Presented at conference on
"Assessing the Theological Legacy of John Howard Yoder,"
University of Notre Dame, 7-9 March 2002

For final published version see chapter 11 in
Ollenburger and Gerber Koontz, eds., *A Mind Patient and Untamed: Assessing John Howard Yoder's Contributions to Theology Ethics and Peacemaking*, Cascadia Publishing, 2004.

The Christian Witness in the Earthly City: John H. Yoder as Augustinian Interlocutor

ABSTRACT: Intriguingly, both Augustine of Hippo and John Howard Yoder ended their long reflections about the role of the church in the world at the same point -- exhorting Christians to follow the model of Jeremiah's exiles in Babylon. This is no a mere co-incidence. Augustine's last word on how the "heavenly city" of Christians still on pilgrimage amid the "earthly city" has served Christian traditions in the West not so much as a final answer but rather as a definitive statement of our question. Over against the putative Augustinianism of Reinhold Niebuhr, Yoder's pacifist, ecclesial social ethic can thus be construed as a late and rival answer to the question that Augustine did so much to sharpen but ultimately left hanging -- just how <u>are</u> Christians to seek the peace of the city?

Seek the peace of the city -- its welfare, its prosperity, its shalom. After all the violence and humiliation at the hands of the nations, after all the temptations to counter-hubris and patriotic self-exaltation, after all the promise and hiddenness of a covenant-making God, after all the epiphanies and betrayals of loyalty to this God, after all the disorientation of land loss and forced exile -- this was Jeremiah's last word to Israel's exiles in Babylon.[1] The social stance to which it called them was supple and manifold, requiring them both to stubbornly preserve their identity and to sufferingly serve the common good they shared even with their conquering enemy. They must be "in but not of" -- long before that phrase became a cliche that is barely able to move us anymore with its rich social creativity.

And so too both Augustine of Hippo and John Howard Yoder. Intriguingly, each in his own way ended long reflections about the role of the Church in the world at this same point, exhorting Christians to follow the model of Jeremiah's exiles in Babylon. This, I will argue, is no mere coincidence. For Augustine's last word on how the "heavenly city" of Christians still on pilgrimage should live amid the "earthly city" has served Christian traditions in the West not so much as a final answer to the question of how they should order their politics within the passing societies of every age, but rather as a definitive statement of that question. We can thus construe Yoder's pacifist, ecclesial social ethic as a late answer -- perhaps the best answer -- to the very question that Augustine did so much to sharpen but ultimately left hanging: Just how are we to seek the peace of the

city, without eroding our loyalty to that better one in whose hope we move and live?

John Howard Yoder was, in other words, far more deeply embedded in Augustinian problematics and debates than we usually recognize. Even to recognize this possibility, however, the reader may need also to recognize at least a couple of three assumptions by which I will proceed. First, what is true of most "authorities" in the Christian tradition is prototypically true of Augustine, that by being pilgrims they left traces along multiple paths by which we may now construe their legacies. Second, the fidelity of one especially creative thinker to another greatly influential one may only be traceable through deep and imaginative reading, not the slavish counting of citations. And third, sometimes those with whom we argue are the ones who influence us most.

Converging upon Jeremiah

St. Augustine of Hippo has exercised such an abiding influence upon political thought in the West for a curious reason: intrinsic to his vision of human society is the insight that we can never quite set our affairs in order and never quite get our politics right. The world's best possible peace is a shadowy one; its most stable order is a tenuous one; its fullest possible justice is always only somewhat more just than current arrangements. In fact, the very effort to forge a definitive political order lies at the root of many of humanity's gravest injustices, disorders and conflicts. For when the earthly city imagines itself to be too like the heavenly city -- eter-

nal and approaching the glory that is proper only to God -- it intensifies the very conditions of human fallenness and thus invites its own falling. Inevitably if not explicitly, therefore, politics according to Augustine must always be temporal, tentative, and revisable.[2] This leaves every generation with a remainder to rework. And that makes Augustinian political thought itself into an ongoing debate that no age, system or ideology can definitively capture.[3] Paradoxically, it thrives upon the recognition of human limitations -- but that must include the limits of any particular "political Augustinianism."[4]

If the politics Augustine charted for the earthly city is necessarily and rightly incomplete, however, the same cannot be said of Augustine's ecclesiology. Given the rigor of Augustine's critique of the Roman Empire in City of God, and the depth of political insight that his critique occasioned, one might have expected from him an ecclesiology at least as thorough as his political theory. If an adequate account of the life of the Church must include not just a theological metaphysic but a practicable sociology, however, Augustine's ecclesiology is elusive and suggestive at best.[5]

In a strictly theological sense, no doubt, Augustine's ecclesiology is immensely rich. For Augustine, the Church is nothing short of shared participation in God's own trinitarian life of mutual love.[6] Such communion is possible insofar as the earthy, bloody incarnation of God in Christ, together with the outpouring of love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, heals both our divided wills and our disordered relationships. If the Church remains a hospital for convalescents, and the mystery of healing renders an invisible quality to the

final identities of the Church's members, that is because the Church lives in an eschatological tension between already-in-communion and not-yet-fully-transformed. In short, Augustine's ecclesiology is seamlessly integrated with his trinitarian theology with his doctrine of love with his eschatology.

In fact, Augustine's vision of the Church was not devoid of practical, sociological, or political specification either. Virtually all of Augustine's writings were "occasional" in some way, insofar as they responded to specific controversies, accusations or pastoral challenges. Whatever else City of God became through its twenty-two lengthy "books," therefore, it began as a response to an accusation.[7] Roman aristocrats were saying that the reason their city had been sacked in 410 was that Christianity had weakened its citizens' virtue and diverted their devotion away from the gods. So when Augustine countered that Rome (the most immediate instantiation of "the earthly city") had slipped because it had risen too high, had deteriorated because it had overextended itself, was humbled because it had grown through imperial pride,[8] his critique came with lessons for that other society which was making its way through the earthly city. The pilgrim heavenly city which is the Church must thrive by humbling itself and glorifying God not self, nor the collective self of nation; its love cannot be for domination, but for God, neighbor and even enemy. And though no one may mistake Augustine for a pacifist, he certainly recognized that the Church had in fact extended itself through the faithfulness of the martyrs and the witness of a people who, like the Hebrews, "was gathered and united in a kind of community designed to perform [the] sacred function of revelation" through "signs and sym-

bols appropriate to the times."[9] This witnessing presence in the world hints at the affirmation of the Second Vatican Council that the Church itself is the sacrament of the world's salvation. It also hints at the truthful power of what John Howard Yoder called the creative minority whose presence is the "original revolution" in the world.

But by now we are <u>only</u> talking about hints. What Augustine's ecclesiology lacks is a politics or sociology to chart out how Christians are to live simultaneously in the earthly and heavenly cities, without confusing their loyalties or conflating their duties. To be sure, just as no politics for the earthly city can be definitive -- given the eschatological tension of the age -- likewise any polity for the heavenly city that is intermixed within the earthly must have a certain open-ended quality. After all, Christians must not only anticipate variations according to culture, history and circumstances, but must remember precisely that they <u>are</u> on pilgrimage, never fully settled but intermixed within the earthly city, and thus still being perfected.

What we may rightly wish of Augustine, however, is that he had at least been clearer about whether and when his political commentary on the earthly city applied normatively to Christians.

A passage often assumed to settle the case may illustrate. How are we to interpret book 19 of the <u>City of God</u> in general, and the identity of "our wise man" the reluctant judge of <u>City of God</u> 19.6 in particular? The chapter begins with recognition that even in human cities that are relatively at peace, some must pass judgments upon others. For those judgments to be just, Roman jurisprudence could not imagine the interrogation of suspects without recourse to torture.

But anyone informed by the best wisdom of human philosophy (the subject of previous chapters) would recognize how imperfect was the juridical process. Torturing suspects to extract the truth might prompt the innocent to lie -- and all the more quickly if they too heeded the philosophers, who counselled courage to welcome death and escape the miseries of this life! Doing one's duty to preserve justice in the earthly city thus necessitated an array of tragic choices: release the innocent only after undeserved torture, execute the innocent upon false confession, or execute an actual criminal without certainty of the grounds. Because "our wise man" recognized "this darkness that attends the life of human society" without flinching, he would accept its claims, do his duty, and sit on the bench without shirking. "Here we have what I call the wretchedness of man's situation," wrote Augustine. And if the wise man was not to be called wicked, that was only because he hated the very "necessity of his own actions," was learning a further wisdom from devotion to God, and cried out for deliverance from his necessities.

To most interpreters, the lesson we should take from Augustine has seemed obvious. In the following chapter, City of God 19.7, "our wise man" turned "wise judge" serves as template for explaining why even the best and wisest philosopher officials will not only punish wrong-doers but wage wars, though they will wage even just wars reluctantly. But although that much is straightforward in the text, the standard interpretation goes farther than the text itself warrants. For when it makes "our wise man" into the exemplar for any politician informed by Augustinian sensibilities -- and thus for any politically-involved Christian -- it assumes that Augustine's purpose was to pro-

vide a normative argument rather than a description of the human predicament apart from God.

Most of City of God 19 is about indictment not guidance. It is one of Augustine's many and characteristic endeavors to drive his readers to despair precisely in order that they like he will look elsewhere for hope, recognize their need for God and cry out for deliverance.[10] The first chapters of City of God 19 constitute the climax to a long series of similarly structured indictments that build upon each other and thus constitute the master argument of the tome: The Roman aristocrats who accuse Christianity of weakening Roman virtue are the ones who have weakened the empire by failing to match the virtues of the old Romans.[11] But the virtues of the old and founding Romans in fact had rested on vices -- love of glory, praise, domination, and self -- so that whatever glories they had in fact achieved in this world, "they have received their reward" and could look forward to nothing eternal (Matthew 6:2,5,16).[12] Ancient philosophers offered somewhat better counsel about where to lodge one's hope and how to pursue the human good; of all the various philosophical sects Platonism came closest to an answer by recognizing that we must look beyond this life for life's happiness.[13] But even they fell short by seeking their good through pride in their own efforts, rather than faith in God.[14] And if the one thing the philosophers all agreed upon was that the human good must be social, the best that human society had to offer was a "shadowy peace" still full of ills, enmity and tragic choices.[15] Such is the panorama of misery Augustine has just finished presenting in City of God 19.5.

"Our wise man" of 19.6, then, was the one who had learned all these lessons -- the best that Roman civic culture and antique philosophical eclecticism had to offer. He was Stoic in composure, Platonic in aspiration, and perhaps somewhere upon the threshold of Christian devotion to God, but no more than that was certain. What he should do next in his official capacity simply was not the driving point of Augustine's argument.

Augustine knew and counselled many such men, of course. He had been one, and though he had once renounced public life he later found himself re-immersed in it as a bishop. The City of God itself he directed to Marcellinus, a genuinely pious Christian and a Roman official in North Africa. When Count Boniface was considering the monastery -- wishing deliverance from his necessities, perhaps -- Augustine urged him to stay in the military, only to see his moral stature deteriorate in the following years.[16]

Such pastoral counsel often responded as much to Augustine's pragmatism as his principle, however.[17] Disjunctures between his systematic reflection and his occasional letters are as much a sign that he himself was unsettled about what "our wise man" and judge should do next, once devoted to God, as they are an authoritative template for Christian political engagement. To Boniface he wrote famously, for example, that his only objective in war should be peace, not vengeance. Yet Augustine's more systematic reflections in City of God 19.12 demonstrate that all creatures, even monsters, seek peace as their ultimate end anyway. So only that "only" in Augustine's counsel to Boniface is normative, and then at risk of devolving into a mere platitude. Further, even that "only" is problematic, for of all the

Church Fathers, Augustine knew better than any that no one can really know one's own intentions, leaving no way to verify when one is acting justly in war.[18]

The normative guidance that Augustine did offer to worldly-wise Christians in City of God 19, was that they look to God for hope, look to the heavenly city for citizenship, and look at the earthly city as no better than a "captivity."[19] They should not cease to be "a society of resident aliens" drawn from many languages and cultures -- not abandon therefore the status that Christians had embraced prior to Constantine.[20] The inadequate, shadowy peace of the earthly city surely had value insofar as it gave the Church time and space to grow in the worship of God, but Christians should merely use this earthly peace not rest in it or identify with it as their own.[21] To "seek the peace of the city" was in fact an obligation for members of the pilgriming heavenly city, but they should do so precisely as did the captive exiles to whom Jeremiah once wrote.[22] If Jeremiah's exiles were the template for Christian political engagement (and if the young Jewish men in the Babylon of the book of Daniel have a historical basis) then yes, one way to seek the peace of the city might be to work as civil servants. But unlike the Roman officials with whom Augustine corresponded, Diaspora Jews had had little trouble remembering themselves to be captives. They dare not forgot that they were in Babylon, that resistance to imperial idolatry could never cease to be an option, and that they belonged first to God and God's people.

For all practical purposes, Jeremiah's final exhortation was Augustine's last word on politics and Christian engagement in City of God. It does not solve but rather leaves hanging the fruitful question

of how exactly Christians are to seek the peace of the earthly city. To take the practices of Augustine's wise but more-Stoic-than-Christian judge as our final answer to the question of how to seek the peace of the city, is to misread his larger argument, to ignore his rhetorical practices, and above all to beg the question Augustine left hanging. The "wise man" of City of God 19 then serves as a blank for later interpreters to fill in with whatever they have already decided to be the best wisdom of their age; his "necessities" become whatever they think they must do when they "do what they have to do" on other grounds. And if Augustine himself could only barely imagine a Christian politics that helped answer the wise man's cry for deliverance -- if he himself assumed that the best his Christian friends in high places could do was act like "our wise man" and carry out their "necessities" with purer intentions and authentic grief in their hearts -- that only means that he too was begging the question that Jeremiah put to him, even as he posed it definitively for later Christian traditions.

Now, what if a later interpreter accepted the contours of Augustine's critique of the earthly city but did more than he to explore the implications of Jeremiah's guidance for life in exile and Diaspora? What if he did at least as much to help Christian "resident aliens" remain clear about where their ultimate loyalties lie? And what if he thus identified a more complete and creative politics for the pilgriming heavenly city that is obliged to seek the peace of the earthly city? It would hardly seem remarkable for someone to describe that interpreter as deeply engaged in the Augustinian project.

Except of course that I refer to John Howard Yoder.

Diverging from Niebuhr

Reinhold Niebuhr's name appears only rarely in the last book that John Yoder prepared for publication, For the Nations.[23] Yet as Yoder turned to Jeremiah and Diaspora for models of constructive social engagement he was answering -- one more time, in one more way, in earshot of still other conversations -- the Niebuhrian charge that often seems to have shaped his career.[24] That charge: Christians who embrace the nonviolent ethic of Jesus might be getting Jesus right, but thus render themselves politically irrelevant and socially irresponsible.

Diaspora Judaism belied this charge. What Jeremiah had made clear when he wrote to the first exiles, urging them to seek the peace of the city, was that living in exile without political sovereignty was an opportunity for mission and constructive contribution to the good of other cultures. Though counter-cultural in one sense it was pro-cultural and "for the nations" in another; Jeremiah's injunction could be translated far more forcefully, according to Yoder: "'seek the salvation of the culture to which God has sent you.'"[25] Diaspora Jews down through the centuries may have done this in ways that were sometimes "grudging and clumsy" or sometimes "wholehearted and creative."[26] But doing so had depended on neither their own ability to gain access to reins of power nor their host culture's ability to comprehend on its own terms the shalom to which God's people were contributing.[27] Diaspora Jews had contributed more not less to Near Eastern and European societies, precisely because they repeatedly became fluent in other peoples' cultural "languages" without losing the

thought world of their own particular "language" or identity.[28] While their social posture might be sectarian in some technical sociological sense, it was that very posture that gave them resources to be more rather than less socially engaged, responsible, and efficacious -- in other words, to be anything but sectarian in the pejorative ethical sense.[29]

So even though Yoder did not set out intentionally to critique one strand of Augustinian political thought by drawing upon another, closer attention to Jeremiah's exiles showed that "our wise man's" necessities might not be quite so necessary after all. Reinhold Niebuhr was nothing if not a 20th century American version of that "wise man," at least according to the standard interpretation of City of God 19 that Niebuhr himself has helped to make seem obvious. He was worldly-wise according to the best wisdom of his age, he claimed remorse for actions that fell short of God's true peace, yet he was "tough-minded" enough to recognize his necessities and do what apparently had to be done. As such, having become a "wise judge" presiding over the court of public opinion in mid-century Protestant America and among its Washington elite, Niebuhr like the Stoic of City of God 19.6 provided a template for "wise" warriors to follow.[30]

For Yoder to move inadvertently closer to Augustine when he critiqued the putatively Augustinian Niebuhr on eminently Augustinian grounds was nothing new, however. Niebuhr sometimes portrayed his own work as a recovery of Augustine's orthodox doctrine of sin and human limitation in the face of misguided liberal optimism about human perfectability.[31] By his own admission, however, Niebuhr turned his attention only belatedly to a doctrine of grace that would correspond

to his doctrine of sin,[32] while he incorporated a doctrine of eschatology only fitfully,[33] and wrote on ecclesiology hardly at all.[34] Yoder had pointed out how impoverished was Niebuhr's orthodoxy already in the early fifties.

"In spite of the appearance of the label 'neo-orthodox,'" wrote Yoder in his 1954 essay on Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Pacifism, he "is far from what a historian of theology could call orthodox."[35] While countering Niebuhr's characterization and rejection of Christian pacifism in various ways in the pamphlet, Yoder insisted that the "most significant" objection to Niebuhrianism went "still deeper." Although Niebuhr's recovery of an orthodox doctrine of sin constituted a proper and largely biblical diagnosis of the human predicament, according to Yoder, it "consistently slighted" all "those Christian doctrines which relate to [God's] redemption" and point to the Bible's answer to our deepest human need. Yoder reminded Niebuhrians, therefore, of the resurrection and the "new ethical possibilities" that it opens up through grace and regeneration. Anticipating themes in his later work, he pointed out the absence of the church in Niebuhr's thought and corrected this omission by pointing towards ways in which that "divine-human society, the church, the body of Christ," as a "supernational society," can break with the patterns of group egoism that Niebuhr thought demonstrated the inevitability of war. Of course that break is not complete in the human society of the church, but in 1954 Yoder was also preparing to counter positions such as Niebuhr's by stressing the need for an adequate eschatology.[36] Meanwhile, as Yoder observed in Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Pacifism, "the common denominator of the above-mentioned doctrines of resurrection, the

church, and regeneration is that all are works of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is likewise neglected in Niebuhr's ethics."[37]

Though Yoder did not say so, however, a theology that took the reality of sin seriously yet continued to chart the course of a multinational society of pilgrims being transformed truly if only partially in this life through the love of God "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us"[38] -- well, this was a theology that became more not less Augustinian even as it challenged Niebuhr. Ecclesiology, eschatology, pneumatology, and grace were precisely the Augustinian doctrines that Niebuhr had slighted.

Yoder's long debate with Niebuhr, on terms that were surprisingly Augustinian both early and late in his career, does not make Yoder himself him an "Augustinian," of course. Yoder could be alternately charitable and caustic about the role Augustine had played in launching the just war tradition and consolidating the Constantinian synthesis of church and state,[39] but he surely would not have called himself an Augustinian. Characteristic of his life-long approach to ethical debate and ecumenical conversation alike was that very willingness he associated with Diaspora Judaism to learn other people's languages and engage them on their own terms, without confusing linguistic systems or endorsing his interlocutors' ethics and worldviews. A willingness to debate all comers, one after another, was Yoder's alternative to what he considered dubious efforts to build a universal theological system that might anticipate every challenge, foundation and common principle in advance.[40]

And yet one wonders. If nothing else, the length and breadth of Yoder's debate with Niebuhrianism makes it something more than one

conversation among Yoder's many. For Yoder to chart his way through such a formative debate using so many Augustinian markers would seem to result from or result in some kind of Augustinian formation.[41] Given the subtle but pervasive way that Augustine has shaped political and theological problematics in subsequent Western thought, exact lines of influence may be too amorphous to trace in a way that will satisfy skeptics.[42] In whatever way that Augustinian assumptions got into Yoder's thought, however, they continued to surface even when Yoder moved from critique of Niebuhrian politics to constructive proposals for political engagement according to his own peace church tradition.

The primary audience for Yoder's The Christian Witness to the State was "nonresistant Christians" who doubted that they could or should address policy deliberations by the state at all.[43] Niebuhr had reinforced this doubt, of course, and so The Christian Witness constitutes one more chapter in Yoder's engagement with Niebuhrianism -- but it is much more than that. Where Yoder worked from assumptions that coincide with Augustine's we may safely suppose that they respond to his own desire to articulate a biblical theology, rather than to respond to the more constraining rhetorical task of meeting Niebuhr's agenda.[44]

A reader familiar with characteristic ways of thought in both Augustine and Yoder will note that Yoder's Christian witness to the state corresponds with Augustine's attitudes toward the earthly city in numerous ways:

1. Both Augustine and Yoder shared a markedly eschatological frame of reference, and a corresponding recognition that the present

challenge for God's people is to live "between the times." Augustine's famous contrast between the earthly city and the heavenly city is not a static ontology, for the heavenly city on earth knows itself to be on pilgrimage home to the fullness of communion with God and all creatures who love God. These pilgrim people live in tension, as resident aliens, not only because they are away from home but because the current world is a contested zone, in which the angelic citizenry of each city (the faithful and the rebellious angels) vie to direct our loves and our loyalties toward opposing ends.[45] Yoder in turn set the stage for Christian witness to the state by describing how "the present historical period is characterized by the coexistence of two ages or aeons," in which Christ is already reigning, although the powers governing the world still refuse to acknowledge that he is Lord precisely through the triumph of the cross. Still, this coexistence is not perpetual, for ultimately "the church and the reign of Christ will one day be englobed in the same kingdom."[46]

2. For Augustine and Yoder, however, eschatology was not just a question of time, but a question of space, wherein the two societies are presently inter-mixed, yet distinguished according to their ends, loyalties and loves. Augustine spoke of co-mixture, Yoder of coexistence. Both described the Church as societies spread around the world, across borders and cultures, united by the character of their love. What distinguished the two societies for Augustine is that the citizens of the earthly city glorify themselves, lust for domination, and love themselves to the point of contempt for God -- while the citizens of the heavenly city glorify God, seek to serve one another in love, and love God to the point of contempt for self. Likewise for

Yoder, the distinction between church and world was not the kind of dualism that would imagine that the church could separate itself entirely from the world, but rather a duality based on faith and unbelief, allegiances in opposite directions, and social relationships patterned according to the contrasting logics of self-interest and Christ-like love.[47]

3. For both Augustine and Yoder, the purpose of history and the good of the social order are never knowable on their own terms. Augustine argued at some length that when the ancient Romans built up their empire, they were not doing what they thought they were doing. They might think they were establishing themselves through their own glorious strength and virtue, or by the power of their gods. But in fact even their virtue had vice at its base, and their gods were demons seek the glory that belonged to God. It was the one God who was ruling for purposes that were ultimately inscrutable but surely included such ends as establishing that partial earthly peace of which believers were to make use but not trust, and providing lessons concerning virtue and vice from which believers could learn.[48] Yoder was of course more blunt: “The Christian church knows why the state exists -- knows, in fact, better than the state itself.” The state merely provides the “‘scaffolding’ service” within which the Church can evangelize. Christ’s triumph is what “has already guaranteed that the ultimate meaning of history will not be found in the course of earthly empires or the development of proud cultures, but in the calling together of the ‘chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation,’ which is the church of Christ.”[49]

4. To be sure, nations tend to think otherwise, so in turn, Augustine and Yoder identified pride as the great problem for the state and made thorough-going critiques of imperial presumption. The problem with the earthly city that Augustine knew best was not just that the Romans had been ignorant of God's purposes, but that they had willfully overstretched themselves in their pride, were falling all the harder, and in the process had inflicted great suffering on other peoples. The grandeur of empire was a fragile illusion at best; look closely and imperialism turned out to be brigandage on a grand scale. The power of the gods who projected Roman values was a "poverty-stricken kind of power," scrambling for lost dominions, claiming honors proper only to God.[50] Pressing the issue, Yoder insisted that such pretension is a problem for all states, not just empires, and not just self-deifying ones that explicitly asked for worship. Certainly in every attempt to create an ideal society, rulers act on pride -- "the one sin that most surely leads to a fall, even already within history." But the "universal temptation" of all states was not to neglect the policing duties God had assigned them according to Romans 13, it was to overdo the function. Thus, idolatry does not have to be explicit, nor apostasy cultic, to express "essential rebellion against God," since violent domination and nationalism are always "intrinsically self-glorifying."[51]

5. Still, even though the capacity of the state to effect true peace with justice is always limited -- and to think otherwise is to invite the very pride that tends toward greater injustice -- Augustine and Yoder both expect that Christians can always call the social order and the state to do somewhat better. Augustine's qualified apprecia-

tion for the virtues of the old Romans, despite their grounding in vices like self-glorification, implies as much. So too does his appreciation for the peace of the earthly city, even though it is but a shadow of God's ultimate peace and in fact falls short of the harmony of purpose that is possible already in this life for those who share in the love of God. Hence the Jeremianic injunction to seek the peace of the earthly city.[52] Yoder's task of explaining how a pacifist church can witness to "the social order at large" even though he could not expect it "to function without the use of force," required him to specify still more clearly why (and how) pacifist Christians can expect policies that are less violent and more just. Christians can expect the contribution of the state to be "modest," "constantly shifting but nevertheless definable." In asking civil authorities to do their "second best" even if they cannot imagine acting according to the fullness of the gospel, pacifist Christians ask something of them that "does not cease to be gospel by virtue of the fact that we relate it to [their] present available options." Policy proposals cannot be total. But they will expose "one injustice at a time, pointing each time to a less evil way which the statesman can understand and follow;" it is thus realistic to hope for "improvement in the tolerability of the social compromise and thus in a certain sense progress."[53]

6. Finally, Augustine and Yoder stated <u>similar motivations for seeking the peace of the earthly city</u>: the aid it afforded to the mission of the Church which is the true purpose of history, and love of neighbor. "While this Heavenly City ... is on pilgrimage in this world," wrote Augustine, "she calls out citizens from all nations and so collects a society of aliens, speaking all languages" -- and so

"makes use of the earthly peace." What is more, the pilgrim people places earthly peace into relationship with heavenly peace. How? By faith they already possess and live that peace which "is the perfectly ordered and completely harmonious fellowship in the enjoyment of God, and of each other in God;" in view of the fullness of that peace they perform "every good action ... in relation to God and in relation to a neighbor, since the life of a city is inevitably a social life."[54] Yoder, while describing the state as performing a scaffolding function" that helps the church to evangelize, emphasized that on many particulars, a primary reason for Christians to witness to the state is "the very personal and very concrete concern" that Christian have for the welfare of the neighbor, the stranger, and even the enemy.[55]

Of course, Augustine and Yoder certainly differed too. Where they did, the thought of each can sometimes push the other in ways both subtle and blunt. Take the issues that prompted Yoder's turn to the conceptual device of "middle axioms."[56] Yoder was sure that Christian pacifists could not appeal as traditional social ethics had done to principles that are "somehow built into the nature of man or of the social order." Convinced that God's will for human social life is only accessible in "definite and knowable" ways through Christ, they instead must translate truths known through Christ into terms that are concrete, practical and accessible to those operating from other ethical convictions. Such translations "mediate between the general principles of Christological ethics and the concrete problems of political application. They claim no metaphysical status but serve usefully as rules of thumb to make meaningful the impact of Christian social thought."[57]

"Usefully," had Augustine employed this device of middle axioms as self-consciously as Yoder, he might have had a far easier time addressing Roman officials without becoming one himself according to the Constantinian synthesis that was solidifying throughout his career. Since Augustine would recognize in any truthful principle a reflection of God's created order, middle axioms must have some kind of "metaphysical status" for him. But this would hardly make them less "useful" to an Augustinian social ethic. For resident aliens who maintain primary loyalty to their heavenly, eschatological home, middle axioms are a practical way to negotiate the "already" and "not yet" of pilgrimage through the earthly city while contributing to its peace -- and what Augustine's vision most lacks is the practical explication that would give "our wise man" somewhere to turn for guidance besides the dubious wisdom of the age.

If Yoder's thought can nudge Augustinian thought toward greater faithfulness not only to Jeremiah's injunction but to Augustine's own vision, however, Augustinianism can serve to probe Yoder's as well. For what is unclear about middle axioms, in Yoder's hands, is whether they can ever become anything more than "useful" -- whether, in other words, they ever dare make truth claims or instead must devolve into the truces, compromises, and contracts of a liberal pragmatism. (Such pragmatism has its own violent and manipulative proclivities, and is thus at least as dangerous an ally for pacifists as Augustinianism allegedly is.) Despite renouncing natural law principles built into human nature and social life, Yoder did want to affirm that "there exists a level of human values, not specifically Christian but somehow subject to Christian formative influences, where the real movement of

history takes place."[58] What are those "human values?" What is that "level"? What constitutes the "human?" Logically, Yoder still needed some theology of creation.[59] Thankfully, Stanley Hauerwas has begun charting a way forward by arguing in his Gifford lectures for a natural theology that is not autonomous from but rather enclosed within the yet-prior claims of Christology.[60] Certainly, such a formulation need not coincide at every point with Augustine's. But finally, any development of Yoder's insight that the cross does "run with the grain of the universe" must offer a theology of creation as robust as Augustine's own, thus allowing for stronger truth claims than his use of "middle axioms" seemed to allow.

Testing the Counter-Intuitive

Of course Augustine and Yoder differed more bluntly still in their respective acceptance and rejection of Christian participation in war. If that difference is incommensurable, my purpose is not to domesticate Augustine for pacifists but to make it all the harder for non-pacifist Christians to marginalize Yoder's witness. Stated cautiously, my claim is that Yoder's pacifist ecclesial social ethic is a surprisingly Augustinian answer to the eminently Augustinian question: just how shall the heavenly city on pilgrimage within the earthly city seek the peace of that earthly city? Stated more strongly, my claim is that an Augustinian can be a pacifist and a pacifist can be an Augustinian.[61] Stated most strongly, my claim might be that they must -- but I am not so foolish as to expect a single paper to establish such a claim in either direction, much less simultaneously. The moderate

claim that one can be both a pacifist and an Augustinian is counter-intuitive and challenging enough. To make it imaginable is therefore response enough. It is imaginable because John Howard Yoder himself was a serious contender for, within, and not strictly over-against the Augustinian legacy.

And yet this claim will prove stronger still if the counter-intuitive intuits more than we expected. Stanley Hauerwas, in the final chapter of his Peaceable Kingdom,[62] has already tested the counter-intuition by showing why pacifists need something of an Augustinian spirituality in order to sustain their struggle and witness. And he has done so by drawing on that Augustinian sensibility which Reinhold Niebuhr did properly share.

A "spirituality of peaceableness" must sustain joy, thankfulness, and hope even while training us to face the tragedy of our world -- nay, our own love of self-delusion -- with unblinking honesty. This was Hauerwas's conclusion as he surveyed the classic 1932 debate in the pages of The Christian Century between H. Richard and Reinhold Niebuhr over Japan's invasion of Manchuria.[63] At the time Richard Niebuhr remained a pacifist, unlike Reinhold, and throughout his career he would remain the more ecclesial theologian of the two brothers. Facing the sense many had at the time that nothing could be done to arrest the historical forces moving towards war in Asia, he argued that some ways of apparently doing nothing were theologically significant and fruitful. For they slowly planted seeds of change, while trusting God's ultimate work in history, and creating the cells for a "Christian international" throughout the nations. Such a vision was by implication a Jeremianic, Diaspora one akin to Yoder's later poli-

tics; the fact that Reinhold did not address his brother on this front might actually be a sign of his lack of political imagination. Instead he charged Richard with an incoherent faith because he trusted God to use the brutal forces of history to eventually bring about a just and loving social order, but would not allow Christians to use those same forces to achieve an imperfect measure of relative justice. Hope was appropriate, but must look beyond history for the fulfillment of history; Richard's mistake was to gloss over the perennial tragedy of human history.[64]

The lesson to learn from the brothers Niebuhr, according to Hauerwas, was not that we must choose between them, but that we cannot sustain "the kind of position represented by H. Richard Niebuhr ... without a spirituality very much like that hinted at by Reinhold." Though we rarely think of Reinhold Niebuhr as providing a spirituality, Hauerwas noted, he was training us in the very spiritual disciplines we need to sustain a struggle for justice -- one that is not surprised by setbacks nor deceived by relative gains. God's peace is dangerous. It exposes the lies upon which human beings "to a greater or lesser extent" have built all "social orders and institutions." The "normalcy and safety" we long for come in ways we prefer to repress, "at the expense of others." If in our interpersonal relationships "we 'use' even our love and those whom we love" in order to secure our needs, and if our larger circles of friendship become "a conspiracy of intimacy to protect each of our illusions" and allow us a measure of "peace," then all the more do we fear and defend ourselves against the stranger who would challenge our illusions. Unless, that is, we are hospitable to the God who is our ultimate

stranger and challenger of our self-images. Unless, that is, we welcome the hope we only truly find on the far side of our human tragedy. Namely, neither can we save ourselves nor can we transform our world through violence, precisely because God has already won our peace through the cross and resurrection of Jesus. "Joy is thus finally a result of our being dispossessed of the illusion of security and power that is the breeding ground of our violence."[65]

But all of this is deeply Augustinian.[66] If Hauerwas is right, then the claim that we do not have to choose between H. Richard and Reinhold Niebuhr is interesting, but far more is at stake. What H. Richard Niebuhr got right about the hope we must live out through cells of that Christian international we call the Church, Yoder would later explain at greater length and in finer detail. What Reinhold Niebuhr got right about facing our illusions unblinkingly, Augustine was training us to do all along. Surely what matters most is that we choose the way of Jeremiah and Jesus, the gift God gave us long before Augustine and Yoder. Between these two witnesses, however, we need not choose.

Notes

1. Jeremiah 29:7.

2. The broad interpretative claims so far in this paragraph are substantiated in the references to Augustine on pp. 16-21, along with corresponding footnotes.

3. For a fuller argument that the Augustinian tradition has been a resilient and living tradition precisely because of its inherent capacity for self-correction, see Gerald W. Schlabach, "The Correction of the Augustinians: A Case Study in the Critical Appropriation of a Suspect Tradition," in The Early Church and the Free Church: Bridging the Historical and Theological Divide, edited by Daniel H. Williams (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002), 47-74.

4. Robert Markus, in his influential Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine, 2d ed., reprint, 1970 (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1988), may have overstated his case when he portrayed Augustine as laying the basis for political liberalism by desacralizing every temporal order. My intention is not to weigh in on the growing, revisionist debate concerning Markus's thesis, reflected for example in Mark Vessey, Karla Pollmann, and Allan D. Fitzgerald, eds, History, Apocalypse, and the Secular Imagination: New Essays on Augustine's City of God (Bowling Green, OH: Philosophy Documentation Center, Bowling Green State University, 1999). Still, I simply cannot imagine how Augustinian political thought can ever do without some sense of the limitations of human politics, whether or not those limitations are now construed to require political liber-

alism. I thus assume that the summary statements in this paragraph will reflect an uncontroverted consensus however the debate between Markus and his revisionists proceeds.

5. H. Richard Niebuhr suggested something similar when he noted in Christ and Culture that Augustine's City of God lacked an ecclesiology to match its philosophy of history. See Christ and Culture, Harper Torchbooks/Cloister Library (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 215-16.

6. Cf. Augustine, The Trinity 6.5.7, and Oliver O'Donovan's comments in The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 128.

7. City of God 1.1. The translation I am consulting quoting is Augustine, The City of God, translated by Henry Bettenson, with an introduction by David Knowles (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1972).

8. These are themes and arguments that run throughout City of God, but that Augustine anticipated already in the preface to book one when he noted "how great is the effort needed to convince the proud of the power and excellence of humility," in contrast to the pride, arrogance and lust of domination that God was surely resisting according the promise of James 4:6.

9. City of God 7.32 (quoted); 18.50.

10. On this characteristic rhetorical practice, see John Cavadini, "The Structure and Intention of Augustine's De Trinitate," Augustinian Studies 23 (1992): 103-23; John C. Cavadini, "Time and Ascent in Confessions XI," in Augustine: Presbyter Factus Sum, papers originally presented at a conference at Marquette University, November

1990, eds Joseph T. Lienhard, Earl C. Muller, and Roland J. Teske, Collectanea Augustiniana (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1993), 171-85.

11. City of God 1.1, 1.33, 2.2.

12. City of God 5.12-20.

13. City of God 10.1, 19.1-4.

14. City of God 10.29.

15. City of God 19.5.

16. Augustine, Letters 189 and 220.

17. Cf. Robert Dodaro, "Eloquent Lies, Just Wars and the Politics of Persuasion: Reading Augustine's City of God in a 'Postmodern' World," Augustinian Studies 25 (1994): 77-138.

18. For a masterful argument as to why Augustine's just war theory falls apart precisely at this point, see Robert L. Holmes, "St. Augustine and the Just War Theory," in The Augustinian Tradition, edited by Gareth B. Matthews, Philosophical Traditions, no. 8 (University of California Press, 1998), 332.

19. City of God 19.17.

20. City of God 19.17. Cf. the Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus 5-6; Shepherd of Hermas s. 1; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 6.5-6; Tertullian, The Apology 38; Origen, Against Celsus 8.75; The Life and Passion of Cyprian 11; Gregory of Nazianzen, Oration 43.49.

21. City of God 19.10, 19.17.

22. City of God 19.26.

23. John Howard Yoder, For the Nations: Essays Public and Evangelical (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997).

24. Long-time students of Yoder will hardly need evidence that

the debate with Niebuhr, Niebuhrianism, and the assumptions that other non-pacifist Christians had held but that Niebuhr definitively articulated, run like a thread throughout his career. Mennonite students of Yoder will also recognize that the response to Niebuhr's charge had already begun in the decade or two before Yoder began writing. The following references, therefore, are only a sample of the most forthright statements recognizing the task of taking on Niebuhr, chosen because they thread back a half a century: Guy Franklin Hershberger, War, Peace, and Nonresistance, 3d ed., reprint, 1944, Christian Peace Shelf Selection (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1969), 236-54; John H[oward] Yoder, Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Pacifism, reprint, 1955, A Concern Reprint (Scottdale, Pa.: Concern, n.d.); John Howard Yoder, The Christian Witness to the State, Institute of Mennonite Studies Series, no. 3 (Newton, Kan.: Faith and Life Press, 1964), 5-8, noting n. 4 on p. 7; John H[oward] Yoder, The Politics of Jesus (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1972), 11-25 (noting especially nn. 4, 7), 110-13; John Howard Yoder, The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 90-91, 100-01.

25. Yoder, For the Nations, 76 n. 60.

26. Yoder, For the Nations, 1.

27. Yoder, For the Nations, 33-34, 67-68.

28. Yoder, For the Nations, 71. Cf. John Howard Yoder, "On not Being Ashamed of the Gospel: Particularity, Pluralism, and Validation," Faith and Philosophy 9, no. 3 (July 1992): 290-91.

29. Yoder, For the Nations, 3-5 Yoder prepared and entitled For the Nations in part to clarify that is own position was less

contrarian than his former colleague Stanley Hauerwas's often appeared to be. Hauerwas, after all, had published Against the Nations. (Cf. the hint of this purpose in footnote 6 on p. 4 of For the Nations.) Long-time readers of Yoder, of course, know that he had regularly drawn up lists of the ways that a prophetic minority, creative minority, Abrahamic community, Jeremianic Diaspora community, or any other preferred term for a putatively sectarian group provides societies-at-large with the resources for constructive social change. See for example Christian Witness to the State, 18-22; "Christ, the Hope of the World," in The Original Revolution: Essays on Christian Pacifism, Christian Peace Shelf (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1971), 203-07; "The Biblical Mandate for Evangelical Social Action," in For the Nations: Essays Public and Evangelical (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 184-89; Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World (Nashville, Tenn.: Discipleship Resources, 1992).

30. For a fresh account of the role that Niebuhr played in the emerging managerial elite of mid-century America, see Eugene McCarraher, Christian Critics: Religion and the Impasse in Modern American Social Thought (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 64-70, 91-97.

31. Reinhold Niebuhr, "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," in Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought, edited by Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall, The Library of Living Theology, vol. 11 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), 436; Reinhold Niebuhr, "Intellectual Autobiography," in Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought, edited by Charles W. Kegley and

Robert W. Bretall, The Library of Living Theology, vol. 11 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), 9; Reinhold Niebuhr, Human Nature, vol. 1 of The Nature and Destiny of Man, reprint, 1941, The Scribner Lyceum Editions Library (New York: Scribner's, 1964), 49; Reinhold Niebuhr, The Irony of American History, The Scribner Lyceum Editions Library (New York: Scribner's, 1952), 17.

32. Against charges that he had been preoccupied with original sin, Niebuhr wrote: "I must plead guilty to this charge in the sense that it was a long time before I paid as much attention to the Christian conception of the cure as to the diagnosis, to "grace" as well as to sin." "Intellectual Autobiography," 10.

33. Note Niebuhr's doubts about the wisdom of having drawn on eschatological themes when he wrote the preface to a reprint of Human Nature, ix.

34. In Human Destiny, Niebuhr's longest sustained discussion of ecclesiology offered no constructive proposal but only a critique of Roman Catholicism, along with what he considered its essentially Augustinian doctrine of grace. See Human Destiny, vol. 2 of The Nature and Destiny of Man, reprint, 1943, The Scribner Lyceum Editions Library (New York: Scribner's, 1964), 138-39, 144-52.

35. Yoder, Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Pacifism, 4.

36. See Yoder's essay "Peace Without Eschatology?", published in various versions: "If Christ is Truly Lord," in The Original Revolution: Essays on Christian Pacifism, Christian Peace Shelf (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1971), 64; "Peace Without Eschatology?" in The Royal Priesthood: Essays Ecclesiological and Ecumenical, edited by Michael G. Cartwright (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), 152-53.

37. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from this paragraph are from Yoder, Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Pacifism, 17-19. For an explicit statement of Yoder's acceptance of "Niebuhr's real service to theology, and to pacifism, in making real the omnipresence of sin," see p. 19.

38. The quotation from Romans 5:5 is one often Augustine often cited in explicating his conception of Christian love.

39. Compare The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel, 75, where Yoder said that "Ambrose and Augustine did the best they could," with The Royal Priesthood: Essays Ecclesiological and Ecumenical, ed, with an introduction by Michael G. Cartwright, with a foreword by Richard J. Mouw (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), 89, where Augustine appears midway in a dynamic leading from Constantine to the Inquisition.

40. On this matter I can offer personal confirmation. [REMAINDER OF FOOTNOTE TEMPORARILY DELETED FOR ANONYMITY.

41. To be sure, Yoder once remarked that the "imperatives of dialogue with majority mentalities [had] skewed" the emphasis in his own position. Does that mean if Yoder's arguments sometimes take an Augustinian shape or form, this is in fact a Niebuhrian de-formation? Some will want to say so, and yet the paragraph I am citing makes clear that if anything Yoder's positions would have come across as more orthodox and pious if unconstrained by the parameters of debate with Niebuhrians. Yoder's remark occurs in a one-paragraph concluding section with the title, "Back to True North;" thus I have long wondered whether this Yoder was not leaving us a commentary on his own entire career. See Yoder, The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gos-

pel, 101.

42. If one did wish to trace a more exact genealogy of ideas, however, the place to begin would probably be in the influence of historian Herbert Butterfield. References to Butterfield occur occasionally in Yoder's work. In June of 1954 submitted a book review of Butterfield's Christianity, Diplomacy and War. (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953) to Guy F. Hershberger for the Mennonite Quarterly Review (never published). In the cover letter he told Hershberger: "This book has made a great impression on me, chiefly in the direction of demonstrating the lines along which the study of history can and should contribute to the church's prophetic witness to the state, precisely because the anabaptist (N.T.) [sic] doctrine of the State is not only a doctrine but also a historical reality." (Guy F. Hershberger papers, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., box 10, file 23). What Yoder found confirmed in Butterfield's historiography was precisely what I am arguing appears also in Augustine -- a circumscribed conception of the state in which the police function is legitimate," yet when wars "go beyond this limit [police action] and claim ideological value or religious or philosophical sanction," they become more harmful, hypocritical, and "rend the fabric of society more than they protect it." As to the influence of Augustine on Butterfield see the suggestive remark on p. 3 of H[erbert] Butterfield, Christianity and History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), and a more extended discussion in Herbert Butterfield, Writings on Christianity and history, edited by C. T. McIntire (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 124-32.

43. Christian Witness to the State, 6.

44. Cf. note 41.

45. City of God 10.7, 11.1, 15.2, 18.1, with Augustine's entire march through history closing in upon the final judgement (book 20), eternal punishment (book 21), and "the eternal bliss of the City of God" (book 22, as introduced in 22.1).

46. Christian Witness to the State, 8-11, 13, 17; quotations are from pp. 8 and 17.

47. City of God 1.35; 10.32, 14.1, 14.4, 14. Christian Witness to the State, 17, 28-31, 42, 72-73. Among the Augustine passages, note that in 1.35 Augustine's discussion of co- or inter-mixture does not imply an "invisible church" in which pacifism is scarcely imagineable because Christians look so much like non-Christians, but rather leads to pacifist possibilities, because among the enemies of the heavenly city are hidden its future citizens, who must therefore be treated patiently, until they convert.

48. City of God 5-11-21, but especially 5.16 and 21, and cf. 19.17.

49. Christian Witness to the State, 10-11, 13, 16, 17, 36, 40; quotations are from pp. 16, 11 and 13.

50. City of God 4.3-6, 11.1, 12.1, 14.3-4,13, 14.28, 15.7; quotation is from 11.1.

51. Yoder, Christian Witness to the State, 37-38.

52. City of God 5.12-15, 19.10-14, 19.17, 19.21, 19.26-27.

53. Christian Witness to the State, 6, 7, 13, 25, 32-33, 38-39, 42, 71-73; quotations are from pp. 6, 25 and 39. Key to Yoder's approach was the notion of "middle axioms," which he mentions on p. 32 and treats at greater length on pp. 71-73. I will give greater atten-

tion to middle axioms below.

54. City of God 19.7.

55. Yoder, Christian Witness to the State, 10-11, 14, 41-42.

56. I state the matter carefully in order to avoid what would otherwise be the laughable anachronism of expecting Augustine to have had access the same conceptual toolbox Yoder had in the mid-twentieth century. And yet it is not historically irresponsible to imagine Augustine himself thinking up a concept like "middle axioms." His pre-Christian career, after all, was that of a professor of rhetoric, which requires appealing to the presuppositions of diverse audiences and interlocutors in order to score one's own points. Augustine continued practicing exactly this in both his many theological controversies and his regular correspondence with government officials.

57. Yoder, Christian Witness to the State, 32-33.

58. Christian Witness to the State, 40.

59. Although, for reasons of both principle and humility, Yoder never claimed to be a philosopher, the power of his intellectual rigor rarely left him making logical blunders. Two sentences on p. 29 of Christian Witness to the State are deeply puzzling, therefore. Yoder was arguing (correctly) that the question of whether Christian principles are relevant to the social order is misleadingly simple. As part of this argument he wrote: "Whether or not, or in what sense, non-Christians or the non-Christian society should love, forgive, and otherwise behave like Christians is a speculative question. The spiritual resources for making such redeemed behavior a real possibility are lacking." Paired, these two statements constitute a non-sequitur, apparently based on the confusion of "ought" (or here, "should") with

the "is" of spiritual resourcelessness." What is puzzling becomes troubling when we linger over the first sentence. If Yoder must not only be humble about specifying exactly what God's will is for a non-Christian social order (which is surely appropriate) but must refuse even to say whether God's will for non-Christians is that they love and forgive -- because such a question is "speculative" -- then he surely needed a more robust theology of creation. Failing to provide one only helps reinstate the case for some kind of natural law theory.

60. Stanley Hauerwas, With the Grain of the Universe: The Church's Witness and Natural Theology, Gifford Lectures delivered at the University of St. Andrews in 2001 (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2001) While drawing most explicitly on Karl Barth, Hauerwas's With the Grain of the Universe honors Yoder by pursuing Yoder's own hints that it is only unbelief which prevents us from seeing that the cross does "run with the grain" of all God's creation after all. For the source of that title phrase, see John Howard Yoder, "Armaments and Eschatology," Studies in Christian Ethics 1, no. 1 (1988): 58; John Howard Yoder, The Politics of Jesus, 2d ed., reprint, 1972 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), 246.

61. Though the purpose of this paper was not to reply to James Turner Johnson's ill-considered claim in the pages of the Journal of Religious Ethics that a pacifist can hardly begin to understand much less interpret Augustine, it obviously does constitute one reply. See "Can A Pacifist Have A Conversation with Augustine? A Response to Alain Epp Weaver," Journal of Religious Ethics 29, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 87-93.

62. Stanley Hauerwas, "Tragedy and Joy: The Spirituality of

Peaceableness," chapt. 8 in The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 135-51.

63. H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Grace of Doing Nothing," Christian Century 49 (23 March 1932): 378-80; Reinhold Niebuhr, "Must we Do Nothing?" Christian Century 49 (30 March 1932): 415-17.

64. Hauerwas, "Tragedy and Joy," 135-40.

65. Hauerwas, "Tragedy and Joy," 141-48.

66. The current paper has demonstrated his unblinking social critique as practiced in The City of God and his practices of thoroughgoing self-examination are famous from his own Confessions. For an exposition of Augustine's analysis of friendship and the illusions by which we subtly but wrongly use our friends, see Gerald W. Schlabach, "Friendship as Adultery: Social Reality and Sexual Metaphor in Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin," Augustinian Studies 23 (1992): 125-47.