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Editorial

What are we doing here? This may be the most important question a Christian can ask. If we avoid the challenge to do good in our immediate contexts, our choices of exciting mission opportunities may increase rapidly. Instead of bringing a neighbor to church, we can send Bibles to Russia or India. And rather than exposing the lies in our lives, we can find grander hypocrisy farther afield. Such larger projects as we are often pulled toward, promise recognition and easily gauged results. Unfortunately, often such mission efforts are edifices constructed without foundations, merely cloud-capped towers which “shall dissolve/ And, like this insubstantial pageant faded/Leave not a rack behind.”

But the dangers involved in over-extending our Christian works ought not dissuade us from all outreach. An entirely personal or intra-communital faith is one prone to rot. In fact, Christ came to earth because God’s people had not proclaimed His word, but kept it to themselves. In response to God’s mandate, Christianity is a religion with a long tradition of extroversion, expressed in aggressive proselytizing and teleological visions. We have to build God’s Kingdom but avoid ostentation.

The balance we need in our action can be found in a commitment to backyard action. Jesus’ command to go and make disciples of all nations begins with the command to go. We cannot wire money to those in poverty, help the helpless with our eyes averted. Nor can we build God’s Kingdom in any real way long-distance.

We must always ask ourselves what we are doing here, and order our priorities accordingly. Thus any need to speak out on issues such as the arms race or the injustices of apartheid pales in comparison to the need to bring love to Grand Rapids’ inner city. We must struggle with the problems of race relations, but not by going to South Africa. We need to see the economic slavery on the corner of Union and Franklin, the hatred and injustice in our city. Freedom should lose its bitter aftertaste in our society before we try to liberate others.

It is a simple fact that we as individual members of the body of Christ cannot live in community with a million people in any meaningful way. Our experiences, our limitations as single humans in time-bound bodies place us in contact with perhaps a thousand people at best. It is in meaningful communities on this scale that we ought to fight our most important battles in Christ’s name.

If we find ourselves only touching other Christians, only preaching to the converted, we are called by Christ Himself to go and make disciples of others. This does not mean thinking in larger terms, but it does perhaps commit us to an ever-changing community and to the constant challenges involved in witnessing to our neighbors.

—DL
My poems are nets to catch thoughts. Often they snare a singular thought or impression and weave it into word sets. They usually focus on that layer of life where truth dwells, i.e., they go below the necessarily polite language of ordinary discourse and dwell where the truth of the matter lives. Questions of truth and the nature of reality float freely or bang around in my mind everyday. The answers to such questions can best be expressed, I believe, in novel or poetic form. Can truth be expressed in ordinary language? I wonder.

The poem "poem A.D." was a net catching the idea expressed above that poetic language digs beneath the fleshly appearances and penetrates to the bones—the reality of a given situation. The title part "A.D." alludes to the Lord's ability to do just that—know the heart not the skin. The poem is a pithy statement of what most of my poems are about—the truth which is not seen on the surface.

I brought my net along one evening to a performance of the Grand Rapids Symphony. At the end the audience applauded as expected. The thought caught in the net was—why have we chosen these performers for special applause? Not a heavy philosophical question but yet an interesting one. From that singular idea or question emerged the poem "performers." Inside the Fine Arts Center we applauded the band bowing in appreciation of our adulation while other performers mowing hear only the wind. Why?

The truths of God or Good Friday demand a poetic response to unfold some of the mysteries. "Friday order" attempts to encapsule an idea that goes right to the "bones." The extension of the wooden pole connecting heaven to earth just seemed to come and sit in my mind. The mystery and wonder of it all then arranged itself on paper in the manner you can see. Can you see a mystery more clearly? I wonder.

"Summer Planting" started with the moment I heard of Sietze passing. Soon after that mom was on Iowa I-80 heading west the summer. Every field of every rolling hill, city signs, brother Sietze alive in a haunting fash. The poem rattled around in mind for two months until it came out back home in Grand Rapids there truth there? I'm afraid so.

Now, one asks, what is an engineer doing writing poetry? My thoughts went in two directions. One thought is that only poets write poems. If I'm honest with myself, I would have to say I view the world around me more as a poet than an engineer. In fact, I'm not s
Summer Planting

Monday, Iowa 1-80, not a good time, the rolling corn sucking hills were haunted, Sully sign evoked ghost filled pulpits (alone today in window streaked sun).

Mother earth had planted a poet.

how an engineer looks around. What I see and experience seems to always come in poetic images rather than in structured boxes more attuned perhaps to engineers' ways.

But, in another vein, I must admit that there seems to be some relationship between poetry and technology. Some hints occur in the writing of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger. In his essay "The Question Concerning Technology" (Harper's, 1977), he seems to (after the ancient Greeks) equate the artistic efforts of the poet and the craftsman doing pre-modern technology. He sees both poet and craftsman as revealers of Being. He says, "Techne (gr.) belongs to bringing-forth, to poiesis (gr.); it is something poietic." Modern technology is seen by him as more of a challenge to Being rather than a revealing of the truth about Being. But, I believe, the design process even as applied to modern technology is an important way for truth to be revealed. Poetry and design reveal truth in a different way than the analytical methods of mathematics and science but they surely deal with the questions about truth and the nature of our existence. In fact I suggest they are a way to escape reductionism that has so sorely distorted the truth, particularly since the time of Descartes.

Having said this, I still find it difficult to wax analytical about the nature of the relationship between poetry and engineering. God has given me such a rich world and such wonderful spectacles through which to view it that I want to revel in as many of its aspects as my talents will allow. I do sense that my interests in poetry (and philosophy) have made me a better thinker and doer of design and science (my summer occupation). To constantly view and sense the creation through the eyes of being of poet-philosopher-engineer is almost too much to handle. It is mind-boggling!
Style. A few comments. The urge to be uniquely creative (isn't that how God made us?) has driven me to search for my own style of poetic expression. A few years ago I did a poem about the Incarnation that was simply one word lines using the alphabet as an organizing tool. Since then, I have been at ease with short, single word line poems. It suits what I wish to say. I see it as a unique style. I ask each reader to probe each word and its fellows to develop images. I would hope that images arise in the mind as these words are sensed by the reader.

The challenge for me is to get across a profound idea in as few words as possible letting the “picture” do the rest. Perhaps economy of thought arises from my engineering background and practice. Be that as it may, I’m always impressed how philosophers beat their readers over the head for several hundred pages to get across one concept. I wish to go the other extreme, seeing how economical one can be and still create images with words that communicate a single idea.

Today? I’m walking around with another poem in my head. While at a mall in Kalamazoo I observed an antique show. Several tables had heaps of jewelry—old rings, brooches, etc., from, I envisioned, several estate sales. Juxtaposed on that scene was the image in my mind of piles of jewelry, gold teeth, etc., outside the gas chambers of Germany in the 1940s. Perhaps someday a few “lean words” will tumble on the paper and I’ll discover another essential truth.

**friday order**

tall
pole
with
cross
beam

fastening
heaven
to
earth

bearing
earth
to
heaven
delivered.

**performers**

band
bell
sound
draws
us
up
as
our
thunder
leans
them
over
while
mowers
drawing
grass
circles
hear
only
wind.
The resounding success of Murder, She Wrote, the television show featuring Angela Lansbury as a detective novelist who solves real-life murder mysteries, is another reminder of the appeal of that genre. Different people choose different kinds of novels for their “escapist” reading: Heinlein and Herbert devotees extoll the merits of science fiction, fantasy buffs perpetually search for an heir to the Tolkien/Lewis tradition, and others enjoy hanging over the cliff constructed by a Ludlum or a Trevanian. But many readers seeking to relax turn first to the traditional detective novel.

Murder aficionados usually acknowledge the genius of Agatha Christie and debate the relative merits of her supposed successors. For many of us, Dorothy Sayers’ decision to stop writing her Sir Peter Wimsey mysteries dealt a crippling if not mortal blow to the twentieth-century detective novel. We continue to search for another Christie or Sayers. Although I had a brief infatuation several years ago with Rex Stout (perhaps inspired by the television show about Nero Wolfe), I find that my recent candidates tend to be women authors who sometimes write about female detectives.

Ngaio Marsh, a New Zealand writer of part-Maorian descent, seems to be achieving a success close to Christie’s. Marsh’s elegant stories feature an upper-class detective, Roderick Alleyn, whose investigations often take him into the theatrical or artistic worlds of England and Australia. In Wimsey-like fashion, Alleyn even meets and courts his wife, a famous painter, when she is embroiled in a murder case. Other recent favorites of mine include P.D. James, who introduces her young female detective in An Unsuitable Job for a Woman, and Amanda Cross, whose protagonist is an English professor encountering murder in her academic and social life. Cross’s Death in a Tenured Position has Dr. Kate Fansler investigating the mysterious death of the first woman to be granted tenure in the Harvard English department.

Although my own academic setting somewhat more sedate, perhaps I like to try identify with these super-women employing their intellect to fight crime. But why, even when they feature distinguished British gentlemen-detectives, do I enjoy these tales of blood, murder, hate, revenge, and psychopathic behavior? Do (and the thousands of other well-educated, normally sedate, evangelical Christians who like murder mysteries) harbor a deep-sea perverse streak? How do we explain or justify the mysterious lure of the detective novel?

Much could be said with respect to this question from the perspective of human beings homo ludens, creatures who play, but a more subtle yet important aspect of detective novels may contribute to our enjoyment of Christie and Sayers. Our very theology is inherent in this genre and explains, I believe, the sense of satisfaction and fulfillment that we get when we read those last gripping pages of a mystery.

A fictional detective story reader depicted Graham Greene’s novel The Honorary Consul may give us a clue to the underlying theology of murder mysteries. Father Rivas leads a Paraguayan revolutionary group that has kidnapped the British consul in an attempt to free political prisoners being held and tortured by a military dictatorship running his country. Rivas, an ex-priest; he has lost his faith in God and the church. He passes the time in hiding by reading an English detective story. Why does he choose this kind of work?

He explains, “Oh, there is a sort of comfort reading a story where one knows what the end will be. The story of a dream world where just is always done. There were no detective stories in the age of faith—an interesting point when you think of it. God used to be the only detective who pursued the wicked man for punishment and discovered all. But now people like General make law and order. Electric shocks the genitals. Aquino’s fingers. Keep the poor
and they do not have the energy to revolt. I prefer the detective. I prefer God.”

Ather Rivas likes detective stories because they remind him of a God he can no longer believe in when he faces the horrors of life in South Africa. The justice achieved in every detective story is the justice ultimately achieved by a reign God. The logical order, the way the facts will add up with an ineluctable rationality, eals to one enduring a seemingly senseless, mented, and absurd existence. But for Rivas, the comfort of a detective story is only a porary fantat. He no longer believes in the active.

William Spanos takes the analogy between the detective and genre a step further in his article, “The Detective and the Boundary: Some Notes on the t-modern Literary Imagination.” He argues that all the well-made novels of the eighteenth century are in effect detective stories. Detailed descriptions, realistic characters, and linear plots ed on cause and effect mirror the ordered totality of the God-controlled eighteenth century. But as people have become increasingly certain about what they can know, a parallel development takes place in literary form. Spanos calls the typical modern novel as an “anti-detective story... , the formal purpose of which is to evoke the impulse to ‘detect’... in order toently frustrate it by refusing to solve the re.” He cites works by Kafka, Beckett, Esc, and Robbe-Grillet as examples of his anti-detective story.

Although Spanos is speaking about the tendency in modern literature to be fragmented, -realistic, and inconclusive, we can also find examples of the anti-detective story. Donald Barthelme, a leading contemporary short story tor, uses such an approach in “Views of My er Weeping.” The narrator of the story at- to discover the truth about the death of at her, who has been mysteriously run down a carriage. He searches for witnesses and s, but one by one they prove unreliable and inclusive. Was his father really drunk? Was the coachman careless? At the close of the story narrator finally appears close to a solution: he ts the account of the coachman. Yet another son claims that the coachman is “an absolute dy liar.” Barthelme can only conclude the ch and the story with the single inconclusive d “etc.” The detective/son will continue to w the clues, but the mystery will never be ed.

The critically acclaimed bestseller The Name of the Rose, by Umberto Eco, displays a very clever combination of both detective and anti-detective elements. (The movie version of this novel starring Sean Connery has recently been released.) Brother William of Baskerville, a learned fourteenth-century Franciscan trained by Sir Roger Bacon is asked to investigate the mysterious death of a young monk in a great abbey. Murder is suspected. As Brother William conducts his investigation, more murders are committed. The monk/detective uncovers clue after clue and employs his stunning deductive abilities to reveal both a complex apocalyptic pattern to the murders and the perversen mind behind all the bloodshed. The conclusion of the story proves him to be right, yet wrong. The monk he accuses is responsible, but there has been no plan, no pattern followed, no plot, just chance events. Brother William laments, “Where is all my wisdom, then? I behaved stubbornly, pursuing a semblance of order, when I should have known well that there is no order in the un- verse.” This detective has solved his mystery totally by accident, even though his logic pointed to the true killer.

The Name of the Rose involves much more than the murder mystery plot. The novel is full of information on fourteenth-century life, religion, and politics. Philosophically it raises questions about the nature and value of knowledge. Literary critics are fascinated with the novel’s comments on comedy and the study of signs. Larger themes insistently emerge. Consequently, the more scholarly reviews of the novel frequently view the detective story as just trapping, the entertaining facade of a deep philosophical book. Yet without the satisfaction we have in tracking down and piecing clues together, without our natural instinct for a sense of closure, The Name of the Rose could not have worked on any level.

Contemporary works like those of Eco and Barthelme have much to say that is revealing and challenging. They show in vivid form the philosophical assumptions of our era, and they point to the uncertain nature of meaning in our corrupted world. Nonetheless, when I’m at the beach this summer, I will probably take out by dog-eared copies of Dorothy Sayers and savor yet again the stimulating mind and speech of Sir Peter in action. As he skillfully follows the clues and wittily banters with his foes, I will be subtly reminded that despite the relativistic and fragmented nature of the world, the mystery ultimately will be solved.

—Susan VanZanten Gallagher
Dept. of English
Dialogue 11
Driven

—Mark Veldl
**Wrench in the Works**

nds against the glass, I
bit on the inside, looking down.

ufactured of cast-off pieces
worlds all around,
ill-oiled, the system works well
til some part fails to fit.

-sync, thrown loose,
row sick as parts
lide and chain reactions
ar the system apart,
a roller-coaster fashion.

hands feel for the seat belt,
the stop button,
ything to shut it down.
luck.
e roof caves in.

ill Cornell

**Tundra Games**

Like a black arrow
with swelling shaft,
they travel. So boys gather rocks
from Lake Iliamna’s shore
and stockpile them along the river bank.

Half-dead they crowd into northward-flowing water
determined to make it up river and beyond the falls
to waiting conception pools,
but rocks smash their moldy bodies
until more float than swim.

Just boys, having fun, they forget
mythic repetition
of once ruby and emerald ocean wanderers
whose only purpose
is to come back home.

—Danette Thomas

**Shaman**

Against tin walls her motions
dance wild and primitive
in dim light and midnight dusk
as she whips cloudberries and seal oil
into ice cream.

“Cloudberries fell from the sky,
eat them and be wise. Follow bear tracks
without fear, disappear into snow like arctic fox,
hunt like eagle.

Eat and learn the ancient secrets,” said Caribou Woman after a long drag
on her Virginia Slim.

—Danette Thomas
Iey, Mr. Ice Cream Man!

Here, kitty-kitty-kitty. Here, kitty-kitty-kitty. Me on, putter. Come on, girl." He stopped his ling for a moment, stood up from his crouched sition on the porch, and scanned the group of d elm trees and clumps of crabgrass in his yard. His small, dark eyes searched an­ usly. And then his lips broke into a crooked ile as he watched the gray and white cat bound yerly if unevenly up the worn wooden stair­e that connected his second-story apartment h the yard below.

"Well, Princess, where have you been?" he ed excitedly. "I was getting worried there for a nute. Well, c'mon now, let's go inside."
The cat paused at the doorway, hesitating; n, after a slight nudge from a shoe, walked in. He followed in after her and stopped at the rigerator in the small, hot kitchen.

"Would ya like somethin' to drink? Huh? Huh, ncess?" The cat looked up at him beseech­Jly and then purred with contentment as he set down a chipped pink pottery bowl full of milk.

"There you go, sweetie." He squatted down, illing as he watched the cat daintily lap at the k. After a few minutes, he stood up · and liked into the living room .It was a hot, stuffy little room. The blazing sun at relentlessly through the open windows onto faded beige carpet. A sagging, worn, brown id couch was lined up against the wall and a ide but sturdy wooden coffee table stood o re it. Against the opposite wall was a straight­cked kitchen chair, spray-painted bright een. The walls were bare except for a large med cardboard picture of Jesus. It had been er for awhile, put up by tenants who had long ce moved. And no one had taken it down. The rent tenant enjoyed looking at it: the long own hair curled slightly at the ends, the lips re painted with a rosy hue, and the clear deep e eyes looked up earnestly toward heaven. He n studied it as he sat on the couch.

He liked his living room. He liked to sit in it at h and read one of his National Geographic gazines. The room could get hot in the mmer but he endured the heat by making a per fan that his mom had taught him to make g ago.

He glanced at the small alarm clock on the, coffee table and jumped up from the couch.

"Four o'clock already!" he exclaimed to himself. "I better get going." He quickly walked into the bathroom situated off of the kitchen and picked up his comb. He looked at it closely. It was a small red plastic one with white printing along the side that read JESUS SAVES. He had seen it lying in the street one day while he was on his route and decided to pick it up. He had cleaned it up well when he got home.

He started combing his thick, shaggy brown hair and then scrutinized his appearance in the mirror. His black-rimmed glasses needed cleaning and his sparse, scraggly-looking beard needed a little trimming, too, he thought. His green print knit T-shirt hung loosely on his frame. He looked disapprovingly at his thin, bony arms.

"No, my biceps sure aren't very developed. That's kinda 'a shame. I wouldn't be half bad if I just had some arm muscles on me. . .cause my legs sure are getting big."

He glanced down at his legs. They weren't very long and they looked somewhat awkward under his brown bermudas. But his thighs were deeply tanned and muscular.

"It's from all that bike riding I been doing, Princess," he remarked as he looked down lovingly at the cat standing in the doorway of the bathroom. "It's so that I can keep you eatin' your tender vittles," he said chuckling.

He put on his yellow hat with the sunvisor and in the mirror, read the white words printed on the yellow background. "MACK TRUCKS," he pronounced slowly. He then gazed at his image in the mirror and said, "Frank Morgan, Mack truck driver." He giggled softly after he said it and then grew more serious as he crouched down to scratch the cat. "Someday, Princess, someday."

He stared thoughtfully for a moment at the movement of the cat's tail swishing back and forth and then stood up abruptly, looking at his watch.

"Four-twenty! Oh boy, I'm going to be late for work. I better get a move on it." He walked quickly to the door and inserted his key into the lock on the other side.

"See you later, Princess. Be a good putter while I'm gone. I'll be back later tonight like al­ways."

He shut the door, locked it, and hurriedly
descended down the steps into his backyard. He rounded the corner into the driveway and then stepped out into the street.

It was a typical July day in the small town of Muncie. The sky was a hazy yellow with the sun’s rays streaming through. The air was still, with no evidence of a breeze, and all of the noise the street contained seemed to intensify the blazing heat. The sidewalks were full of children: shooting marbles, tending lemonade stands that were getting meager business, spraying each other with garden hoses, and running through sprinklers. Teenage girls sat on stoops, drinking Cokes. And housewives lazily hung out the wash in their backyards, talking to their next-door neighbors over the fences.

He loved being outside on the summer afternoons. The heat never bothered him; he just enjoyed watching everyone in the neighborhood. That’s why I like my job so much, he thought; I can be outside and watch everyone.

He broke away from his thoughts and grew alarmed by the green neon clock above the Walgreen’s drugstore. Four-thirty! He was supposed to be at work right now! He broke into a run, his stubby legs clumsily carrying him down the city sidewalks. He bumped into an elderly man, doggedly pushing his grocery-laden cart away from the Food Club shopping mart. The collision upset a grocery bag that had been set precariously on top of all the others. It fell to the ground and out rolled four individually wrapped rolls of toilet paper, a plastic bottle of Metamucil, and six cans of Campbell’s tomato soup.

The elderly man halted abruptly and his face became red with anger. “You clumsy oaf; just what is the meaning of running so wildly through the street?”

The accused approached meekly, his face wrought with regret. He bent down quickly as he approached the cart, and gathered the soup cans in his arms.

“I am very sorry, sir. You see, I’m late for work and—”

“I don’t give a rip what you were late for. There is no excuse for this kind of behavior, do you hear?” he demanded.

“Yes, sir. I am really sorry.” He dumped the soup cans in the grocery cart and bent down once again to pick up the Metamucil bottle. There was a small crack in the side of the bottle and some of the brown grainy powder had spilled out on the cement. He picked it up quickly, trying to hide the opening, but the old man’s eyes were too quick.

“Just forget it, now. Be gone, you ruffian.”

Frank stared, dumbfounded and guilty for a moment, the Metamucil bottle still in his hand. He quickly dropped the bottle into the cart spilling more of the precious powder onto the ground, and then he took off down the street again. He turned around and shouted, “I am sorry, sir.” But the aged figure paid him no heed.

Frank kept running, this time more carefully. He went down one street, up another, around several corners—a route that he had memorized after many afternoon jaunts like this.

He finally came up to a small white building with UNCLE PETER’S ICE CREAM TREATS, INC. printed in red and blue across the front. Underneath the words TREATS we printed a blond-haired boy and girl eating popsicles, happily oblivious to anything else aside from their joy of consuming ice cream.
He walked through a white door labelled EYES and proceeded down a narrow way, ignoring the bulletin boards overflowing with notices and memos to the 20 or 30 drivers who were employed by Uncle Peter's. At the end of the hallway, he came to the large packing room and cautiously hesitated before entering. He veered to the right of the room and saw the long, man sitting at a table, his head bent over as he scrutinized the financial reports of the month. Frank stood at the doorway for a moment and, taking a deep breath, quickly strode through the room, hoping to pass by unnoticed before the opposite door.

"Frank, where the hell you been?" the man at the table angrily questioned. Grinding his teeth into the ashtray before him, he pushed chair away from the table and rose to his full height.

"Do you know what time it is?"

"Well, yes, Mr. Smeley, I do. I know I'm a little late but—"

"It's 4:40. You shoulda been loading your cart ten minutes ago."

"I know that but—"

"I don't want to hear any of your half-assed excuses today and don't interrupt me when I'm sing to you. I'm fed up with your tardiness day and day out and I'm not going to put up with it more."

Frank stood attentively, with his cap in his hands, as Mr. Smeley's tirade continued. He used on the thin, grayish lips that moved in out, occasionally exposing tobacco-stained teeth. He stood there mesmerized, no longer paying attention to the angry words that were directed at him.

"Well, why the hell are you standing there, ring like that at me? Get your ass in gear! Load the ice cream in your cart and hit the streets!"

Frank jerked startlingly, once again aware of where he was and what was happening. "Yes, " he bellowed and quickly began to march out of the packing room.

"One more thing, Frank!" Mr. Smeley's voice de Frank halt abruptly. "You better count on ying out until 10 tonight. From now on, if you ne in so much as one minute late, you'll stay a half hour later. Understand?"

"Yessir, Mr. Smeley!" and with that, Frank liked out into the back parking lot where his truck, number 39, stood parked against the far wall. He quickly opened the latch on top of the truck and stocked it with the varieties of ice cream retrieved from the freezer built into the wall.

Within a few minutes, he was mounted on his bicycle seat and with his Mack truck cap firmly pulled on his head, he pedalled past the chain-link fence encircling Uncle Peter's Ice Cream Treats. Once out on the street, he pumped his legs smoothly and rhythmically, occasionally glancing down with pride at his bulging thighs and the hairs made golden by the summer sun. He rode faster and faster toward his district of appointed streets, feeling the cool air permeate through his T-shirt against his sweaty body. He grinned broadly as the air made into wind whirl ed about his ears and made his eyes water. He loved being out on the road like this. He felt free and wild, like he belonged to the summer and to the street life. Yes, he belonged. The kids were glad to see him when he rode down their streets and their parents would recognize him and wave. No one laughed at him or looked at him funny. He belonged and he felt accepted. And that's how it would be when he got his Mack truck. He would drive through the countryside, he and his Princess. And they would belong there, too. His grin faded as he thought this and he could feel his eyes burning, his heart pounding. Someday, Princess, someday, he thought to himself.

His pace slowed as he came to Lincoln Street and turned right. Now the fun part starts, he thought, as he turned on his bell and began to ring it methodically. He continued down the quiet suburban street, glancing about, trying to visually seek out his usual customers. He watched as fathers came home from work, playfully greeting their children in the yard, and stepping aside the doors, kissing their wives, who had been waiting for their arrivals.

He continued pedalling through the long, winding street, rhythmically tapping his bell. "I usually don't come down Lincoln this early," he muttered to himself. "That must be why I'm not getting any customers yet."

As he spoke, a group of small children stood on the corner, anxiously awaiting the arrival of his ice cream cart. His face brightened as he spotted them and he brought his cart to a halt.

"I would like five nutty-buddy bars," she said crisply.

"Good evening, ma'am. How are you?" he offered, his lips breaking into their crooked smile.

"Fine, thank you," she hurriedly replied. She peeked anxiously at him and repeated, "Five nutty-buddy bars, please?" in a questioning tone.

The smile quickly disappeared from his face.
and he looked at her with bewilderment. Not knowing quite what to do, he allowed his eyes a quick span of the woman, from her exposed feet wrapped in harache sandals to the top of her head, where her brown hair was tightly bound in a red bandanna. Her mouth was set firmly and her eyes took on a suspicious, hardened stare of him.

He started to feel the hot rush of blood to his face until he directed his attention to the five small children shyly standing behind the woman. Craning his neck to catch a better view of them, he brightened and enthusiastically asked, “How are you kids tonight? Gettin' your daily dose of ice cream, huh?”

“Waiting for their daily doses of ice cream,” the woman sternly replied, looking at him angrily. Her sharp reply stirred him into action and as he quickly opened the hatch on his cart, he hastily said, “Right! Five nutty buddies comin' right up!” He held out the bars to the children and as they eagerly grabbed them, the woman swiftly laid the five-dollar bill on the top of the cart and hurriedly led the children away.

He hopped back on his cart and watched forlornly as the group made their way down the sidewalk. He slowly pedaled away, shrugged his shoulders, remarking to himself, “Well, those folks certainly weren’t very friendly. Guess I’ll head down another street for a while.”

He turned another corner and gazed at the orange ball of sun as it slowly settled on the horizon. The glinting rays struck his face and he wiped off the droplets of sweat from his forehead with the back of his hand. He continued pedalling, weaving his way in and out of quiet lanes and cul-de-sacs, selling to an occasional customer here and there. But as the skies turned dusky, he decided that he would call it a night and head home. He steered his cart around and made his way toward Uncle Peter’s Ice Cream Tree.

Within a matter of minutes, he arrived at destination breathing a sigh of relief and noticed that the windows of Mr. Smeeley’s off were dark. “Good!” he remarked to himself. “Now I won’t get in trouble for comin’ in an hour early.” He went through his usual routine putting his cart and ice cream away, and after quickly skipping through the darkened halls, passed the notice-laden bulletin board, he stepped onto the city sidewalk in the direction toward home.

He walked at a leisurely pace, taking deep breaths, and sucking in the cool evening air. He glanced perceptively around him, slowing pace as he passed the Kool Kone on his left. Groups of teenagers flocked around the cream stand, laughing and yelling. As he scanned the crowd, his eyes met upon two young boys and a girl. The girl stood licking an ice cream cone, her tongue darting rhythmically around its circumference, while the boys proudly blew smoke out of their mouths from their cigarettes. All of their eyes were drawn to the solitary figure of a man across the street. They traced comments and laughed contemptuously, while they continued to stare at him. He felt the penetrating gaze from across the street and in a puzzling manner, quickened his pace and started off for home or more.
As he approached his destination, he noticed a
group of boys standing on the curb across from
his apartment. They stood closely next to each
other and appeared to be inspecting something
that lay on the street.
He quickly crossed the street to be away from
them and broke out into an even jog until he
reached his apartment. He bounded up the worn
wooden staircase and stopped abruptly before
the door. It stood partly open. He pushed the
door back against the wall and walked inside.

"Princess? Princess, where are you, honey?
did you get that door open again?" He waited for
the familiar tapping noise of her feet, but heard
nothing. He walked further into the living room.

"C'mon, Princess. I ain't goin' to yell at you.
come out now. Where are you, purty putter?"
He knelt down and peered under the couch. He
stood up again and his attention was drawn to the
noises from the street. The boys' laughing and
outing was getting louder. He froze momentarily as he thought he heard his name called.

"Hey, Fraaank!"

"Hey, Mr. Ice Cream man!"

He felt his chest tighten and his pulse quicken.
He took two long strides over to the window and
ooked down at the boys. They were looking up
ward him and when seeing his figure in the
indow, they pointed and their laughter grew
isterous and raucous.

"Hey, Fraaank?" The intonation of their voices
se as they called his name.

"Hey, Franky! Are you looking for your
utter?"

He continued looking down at them and
iced a small, lighter shaded shape on the
reet before them. He felt a sense of alarm rise
within his body and swallowed nervously. He
ickly turned away from the window and
unded over to the door, down the steps out-
de.

Upon noticing his approach toward them, the
ys laughed with delight and looked at him
ockingly. The ringleader held a long tree
anch in his hand and poked savagely at the
ape in the street.

Frank crossed the street and as he realized
hat lay before the boys, he stopped abruptly
ith a cry. At this point, the boys quickly ran
ay, scattering themselves across the grave-
r that stood behind them.

Once at a distance, the ringleader stopped and
outed, "Hey! We didn't do nothin'! The stupid
imal stepped right in front of a car. Now you
ng go buy yourself somethin' smarter." With
at, he started running again and disappeared
into the shadows.

Frank knelt down by the blood-stained mass of
fur and gingerly picked up the lifeless body. He
cradled it in his arms and attempted to support
the head that flapped at a bizarre angle. He sat
don the curb, burying his face into the
atted fur.

"Oh, Princess!" he crooned. "Oh my baby!
Don't worry, honey, it's gonna be okay. Every-
ing's goin' to work out just fine. You and me,
Princess. That's how it's goin' to be. You and me
drivin' in that truck, free to roam the country."

He stood up and walked slowly back toward
home, tenderly stroking the bloody fur.
Roundtable: Just War and Pacifism

On a Thursday evening late in October, a group gathered to discuss a Christian attitude on war. The participants were George Harper, professor of English; Ken Konyndyk, professor of philosophy; Paul Staub, a freelance artist who has withheld a portion of his taxes in protest of militarism; Bob Wiersma, a student and member of the Army; and Fred Mast, student and member of CAPA.

Dialogue: To start out I'd like to read two passages. The first is from Luke 6:27-31. "But I say to you that hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; from him who takes away your coat, do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods, do not ask them again. And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them." The other is from Romans 13:3 & 4. "For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer."

Dialogue: Despite the fact that part of the Christian scripture is the apparently simple and direct statement, "Thou shalt not kill," Christians have had and still have widely different views on war; everything from absolutely refusing to participate to eagerly throwing themselves into the fighting. And despite the apparent peacefulness of the world as we see it from the American Midwest, war is a very real thing: at the last count, 43 nations were at war; presently, our own government spends vast amounts of money on materials of warfare, not only for the United States itself, but for dozens of countries around the world. So what is a responsible Christian attitude toward this pervasive and troublesome thing called war? Should it be rejected absolutely? Should it be accepted as a necessity in this world? Or is the truth somewhere in between?

Ken Konyndyk: You started with one extreme, went to the middle part of the spectrum, and asked if the truth is somewhere in between those two instead of going all the way to the opposite end which is holy war. Are you trying to confine us? Actually, I don't think there are too many crusaders around these days. What do you think?

Paul Stoub: It seems like the Reagan administration, when it invokes the deity, has an idea of the battle of good against evil, and goes in the direction of a crusade in which the forces of good, as interpreted by Reagan, namely the United States, are fighting against the forces of evil, namely Communism.

Fred Mast: Were the Crusades defensive or offensive? I've always thought of the Crusades as a group of people going out to conquer an area whereas a lot of times Reagan is proposing the sort of defensive type of approach. Taking Central America as an example, he says he is defending against Communism which is coming closer and closer.

Stoub: If that's true, they are doing it by invading Nicaragua.

George Harper: The point is, should anything be done at all, if the scriptures are to be followed? Can any kind of force be exerted whether overtly or covertly? The question we are facing is, does one fight or not fight; does the Christian fight at all?

Stoub: I think my position of non-violence goes along with what was read, which was a statement of the Golden Rule. As a nation, then, we should ask what we would like Nicaragua to do to us.

Bob Wiersma: But can nations or collections of individuals be held to the same principles that an individual is? I've always considered that an individual answers to different callings and different bounds entirely than a nation.

Stoub: What makes you think that's so? Do you find any scriptural support for that?

Konyndyk: Sure. In the passage we just read, individuals are not licensed to bear the sword but the State is. Individuals are not entrusted with enforcement of laws, but the State is. I can decide to make a law on my own and go out and enforce it, but the government can; they have powers that I don't have.
They are still required to operate within the bounds of what is good. So that is an absolute standard.

**Per:** For a government, though, there is very likely that there is no correspondence between their standard and the Scriptural standard. Governments grow naturally; they aren’t set up, except in a rare instance, by Christian groups. And I think the New Testament is thinking that into account. The New Testament doesn’t endorse government necessarily, but it does endorse the principle of government bearing the sword. I expect that would fit even something like a Moslem government.

**Konyndyk:** I don’t think that implies a Christian endorsement of it; it is still the business of Christians to call the state to justice.

**Per:** But if he is the minority or even a weak minority, he is still obliged to grant the state the power to wield the sword, to be the authority. He’s not like the laws that the sword endorses, but I don’t think the Christian should turn away from it because it is an agency set up by God to enforce justice. No, there may be injustices by it, but in the general way it strives to enforce justice.

**Hub:** That is what it’s for, but it doesn’t always, even often, do that.

**Per:** Perhaps not. The individual “I know” to stand up to the injustice he finds in his own government—he has to protest. But at the same time, I can’t abandon the principle of obedience by it, but in the general way it strives to enforce justice.

**Hub:** We should all be subject to the authorities but obedient to God. That, of course, phasizes the difference between the two. Obedience to God is the primary goal of the State. Think of what the angels announced when Jesus was born—“peace on earth, good will toward men on whom he is well pleased.” Well, who do you suppose the ones in whom God was well pleased were? They were ones who were obedient. Now that’s considerably different than the kind of idea we get about peace in our country: namely that peace comes as the result of strength. That’s pursued governments all over the world, throughout history. As Christians, I think we have to have relevance to that idea. And that’s a pertinent consideration in the arms control issue too. I think the government is trying to do two contradictory things. You either say peace comes through justice and obedience, or peace comes through dominance and strength. I think that the evidence of Scripture and the testimony of my own soul leads me to choose obedience and justice.

**Harper:** You would grant the need for a police force?

**Stoub:** Yes.

**Harper:** But on the other hand, okay the money for a standing army?

**Stoub:** Not during peace time. The U.S. had no standing army during the times of peace after WWII; the army was decommissioned.

**Harper:** Well, there was continuity.

**Stoub:** But compared to the kind of build-up that we have had since WWII, the numbers were insignificant. And the surge of patriotism has pretty much followed that history too. I was thinking of Calvin College singing the national anthem before basketball games. Before the thirties say, no one would think of doing something like that. That sort of patriotism—worship of the flag—is just taken for granted nowadays. **Dialogue:** Does the principle of obedience to authority have any bearing on international relationships? Does it justify a war?

**Harper:** In an abstract and ideal state, yes it does. In fact this situation cannot occur. You can proclaim that just war theory all you like, but whether you will be heard by rulers is another question. It seems more likely nowadays that a ruler in a Moslem country will listen to religious authority more than would a Western ruler.

**Konyndyk:** I think that if we grant that the state is a legitimate entity, that it really does have God-given authority, which I think it does, and if it does in some profound sense represent a people, then I think that government has the right and responsibility to protect the integrity of that country and to protect it from attacks from the outside. It would be remiss not to defend its people. And if that means going to war then I think going to war would be permissible. Paul [Stoub] may have a different view than I do, but I think I have an obligation to my family to defend them from attack. Likewise, the government has this same obligation. I think there’s a sense in

*I have an obligation to my family to defend them.*
which going to war could be not an immoral but a moral activity.

Stoub: As far as your claiming that I would probably disagree with protecting my family; well that is putting words into my mouth, Ken. I certainly would defend my family. And I would like to think that I would defend my community and my country too. But, you know, non-violence is often dismissed as a possibility for a defense, and I think that we should give at least some room to it.

Konyndyk: One of the criticisms of the just war theory I have noticed in defending it against people who are more specific than I am is that it hasn’t succeeded in preventing war and that people use it as an excuse and pretext rather than a way of measuring actions. And there’s a sense that that is a defect. Insofar as the defenders of the theory have let the theory be used in that way, I think that they have been taken in; they have done everything wrong by letting the theory be used that way. But of course when the theory is out there on the table, then anybody can pick it up and say, “I’m operating according to this theory.” Our government more or less holds to a theory like that, and it thinks that a last resort means a couple of diplomatic contacts and if you don’t get anywhere, well, that’s it. Then what is just cause? Well, just cause is anything that can be construed as self-defense. One even heard those kinds of arguments about the war in Vietnam. The domino theory: first Southeast Asia, then the Philippines, then Hawaii, then the next thing you know, it’s San Francisco. That’s really a kind of extended self-defense. They use this because the know that’s something that people accept.

Stoub: On the other hand, in a practical way, I like the picture of a good practical deterrent for the kind of violence we’re right on the edge of. But still I don’t hear the Gospel telling me that…

Harper: You’re not talking passive resistance when you say pacifism; you do make a distinction.

Stoub: Well, passive is different than pacifism don’t believe in being passive. I believe in taking action and doing what I can, standing up for what is right and trying to prevent harm and violence.

Harper: There’s much truth to that because historically the British did have a very tender conscience, and it became an albatross around their neck.

Konyndyk: In Jacques Ellul’s book on violence he says that in the case of Gandhi, the thing that makes non-violence work was the fact that it stood up against the British conscience; if he had stood up against the Nazi conscience or the Communist conscience, Gandhi would have been put away in a few days, and that would have been the end of the movement. That is Ellul’s answer to the people who say that non-violence won’t work.

Harper: The status of Christ’s words that...
int to obey to the letter, are those words in conflict in the matter that we brought up earlier. The New Testament is in tension it seems. And we have to take both of those poles in the tension into account?

**Our:** The government needs to be guided by justice, by what is good, and to that extent it could not, as the Apostle Paul says, be a terror someone who's doing right.

**Riper:** But it does have to be a terror to those who do wrong. And that means arming the government.

**Our:** But arming the government to prevent order is still far away from building an army and staffing a war. We're talking about internal orderliness; that's the part the government needs to attend to. Now how it does this is a matter for which it is accountable, and if it spills innocent blood then it will be judged for that.

**Riper:** The government is also the agent for external order.

**Our:** Where do you get that?

**Riper:** In the nature of things, contiguous states are bound to have tension at their borders, trade difficulties, imbalance and so on. vitally, the government also has to look at its external relationships which might include usting injustice across the border.

**Our:** But isn't that interfering with the God-en responsibility of that other country?

**Riper:** You would rule out the principle of the pre-emptive strike if there was a perceived threat your government via its neighbor? That has come a very popular doctrine.

**Our:** I think it is atrocious. I think it is far away from anything that would even fit under a just war.

**Riper:** It might be atrocious only in its most surd and extreme examples. A strike against Gadhafi for example, strikes me as absurd.

**Ersma:** But most people don't perceive that a pre-emptive strike. They say we are retaliating for terrorist activities.

**Riper:** But it is pre-emptive in a way though, because it is supposed to remind him that he won't get away with this for long.

**Ersma:** It's an over-response to terrorism.

**Riper:** There are some observers who think the strike against Col. Gadhafi, in fact, had effect of slowing down the terrorism. Statistically, there doesn't seem to be as much as before.

**Our:** You do agree that, though this hasn't solved problem, it may have deterred the reaction temporarily.

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**Konyndyk:** When you start responding with violence you encourage the other to respond to you that way, and then you have to hit him back harder.

**Harper:** There's a remarkable old Laurel and Hardy movie in which they're in a line of automobiles leading to the beach and they are stopped for some reason, and one of the automobiles lightly bumps the car ahead of them. The driver of the bumped car gets out and goes to the back and looks at the people in the car that bumped him, kicks on their headlights which then falls off, and gets back in his car. The people in that car come forward and they kick his front wheel. He waits a minute to collect himself, goes back and gives a tremendous kick to their car and the tire falls off. Other people get into the act because they can't go forward or backward. And within five minutes, the entire line of cars is bashed into each other. In five minutes you have global conflict.

**Konyndyk:** I want to ask something of Paul. You are a protester of sorts, withholding your tax money that goes to the military; but as I hear, you are not opposed to armaments altogether.

**Stoub:** If there was a move toward disarmament, a more tangible move in that direction, then I would end my protest.

**Konyndyk:** Maybe I need to hear the nature of your protest. You think that this is a form of injustice you are protesting; I want to ask: if our government does a lot of other unjust things, why do you protest this one?

**Stoub:** A good question, a fair question. I've been withholding a portion of my income tax directly proportional to what goes to the military, not because I think it is foolishly spent, or that there is inordinate waste, but because I think it is really idolatrous. Here we are as a nation, putting all of our trust in the military, which is unmistakably militarism and idolatry. Militarism is putting your trust in the military—not just having the military as a backup for a healthy and prosperous society, or having it in the wings to defend the borders—but putting it right in the forefront, economically and diplomatically, so that everything that the U.S. does both internally and internationally is coerced by the presence of the overwhelmingly military. That's why I'm pro-
sting—because I consider it idolatrous to do it. For me, to contribute would be to participate. Now that's far different than wasting money on various programs which you may think are alternately foolish or selfish.

Konydyk: So it's really a different argument on non-violence. That is to say, even though I don't espouse theological or philosophical non-violence, I might nevertheless withhold my tax money for the very same reasons. In fact, listening to you, I wondered whether I should.

oub: That's right, and maybe that hints at me difference that I do make for the standard conduct I apply to myself and how I spend my money, and the standards of conduct that government has. As I said, if the government moved away from this overweening dependence on the military, then I would resume paying my taxes, not because I think the military is an especially good thing, but because it would no longer be an idolatrous involvement.

per: Bob, you've been with the military for a ; what is the general attitude toward their function? How does the average young military officer look upon his calling, after you discount fascination with the bells and whistles? Do you have a philosophical perspective on the latter?

iersma: I don't think there is one all-encompassing view that's held by all officers of the military. But I think that there is a kind of international communist conspiracy theory. The Viet Union in all military documents is always plied.

per: Is there an official attempt to inculcate a standard point of view, a government issue point of view on the soldiers?

iersma: The thing that stands clearest in my mind is when I was at basic training, six years ago a private when I first joined. We had a course where we learned how to use a bayonet, and all the dummies on the course were Soviet soldiers, th the Soviet helmets on and carrying Soviet rifles. So I think that they are gearing us toward an area of conflict. I was always tempted and ways being pulled into thinking of Soviet citizens as something less than human. But I read books like Sider's on nuclear war, and realize at a large percentage of the Soviet population is in fact Christian. Then I swing back to the question that was originally raised about Christian principle in international politics and wonder; did the sword to temporal authority, but as that mean that He gave it to Ronald Reagan

but didn't give it to Kime Sons, the North Korean leader, or even Hitler? Hitler came to power. He was in charge of Germany. Did not God also give him the sword to wield?

Harper: Well, the train rolls back.

Konydyk: Do you feel like an odd person in the military sometimes, Bob? Do you feel that you are a lot more reflective about what you're doing than the other people there? That you're not quite so eager to run off and shoot somebody as maybe some of your colleagues are?

iersma: Well, of the soldiers that I know best, most are from Christian backgrounds; most of them are Protestants as a matter of fact. And with my closest friends, no, I don't feel that way. But in the sea of thousands, maybe I do feel like I'm kind of an oddity. But I'm not planning on going out and quitting as a result of it. The way I look at it is this: how horrible it would be if all Christians were to refuse to participate in the military and what a horrible institution it would become. I think it's a comfort both to me and to my parents that there are people who consider these things and who take part in them. Remember Lt. Kaly who massacred all those people in Vietnam? I think that those kinds of things would be a lot more common if there were fewer Christians in the military.

Harper: No, we had on campus two weeks ago a speaker; Col. Scott, who was a very good soldier. No matter how you slice it, he did his job well. But in a conversation with him I found out the guy is simply not a stereotypical gung-ho military person. He saw his calling as any army officer entailing doing a good job, doing what he's told within the limits of his conscience and being ready to defend his country. A lot of old-fashioned patriotic noises came up that night. I didn't hear any red-baiting business and he was remarkably right-minded, you might say, on the matter of arming the contras: that is, very much against it. He gave a number of arguments exposing the folly of that policy. It was his contention that a great many of his acquaintances at his level, Colonels, Brigadier Generals and so on, were simply not quite convinced by the administration's arguments about Central America. Now it is possible that a man like that might at some juncture have kept other unreflecting officers from doing what they should have done. I'm glad a man like that was in there, a Christian man. He didn't wait for us to pray over our supper, he started off himself. I'm glad, that guy's in there. Maybe I can lament that we
have armies.

War's such a mindless thing, but if we have to have one, I'd prefer to have an army of Chuck Scott's, of Bob Wiersma's. But that doesn't solve the question: should we have an army at all?

**Konyndyk:** As I understand what Paul was arguing earlier, he didn't object to this country having an army but to its having the size of army and the armaments.

**Stoub:** That's right. That's the point at which my connection with it is intolerable to me. I would argue against having an army, but I would like to do that in the context of being able to convince people, not coerce them.

**Wiersma:** It's the gunboat diplomacy type of army that they have now. You asked me what I think are the opinions of my fellow soldiers. I think most of them would agree that if we lived in a peaceful world, the ideal situation would be that they wouldn't have a job.

**Stoub:** I want to distinguish a group, people who are Christians by profession and have devotions and treat the people around them in a humane way yet fail to apply the constraints of the Kingdom on their public action or even their official action for government. People can be misleading about that. They can be responding out of hatred for communism or Russians that clearly is far from what Christ is calling us to be. So this argument about being Christian and being in the military and that's a comfort, I don't buy at all. There were Christians who were dropping nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and it was a despicable un-Christian thing to do. We can't take comfort in that. We are judged for that kind of action as a nation regardless of whether we come home and pray over our supper. A lot of your arguments here about having a military and so on, seem to be based on pragmatic considerations. My favorite heroes in the Bible are the three friends of Daniel who stood up to King Nebuchadnezzar and said "We won't bow down to your idol. We won't commit idolatry, and the Lord our God is powerful to defend us. Even if he doesn't save us from death, we still will refuse to do it." I think that's more the direction we ought to be taking as citizens, as citizens of the United States, as citizens of God's Kingdom. That's the thing we ought to be encouraging each other toward rather than always coming down to what's pragmatic, what's practical, what works. We ought not defend non-violence on the basis that it worked in India. I think we ought to be non-violent because that's the example Jesus gave us. Difficult though it may be, that's the direction in which we ought to be heading.

**Harper:** Once again, is that in tension with the New Testament's clear statement that there is a sword given to the government?

**Stoub:** Well, I think there is a conflict there for anyone who wants to become involved in the government. Serving in congress or in the military, you have to be clear about where you allegiances are. You have to say at some point, I can go this far and no further. And to take an oath of office that may require you to do something that's against your principles or the principles given you by religion, I think irresponsible. You have choices. You can say, won't do that.

**Harper:** What about the fact that there is nuclear potential? Are we not obliged to fight the threat? And what if the only means to fight it is to build up our country's nuclear capacity? Is the Christian responsible for the continuance of the world?

**Stoub:** The Christian is responsible to preserve and tend Creation. This whole nuclear question brings the issue sharply into focus. The question as I see it is this: Can we fight death with death? Can we fight threat with threat? Can we fight evil with evil?

**Harper:** I agree with you that we are obliged to tend creation. Things have come to the point where tending creation may very well mean creating a counter force which is inevitably itself destructive. We're stuck. I don't see where we can do about it.

**Mast:** I don't necessarily see developing another counter attack as the means of restoring the world. If they send their missiles over, will we send ours back as a kind of last goodbye? I don't see this whole build-up getting us anywhere.

**Konyndyk:** The present policy is such that we maintain the ability to blow the Russians up because they have the ability to blow us up, and because we counter-balance each other, we are each afraid to do that. I think that you are right saying that's a morally unacceptable position. Christian can't justify it on just war standards anything else.

**Harper:** But is the Christian obliged to say, okay, here I am, go ahead, send the stuff over?

**Konyndyk:** But what should we do about it? Should we unilaterally disarm? Should we try what we've been trying to do, but try a bit harder? It looks like the President had a pretty good shot at it, and he passed it up.
ub: The proposal finally falls out on the table he walks away from it.

rper: That’s, in fact, what happened.

nyndyk: He refused to trade his bird in the h for two in the hand.

rper: If you had been in a position of power, Christian would you have, in fact, said, “We not going to counter you. We are obliged not counter you. Our principles are such that we absorb anything you send us?”

ub: No retaliation; that’s the clearest

issiveness is different than icifism.

ishing of what Jesus says.

rper: So Jesus is counseling us over 1900 rs of distance.

ub: He says don’t retaliate. In fact, I think you even interpret His words as saying don’t sider your attacker to be your enemy.

nyndyk: It seems to me that Paul is right, that iliation when you are threatened is a ningless and mindless retaliation. If the iets were to blow us all away it seems to be a us mindlessness to say, “Well, I’m going to e you with me.”

ub: And when you eliminate that use for ear weapons, the only use is for first strike, ch you wouldn’t permit either.

rper: But does mutually assured destruction like the only policy?

nyndyk: You have these weapons and there only two things to do with them, but you can’t either because both options are immoral. It looks like the position we are in.

st: This is why SDI is so popular among a lot Christian organizations; because you are not down, you are not attacking, but what is posed is that the missiles will be shot down of range of this world, and it’s going to stay y from this world. That’s why it is so popular. The fact remains that the nuclear means of troying the world are here, and we have to ide what we are going to do. We can’t turn backs on it, but we also can’t keep building The time has come for bilateral talks.

ersma: If we can’t use them then why do we e them?

Harper: That’s the whole paradox right there.

Konyndyk: The thing is that people are casting about the justification for that policy because, rightly or wrongly, they perceive this mutual ability to destroy each other as what has kept the balance; the balance of terror has been, in fact, what has kept peace between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. But is that what has done it, or not? It’s pretty hard to say.

Konyndyk: We want to decide. But as moral Christian human beings, is this a policy that we can ascribe to or not? The only case in its favor is the pragmatic one—that it seems to have worked.

Stoub: What do you think would happen if we began to dispose of nuclear weapons?

Harper: Unilaterally?

Stoub: Yes, let’s say that the U.S. would begin.

Harper: There would be economic chaos, tremendous realignment of power. And perhaps we would even experience a realignment in values. You might even find people sitting down to read. But that isn’t a very real possibility.

Stoub: But Japan has been practically disarmed, and they have experienced tremendous economic growth as a result.

Harper: But they have also experienced an erosion in traditional values. I don’t want to make the case that military alertness is somehow good for a nation, but Japan is morally a mess. The fall-out of their industrial policy is horrifying, what it has done to people, to society. It’s true they haven’t put much of their gross national product into armaments, but they didn’t have to flex their military muscles to take over Southeast Asia. I guess there is just no answer to all of this. Not in the worldly sense. Your answer [to Stoub] is the right one, but my view is that you better start training people to handle the problems that come up in the world. You are not going to get them all converted to Christ’s view.

Konyndyk: There are people studying non-violent resistance of various sorts, trying to distill out various effective types of non-violence. Certainly there should be peace studies of this sort,
but there is also a lot to be done on a personal level, such as developing in ourselves and in our community non-confrontational ways of conflict resolution. But look at the reluctance of people to go to a reconciliation service instead of going to court and battling it out. There is a combative spirit that we all have that is really basic. A lot of this is created by feeling that if you and I disagree, well, let's just step outside into the alley way and get it settled. A lot of us, and myself included, are feisty characters.

Harper: Historically there have been attempts to do that on an international scale, the League of Nations, for example, which was in effect an international conflict resolution center. Incipient conflicts would first be referred to it so that they would not go to war. The United Nations was supposed to be the avatar of that failed experiment.

Konyndyk: The United Nations certainly hasn't solved everything, but I think the U.N. has served to reduce the number of armed conflicts, and shortened conflicts that have erupted. There is a group, an international body that will say, "Okay you guys, call it off, and we will keep the peace here."

Harper: It didn't work very well in the proxy conflict that took place between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in Korea.

Konyndyk: I think that for nations other than big nations such as the U.S. and Russia, it has helped resolve their problems.

I think that one of the ways too that we can push harder is within the churches. In studying the just war theory it has struck me that although our church and other things that you haul out after your country is at war to justify what it is doing, instead of something that is laid in the people's hands with, "this is the way war should be evaluated." We should teach it more to young people, to the college-age people.

Mast: As far as the responsibility of the church, people in the church must write to their representatives on different issues, telling them, "Listen, we believe this is the right way this should be done." Maybe this is another way we can avoid military conflict.

Konyndyk: From what I know of the history of the denomination we have apparently experienced a bit of a shift in that regard since the First World War.

Harper: Oh, yes, the most influential newspaper in Northwest Iowa was run by a pacifist.

Konyndyk: CRC people, I think, wanted to stay out of the world, but since then they have come patriots.

Harper: Historically, though, we have not been a peace church.

Konyndyk: The first time we ever made a statement on the issue was in 1939, and that actually in response to Diedrich Kromminga wanted the church to take a pacifist position, that is why the document consists basically arguments against pacifism. If you look for a kind of a just war theory, you really won't find even a trash of a lot.

Stoub: A lot of these arguments come through the 1977 documents as well.

Konyndyk: Is that right? I thought they gotten a lot of that out of it. Well, the theme is there.

Stoub: Yes, they still give reasons why pacifism is not an acceptable alternative. One time I was teaching an interim course and I had someone back and research old Banner editorials prior World War I. The prevailing idea was that the U.S. shouldn't have anything to do with it. That would not deal with it until 1941.

Harper: Of course, this was isolationist territory.

Konyndyk: Yes, I suppose it was isolationist spirit as much as anything. We haven't changed all that much. We follow too much the current around us in deciding what we think about instead of having an independent Christian perspective.
A Housecall

Time took a bite of me today,
(He makes his housecalls daily.)
I watched him chew and savor it
With surgical precision
And neatly lick my body wound.
(I offered him a candy mint
But he protested, with a steady hand.)
"Until tomorrow, then?" I said
And paid the minimal fee.
(My insurance didn't cover it.)
He smiled through a bone-stretched face
And nodded kindly, "Yes,
Until I've sucked the final morsel from your bones."
(Chronos has been known to eat his children.)
He tipped his stylish hat
And marched on to the house next door.

—A. Deliyannides
A Lullaby of the Moon

Slipping through the window
(I thought I had shut it)
Is a lullaby.
Barefoot
I stand by the blue window.
The crescent moon looks
As if it were breaking.

Who's singing out there?
Who's crying in the dark?

The day you say to somebody
"I'm all right."
You are left alone.

Smiling
The pale crescent is just about to break.
Just about to break.

Who's singing out there?
Who's crying in the dark?

The day he blames the world
"I hate to grow up!"
A child learns a trick of the grown-up's.

How old are you going to be?
How old are you going to be tomorrow?

The day you can start saying
(yes, saying)
"I'm scared of nothing,"
They will call you a grown-up.

Innocently
A child degenerates into the grown-up.

Who's singing out there?
Who's crying in the dark?

Comes the night
The moon becomes a baby again
Crying, crying,
Scared of being alone.

—M. Inoue
The cold, leafless trees beat their dark branches together in the chill, my wind. Perhaps there will be snow by morning. The holiday will bring respite from the onslaught of mework, though some seem to believe that assigning more work on break will encourage prudent use of time, and so most of us leave our sheltered community, venture to enlighten our parents with our new knowledge. Thanksgiving means going home, home-cooking, gatherings, a fire in the fireplace. This all a good thing, having a dearce in our memories and future lives. But sometimes all this seems be such an empty thing. Do we really take it seriously, rattling in our prayers strings of thank-yis: "Thank you, Lord, for our parents, for a place where we can run, for our professors, friends, food..." It is a list we can do in memory without thinking too much. At the end of dark, cold, grey November comes this celebration of thanks, connoting home and full lies, hunger more than sated, and is dimmed with nostalgia. And we the whole idea of thanks for nted, ourselves being well-filled. We deserve none of it. It is al-st funny that we should celebrate thanks by feasting ourselves on food, napping afterwards, and ng cold turkey much later. We not even deserve the very life that flows in our bodies and spirits, goodness of each breath of air are given. Yet they are given gladly. All that has life and breath it as a free gift, so free that we do stop to think about it, and yet iout it...nothing would be. What is that thing that keeps us going, keeps our heart beating, lungs breathing, makes life seem so permanent and hardy to us? How quickly the light can be snuffed. There is terror in that thought, terror that makes me wish I had not taken so much for granted and that I would cease to take things for granted. Family is always there, unless...There is always a warm place to come home to at night, a bed for someone to spend whatever precious hours of sleep we may have. The very life that flows in us, through us is a precious electricity that we misspend or over-conserve too well. But guilt is also a waste. Thanksgiving.

Giving thanks, an easy phrase to say but the implications are staggering. The minister always tells us in the Thanksgiving Day service to make a list of things we are thankful for and then to pray a short silent thanks-giving a space less than five minutes as the congregation sits in silence with rumbling stomachs more concerned with dinner that will be served shortly. Brightly colored thoughts click through people's heads, a day of particular beauty, back in October the trees were on fire and the sky was not translucent, but a bold blue with high, waving clouds, mother's auburn head bent over her Bible early mornings in a quiet house, the test that towered so large and finally was over...It is the good that we remember. Paul, however, reminds us that we are to give thanks in all things, so that even the grieving parents who lost their seventeen-year-old son in the late summer, and the lonely widower, the old woman racked with pain from a debilitating bone disease, those who are near death and those who are alone and bitter have thanks to give. Thanks for the gift of life and thanks even in the unexpected—and expected sorrows and pains. Thanks for the suffering that builds character, thanks for the "dark nights of the soul," where thanksgiving seemed impossible and yet was just as appropriate, if not more so.

All this somehow comes to bear on what was initiated as a feast of thanks and celebration for a good harvest and survival—and the assurance that because of good harvest, continued survival would be possible, not easy perhaps, but possible. So for a day we set aside time to remember and be thankful, not meaning that we should always be smiley and merry about telling how thankful we are for everything, never having days where getting out of bed is almost impossible and the brain doesn't want to function at eight o'clock with anything more than a headache, days when absolutely everything that possibly can go wrong does—the long, busy ones that we so often encounter. Rather while we especially remember the good in this Thanksgiving day, we can the rest of the time perhaps remember the awesome gift we are given with each new morning we see without fail, Life.

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." —I Cor. 15:57

—Rose Cunningham
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