracy in the world. This identity would be restored through violent action, and result in a 21st century blending of Christian nationalism and Civil Religion. Later, President George W. Bush would use the weighted word “crusade” to describe the purpose of the American military mission and in the 2016 Presidential race, Ted Cruz said that as President he would make the desert “glow” after carpet bombing terrorists in order to restore justice in the Middle East and promote democracy13.

The September 11th attacks represented a focusing point of both American Civil Religion as well as Christian nationalism on the mission of violent protection of American interests and values through the use of force in the Middle East. No longer was the ultimate enemy the godless Soviets, but rather a transnational radicalized form of Islam that believed God had ordered the death of Americans. This shift is key
as many Christian nationalists view America as a representative of God against the evils of other non-American systems. After the September 11th terror attacks Americans clearly saw Islamic terrorism as the far greater threat to their way of life and differentiated it from other international threats to democracy and sovereignty. The subconscious exceptionalism adhered to by many American Christians justified American military action in the Middle East against the new eternal enemy of religious terrorism.

Traditionally pacifist and apolitical groups also represent a voice in the discussion of the various Christian responses to violence after September 11th, 2001. Some American Christians from Peace Church traditions have sought to resist violence of any sort, no matter who is carrying the weapons. Peace Churches do not fit in with the narrative of Christian nationalism, nor do they strictly adhere to the ideals promoted by American Civil Religion when conflated with military action. Within the American church, discussions about pacifism, just war, and political involvement are not new. However, in the wake of the renewed threat of terrorism, many Christian pacifists found their beliefs called into question in the name of realism and patriotism. Catholic intellectual George Wiegel called into questions the seemingly de facto pacifist position of the Vatican after the September 11th attacks, expressing frustration with the call of Pope John Paul II for a stand-down of American military force.14 Also, some Just War theologians found a difficult time merging their Augustinian beliefs with the star-spangled faith that many American Christians followed.
The extent and method of political engagement is an issue that shows stark contrasts between Christians of differing frameworks. The diversity of political thought within American Christianity must be understood in the context of American history, with attention given to how individuals and groups of Christians feel their beliefs should be manifested politically. Viewpoints on violence such as Just War, Pacifism, and ultimately Christian nationalism play an important role in determining the frameworks from which Christians determine their political role in the nation.

The internal debate over the role of Christians in post 9/11 America reveals traditional and modern divisions within American Christianity. This debate also raises several intriguing questions of research and discussion in modern American Christian history. Among these are questions surrounding are the modern application of Just War theory in American policy, and the justifications for modern Christian Pacifism. Furthermore, points of study should include both the beliefs and actions of American Christians in response to the mobilization of the American military after 9/11 in order to fully understand the role of an ancient faith in the lives of millions of Modern American Christians. Despite the fact that Christian nationalism has been both publically and subconsciously relevant to many American Christians, movements also emerged and clarified themselves after 9/11 that held to the ideal of Christian Pacifism. These ideals are spiritual and political, yet often unaffiliated, and exemplify a connection to previous veins of American Christian Pacifism.
The Rise of Christian Nationalism: A Brief History

Despite the existence of relevant Christian Pacifism, and legitimate Just War followers, American Christian nationalism dominates the political sector of American theopolitics. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus tells his followers to “give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and God what is God’s”. In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul states that earthly authorities require submission from the followers of Christ. Debate regarding the interpretation of these scriptures centers around what Christians feel is the Church’s relationship with secular authority. This issue has been debated throughout the history of the United States. Many scholars feel that the unique religious history of the United States is responsible for creating strains of both religious and secular versions of American exceptionalism.

The origins of American exceptionalism, and the beginnings of American Christian nationalism, are often traced to Jonathon Winthrop’s sermon entitled “A Model of Christian Charity”. In this sermon Winthrop claimed that the Puritan community in North America would be a model for Christian communities around the globe to follow. In this speech, Winthrop impressed upon his Puritan settlers that they have entered into a convent with God to do his will in the New World. Winthrop firmly established in the minds of the Puritans that they were a chosen people, set apart from the rest of the world by stating; “For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us.” The European settlers accompanying Winthrop believed that their covenant with God was akin to that of the Israelites in the biblical narrative; only their promised land was New England.
The Puritans’ belief of a divine covenant is also saddled with the fear of failure. Winthrop himself warned of disobedience to God stating, “But if our hearts shall turn away, so that we will not obey . . . we shall surely perish . . .” With a genesis in Winthrop’s sermons and continuing through the Puritan jeremiad lectures, Puritans were taught to expect divine punishment if they strayed from their mission. While the Puritan communities and 17th-century Calvinistic way of life faded into the background of a broadening American culture, they left lasting imprints on American religious identity.

Throughout the nation’s early history, many Americans saw strong connections between Christianity and national identity. Religion was used to justify rebellion from England, as well as the removal of Native Americans. Some revolutionary clergymen believed that there was a complementary, if not divine, relationship between the emerging republic and the churches in America. By this time America had a diverse set of religious groups living within its boundaries, ranging from Quakers to Congregationalists to Catholics to Jews to Deists. Yet, most Americans still viewed religious liberty, and religion itself, as part of a unique American identity. Distinguished Professor of Religion Dr. Richard Hughes stated that many Revolutionary Americans “compared New England to ancient Israel, suggesting that God had chosen the colonies for victory over Great Britain.” Thus moralizing the rebellious conflict between the “chosen” colonies and the also largely Protestant Great Britain.

As American Christianity became more democratic, so too did the political and social culture. The Great Awakening revivals turned religion into a social and
common cultural experience and encouraged American Christians to conflate religious language with the egalitarian language of the era’s political change. By doing so, many American Christians continued to intertwine their political and religious identities, further perpetuating the narrative of Christian nationalism, while simultaneously establishing the foundation for American Civil Religion.

Relative equality among free men was an important aspect of the identity of the young republic politically, as well as philosophically. The democratizing spirit within American Christianity allowed for the revival movement of the First and Second Great Awakenings to take peoples “deepest spiritual impulses at face value rather than subjecting them to the scrutiny of orthodox doctrine and the frowns of respectable clergymen.” Perhaps the most renowned orator of this spirit, Jonathan Edwards used his sermons, such as “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” to promote the spirit of democratization and agency. His sermons carried elements of Calvinism, but also fatefully included the message that an individual might affect their salvation by humbly seeking God’s forgiveness and grace. Edward’s emphasis on and validation of the experiences and desires of the individual in a religious setting helped galvanize the validity and focus of individualism in the American identity.

American individualism and democratic ideals penetrated the teachings of many American Christian churches. As the nation grew, many Americans viewed it as the nation’s Christian duty to spread western civilization and religion across the continent, and perhaps the world. Many Americans combined their Christianity with ideas of racial superiority and democracy as a means to justify their treatment of
Debates over the humanity of Native Americans were longstanding within Christianity. The Catholic Church began the debate when Christopher Columbus encountered Native Americans, and historically popularized the debate through the interchanges of the Spaniards Sepulveda and De Las Casas. For many Christians, the debate continued from these early encounters into the building of the new nation. Furthermore, the religiously laden political philosophy of Manifest Destiny justified the acquisition of territory and even war, implying a “chosen” status for the United States that resonated with many Christian nationalists.

Slavery became a divisive issue in American Christianity. Many southerners used religious reasons to justify the economic benefits and human coast of the “peculiar institution”. During the Civil War religious leaders on both sides declared that God was on their side. The rhetoric of some religious leaders reflected the Puritan ideals of God’s righteous punishment, expressing that the war was God administering such punishment to the United States for the sin of slavery. In the midst of the bloodshed of the Civil War President Abraham Lincoln used American religious ideals to galvanize the Union behind the righteous cause of abolition. A largely unsuccessful Reconstruction period reified a Jim Crow system politically and economically, while southern churches remained largely segregated. A racial division within American Christianity had begun well before the end of war. Even some Northern churches limited the behavior and role of black congregants, forcing Black religious leaders such as David Allen to form their own religious institutions.
As the diplomatic focus of the United States turned international, some American Christians adapted their religious ideals to match the nation’s politically expansionist philosophy. From the Spanish American War, through both World Wars, Americans heard the appeal that the nation’s decision to intervene in foreign affairs as their moral duty, a morality that invoked the interplay between religion and democracy. President McKinley often referenced the mission of civilizing and Christianizing new territories as the mission and practice of the expanding nation. Groups such as the Thomasites sincerely reflected the appeal of this call. This group of American missionaries, who arrived in the Philippines on board the USAT Thomas in 1901, devoted their lives to Christian uplift in the Philippines. As mentioned, President Wilson would later also draw upon his understanding of national mission during World War I.

As the Second World War came to a close the United States found itself alone on the world stage with one other super power, the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union’s relationship to religion further pushed Americans to promote a version of Christian nationalism. The Soviets officially adopted the atheism operative in Marxism-Leninism, but also brought the Russian Orthodox Church under state control when it suited their purposes, such as during the Second World War. As a result of both actions, Americans saw their own religion as a significant differentiating factor between American and Soviet ideals. This was seen publically with the addition of the words “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance, and privately, as many preachers railed from the pulpit against the godlessness of the Soviet system. They attributed the inhumanities of the Soviet regime to its atheism. Messages from political leaders
reinforced the idea that America represented the strength of Christian world against
the atheist Soviet menace. President Truman publically stated that he viewed
America’s laws as “God Given”, and that the country would defend their spiritual
values against the Soviets who did not share America’s moral code and who often
persecuted church leaders in satellite nations where religion was part of national
identity.31

Out of the Cold War atmosphere grew a modern political movement known
as the “Religious Right”. Americans who were drawn to this movement found an
appeal in a blend of conservative politics and religious overtones. The 1970s also
saw American evangelical Christians echo American mainstream culture. The
parallel culture created by American Christians in the 1970s reflected the anxiety
that many Christians felt when faced with the liberalizing of American society.
Socially, their response was to inject Christian values into popular culture as well as
create a “Christianized” version of American culture. Christian Music, literature, and
television mimicked, and mixed with, secular culture.32

Politically, throughout the Cold War, conservative Christians and Catholics
rallied as a voting block for politically conservative candidates out of fear of the
Soviet Union and in response to the conservative domestic issues of abortion and
integration. Foreign policy issues such as Nixon’s “Peace with Honor” and Regan’s
hard rhetoric against communism appealed to conservative Christian Americans, as
active ways to further what they felt was the defense of Christian values abroad. The
language used from the pulpit by some conservative evangelicals and Catholics
matched the political rhetoric of American politicians. Christian Leaders such as
Jerry Falwell and James Dobson urged American Christians to rally behind conservative political candidates and promoted a religious social agenda in the United States.

Conservative pastors and politicians did not speak for all American Christians. During the 1970s America also saw the emergence of a “Religious Left”, which had its roots in a long tradition of progressive Christianity in America. The Religious Left fought for Civil Rights and protested against the Vietnam War. Also, traditionally apolitical groups such as the Amish and Mennonites, which have developed a rich religious tradition in the United States, often refrained from active political debates. Despite keeping a philosophical distance from the idea of Christian nationalism, the Christian Left’s political engagement was still defined by their religious ideals practiced in an American context.

Despite the existence of its religious detractors the American reality of Christian nationalism has shown itself throughout the nation’s history. At times of crisis Americans seem to be drawn closer to the “Christian nation” narrative as evidenced by the rhetoric used by politicians and pastors before and during wars in American History. The September 11th terrorist attacks represent the most direct crisis in modern American History. After these brutal attacks many American Christians once again revealed their explicit or subconscious beliefs in American exceptionalism and Christian nationalism. Some, thought not all, outspoken American Christian leaders will revive the public connection between conservative politics and evangelical values.
**Considering the Sword:**

The United States responded to the September 11th terror attacks with a nationalistic fervor reminiscent of the American public’s response to the attack on Pearl Harbor, or the galvanizing reports from Havana harbor that sensationalized the sinking of the *USS Maine*, an event that would plunge the United States into an imperialistic age. When President George W. Bush decided to use military action in Iraq and Afghanistan many Americans supported the president’s decision. They felt as those American losses required violent revenge and that the safety of the nation was at risk if the military was not mobilized. By November 2001, over 92% of Americans supported the use of military force in Afghanistan with 80% favoring the use of ground troops.\(^{34}\) The American invasion of Iraq would be a more divisive conflict. At the outset of the war nearly three fourths of all American supported the decision to use American Armed Forces in the invasion of Iraq. However, that number quickly declined as time passed and American causalities mounted.\(^{35}\) Nonetheless, at the outset of both conflicts, Americans felt that it was the role of the United States to intervene in the Middle East.

American Christian supported the initial war in high numbers, and they stayed loyal to the cause of the war at higher numbers than the general public as the conflicts became unpopular. A 2006 poll showed that 62% American Christians continued to support the decision to invade Iraq. The same poll showed only 45% of the general public, a percentage that also included the aforementioned Christian support.\(^{36}\) Revealing a strong connection between conservative politics and
religious identity, nearly 80% of the Christians supporting the continuation of the war in 2006 belonged to the Republican Party.

These numbers represent a still image of the social and political climate in the years following the September 11th attacks. The nationalistic spirit was high and drew support for armed conflict in the Middle East. Perhaps the most telling story is that these numbers show American Christians supported the continued use of military force, even when public opinion was swinging away from support. Christian reaction to U.S. military action in the Post 9/11 era was rooted in the ethos of Christian nationalism that exists in American Christianity but it was also bolstered by the public views of the very vocal remnant of the Religious Right and politically and theologically conservative Christian scholars and theologians.
The Christian War Hawks

Despite the prominence of Christian nationalism, many official denomination leaders wrote public letters to President Bush, openly opposing the administration’s drive toward, and preparation for, the Invasion of Iraq. Leaders of traditional Peace Churches, such as the Mennonite Church USA, urged President Bush to seek peace. Many churches in the “Just-War” tradition, such as the Lutheran World Federation, openly expressed doubt that the coming conflict met the criteria of a just war. Pope John Paul II also publicly called for war to be averted. However, many “everyday Christians” would have been surprised to find that their denominational official did not support military action in Iraq. As evidenced by the aforementioned polls, many American Christian denominational and high church leaders were unable to convince their followers to oppose the War in Iraq.

The public institutional opposition by religious groups to the coming military action in Iraq was largely overshadowed in the public press by several very vocal Christian nationalist leaders. Many of these leaders were members of a newly revived “Religious Right” that found a political home in President George W. Bush’s beliefs and policies. Leaders such as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell were firm believers in a version of Christian American exceptionalism that positioned America as a moral compass for the modern world. This Puritanical ethic also brought with it the belief the United States would be punished if American failed to maintain high moral standards, which they theorized resulted in the September 11th attacks.

In many ways the commanding voices of Falwell and Robertson was a resurgence of their roles, as well as other conservative Christian leaders, in the
political and social conservatism that dominated American national politics in the 1980’s. Jerry Falwell as a leader of the theopolitical organization known as the Moral Majority during the emergence of the New Right coalitions in the 1970s, while Robertson formed the Christian Coalition. These modern fundamentalists actively engaged with politics in an effort to create both a political and social climate in the United States that supported conservative Christian values. Senators, judges, and presidents felt the pressure from these groups and leaders. Falwell and Dobson, among others, would rejoice at the strengthening American military to defend American values internationally.39

The political clout of these conservative Christian leaders diminished somewhat during the Clinton presidency. Even without the support of the powerful conservative religious leaders, President Clinton found his own ways to assert religiosity into his political persona. His southern background, comfort with African American religious traditions, and his appeal for public forgiveness all reflected the importance of the conservative religious ideals in American Politics. However, a more nationalistic model resurged during the clarifying event of the September 11th attacks. After this event, American’s felt a clear enemy had emerged that threatened the moral and political values of the nation. As mentioned many Americans, especially Christian Americans, supported U.S. efforts to prosecute the “War on Terror”.

Perhaps one of the clearest examples of Conservative Christian support for U.S. military action in the Middle East was an article written by Jerry Falwell entitled “God is Pro War”. In this article Falwell explains the biblical argument he uses to
justify war. Also included in this article are telling signs about what he feels is America’s role in God’s plan of the world. Falwell’s ethic of Christian nationalism is evident in the language he uses, such as his belief that the freedoms of America are “God-authored” and must be violently defended. In his article, Falwell compared the war to the plight of the Israelites and the defense of their culture. He further justified the conflict by saying it met the criteria of just war. In the eyes of the secular press, the public platform that Falwell had established as a leader of a mega-church, founder of a thriving university, and conservative political commentator, allowed his message of war and Christian nationalism to replace the aforementioned institutional Christian opposition to the War in Iraq as the perceived position of Christian evangelicals. In fact, many American Christians relied on the secular press to inform them on the morality of the War rather than their Church leaders. Conservative Christians in the national media were able to disproportionately influence the opinion of American Christians over their church denomination leaders by seizing on the underlying ethos of Christian nationalism and by vocally promoting their views through the public media.

Following the same conservative theological and political strands of American Christianity exemplified by Jerry Falwell, Southern Baptist leader Richard Land joined the call for American military intervention in Iraq. As the president of the Southern Evangelical Seminary, Land helped coordinate and author a letter to President Bush in 2002 urging him to invade Iraq. Several other prominent evangelical leaders, such as Dr. Chuck Colson of Prison Ministries and Dr. Bill Bright founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, also signed their names to this letter.
Colson himself, as a part of Nixon’s Watergate Scandal, represents a connection to the early ties drawn between conservative politics and evangelical leadership. His participation in the Watergate crimes occurred before his personal conversation to evangelical Christianity, but Colson’s later ministry would often reflect conservative social and political values.

The “Land Letter” promoted the idea that an invasion into Iraq would meet the Just War criteria that many American Christians employ as an ethical framework to justify or refute violence, and in doing so revealed the connection between American Christianity and American political values. For instance, Land argued that invading Iraq would protect American freedoms at home and abroad. It is difficult to argue that the Bible, and more specifically the Gospel’s message, is antithetical to personal and societal freedoms. However, the assumption that Christians are to violently procure and defend the ideals of political freedom assumes much about scripture regarding the Christian’s role in violence.

In the months directly before the Invasion of Iraq, Land would continue to publically advocate for military action. In addition his initial letter, he also penned another public letter that used a mixture of American political theory, scripture, and American historical events to explain why he felt the impending invasion would meet the just war theory. The belief in obedience to authority, and the belief that authority is God ordained are central tenants to Land’s argument. The authority that Land promotes as “legitimate” is not a Church authority but rather the Unites States Government. While this was not the official position of all, or even many, denominational leaders, it clearly shows a persistent notion felt by some Christians
that America can, and should, act as defender of what are perceived to be moral and “biblical” values in the greater world.

Other pro-war and Just War Christians promoted the notion that moral violence and death are necessary to preserve morality in the world. Like Richard Land, prominent evangelical conservative Dr. Bob Jones defended the use of violence to promote the American values of freedom and liberty. In an interview with Larry King, Jones admitted that war is part of man's sinful humanity but insisted that this war would help preserve peace. Intertwined with Jones’ defense of the coming war in Iraq is, again, a sense of Christian nationalism. The authority to wage war, Jones explained, is given to nations by God. Also, the language that Jones used reveals a sense of immediate exceptionalism that sets the United States apart in this particular modern era. Throughout the interview, Dr. Jones thanked God that the United States had a Christian leader who “seeks the face of God” in President George W. Bush.46 This rhetoric exemplified the ethic of Christian nationalism by implying a connection between the leadership of the United States and the role of America in God’s providence in the world.

The rhetoric of President Bush himself often fell into the ethos of Christian nationalism. Throughout the preparation and early phases of the military mobilization of the military, President Bush framed the struggle of the United States not as political endeavor, but rather a moral imperative. The rhetoric often used by President Bush reflected his belief that God supported the mission of the United States. It provided a sectarian counterpart to the Marxian notion of being on the ‘ride side of history,’ a view in which there is an objective direction to human affairs.
In a speech to Congress nine days after the September 11th terror attacks, President Bush said, “Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.”

Bush publically stated that the war in Iraq was a “crusade” to “liberate the Middle East.” The public rhetoric of President Bush helped author a narrative for the American public that justified the efforts of the military as moral, Christian, and God-ordained. In 1987, President Reagan equated the American effort to oppose the Soviet Union as a crusade. This matched his belief that the United States must be militarily and spiritually strong to be the beacon of freedom and morality in the world.

President Bush picked up the mantle of religiously laden, conservative, pro-military policies to oppose what had become America’s new ultimate enemy; Islamic terrorism.

The moral rhetoric used by President Bush alarmed many Muslims around the world. Though likely inadvertently, President Bush’s use of the weighted word “crusade”, as well as his other previously mentioned rhetoric, helped create a moral situation in which Radical Islam became the “other”. Of course, the Crusades are seen in Christian history as an attempt to recapture the Holy Land after its conquest by Islam. But in the Islamic world, and in many progressive American circles, the Crusades are seen as not only racist and imperialistic, but also as a time of bloody violence committed nearly indiscriminately at times in the name Christ. Past uses of the term such as when Dwight D. Eisenhower referred to the Allies’ “Crusade in Europe” during World War II did not cause controversy. However, today’s understanding of history and transculturation has left the word axiomatically
controversial. President Bush’s message to the American people was one that
diminished any possible logic or reasoning behind the enemies purposes to fight.
The “othering” of the enemy produced an outcome in the ethos of Christian
nationalists that did not anticipate the consequences of military action against an
enemy. “Othering” creates a narrative that the enemy is an illogical evil presence,
rather than a group of people reacting to their situation in the world through
political and religious mediums. Jackson Lears described the providential and
moralistic language used by President Bush as promoting “tunnel vision” and
“sanitizing the messy actualities of war”.50 For many conservative American
Christians the rhetoric of the Bush administration created a clear focus and
justification for military action on the grounds of morality and divine authority.

The United States Armed Forces were not devoid of the narrative of Christian
nationalism rhetoric during the invasion of Iraq. Lt. General William Boykin stated
that the mission about justification of the Iraq War was clear. In one of several
public addresses Boykin stated “The enemy is a spiritual enemy. He’s called the
principality of darkness. The enemy is a guy called Satan.”51 Boykin would also
publically state that he believed the United States was a Christian nation and a
terrorist target because of this distinction.52 Many of these public addresses were in
his military uniform and in front of Church audiences. While Boykin’s words may
only have appealed to a small minority of the men and women enlisted in the Armed
Forces, his speeches are an example of the power Christian nationalist narrative in
modern American culture. The fact that Boykin had an audience to deliver his
message multiple times shows that a portion of the American public believed that
the United States was indeed involved in a struggle with evil, and they were on God’s side.

Christians who felt that the war in Iraq was a morally justified, if not divinely ordained, found scholastic support in well-respected Catholic theologian Richard John Neuhaus. At times sounding more like a conservative political topical writer than a religious ethicist, Neuhaus found the war in Iraq justified for various reasons, such as the supposed weapons that Saddam Hussein possessed, the protection of Iraqi lives from the dictator, and the historic aggression of Iraq. For Neuhaus, war in Iraq was a moral responsibility, stating, “War, if it is just, is not an option chosen but a duty imposed.”53 America seemed to be in the best and most justified position to carry out this duty.

Furthermore, Neuhaus found no conflict between the teachings of the Catholic Church on war and the American decision to invade Iraq. There was little room for opposition to the war in Iraq in the American Catholic theology of Neuhaus. In fact, Neuhaus believes that those who consider pacifism to be the place of the church are “committing a mortal sin”.54 As a Catholic, Neuhaus must address the calls for peace by Pope John Paul II, which he does with both technicality and nuance. He argued more from the perspective that the Pope had not declared the invasion a crime against humanity; therefore it could still fit the just war criteria.

The vocabulary that Neuhaus uses is logical and clear. He defends the doctrine of Just War as a Christian duty, rather than one of several possible responses to danger. Outside of the Just War vocabulary that he uses, he often discusses the topic of Iraq in terms of international politics and often assumes a
highly proactive role by America in determining international political outcomes. While his rhetoric is not overly nationalist, he does show some evidence of a presumption of American exceptionalism. His public support of the war in Iraq gave many conservative Christians a public scholar to call their own, and the media a vocal religious proponent of the war.

Years after the American Invasion of Iraq, the United States public, while still divided, seems to have determined the military action was ill advised. Yet, many American conservative Christians can be found once again lining support behind political voices that promise aggressive military policies in the Middle East. Part of this might stem from the continuing persecution of indigenous Christian groups in that part of the world who are frequently on the receiving end of violence from terroristic groups such as ISIS, as well as the traditional conservative Christians stance to support Israel, and therefore opposition any sign of Arab aggression or regional instability. Speaking retrospectively, this present support seems to mirror the reaction of Christian nationalists to the invasion of Iraq. Modern support for military action is occurring despite many denominational leaders calling for reflection and reasoned foreign policies.

The war in Iraq represents a uniquely modern expression of American Christian Nationalism. The events of September 11th revived a subconscious belief in American ethos that perpetuates the perceived moral leadership providence has given to America in the world. The emerging Christian nationalism can be seen in the rhetoric of outspoken conservative religious leaders, Christian scholars and even the President of the United States. While many Christians may not prescribe to
the ethic of Christian nationalism, its strength and influence in a post September 11th world show that it remains a powerfully engaged ideal within our national culture and ethos.
Questions of Just War after 9/11

After the September 11th terror attacks many American Christians understandably sought to morally justify a violent response to the terror attacks. Leaders like Falwell and Land felt that their cause fell under the Just War tradition. They were not alone; many Americans who supported military mobilization felt that American actions would qualify, in part or in whole, under the tenets of Just War. Within the traditional Just War denominations, much debate arose as to how massive military action after the September 11th attacks would or could meet the lofty standards set forth centuries ago. Christian nationalism influenced the judgment of some Just War supporters; others however were less convinced that the American military response to the threat of modern terrorism in the Middle East was a just moral cause.

Just War theory is the traditional position of many Christian denominations. The theory was clarified and presented by Augustine of Hippo (354-430), the formative theologian in the early Christian Church. Augustine sought to reconcile the pacifist teaching of Jesus Christ with Roman citizenship as the western empire was nearing its final collapse. His theology affirmed the well-accepted idea that war was the result of human sin, and that if it was necessary it must be waged with sadness. In Augustine’s world, there was little room for the promotion of nationalism and glory in war. According to Augustine, Christians did not have the right for violent self-defense, however they were able to use violence to defend other innocents.
The four defining characteristics of Augustine’s Just War theory were just authority, just cause, right intention, and last resort. Also, the violent response must be proportional, noncombatants must be spared, and the good of the war must outweigh the damage. All of these conditions must be met in order for a war to be considered truly just. Augustine’s brilliant and measured justification for war must also be understood in the historical and political context in which he lived. Augustine’s world differs greatly from the modern globalized and democratized world. Rome, while declining as power, flowed to Constantinople and what would become the eastern Byzantine Empire, was the ultimate power and was often able to keep relative peace in the empire through the use of heavy military force. Also, Christianity had recently ascended to political power in the empire. Augustine was no doubt influenced by the world that he saw around him, steeped in military might and economic prosperity. This does not discount the theology of Just War, rather contextualizes its creation. Furthermore, emphasis should be placed on the level of rigor that Augustine built into his justifications. While many Americans have claimed a just cause when going to war, the situations often fall short of Augustine’s theory.

Terrorist and guerilla groups engaging in violence outside of the sanctions of established states has largely molded war in the 21st century, and resulted in both civil and policing wars. Terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS are not nation states with recognized governments. However, they have been the reason for the U.S. military targeting the Afghanistan for the harboring of terrorist organizations, and Iraq for its suspected role in the aiding of terror groups, as well
as its political and social destabilization. The Coalition Force invasion of Iraq and the American war in Afghanistan were originally prompted by terrorism and resulted in a policing type action by American forces. The existence of modern warfare and the threat of terrorism called into question the modern application of Just War theory. Columbia Theological Seminary Professor Dr. Mark Douglas noted that modern warfare had blurred the distinctions between “aggressive, defensive, preemptive, and preventative wars”.

Also, Douglas explained, “just warriors” were split on the justification of the U.S. decision to invade Iraq. The Bush Administration touted the alleged threat of weapons of mass destruction and Saddam’s supposed links to terror. Others simply considered the Iraqi government a source of regional instability including the past invasion of Kuwait. Still other thought that nation-building in Iraq would lead to a modern democratic nation, which would inspire its Arab neighbors. Some just warriors felt that actions of the Hussein regime and the possible future actions of the country warranted a preemptive strike, while others felt that hypothetical future actions, or progress toward democracy did not meet the criteria for just war. For his part, Bush articulated what came to be known as the “Bush Doctrine,” the idea that, in an era of weapons of mass destruction and unconventional attacks, the United States could not wait to be attacked before eliminating threats. Douglas noted that followers of Just War often fall into two camps, traditional or modern. Traditional just warriors strive to adhere strictly to the original tenets of Augustine’s theory, while modernists seek to apply Just War theory in the complex, nuanced global stage.
Just War theory in the 21st century is not without clarifying academic voices. University of Oxford Professor Nigel Biggar eloquently admits that killing “is always to cause an evil. It is to cause the death of someone with an equal calling to discern, interpret, embody, and represent what is good in the world.” Biggar argued that intention is an important aspect of justifying killing. He posited that a soldier does not need to intend to kill others as their goal in war. Biggar explained, "No one should choose to want or intend to damage or destroy such precious life... Nevertheless it may be permissible to choose to act in such a way as to cause the death of a human being provided, that what it intended is other than his death (e.g. defending the innocent)..." In this way, Biggar sees room for justified killing by engaged and reflective soldiers in a time of war.

As a whole, Biggar determined the coalition force invasion of Iraq to be just. Admittedly, Biggar reflected that the morality of this particular war was not easy to analyze. Nonetheless, it meet the criteria set forth by the Just War theory with Biggar determining that it was the last resort. Other just war supporters such as Santa Clara University Ethics Professor David DeCosse disagreed with the determination that the invasion of Iraq was a just war. Decosse argued that the modern case of preemptive war was much more difficult to justify, explaining, “While self-defense is the classic instance of a just cause, the highly speculative nature of the president’s self-defense argument was a moral problem from the start.” Several other reasons DeCosse gave for his determination that the Iraq War did not meet the qualifications for Just War were the post-war political chaos and the slow pace of change within Iraq.
Biggar and DeCosse represent two conclusions drawn from the same baseline theory. Richard Neuhaus is also firmly entrenched as a dutiful adherer to Just War and supporter of the Invasion of Iraq as a just cause. However, unlike Biggar, his nationalistic language leaves him open to criticism from both pacifists and just warriors alike. When discussing the purpose that America has in the world, Neuhaus explained; “because America is the home of most of the heirs of Israel of old, and because this is a land in which his Church is vibrantly free to live and proclaim the Gospel to the world, we believe that America has a peculiar place in God’s promises and purposes.”

Christian academic Dr. Braden P. Anderson critic’s Neuhaus’s theology by noting that Neuhaus has a “nationalistic account of America” that reflects of covenant that is “a product of human initiative... rather than a product of God’s one initiating act, calling for the people’s commitment.”

Criticism of Neuhaus’s political theology and promotion of the Iraq invasion as just does not associate all just war theorists with nationalism. However, it does show that Christian nationalists have often used Just War theology to moralize political causes. Combining theology with political causes can often have a muddled moral outcome that appears on the surface to be structured in morality. While many strict Just War theorists honestly work toward upholding the high standards of the theology, political leaders are often strained to aptly moralize modern military and political violence with Just War.

Outside of the critic of the combination of Christian nationalism and just war, Modern Christian Pacifists offer their own critic of the revered theological tenets. In addition the pacifist’s belief to avoid war and killing in general, many pacifists
pointed to the expansive war that developed in response to the September 11th attacks as evidence of the pervasive evils of national violence. Not only was the American government seeking to hunt down the actual guilty terrorists, but also to change the political landscape of a region. The resulting civilian causalities and prisoner human rights violations add further fuel to the pacifist argument that modern warfare cannot be made just. 65 An interesting ally for Christian pacifists has been the Vatican. The Catholic Church is considered one of the originators and keepers of the Just War doctrine. However, in the late 20th and early 21st century, Catholicism has seen a pacifist turn. Pope John Paul II emphasized the role of forgiveness in the search for a solution to the September 11th attacks.66 The “Catholic turn” toward a revival of peace ethics is not an absolute or permanent turn by the Vatican. However, it does show the lack of Just War support that some sectors of the Just War theory community showed for American military action after the terror attacks on September 11th, and it exemplifies the possibility of a response more directed toward pacifism than war.
Chapter 2: MODERN CHRISTIAN NON-VIOLENT THEOLOGY

The Third Way:

Following in the historic legacy of various peace churches, modern Christian pacifists vehemently opposed the use of violence after September 11th. Modern Christian Nonviolence is championed by several highly respected theologians, and has a growing reach through popular figures in Modern American Christianity. The face of modern Christian Pacifism is changing as more young progressive Christians are reconsidering the relationship between the nation and their personal faith, and traditionally pacifist conservative populations struggle to find a balance between personal peace ethics that are challenged by the modern threat of terrorism. The September 11th terrorist attacks left many American Christians feeling that their safety was threatened. As Soluka observed, Americans struggle to understand how God had allowed this attack to take place on American soil.

Many of the most vocal and outspoken leaders in American Evangelical Christianity rallied behind the American effort to bring violent justice to anyone who threatened American interests. When reflecting on the public message of many of these Christian leaders it is easy to assume that Christians of all traditions followed the outspoken conservative leaders in lock-step promotion of Christian nationalism and world mission. However, traditional peace churches actively resisted the temptation to abandon their peace ethic for the popular and attractive fervor of American patriotism that had swept the nation after the September 11th attacks.
In response to the “Land Letter”, many Christian denominations and leaders wrote President Bush to urge him to suspend the impending American military action in Iraq. These public statements included traditional just war advocates as well as Christian Pacifists. Leaders from African American Churches, The Church of England, and some Jewish leaders joined with leaders from Christian Pacifist Churches to show opposition to the financial, human, and spiritual cost of the War in Iraq. Christian pacifism is an often overlook branch of the American Christian tradition in part because the denial of the legitimacy of violence tempers the possible political clout that Christian Pacifist groups can accrue. However, despite the lack of political mobilization and influence of Christian Pacifism, it remains a viable, practiced, and in some areas, growing sector of American Christianity.

Support for modern American Christian pacifism came from both surprising and traditional sources. The Vatican under Pope John Paul II was an outspoken critic of American involvement in Iraq, despite the tradition of Just War theory in Catholicism\(^7\). Some mainline evangelicals also considered Christian Pacifism in response to the religiously laden conservative politics promoted by the Bush administration. Evangelical professor Preston Sprinkle exemplifies the small, but important, contingent of evangelicals that began to question the connection between national sponsored violence and their Christian Faith. Named the “manly Christian pacifist” by Christianity Today, Sprinkle came to Christian nonviolence later in life. He joined the already developed tradition of Christian nonviolence that represents an often ignored and misunderstood undercurrent of American Christianity.
The title of “manly Christian Pacifist” bestowed upon Sprinkle inadvertently implies that most Christian Pacifists men are not masculine, or that pacifists in general do not take responsibility to stop violence. While this was likely an unintentional mistake, it reflects the often assumed position that pacifist avoid, rather than confront, violence. While this is a logical, and at times legitimate, critic of Christian pacifism in the 21st century, it does not accurately reflect Modern Christian pacifist theology or action. Nor does it appropriately give respect to the thousands of Christian pacifists who have died in the name of peace. American Christian pacifists fall across a broad spectrum but all of these believers hold true to the idea that Christ promoted and ethic of nonviolence in response to both worldly and political pressures.
**Modern Nonviolent Theology**

Modern Christian nonviolent theology is not a strictly American belief; many regions throughout the world have strong traditions in Christian nonviolence. Russian Mennonites, Chilean Catholics, and the Polish group Solidarity have all practiced various forms of nonviolent resistance. Nonviolence itself also has can include non-Christian traditions, such as the famous and popular tradition practiced by Mahatma Gandhi in India. However, Christian Nonviolent theology in America has developed alongside, and at times in reaction to, Christian nationalism. This development took place over several centuries. In revolutionary America Quaker and Mennonite pacifists refused military service and even declined to pay taxes that supported wars, this would also continue in later wars fought by the United States. Resistance to military service and war would be a reoccurring protest for Christian pacifists, including notable draft dodging in the Vietnam War. Furthermore, American Christian pacifism was organized in other denominational traditions such as in the cases of the Methodist, and the Catholic organization Pax Christi. Christian Pacifism is often associated with nonresistance. However, a strong history of social and political action shows that, while excluding violence, Christian Pacifism is often active nonetheless.

During the 1970's the United States found itself in the midst of great social upheaval at home while actively battling the spread of communism abroad. A common criticism of many American Christian pacifists was the lack of action against injustice, and a lack of a modern ethical basis for such civil opposition. At the same time many Christian pacifists sympathetic to the social justice movements and
draft resistance, sought to integrate social action into their traditionally conservative theological mission. This effort can be seen most prominently through the theology of Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder, who sought to modernize and legitimize the Christian peace ethic.

Perhaps Yoder’s most influential work was his 1972 book *The Politics of Jesus*. Central to the premise of his book is Yoder’s argument that Jesus is a “model of political action.” According to Yoder, Christ actively attempted to change society. Christ interacted with the established society as an outsider with a different set of social ethics from the established norms. This outsider mentality is one that resonates with the Christian pacifist tradition. However, unlike some pacifist groups, Yoder specially urges Christians to engage with society by following Jesus’ social ethic, rather than withdraw from society. He called for Christians to use the resources of sacrifice, be long-suffering, and utilize the individual talents of their communities. Christ’s refusal to use violence and his distaste for the accumulation of wealth and power, his love for the poor, and his displeasure with the political climate of his day makes him a social outsider and a political target for those in power as a threat to their power and position. Yoder emphasizes the political relevance of Christ by saying “Jesus’ public career had been such as to make it quite thinkable that he would pose to the Roman Empire and apparent threat serious enough to justify his execution.” His vision of Christian action in a secular world is not a numbered step program to achieving the kingdom of God on Earth. Rather, it is a long process in which the participants realize that victory will not be achieved
though human means. The long process is both the beauty and frustration of the modern Christian pacifist.

Accompanying John Howard Yoder's call for Christian nonviolent political action is his reaffirmation of tenets that were key in shaping the Christian nonviolent ethic in America and abroad. Included in Yoder’s urge to act was an affirmation that the “Kingdom of God” is not hidden, but a participatory opportunity for followers of Christ to promote justice in the world. Furthermore, the ministry of Christ can be seen not only as political, but as threatening to modern power structure that perpetuate injustice. Yoder warned Christians about the dangers of political power and blind obedience to secular authority. Despite the common retort that Romans 13 calls Christians to be obedient to the secular governments, Yoder analyzed these scriptures to urge Christians to be nonresistant and nonviolent in all of their interactions with the world. Yoder further clarified this point by explaining that even though violence can create social order Christians are “not to perceive in the wielding of the sword as part of their own reconciling ministry.”

Yoder’s peace theology counters much of the of the contemporary message Christian right that developed in the 1960’s-80’s. While Yoder did not live to see the September 11th terrorist attacks, his theology provided a strong basis from which early 21st century Christian Pacifists have drawn ideas about political power and the role of Christians in the processes peacemaking and resistance of the revival of Christian nationalism. Academic theologians, pastors, and popular figures in modern American Christianity have built theological structures and developed political action plans from Yoder’s important work. It is also worth noting the academic
theologians that have followed Yoder’s theology often work within abstract frameworks not readily understood by the general public. Many of the other public figures and pastors within the realm of American Christian pacifism have sought to synthesize the academic frameworks of Yoder’s theological successors.

Perhaps no American theologian took up the mantle of the nonviolent violent ethic more prominently than Stanley Hauerwas. A brilliant and tremendously respected theologian, Hauerwas has written some of the 21st century’s greatest works of nonviolent Christian theology. As an academic theologian, the theological works created by Hauerwas are often dense, however, this has not stopped him from becoming highly influential, both inside and outside of academic circles. One year after the September 11 attack, Hauerwas published a critic of the American political system and its response to the terrorist attacks. In this work he makes it clear that his opposition to violence is a result of his Christianity, not because the particular violence perpetrated in the name of revenge after the terror attacks on September 11th was somehow Un-American. On the contrary, Hauerwas viewed violence and war as a normalizing act for America, stating that it has been the standard operation of the American system for most of the 20th century.

At its heart, Hauerwas’ work not only disavowed nationalism but also critiqued that American view of death. He states:

Christians often tend to focus on being united with Christ in his resurrection, forgetting that we are also united with him in his death. What could that mean if it does not mean that Christians must be ready to die, indeed have their children die, rather than betray the Gospel? Any love not transformed by the love of God cannot help but be the source of the violence we perpetrate on one another in the name of justice. Such a love may appear harsh and dreadful from the perspective of the world, but Christians believe such a love is life-giving not life-denying.72
Clearly Hauerwas realized the temptation to achieve justice through violence, but reminded Christians that there was a different way. Hauerwas went on to state that American’s, as a whole, feared death. While this is a natural response to the subject of death, Hauerwas reminded his readers that people willing to die for their beliefs perpetrated the attacks on September 11th, 2001. Yet in the face of such devoted terror, Americans were asked not to die for their moral beliefs but to shop and allow material consumerism to support the American economic and military machine. The focal point of death in his article does not mean that Americans Christians should die, but rather live without the fear of death, understanding the consequences of the resurrection of Jesus and that, as Hauerwas posits, pacifism “is the necessary condition for a politics not based on death.”

In the years and decades after 9/11, Hauerwas continued to give lectures and publish works that attempted to explain his devotion to nonviolence and justice. Perhaps his most important work on this topic was his 2013 book War and the American Difference. In this dense and nuanced work, Hauerwas studied the reasons why American Christians felt such a strong connection to their nationalism and militarism, and also he sought to investigate what it meant to live nonviolently in the United States. Hauerwas was deeply influenced by John Howard Yoder, agreeing with his stance that “we are not pacifists because pacifism is a strategy for ending war, but because it is the way we must live to be faithful followers of Christ.” In explaining why more American Christians do not define themselves as pacifists, Hauerwas explained that because American Protestants have so tightly married their republicanism to their religious system, their belief systems border more on
Civil Religion than genuine Christianity. In this way many American Christians have come to see America as the church, rather than the Church as a check on political power within America. As a result many Americans feel no conflict between their national and faith identities.

According to Hauerwas, “War is a sacrificial system that creates its own justification”. The more soldiers that die the more important the outcome becomes. Hauerwas argued that war gives meaning to national struggle for a higher good. American Christians feel a natural draw toward the honoring of sacrifice. Historically, Wilson’s call in WWI to make war to end war exemplifies the Christian value of sacrifice in the context of national war. While a portion of the allure of Christian sacrifice on the battlefield may be nationalism and patriotism, Hauerwas argued that sacrifice in war has often drawn the respect of American Christians due to the comparison naturally made between the sacrifice in war and Christ sacrifice on the cross. Soldiers not only risk their lives in defense of others, they also sacrifice the ability to not do harm. Hauerwas states “War also sacrifices our unwillingness to kill”. Killing has the possibility to create long lasting moral and psychological injury. Hauerwas did not describe the sacrifices of war as a means to glorify the process, but rather to show both the total cost of war to all involved and to explain the fixation with the sacrifices of war by American Christians.

Hauerwas posited that the alternative to war is the Church. The Church, as Hauerwas describes, “does not have a social ethic, it is the social ethic”. The sacrifice of Christ created the social ethic and the imperative to refuse violence.
Hauerwas claims that if Christians continue to participate in violence they "rob the world of the witness it needs in order know that there is an alternative to war."\textsuperscript{81}

Hauerwas felt that Christians are called, instead, to refuse violence so that we might not “just survive, but live in the resurrection of Christ”.\textsuperscript{82} This mirrors the thoughts of fellow Pacifist theologian Ron Sider who said that pacifists’ actions in a life following Christ’s social ethic may require uncomfortable sacrifices despite the resistance to perpetrate violence.

Those who have believed in peace through the sword have not hesitated to die. Proudly, courageously, they gave their lives. Again and again, they sacrificed bright futures to the tragic illusion that one more righteous crusade would bring peace in their time. For their loved ones, for justice, and for peace, they have laid down their lives by the millions. Why do we pacifists think that our way -- Jesus’ way -- to peace will be less costly?\textsuperscript{83}

The difference between the death of a soldier and the death of a Christian pacifist is in the vision of the world in which they sought to create. The vision that Hauerwas had of justice was one that restored relationships, and ultimately humanity to God. Hauerwas even reduced the broad interpretation of justice to an application of restorative beliefs with the context of pacifism. He stated, “We believe that it remains possible for those who have killed to be reconciled with those they have killed.”\textsuperscript{84}

Brilliant as it is, Hauerwas’ theological work also included an important shade of humility. According to Hauerwas, pacifists bear the guilt of war to the same degree of the participants of war. Assigning guilt does not achieve good for the ultimate goal of pacifist and Just-War Christians alike, to make war less likely.\textsuperscript{85} Christian pacifist and educator Ron Sider agrees that Christians can and should actively work toward peace. Sider is one of the most vocal Christian pacifists in
calling for Christian action and service to combat violence. In his book *Nonviolent Action: What Christian Ethics Demands but Most Christians Have Never Really Tried*, Sider emphasizes the importance of action but also the importance of community and cooperation with peace loving Christians who may not identify as Pacifists.

Sider expressed two major points. First, nonviolence has worked throughout the world in order to bring about a more just outcome to a political conflict. Sider not only pointed to the American example of the Martin Luther King Jr.’s protests during the Civil Rights Movement, but also cites examples form all over the world in response to inequality and injustice. Also, Sider points that traditionally Just War churches have begun to question modern warfare. That is not to say that Just War churches are abandoning their traditional beliefs on war, but it does mean that Just War traditions are questioning how that belief matches modern war efforts. The hope that Sider promoted was that by combining efforts with strict Just War theorists, pacifists and non-pacifists alike could bring about a world with less war. One of the key pieces of evidence to show the increasing communication and cooperation between traditions is a joint statement issued by the Vatican and the Mennonite Church urging Christians to reflect on the nonviolence teaching of Christ and even went as far to say that Catholics increasingly emphasize the nonviolent teaching of the Gospel.86

Brilliant Croatian-born Protestant theologian Miroslav Volf has also been an important contributor to theological discussion in the United States on the topics of violence and reconciliation. Part of the intellectual argument that Volf promoted after September 11th was that Christianity is not inherently violent. Volf argued that
with a “thin” understanding and application of theology Christianity would appear on the surface as an ethic that has historically promoted violent acts. However, Volf called for a “thick” understanding of Christian theology. According to Volf, misused and poor theology has led to violence in the name of Christianity. In an article titled “More religion, less violence”, Volf posited that a deeper understanding of religion and Christianity would create a less violent world. Following the traditions of Christianity and its teachings would result in a “culture of peace”. Like Hauerwas, Volf felt that reconciliation was one of the most important duties of the Church. Unfortunately, the positive works done by the church and other religious organizations were not often publicized, leaving many Americans to associate Christianity with the rhetoric of violence expressed by some vocal political and church leaders.

Most nonviolent theologians offer several structural ideals to guide the actions of Christian Pacifists. In a post September 11th America reconciliation and the act of absorbing violence have emerged as key tenants for Christian pacifism. As mentioned, Both Volf and Hauerwas feel that reconciliation should be a vocal point for modern Church. According to Volf, reconciliation is primary. Reconciliation needs to take place before the process of true justice can happen. The primacy of reconciliation implies that a transformation must take place in order evil to be extinguished in a situation. Volf describes the process as such; “Just as the persecutor was received by Christ, so the persecutor was received by the community he had persecuted.” The theology proposed by both Volf and Hauerwas agree that the actions of reconciliation are difficult and demanding.
Hauerwas posited that the work toward reconciliatory justice shows that everyone has individual and collective worth and may not be recognized as justice to the political state.91

Theologian Elmer A. Martens further explained the role of the peacemaker in American Society by calling Christians to absorb violence. The “absorption” of violence promoted by Elmer indicates a belief in the “cycle of violence”. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famously described this concept when he stated; “Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love... Our aim must never be to defeat or humiliate the white man, but to win his friendship and understanding.”92 In this speech King described both the ideas of reconciliation and enemy love, realizing that they are unable to be separated. Martens suggested that like violence, peacemaking could by cyclical. First however, violence must be absorbed. The basis Martens used for his position was based on the crucifixion story, stating “the cross shows us the way to deal with violence: absorb it. Break the cycle.”93 Reiterating the stance held by most Nonviolent theologians that the death and resurrection of Christ represents an avenue for achieving justice that does not partake in the justice promoted by a fallen world.

In a post September 11th America, Stanley Hauerwas has often publically responded to other Christian academics calls for Just War. In responding to the pro-Iraq War nationalism espoused by Catholic theologian Richard Neuhaus, Hauerwas claimed that pacifists and just war theorists should not often disagree, as he does with Neuhaus. Hauerwas suggested that nationalistic language is often wrapped in
the clothes of a Just War justification. Also, in response to the classic C.S. Lewis “Why I am Not a Pacifist”, Hauerwas argued that the pacifism that Lewis attacks is one based on liberal thinking rather than real Christian nonviolence. Christian pacifism, Hauerwas argued, is based off of the entire life and ministry of Jesus rather than a few passages that are targeted by C.S. Lewis. Hauerwas reiterated that pacifism is not a belief that is designed to end war, rather a requirement to be faithful to the teachings of Christ.

Hauerwas, Sider, Wolf, Martens, and many others represent an academic class of Christian pacifists who created and practiced the structural frameworks of nonviolence that made actions of resistance to violence theologically sustainable. Also responding to the call of nonviolence in America after the September 11th attacks was a class of Pastors and popular Christian public figures. These popularizers represented a synthesis of the higher academic density of the aforementioned theologians into an actionable nonviolent lifestyle and cultural critique. Among these public leaders in Christian Pacifism were Shane Claiborne, Gregory Boyd, Brian Zahand, among others. Several of these figures came to follow Christian Pacifism later in life, but all experienced the impact of choosing to lead a nonviolent life in the public eye.

Shane Claiborne is a well-known leader among more “progressively minded” Christians. While hesitant to take public political positions, Claiborne’s response to violence in modern America was fervently Pacifist. In his book *Jesus for President*, Claiborne explained his ideas for living a social ethic that is restorative and reconciliatory in the 21st century. A large theme of his book discussed his rejection
of the Christian nationalist narrative that has been naturally adapted by many American Christians. Through interviews and testimonies, Claiborne discusses the impacts of violence in soldiers and society. Claiborne describes several soldiers’ stories that left the military because they began to reject the idea of killing on grounds of religious conscience. With these examples Claiborne sought to display examples of individuals that worked against the norm in society, which Claiborne views as militarized and infatuated with war. Perhaps the way in which the publication of Claiborne’s book most impacted the public was his easy to read synthesis of the high academic language of Hauerwas and Yoder. Many of Claiborne’s examples are grounded in academic theology but were described in an entertainingly narrative way that also matched with other 21st century values, such as racial justice and environmentalism.

Another popularizer of Christian Pacifism, Pastor Gregory Boyd became a well-known figure in 21st century American Christian pacifism in 2006 when about 1,000 of his 5,000-member church left after he preached a 6-part sermon entitled “The Cross and the Sword”. In this sermon series, Boyd warned about Christian nationalism and refused to endorse a political presidential candidate, even though his congregation was called for him to endorse President Bush. Boyd made it clear to his congregation that he felt that God has called Christians to be peacemakers and to not support war. While Boyd has impressive degrees from Princeton and Yale, and he has a respected grasp on theological structures, his message is often presented in such a way that it would have appeal and provide understanding to the

A central theme of Boyd’s message was that American Christians have allowed their nationalism to blind them, overtaking their allegiance to God. Boyd wrote; “The origin of violence is not ‘the enemy’... but something we and our enemy have in common... that our fallen hearts are idolatrous and subject to the fallen powers that influence us.” According to Boyd two “kingdoms” exist, the Kingdom of the Sword and the Kingdom of the Cross. While followers of the sword put faith in worldly powers, followers of the Cross trust the power of self-sacrificial love to transform hearts.” Boyd explained that the United States had attempted to Christianize military force when President Bush put the questionable title of “crusade” on American military action. This not only rallied American Christians away from an ethic of peace but it also had an international impact of the perception of Americans and Christianity. Boyd drew heavily from other theologians, such as Yoder and Hauerwas, to explain the importance of living peacefully. Despite his well educated and accessible positions on the dangers of nationalism in American Christianity and the moral imperative of nonviolence, many American Christians rejected the message of Boyd and his fellow pacifists, as shown in the polling data described in a previous chapter.

Dr. Preston Sprinkle and Pastor Brian Zahnd both begin their theological journeys as Christians who celebrated American military action. Admittedly Sprinkle still considers himself an evangelical and he still feels “that the smell of a recently fired shotgun on a crisp fall morning comes darn near close to paradise”.

52
Brian Zahnd readily admitted that he watched the first night of the bombing and invasion of Iraq on TV while ordering pizza with friends, as if it was a night of entertainment rather than violence. Zahnd later called this his “greatest sin.”\textsuperscript{99} As a former Christian nationalist, Zahnd once found no problem with justifying violence. However, over time he came to view the role of Christianity in the world as redemptive, which for Zahnd excluded the use of violence. Zahnd felt the use of the Christian narrative to justify violence was exceedingly troubling. While visiting the Cadet Chapel, a building built to reflect an image of fighter jets soaring into the air, Zahnd noticed that an enormous sword was placed on the front Chapel wall where a crucifix would be expected to hang. To Pacifists like Zahnd the imagery was unmistakable. Americans had come to view Christianity and the American military so interchangeable that “The cross of Christ had been replaced by a sword of war”\textsuperscript{100}. The central emphasis of Zahnd’s critique of his perceived glorification of war found in common American Christian thought was to remind Christians that “We are not safe. We are saved”. Like Hauerwas and Yoder, Zahn acknowledged that nonviolence does not mean that those who practiced pacifism would be able to avoid conflict, rather it is an ethic that defines a response to violence.

Despite their theologically conservative roots, both Zahnd and Sprinkle offer both the stories of their conversation to Christian Pacifism and a synthesis of theologians such as Yoder and Hauerwas. Sprinkle noted that many Americans are surprised when some Christians would denounce war saying that they were against “our troops”. The use of the word “our” reveals an identity that associates mainstream Christianity with the Christian nation. Sprinkle called for Christians
declare a citizenship to God saying; "we must give our allegiance to the Lord even if it means being unpatriotic toward Rome". Often, as noted by Zahnd, safety is naturally valued by humans, Sprinkle added that the desire to be safe often led Christians to pledge allegiance to the physical military might of the United States Army rather than the nonviolent ethic of Jesus. By answering many common questions Christians had about nonviolence, authors like Sprinkle were able to extend conversations about violence and theology beyond the simple American arguments of nationalism and patriotism.

Popularizing of theology, and critiques of identity and loyalty always serve a purpose with the context of Religion. In the “fog of war” that followed the September 11th attacks, Christian Pacifist called for thoughtful and creative responses that were faithful to their understanding of the meaning of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Nonviolent theology continuously evolves and shifts as the historical narrative progresses forward. Despite this, continuity can be found in the adherence to the ethics of reconciliation and identity. As the ethic of Christian Nonviolence shows evidence of change and continuity, so to does that action prescribed by Modern American Christian Pacifists.
Chapter 3: MODERN CHRISTIAN NONVIOLENT ACTION

Modern Nonviolent Action

The nonviolent Christian response to military action after 9/11 goes much further than the theology classrooms and the pages of ethic books. The United States has a long, often ignored, history of nonviolent resistance in the name of Christianity. While American Christian pacifists have made significant theological contributions to American Christianity, perhaps their most easily recognizable contributions are the justice seeking protests and actions by well-known Christian Pacifists. Modern American Christian pacifists followed in the footsteps of pre-revolutionary Pennsylvania Quakers, some of who abandoned political power in order to stay true to their beliefs in nonviolence. William Lloyd Garrison and Sarah Grimké worked within the same secular realm of politics that the aforementioned Quakers abandoned in order to promote justice, while still adhering to their nonviolent ethics born from their religious convictions. Martin Luther King Jr. revitalized utilized Christian pacifism in his struggle for racial justice through means of reconciliation. Contemporary pacifists resisted the expansion of American military action in Vietnam through protest and draft resistance. The era of American History immediately following 9/11 saw and enhanced national militarism that made it highly difficult for any traction to be gained by the nonviolent ethic in American Christianity. Yet this era saw American Christian Pacifists actively and physically resist modern military violence by economic means, methods of protest, and efforts at reconciliation.
Christian Peacemaker Teams and the MCC

Pacifism and nonviolent action does not often carry the immediate same political clout and power that the use of force can in international affairs. Many critics of Christian pacifism argue that the peace ethic leaves those who follow it defenseless and open to violent attack. In the late 20th century, American Christian pacifists sought to empower their message reconciliation through peaceful means. In 1984 prominent Christian Pacifist Ron Sider gave an impassioned speech at the Mennonite World Conference detailing the effort and cost that a firm and active belief in pacifism requires:

Unless comfortable North American and European Mennonites and Brethren in Christ are prepared to risk injury and death in nonviolent opposition to the injustice our societies foster and assist in Central America, the Philippines, and South Africa, we dare never whisper another word about pacifism to our sisters and brothers in those desperate lands. Unless we are ready to die developing new nonviolent attempts to reduce international conflict, we should confess that we never really meant the cross was an alternative to the sword... The result would not be utopia, or even the abolition of war. But it might tug our trembling planet back from the abyss.104

Like Yoder, Sider believed Modern Christian Pacifism required nonviolent action. In this speech he intentionally challenged the implied belief that following Christian Pacifism removes the risk of being a victim of violence. On the contrary, Sider explained that Christian Pacifism calls its followers to suffer with victims of violence around the world, even if puts the Christian Pacifist in danger. Sider also reminded his audience that; “Those who have believed in peace through the sword have not hesitated to die. Proudly, courageously, they gave their lives.”105 This speech was a clear call to action for Christian pacifists around the world. Those who followed Sider’s assertion realized that peace required sacrifice.
In 1986 an organization that became known as the Christian Peacemaker Teams was formed. Teams from this organization have served all over the world, and in violent political climates. This was not the first time that Anabaptists and Christian pacifists formed relief organizations. During the Vietnam War members of the Mennonite Voluntary Service provided relief to the victims of the conflict in the region, regardless of loyalty. To the MVS the idea of earthly loyalty or a human enemy was problematic. Rather these Anabaptist Christians felt that the love of Christ applied to all humans, and they felt it necessary to participate in the reconciliation and healing process rather than the violent conflict.

The Christian Peacemaker Team extended the legacy of organizations like the MVS into the modern, complicated political and cultural climate of the Middle East. After the September 11th attacks the CPT decided to expand their efforts in the Middle East. Retaliatory bombing and violence by the U.S. in Afghanistan was promptly condemned in a public statement from Christian Peacemaker teams. This statement not only condemned violence in general but also called for American Christians to stand with the people victimized by American military action. The CPT called for Christians to reach out to their Muslim neighbors in love, to provide aid for the Middle East, and to publically resist military service and taxpayer funding for the violence. Exemplifying their Anabaptist roots, the CPT statement made a clear distinction between their national identity and their spiritual loyalty stating; “we are putting our country on notice today that it does not have our permission to go to war in our names.” In the midst of the geopolitical upheaval following the September 11th attacks, the Christian Peacemaker Teams sought to initiate
preemptive nonviolent action. Embodying the peace ethics of nonviolence and civil disobedience, this action came when members of CPT began to focus on the nation of Iraq in 2002, as it became clear that President George W. Bush intended to move the nation toward war in the region.\textsuperscript{108}

The members of Christian Peace Teams, known as CPTers, experienced first hand the bombing of Baghdad by the U.S. military and provided live media coverage of the aerial assault.\textsuperscript{109} After the assault, the CPTers first task was to protect the Iraqi civilians from the unexploded ordinances that littered the city. The team set up boundaries around the munitions and petitioned the U.S. military to disable the ordinances. The CPT stayed operational in Iraq throughout the occupation of the region by American and Coalition forces. During the occupation CPTers worked to limit abuses and bring to attention human rights violations committed by the occupation forces. The CPT volunteers created leaflets to give to U.S. soldiers explaining the universal human rights of the Iraqi civilians as defined by the Geneva Convention.\textsuperscript{110} Also, volunteers took statements from former Iraqi detainees that detailed abuses and theft by Coalition forces. These statements were collected and published in a report for the international press. However, this report was largely ignored by the mainstream media until the photos released detailing the Abu Ghraib abuses were made public by another outlet.\textsuperscript{111}

CPT in Iraq experienced a hostage crisis, death, and injury from their service in the Baghdad region. The obvious danger of entering Iraq did not deter CPters from aiding Iraqi citizens, even before the Coalition invasion. The team found purpose in representing Christ by “getting in the way of” any evil or violence that
would be brought against the people of Iraq. Even after a hostage episode that resulted in the murder of a team member, CPT responded by publicly forgiving their assailants and refusing to testify in any capital trials against their kidnappers. In this way the CPT felt that they were serving the Iraqi people by proving services and advocacy for the local people, and serving their former captors by preventing their death through execution. The action of “getting in the way” of violence disarmed some critics of pacifist groups like the CPT who accused pacifist groups of laying condemnation at the feet of the American Government while not actually taking any risk to create change in the region. These pacifists were objectively willing to suffer and, if need be, to die just as soldiers die for the cause of their country, in order to be faithful to their vision of Christianity and the Kingdom of God.

The mission of Christian Peacemakers Team is to offer an alternative to violence and war. True to the Anabaptist roots of the CPT, the teams ignored criticism from some conservative American Christians who questioned their lack of national loyalty in a time or war. It was their belief that war created a situation in which further violence became easier and natural. Witness the unfair treatment toward and detaining of Iraqis, CPT members reported that the presence and actions of American military personal in the region were causing some Iraqis to distrust American and Coalition forces. The massive detainee programs administered by American forces resulted in thousands of Iraqi citizens being imprisoned with dubious evidence. The CPT fought an uphill battle for the release of unjustly imprisoned detainees. The message and purpose of the team was solidarity,
CPTers wished suffer with the Iraqi people and working on their behalf, even though they, like many of the invasion forces, were of American nationality.

Due to the complex social and political climate of the region, goals of the Christian Peace Team were easily confused in the minds of some Iraqi citizens. Before the Invasion of Iraq, CPT members could not speak out against the brutal Hussein regime if they wanted to continue to operate in the country. CPTers sometimes found themselves in dangerous situation facing angry Iraqis who accused them of doing nothing in face of Saddam, and others who associated these American Christians with the American military forces. Despite the this adversity, CPT members strived to alleviate the suffering in Iraq in any way possible, even working with Muslim Peacemaker Teams to coordinate relief for the people of Iraq. Like the CPT, the MPT was appalled by the violence being committed by people of their same faith, and often in the name of their God. The CPT continued to show sensitivity to local concerns during their own hostage crisis by bringing to attention that Iraqi civilians were far more often the victims of kidnapping, and that violence on all sides is contributing to the destruction of Iraq.

For CPTers the realistic goals were not to immediately bring a peaceful end to the invasion of Iraq, or to religious conversation of an entire region. Rather, the goals were two fold. First the CPT held a goal of achieving reconciliation. As mentioned in the theological frameworks presented by Hauerwas, reconciliation must take place before or as a part of the progress toward justice. By bringing material aid as well as the human investment in building local relationships and trust, the CPT sought to restore humanity and hope to the people of Iraq in any way
possible. Secondly, the purpose of CPT action was to “get in the way” of violence. The presence of the CPT in Iraq, as well as other locations of involvement for the CPT, was also meant as a preventative to future violence. The injustices cataloged and reported by the CPT, as well as their willingness to enter dangerous situations and petition on behalf of the people in Iraq represent a practical and workable response to Marten’s call for Christians to absorb violence. While struggling to reduce war, the Christian Pacifist actions of the CPT did not end violence but rather were a faithful exercise toward justice and reconciliation through their understanding of the cross.

Anabaptist groups such as the Mennonite Central Committee also responded to the havoc of war in accordance with their traditional pacifist values. The Mennonite Central Committee is an outreach branch of Mennonite Church USA that also enjoys support from multiple Anabaptist and Brethren denominations, among others. The MCC seeks to help those who have been impacted by war and also bring attention to the amount of money being spent on the American military, and how that impacts Americans and the international community alike.116

Early in the build up to the American invasion of Iraq, Kevin King of the MCC publically expressed concern over American humanitarian aid possibly being used as a political tool. In response to the building crisis in Iraq the Mennonite Central Committee worked with other relief groups to provide handmade blankets, relief and medical kits, as well as sending 10,000 cans of canned meat. King stated that this action was based on the “enemy love” doctrine that Jesus Christ promoted in his life, death, and ministry.117
MCC workers not only responded to American military assaults with relief, they also brought home tales of the realities of war. Relief workers brought stories such as the destruction of Al Rashad Psychiatric Hospital, the only mental hospital in Iraq, and the MCC efforts to provide aid to any patients that could be located. Also, relief workers were appalled at the lack of clean water and medical care that many Iraqi citizens experienced during the American invasion. The MCC responds to many other issues and tragedies other than U.S. military action.

The MCC remained active in the Middle East after much of the major American military action had finished. In the first five years of the Syrian War the MCC spent over $34.6 million on humanitarian relief for the refugees impacted by the war and its spill over into surrounding countries. Included in this relief effort were hygienic kits, food, and educational materials. A part of the money went to conflict resolution education and for MCC assistance in the resettlement of refugees in Canada. Like the Christian Peacekeeper Teams, the MCC sought to respond to crisis and violence with a helping hand. This aid was prompted by the belief that Christ called his people to give to those who need and to respond to violent situations with nonviolence.
Veteran Outreach:

The line between victim and perpetrator can often be blurred in the fog of war. In the military action after the September 11 attacks many Christian pacifists in America began to realize that the veterans of these modern wars could easily fit both aforementioned categories, and their belief in redemption and reconciliation compelled them to act on behalf of all impacted by violence. As veterans began to return to the United States traditional “Peace Churches” began is prepare reconciling ministries and support for these returning warriors. Denominations such as the Mennonite Church USA, and the Quakers created outreach and inclusion programs for veterans returning from war. These programs represented ways in which church denominations could make a local difference by following the simple command of “loving thy neighbor”. Also, veteran services supported by Christian pacifists reveal an understanding of the structural complexities of both war and the American culture. It acknowledges, as Hauerwas does, that we all hold some responsibility for the violence in our culture, and that those who perpetuate the violence are working within a structure that rewards, moralizes, and glorifies violence\(^{120}\). Both of these acknowledgments, both personal and structural, required a more complex and nuanced response for Christian Pacifists who touted the ethics of redemption and reconciliation.

The response to veterans by many traditional peace churches has been an emphasis on relationships and needs awareness. Both Quaker and Anabaptist responses to veteran needs focus on the idea of moral injury. The term “moral injury” is used to describe any distress that occurs from adverse moral choices that
occur in war. This could be the participation in an act with questionable moral consequences or being witness to such an act without intervening.\textsuperscript{121} The Peace and Justice Support Network, a special issues organization created by the Mennonite Church USA, offers resources that aid veterans in “naming the pain” of moral injury.\textsuperscript{122} Additionally, educational information is available to help nonveterans understand the pain of moral injury. The Quakers response to moral injury has been to provide resources and information for both pacifist and veteran alike to address the needs of those suffering from moral injury.\textsuperscript{123}

Members of the Mennonite Church, traditionally one of the most ardent peace churches, designed a creative grassroots response to returns veterans. This response consisted of an actionable curricular framework that empowered Mennonite churches to effectively reach out to veterans with the goals of valuing the humanity of the veteran while staying true to the traditional peace ethic of the church. This program, named “Returning Veterans, Returning Hope: Seeking Peace Together” was created by Mennonite Central Committee, the Peace and Justice Support Network of Mennonite Church USA, and Mennonite Mission Network. One of the co-creators, Evan Knappenberger, of this program is an Iraq war veteran who has studied at Eastern Mennonite University and the School’s Seminary. Knappenberger feels Peace Churches can learn a lot from the stories of veterans and he feels strongly that war cannot end without the help of military veterans.\textsuperscript{124} Fellow co-creator Titus Peachey stated that he felt the Mennonite Church has “not done a good job connecting with veterans and the pain that they carry”.\textsuperscript{125} The Church’s historic lack of acceptance of and aid to veterans has caused a schism
between the Mennonite community and the greater community they hope to serve. In creating a theological framework for veteran integration, Knapperberger and Peachey hoped they could bridge this divide.

The curriculum itself contains six lessons that prepare both the veterans and the church for understanding. One key aspect of the curriculum is the emphasis on the experience of the veteran. The curriculum posits that all of humanity shares the guilt of violence and war. Furthermore, the task of transforming the experiences of trauma victims from war is the church’s responsibility. Mennonites are asked to “relate to the veterans, not the war”, and first view a veteran as a person rather than an instrument of war. The framework also seeks to educate both the pacifist and veteran on the structural necessity of war that our human culture has created. Attempting to rebut the idea that militarism and Christianity represent a path to prosperity and security a lesson in the curriculum describes the evil that occurs during war. Present in the lesson are examples of American societies glorification of war, the economic cost it accumulates, and the falsehood of the common American justification for war; that it is a means of achieving peace. The alternative to war offered by the framework is service. Those who adhere to pacifism must work to both eliminate the causes of war and the care for the current victims of conflict.126

Quakers are another religious community within Christian Pacifism that has embarked on an effort to provide awareness and aid to modern veterans. The structural differences within the Quaker religious community have contributed to the lack of formal and programmatic response by the group, however through religious community’s publications and local meetings awareness for the needs of
veterans has been raised among the Quaker community. The August 2015 issue of the Quaker Publication *Friends Journal* focused heavily on the needs of veterans and what Quakers can do to heal returning warriors. Quaker contributor Jack Ciancio described the role of the Quakers in dealing with veteran issues is that of the Good Samaritan by providing “unconditional support—physical assistance, immediate medical care, lodging, and financial support” to victims of PTSD.\textsuperscript{127} Quaker Army Chaplin Zachary Moon emphasized relationship as the key contribution of the Quaker community in supporting veterans. Moon stated that “If we can do anything miraculous and counter-cultural in our time, it would be to engage with people as people” and that building “humanizing relationships” with veterans does not endorse the war or the ethics of violence.\textsuperscript{128}

In his book *Coming Home: Ministry That Matters with Veterans and Military Families*, Moon adds his poignant thoughts to a growing discussion about the roles of Quaker theology and community in providing services to military veterans. Moon’s motivation for writing his book was to create an environment within Quaker communities that can welcome and honor veterans. The emphasis of Moon’s ministry is on creating relationships, however some traditional Quakers find some of Moon’s language about killing and honoring veterans troublesome. A Quaker ministry known as “The Quaker House”, located near Fort Bragg in North Carolina, represents a combination of the awareness to serve those in the military with the traditional Quaker belief of pacifism. Located at this humble facility are counseling services of military members dealing with the moral issues of war and resources for PTSD victims.\textsuperscript{129}
The Center on Conscience and War represents another way in which the modern Christian peace ethic is responding to the mobilization of the American military. Created by Mennonites the organization predates World War II and plays a large activist role in the American modern nonviolent ethic. The goal of the CCW is to protect the legality of conscientious objection and the rights of conscientious objectors. Also, this group actively seeks and supports current members of the United States military who feel the moral need to object to their service on the grounds of their conscience. Former soldier and current peace advocate Evan Knapperberger noted the importance of the veterans in the history of nonviolence stating; “The people who teach us nonviolence, many of them wore a uniform”, listing Ghandi and Tolstoy as examples. Between 2014 and 2015 the CCW saw well over 100 cases of soldiers who sought to be discharged as a Conscientious Objector.130 While the CCW accepts people of all faiths and backgrounds, the organization still reflects its Mennonite beginnings in actions and posts “Words of Conscience” from every major Christian denomination that supports conscience choice in regards to military service. These statements of peace ethics vary from the Methodist stance of support both the soldiers and the conscientious objector to that of denominations who do not support any military service, such as the Brethren in Christ.

Peace Churches have been traditionally slow in response to veteran needs. The 21st century responses by the Mennonites and Quakers reveal a humility and understanding of both the needs of the veterans and the idea of common guilt. Theologian Stanley Hauerwas stated of pacifists “we are as implicated in war as
those who have gone to war...”. He suppressed the idea of assigning guilt as he stated it is not helpful to create a “cooperative effort to make war less likely.” By reaching out to and caring about military veterans, modern Christian Pacifists have begun to create a collaborative journey toward a more peaceful world. Also, these programs represent the nonviolent commitment to reconciliation. By offering soldiers an opportunity to leave military service on the account of moral conscience brings them closer to reconciliation with their former military enemies. Perhaps more practically, support for military veterans offers a path for former servicemen and women to heal from the horrors of war. Hauerwas finds it cruel to expect those who have killed, who have sacrificed the refusal to kill, to return to a normal life. Just as Hauerwas felt that soldiers could be spiritually reconciled with their enemies and those they have killed, the Christian Pacifist response to veterans is to offer ways for former soldiers to reconcile with the church as well as their past selves, before they sacrificed the refusal to kill.
Pacifism and Protests

In the 1970’s, Christian pacifism received a retooling by theologian John Howard Yoder. While nonviolent resistance and Christian pacifism have rich and intertwined history, many American Christian pacifists of the 1970’s found themselves struggling with a response to what they viewed as the prevailing injustices of the era in Racial Segregation and the Vietnam War. Yoder’s influential book “The Politics of Jesus” described Jesus Christ as a political radical that was confronting the structural injustices of his time. The image of a politically active Jesus motivated military draft resistance in the Mennonite Church. More than 50 Mennonite men were willing to be arrested for their resistance to American military actions. Furthermore the denomination its self produced public support for their actions of conscious saying: “We recognize noncooperation with the military draft based on loyalty to Jesus as a valid witness. We pledge the resources of our brotherhood to a supportive ministry to young men and women who take such a stand”.133

This public statement was guided not only by the traditional values of the Mennonite Church, but also by the modernizing theology of John Howard Yoder. His modern political theology, which was revisited and revised by modern theologians such as Stanley Hauerwas, created a moral imperative to actively and publicly resists structural violence within society. Many Christian Pacifists recognize that violence is often controlled by the institutional powers of the government. This creates a situation where there is a need for creativity and devotion in order to
expose and combat structural violence and oppression. Yoder himself advocated for creative resistance to military violence and social injustice in America and abroad.

In a post September 11th America, the creativity needed to oppose American Military violence manifested itself in a variety of ways. Christian Pacifists made public demonstrations opposing nuclear weapons, refused to pay taxes, and aided soldiers in seeking conscientious objector status. A leading figure in the New Monastic movement and absolutist pacifist Shane Claiborne termed Christian protest against violence and injustice as “Holy Mischief”. Claiborne himself was involved in many protests against war, including refusal to pay his full federal income tax. In an open letter published by The Huffington Post, Claiborne explained that he only paid 70% of his federal income tax due to the fact that he estimates the U.S. Government spends 30% of its budget on the military. Claiborne justified his actions by saying “My Christian faith and my human conscience require me to respect fully reserve the right not to kill, and to refrain from contributing money towards weapons and the military.”

Tax resistance has a long and varied history within American Christianity beginning with Quakers refused to pay taxes during the Revolutionary War. Also, invigorated by Henry David Thoreau’s “Essay on Civil Disobedience”, Christians again refused to pay taxes during the Mexican War, which many called unjust. Throughout World War II and Vietnam, some Christians also openly opposed American military expansion by refusing to pay taxes on the grounds of conscience. Claiborne’s tax protest was not a singular response by American Christians who followed a nonviolent peace ethic. The National War Tax Resistance
Coordinating Committee is a group of American peace activists who refuse to pay a portion of their yearly taxes. While not a specifically Christian organization the NWTRCC provides an opportunity and a degree of protection for Christian Tax resistors. The organization’s Penalty Fund provides financial resources to those who refuse to pay taxes in the name on peace.136

As expressed with the aforementioned tax resistance, the U.S. government can often be seen as an adversary to those who attempt to practice nonviolence and naturally instills a motivation for civil disobedience. American military action in the Middle East after September 11th, 2001 renewed a call for civil dissidence among some Christian Pacifist, in both organized and individual fashions. More public than the disobedient act of refusing to pay taxes, some Christian anti-war protests sought to spotlight certain issues of injustice and American military strength. The Plowshares Movement, a Christian pacifist and anti-nuclear weapons movement, represented a continued opposition to the immense power of the U.S. Military. One of the most famous protests in this movement was a 2009 infiltration of a nuclear weapons facility by 3 Christian protestors. After cutting through several fences, Sister Megan Rice age 82, Greg Boertje-Obed, 57, and Michael Walli, 63 raised peace banners, placed baby bottles of blood at the facility, and sang peace songs until their arrest.137 While the Plowshares movement is not a specially post 9-11 development, the protests that come from this movement after the renewed American military mobilization in the Middle East represent the latest chapter in one facet of American Christian Pacifism.
Also in the same vein as the Plowshares protests, the early 2000’s saw many American Christians react negatively toward American military action. On March 17 2007, while polls would still show that the majority of American Evangelicals supported the war in Iraq, thousands of Christian Protestors converged on the White House to protest the War in Iraq. The pacifist organization Christian Peace Witness and the politically left –leaning group Sojourners organized the candlelight vigil. While not everyone who attended this rally would identify as a Christian Pacifist, the protest itself reflected a strong nonviolent ethic. Event organizer Rev. Raphael G. Warnock echoed these sentiments calling for a “surge in the nonviolent army of the Lord.”

In many respects the nonviolent ethic at the core of protests by Christian Pacifists follows the theological structures laid out by Ron Sider. Christians in the CPT actively risked their lives in order to build relationships with people who were suffering from the effects of American military action in their region of habitation. At home, Christians who protested at military sites, or through tax resistance sacrificed monetarily and risked jail in order to promote an ethic of nonviolence. Classic protests and rallies offer a less direct theological connection to the ethic of nonviolence. Nonetheless, all of these acts revolve around the theological belief in a social ethic that informs the decisions and actions of Christians regardless of the power or positions of secular political powers. Christian nonviolent resistors do not resist because they seek the political power to impress an ethic on society. Rather they resist violence through any means possible to loyalty follow what John Howard Yoder termed the “Politics of Jesus”; reconciliation, redemption, and peace.
Conclusion

Despite the fact the most Christian theologians, academics, and denomination leaders in America find Christian nationalism highly problematic, the general American Christian public continues to find the a great deal of draw toward the American exceptionalism, whether that be conscious or subconscious. Political powers still invoke the religious terms and symbols when justifying their political or militaristic ambitions. As mentioned this religious symbolism can, in part, be explained by the development of Civil Religion. However, as some aforementioned Christian scholars note, many American Christians have deeply wedded their faith to their national identity, as exemplified by the by the crisis to faith some Americans experienced after the September 11th terror attacks.

The link between faith and nationalism is not a 21st century phenomenon. From the Edict of Milan through President Bush’s “crusade” against terror, Christians, of all nations, have strived to placed their nation and culture at the core of God’s agency and will on Earth. For some American Christian the struggle against Radical Islam has allowed them to create a national narrative to parallel biblical struggles of good and evil. Still others view America’s role in the world in less eschatological terms, nonetheless affirming their view of America was a source of moral authority and good in the world. Followers and dissenters of this view fall all along the religious and political spectrums of right and left, or of Christian nationalism, Just War, and Pacifism. At any place along this spectrum Christians wrestle with questions how to interact with or support political, and by extension, military powers.
As mentioned, many American politicians attempt to seize on the desire for American Christians to promote and moralize American culture, and its role in the world. Despite this, some American Christians in the 21st century have adhered to a peace ethic of Christian Pacifism. The idea of Christian Pacifism has remained a viable and actionable practice, even in the age of terrorism and new national enemies. At its heart, 21st century Christian Pacifism is very political, although not often interested in accumulating political power or clout. Nationalism is inherently tied to militarism and power. Many Christian Pacifists limit the importance of their nationalistic identities because of the close association of those identities to the presumed necessity of violence to coalesce power in modern political states.

By not associating with political powers, some 21st century Christian Pacifists strive to push against violence and militarism and in doing so serve both the victim and perpetrators of the violence. Modern Christian Pacifists have adapted the traditional peace church ideal to the modern world. The watershed theology developed by both John Howard Yoder and Stanley Hauerwas revitalized the political and social ethic of Christian Nonviolence in the modern age. Rather than passive, Christian Pacifists have enacted a very active role in the effort to limit war and neutralize its human impact. The aforementioned Christian Peacemaker Teams exemplify the sacrificial nature of the peace ethic ideal of “getting in the way” of violence as a combative tool to suppress violence and limit its damage. Furthermore the ideal of reconciliation is exemplified by efforts to reach out to veterans of war and other victims of moral injury. In doing so modern Christian Pacifists have
accepted a broader rather than partisan role in the effort to heal all of the effects of violence.

It should be understated Modern Christian Pacifism is political. However, despite the political nature of the aforementioned anti-war protests, Modern Christian Pacifists often oppose political power. Rather than adhering to modern political identities, Pacifists who follow Hauerwas’s call for the church try to be the new “social ethic” that embodies the aforementioned ideals of reconciliation, nonviolence, and Marten's sacrificial “absorption of violence”. The social and political ethics promoted by modern Christian Pacifism continuously need to be reworked and adapted as the line of history continues to progress. The 21st century has seen many events, such as September 11th, that have required unique and modernizing responses by nonviolent Christians.

Modern and Future enemies, such as ISIS, will require a reassessment of the role of Christian Pacifism in the combating of violence in the world. Some Christian Pacifists have even gone as far as to call for military resistance to modern threats like ISIS139 while others, like Ron Sider have called for a rethinking of nonviolent strategy. Sider has criticized Just War theorists and pacifists alike for a lack of effort and funding into nonviolent causes and resolutions to the sources and effects of violence in areas that breed extremism.140 Members of the Christian Peacemaker Teams noted that that the occupation of Iraq was leading to some Iraqis to view violence as an alternative to subjugation. Also, other pacifists have noted the possible adverse effects of meeting evil with violence. While writing for a Mennonite publication, Quaker activist Micah Bales noted that violence against extremism can
often breed further extremism and reminded readers "As followers of the slain lamb, we are conquerors through the blood of Jesus, through our commitment to show love even to those who want to behead us."\textsuperscript{141}

Christian Pacifists have also shown active apposition to the changing methods of warfare. Drone warfare has become a prominent method of executing military operations and Christian Pacifists have noted the impacts on both pilots and victims. Drone killing presents an ongoing circumstance in which pilots often watch their targets for an extended time before striking, often observing the daily lives of the surrounding noncombatants. Often drone strikes have led to the death of civilians, these deaths number in the thousands. Christian Pacifists have begun to speak out against the ill effects drone warfare has on the victims, the communities, and the moral injury experienced by the pilots themselves.\textsuperscript{142} Modern Christian Pacifism will need to continue to adapt and develop creative responses to humanity’s ability to continuously create new methods of causes harm and death to its own.

The future effectiveness of Christian nonviolence may depend on the ability of Just War proponents and Pacifists to work together. As mentioned, Ron Sider has been a devout Christian Pacifist for his entire life. However, he views Just War proponents as an ally in reducing violence. Just War has many variations but at its core it creates an extremely high bar to be met in order for violence to be justified. However, this relationship could obviously be jeopardized by the strict adherence to nonviolence by Pacifists or the possibility of nationalism interfering with the judgment of Just War proponents.
Perhaps the future of Christian Pacifism will rest upon education and awareness. Many denominational leaders and Christian academics are pacifists, or are very hesitant to justify the use of violence as moral. Yet, as mentioned many American Christians support American military action, often without taking into account traditional Christian teachings on either Just War or Pacifism. An awareness of both could deepen American Christian’s understanding of the sacrificial nature of the traditional teachings and their theological relation to the sacrifice of Christ. Efforts by denominations, pastors, and perhaps academics to education American Christians in traditional theological teachings could help create what Mirosolv Volf called a “thick” understanding of Christianity.

Education and collaborative work may lead to future effectiveness of Christian Pacifism. However, the challenges are great. American nationalism and patriotism have easily blended with Christianity in America, creating various veins of Christian nationalism, American exceptionalism, and Civil Religion. All of these influences make it difficult for Christian Pacifism to be a natural or logical choice by American Christians. Despite the easily accepted identity of varying level of exceptionalism and nationalism, Christian Pacifists reject national identity for participation in the “Kingdom of God”. Christians in America have enjoyed an immense amount of political freedom and power. While this has allowed for an active, plural, and vibrant church to develop in America, it has left some Christian theologians feeling that American Christians too easily abandon a divine identity for the safety and power of a politically sound nation.
American Christianity has no doubt benefited from the might of the United States, perhaps at great spiritual cost. Christian Pacifists, like Stanley Hauerwas, hope for a day in which American Christians will be more concerned about identifying with Christ rather than a nation. Hauerwas describes this idea by explaining, “as a Christian I wish America as a nation was more ‘secular’ and the Christianity of America was less American. Put differently...I fear the American version of Christianity cannot provide a political challenge to what is done in the name of the American difference.”\(^{143}\) To many American Christians, comments like this may seem counterintuitive but it is important to remember that Modern Christian Pacifism sees identity as divine and not national. American Christianity will continue to be a political force and part of the American cultural identity. However, Modern Christian Pacifists will continue to redefine their own identity and strive to bring out an active and effective nonviolent ethic within the American church as a means of ministry and a strive toward justice.
REFERENCES


2 By “Christian nation” I referencing a belief Christianity is not only the dominant religious group but also the national policy should reflect explicit Christian values. For more reading on the historicity and debate of this claim, real or perceived, see Was American Founded as a Christian Nation? By John Fea.

3 Cruz, Washington Post.


10 Ibid., 21-44.


12 Ibid.


14 Weigel, George. "The Just War Tradition and the World after September 11." Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture 5, no. 3 (2002): 13-44. Wiegel's argument is not a patriotic argument but one to bring the Catholic Church back to the traditional stance of Just War. However, in doing so he elicits ideals of justice through the application of violence, which would have been seen by many American Christians as a matching moralization of the use of violence to defend American interests.


16 American exceptionalism has several different varieties. Most generally the term means that Americans feel their nation has a special place in the world. Some feel that role is establish through the political identity of America, while other Americans believe there to be a special relationship between God and the United States similar that of the biblical relationship between Israel and Yahweh.


18 Ibid.


20 Winthrop

21 Hughes, 24

Hughes, 24.


Hatch, 10


Scott


Schmidt, Leigh Eric. *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005. Schmidt gives a detailed history of 19th century American spirituality and the various tones of progressivism in American Christianity that can be seen in this time period. Schmidt’s discussion ranges from liberal bends in Protestant and Catholic teachings, teachings about racial and gender equality, and even links the history of liberal spirituality to modern aspects of American religion. Observations about today’s liberal religion surrounds the idea that American Christians have become concerned about the self, even at the cost of lessening the service emphasis of liberal religion.


I am using this term to describe American Christians who regularly practice Christianity and attend church but are not Church Leaders, theologians, or religious scholars.

Hughes, 152-156.


Cummings


Land


Hauerwas discusses the impact that killing has on individuals by reviewing interviews and accounts of soldiers who have returned from war with deep emotional and spiritual scares. Also, he discusses that part of the sacrifices that non-pacifists make for their beliefs include sacrificing not killing. Killing, Hauerwas argues, is against our humanity and does not come naturally to man. The idea that killing is undesirable is prevalent in societies around the world. Hauerwas feels that sacrificing not killing (willingly enduring the emotional fallout that comes from taking another human’s life) has become part of the glory associated with our modern nationalism.


Ibid., xiv.


http://www.mlkonline.net/ourgod.html.


Ibid., 109.


Ibid., 178.

Sprinkle, 155.


Brock, Peter, and Nigel Young. Pacifism in the Twentieth Century. Syracuse, NY: Distributed by Syracuse UP, 1999. 186


http://www.cpt.org/resources/writings/sider.

Ibid., Ron. "God’s People Reconciling."

Objectors Who Did Not Cooperate with the Vietnam War Draft.


Ibid


War and the American Difference, 6.