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Title: Understanding pacifisms: A typology

Date: 2007

Originally published in: Political practices and international order

Example citation: Clough, D. (2007). Understanding pacifisms: A typology. In S. Heuser, & H. G. Ulrich (Eds.), *Political practices and international order* (pp. 370-371). Munich, Germany: LIT.

Version of item: Author’s post-print

Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10034/134374>

Clough, David. 'Understanding Pacifism: A Typology.' in *Political Practices and International Order*, Hans G. Ulrich, and Stefan Heuser (eds.), (Munich: Lit, 2007), 370–81.

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Understanding Pacifisms: A Typology

David Clough

According to its critics, pacifism is politically irresponsible, unrealistic, idealistic, incoherent, self-contradictory, logically untenable, bizarre, ludicrous, and a fantastic corrupting illusion.¹ As a pacifist, what worries me more than the breadth and depth of these charges, is the basic misunderstandings of pacifism on which most of them stand. For the past 1700 years Christian thinking about war has benefited from a dialogue between those who have thought that war could be justified in some circumstances and those who have thought it could not.² My belief is that the tension sustained in such a dialectic is essential to an authentically Christian contribution to

¹ Jan Narveson seeks to show pacifism is 'incoherent because self-contradictory in its fundamental intent' (Jan Narveson, 'Pacifism: A Philosophical Analysis', in *War and Morality*, Richard A. Wasserstrom (ed.), 63–77 (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1970); Elizabeth Anscombe views it as a corrupting illusion (Elizabeth Anscombe, 'War and Murder', in Wasserstrom, *War and Morality*, 42–5); Reinhold Niebuhr viewed it as irresponsible (for a discussion of Niebuhr's position, see James F. Childress, 'Contemporary Pacifism: Its Major Types and Possible Contributions to Discourse About War', in *The American Search for Peace: Moral Reasoning, Religious Hope, and National Security*, George Weigel, and John P. Langan SJ (eds.) (Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press, 1991), 109–36); Tom Regan has stated that pacifism is 'bizarre and vaguely ludicrous' to put it mildly (Tom Regan 'A Defence of Pacifism' in Richard A. Wasserstrom (ed.), *Today's Moral Problems* (New York: Macmillan, 1975), p.451, cited in Andrew Alexandra, 'Political Pacifism', Working Paper 2002/16, Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics, Department of Philosophy, University of Melbourne, 2002, available online at <<http://www.cappe.edu.au/PDF%20Files/Alexandra3.pdf>>. Alexandra collects and discusses and briefly discusses several of these objections at the beginning of his paper.).

² Before that, Christians consistently opposed participation in the armed forces, though Christian practice was more various: for a discussion of this see John Helgeland, Robert J. Daly, and J. Patout Burns, *Christians and the Military: The Early Experience* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1987).

debates about international order and the political practices that sustains it. Obviously, a prerequisite for the continuation of this dialogue is an accurate understanding of the positions of both sides. At least since the revival of the Christian just war tradition in the middle of the last century by Paul Ramsey and others,³ the principles of the just war position have been generally well understood. The aim of this paper is to assist in responding to the complementary need for a good understanding of pacifism, especially by those who take a different view of the demands of Christian discipleship.

Despite the fact that most Christian theologians since the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine in AD 312 have judged that war could sometimes be justified, Christian engagement in political has been regularly and significantly informed by an emphasis on peacemaking practices that are alternatives to using violence to resolve conflict. While nearly all Christians have recognized the importance of employing measures short of violence wherever possible, non-violent strategies have often been developed, sustained and proffered by those Christians who believed violence of any kind to be unjustifiable. If

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Christian thinking about international order is to continue to benefit from this tradition of thought and practice, it is important that the Christian pacifist tradition is understood in all its complexity. My aim is therefore modest: I am not arguing in

³ See, for example, Paul Ramsey, *The Just War: Force and Political Responsibility* (Savage, Maryland: Littlefield Adams, 1983).

favour of pacifism, as I have done elsewhere,⁴ but am merely seeking to clarify the key characteristics of different kinds of Christian pacifism as an aid to future discussion.

We should acknowledge that the responsibility for the misunderstanding of pacifism does not belong exclusively to its critics. While the church's rejection of the sword dates back to its very beginnings, the term 'pacifism' is a relative novelty, first used only in 1902.⁵ Its origins were in a social movement opposing war, but it has been claimed by those opposing the use of force or violence in any context, and, as we shall see, many seek to restrict it to this latter narrow meaning. In this paper I will argue that we should retain the term in a Christian context for all those who believe at least that Christian participation in war is illegitimate, but that we should also recognize the diversity of pacifist positions by plotting their position on four independent axes.

I. Other classifications

Attempting to classify different pacifist positions is not a new sport, and before I outline the typology I am commending, it is helpful to survey the alternatives that others have proposed. Most, I will suggest, identify positions only in relation to a single characteristic, and therefore miss important alternative points of comparison. Others offer thick descriptions of different pacifist traditions but fail to offer a framework for assessing their commonalities and differences.

⁴ See David Clough, and Brian Stiltner, *Faith and Force: A Christian Debate About War* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2007). In Chapter 2 we set out an earlier version of this typology.

⁵ See Jenny Teichman, *Pacifism and the Just War: A Study in Applied Philosophy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

One distinction that has been widely used is that between ‘pacifism’ and ‘pacifism’ proposed by the historian A. J. P. Taylor in 1957. Taylor was a member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and sought to distance himself from the position of others within the peace movement who believed enemies should not be resisted in any form. He therefore used ‘pacifism’ to represent the doctrine of non-resistance, and coined the term ‘pacifism’ for his own position of ‘the advocacy of a peaceful policy’.⁶ One obvious problem with Taylor’s nomenclature is that the word ‘pacifism’ is both ugly and virtually unpronounceable. Notwithstanding the point that it is etymologically preferable to ‘pacifism’, to take this as the name for the majority of the peace movement is unlikely to aid clear discussion of positions. If Taylor’s stipulative definition of ‘pacifism’ is also accepted, pacifism becomes a label for a small extreme fringe, and the rest of those seeking alternatives to war are left with a position that dare not — or cannot! — speak its name. It may have suited Taylor to use this

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nomenclature to escape the ‘pacifist’ label, but it does result in a useful demarcation of positions.

Lisa Cahill offers a different binary categorization of pacifist positions, based on motivation. She distinguishes between those Christians who are motivated by a belief that pacifism is mandated by scripture, and those who are motivated by empathetic identification with the neighbour. While the two elements are separable, she notes that

⁶ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Trouble Makers: Dissent Over Foreign Policy 1792–1939* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1957), 51 n.

at its best Christian pacifism includes both emphases,⁷ so her categories serve primarily as a proposal as to what should be the basis of Christian pacifism, rather than as an analytical tool.

Theodore Koontz identifies three strands within what he calls Christian nonviolence: pacifism, which he terms the belief that minimally 'it is *morally* wrong for *me* to participate *directly* in *killing* in *all war*'; abolitionism, which attempts to abolish the evil of war, and non-violent resistance, which claims there are normally, if not always, effective non-violent alternatives to violence.⁸ Like Cahill's categories, however, Koontz is identifying different strands in pacifist thought rather than categories useful for analyzing pacifist positions. All three of these emphases, for example, happily coexist in many versions of pacifism.

James Childress situates Christian pacifism within a modified version of Niebuhr's scale of non-resistance, non-violent resistance, limited violent resistance and unlimited violent resistance. He offers a four-fold categorization of pacifism, based on its mode of reasoning: *legalist-expressivist*, which sees pacifism as an obligation of Scripture or a mode of witness to fundamental Christian values; *consequentialist pragmatic-utilitarian*, which judges that pacifism will lead to the best utilitarian result; *redemptive witness*, which combines the former two positions in believing that pacifism is both right and effective, and *technological*, which holds that in a modern context the just war criteria prohibit all wars.⁹ This is the first example we have surveyed that does attempt to describe mutually exclusive analytical categories, but

⁷ Lisa S. Cahill, *Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 150, 236.

⁸ Theodore Koontz, 'Christian Nonviolence', in *The Ethics of War and Peace: Religious and Secular Perspectives*, Terry Nardin (ed.) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 169.

⁹ Childress, 'Contemporary Pacifism'.

does so in relation only to the question of the basis or justification for taking particular pacifist positions, and does not address other characteristics distinguishing the content of the positions.

Peter Brock identifies five types of pacifism: *vocational*, which is the forswearing of violence by priests and others in holy orders; *eschatological*, the view that pacifism is an ethic for the interim until the apocalyptic wars foretold in the book of Revelation; *separational*, the position that the redeemed must separate themselves from the rest of humankind and refuse to participate in war; *integrational*, combining an ethic of peace with the setting up of reform movements; and *goal-directed*, using non-violent

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techniques to achieve specific ends.¹⁰ Brock's categories helpfully identify some particular pacifist groups and motivations, but do not provide a complete or systematic mapping of positions.

Duane Cady argues that we should see Christian positions on war as a continuum, with war-realism as one extreme and absolute pacifism as the other. Next to war-realism he places 'just warism', and then seven different pacifist positions. *Pragmatic* pacifism judges that wars tend to promote rather than relieve human misery; *ecological* pacifism focuses on the impact of war on the non-human world; *technological* pacifism claims that modern war in particular is unjustifiable; *fallibility* pacifism contends that we could never have enough knowledge to justify the use of lethal force; *collectivist* pacifism accepts the use even of lethal force in some circumstances, but not war; a further unnamed type accepts non-lethal force, and

¹⁰ Peter Brock, *Pacifism in Europe to 1914* (Princeton, 1972), 472 f., cited in Teichman, 'Pacifism and the Just War', 6–7.

absolute pacifism believes ‘it is wrong always, everywhere, for anyone to use force against another human being.’¹¹ While the idea of a continuum is helpful, and the terms again highlight particular motivations for pacifism, it does not seem to me that the pacifist positions Cady defines can be arranged linearly as he suggests (for example, it is not clear why ecological pacifism should fit one side or another of technological pacifism). This lack in Cady’s account suggests the need for additional dimensions in a mapping of pacifist positions.

John Howard Yoder has provided the most exhaustive list of pacifist positions. In his book *Nevertheless*, he identifies no less than twenty-nine different types.¹² While the book achieves its aim of making clear to its readers the diversity of pacifisms, however, the extensive listing does not serve as a classificatory scheme with the potential clearly to identify similarities and differences between positions.

Martin Ceadel identifies five basic positions on war: militarism (war is a positive good), crusading (it is legitimate to use aggressive war to promote order or justice), defencism (only defensive war is legitimate), pacific-ism, and pacifism. For Ceadel, pacific-ism is the view that war can be abolished, but it concedes that some defensive wars can be justified, and pacifism is the absolutist view that participating in or

¹¹ Duane L. Cady, *From Warism to Pacifism: A Moral Continuum* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 58–75.

¹² These are: Christian cosmopolitanism; Honest study of cases; Absolute principle; Programmatic political alternatives; Political pacifism; Nonviolent social change; Prophetic protest; Proclamation; Utopian purism; Virtuous minority; Categorical imperative; Absolute conscience; Redemptive personalism; Cultic law; Cultural isolation; Consistent nonconformity; Mennonite nonpacifist nonresistance; Eschatological; Anarchic; Consistent self-negation; Very long view; Redemptive suffering; Imitation of Jesus; Self-discipline; Situational pacifism; Rabbinic monotheism; Coherent cosmos; Pacifism of virtue; Pacifism of the Messianic Community (John Howard Yoder, *Nevertheless: A Meditation on the Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism* [Scottsdale, Pa: Herald Press, 1992]).

supporting war is always impermissible.¹³ He subdivides pacific-ism into liberal, radical,

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socialist, feminist and ecological types. In treating pacifism he suggests five different scales. The first scale is the relationship of pacifism to state policy: he suggests pacifists can be *optimistic* —pacifism is the most effective defence policy; *mainstream* — pacifism is not yet practical politics, but soon will be; or *pessimistic* — pacifism is faith rather than strategy. The second scale he describes is the kind of violence prohibited by different versions of pacifism. The types he identifies here are the prohibition of force of any kind, all killing, all war, modern war, or war in a nuclear era. The third scale is binary: pacifism is *unqualified* if it believes no conceivable war is ever justified, or *contingent* if a justified war is possible, but the probability so remote that it should be disregarded. The fourth scale classifies motivation for pacifism as religious, political, utilitarian or humanitarian. The fifth scales addresses the practical orientation towards war. In peacetime this could be the use of non-violent action, collaboration with non-pacifist remedies, or sectarian withdrawal; in wartime the types he notes are defying the war effort, serving society in other ways, or withdrawing into communities.

Ceadel's multi-scale mapping is the most useful of those surveyed. The alternative perspectives on any particular pacifist position provided by the various scales means that a position can be pictured more thickly than the one-dimensional mappings presented by other authors. The unqualified/contingent polarity seems of very limited

¹³ Martin Ceadel, *Thinking About Peace and War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

value however, and the fifth scale of orientation to war lists strategies that are not mutually exclusive in any given pacifist position, and therefore less useful to classify them. More troubling is the characterization of pacifism as a whole as ‘absolutist’ and prohibiting support for war as well as participation in it (significantly narrowing the category and excluding Tertullian, for example¹⁴) and the neglect of any limitation on war apart from the aggressor-defender distinction, ignoring the just war tradition in its entirety. The pacifism category seems to function for Ceadel, as for Taylor, as the part of the peace movement in which he feels comfortable, but unhelpfully overlaps with the just war tradition on one side and pacifism on the other.

II. A new typology

I suggest, therefore, that while the typologies I have surveyed are in the main useful ways of recognizing the multi-faceted diversity of Christian pacifist positions, none serves the goal I seek of an analytic framework that can serve to categorize positions and illuminate key features of them, in order to improve understanding of Christian pacifism. Instead, I propose the following four-dimensional mapping. My definition of Christian pacifism, which all the positions I survey minimally have in common, is the belief that it is not legitimate for Christians to participate in warfare.

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1. Principled or Strategic?

A pacifism of principle is motivated by the belief that violent acts—or particular kinds of them—are unacceptable whatever the results of using or not using violence are likely to be in a particular situation. Renouncing violence is an unconditional ethical demand, which must be observed irrespective of any other considerations. Christians

¹⁴ See below for a discussion of Tertullian’s position.

who believe that Jesus' teaching of turning the other cheek means that Christians are prohibited from using violence are one clear example of this principled pacifism, though many have derived similar commitments from other faith commitments or nonreligious philosophies.¹⁵

Strategic pacifism, in contrast, renounces violence on the basis that given a particular context, the use of violence is illegitimate, but recognizes that there are other possible scenarios where violence could legitimately be used. Emil Brunner, for example, wrote in 1932 that war could have been justified some decades ago but has now 'outlived itself', having become 'so colossal that it can no longer exercise any useful function'.¹⁶ In the same spirit, the 1980s saw many Christians identify themselves as 'nuclear pacifists', meaning that they considered the destructive potential of nuclear weapons made any resort to war illegitimate. The key difference with the principled position is that strategic pacifism is rooted in the belief that violence is illegitimate because of its likely results, rather than because of any absolute prohibition of it. There is obvious continuity between this view and the just war tradition, which also recognizes in its proportionality criterion that there are circumstances where the use of violence is counter-productive. The difference is finally one only of degree: if you believe that no modern war is likely to be justifiable, then *pacifist* seems a better label than *just war advocate*.¹⁷

Another group to be noted here are those who turn to non-violent methods of resolving conflict or bringing about a change of regime because they judge that they

¹⁵ This position is related to Cahill's category of obediential pacifism, and Childress's 'legalist-expressivist' category: see above.

¹⁶ Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative: A Study in Christian Ethics*, trans. Olive Wyon (London: Lutterworth, 1937; original German ed., 1932), 470–71.

¹⁷ My category of strategic pacifism is related to Childress's 'consequentialist pragmatic-utilitarian' and Yoder's 'honest study of cases': see above.

are more likely to be effective than using violence. The use of non-violent means is then a strategic choice, rather than one based on principle, often where a popular movement is confronting a regime of overwhelmingly superior military power. Obviously, principled pacifists can use nonviolence in an effective way, following the example of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. But strategic pacifists would be prepared to consider violent methods if they came to think that non-violent ones were not as effective: the choice of the African National Congress in South Africa to turn to limited violent attacks in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s after many decades of non-violent protest is one example of such a choice (though it is worth noting that the ANC's

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greatest effectiveness arguably coincided with Nelson Mandela's re-embrace of a strategy of *non-violent* resistance in the 1990s.)¹⁸

2. *Absolute or Classical?*

Absolute pacifists are those who renounce any use of force, whatever the circumstances. This prohibits participation not only in warfare, but also in policing and the criminal justice system. Count Leo Tolstoy, the Russian novelist and social commentator, believed that the Christian gospel required an absolute pacifism of this kind:

I now understood the words of Jesus: 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, An

¹⁸ See Brian Frost, *Struggling to Forgive: Nelson Mandela and South Africa's Search for Reconciliation* (London: HarperCollins, 1998). Two short, accessible histories of the ANC are Saul Dubow, *The African National Congress* (Gloucestershire, U.K: Sutton Publishing, 2000) and Heidi Holland, *The Struggle: A History of the African National Congress* (New York: G. Braziller, 1990). This kind of strategic pacifism is related to Yoder's category of 'nonviolent social change' and Brock's 'goal-directed' classification (see above).

eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil'. Jesus' meaning is: 'You have thought that you were acting in a reasonable manner in defending yourself by violence against evil, in tearing out an eye for an eye, by fighting against evil with criminal tribunals, guardians of the peace, armies, but I say unto you, Renounce violence; have nothing to do with violence; do harm to no one, not even to your enemy.'¹⁹

This is a demanding and strongly counter-cultural position. On the personal level, Tolstoy commends a lifestyle of nonresistance, not simply nonviolence.²⁰ On the political level, while Tolstoy never espoused anarchism, it is clear that no conventional state could coexist with his absolute pacifist vision and opposition to the institution of private property.²¹

Recognizing this difficulty with absolute pacifism, many pacifists have instead adopted a *classical pacifism* that distinguishes between legitimate uses of force in criminal justice and policing and illegitimate wars between nation-states. This rests on the belief that there is a morally relevant difference between a state's use of police force to preserve order within its borders and its use of military force against other nations. This point is contested by many just war theorists, who argue that military action is merely a continuation of policing. Classical pacifists recognize the need to use limited force in restraining evil, and could support an international force to police

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¹⁹ Leo N. Tolstoy, *My Religion*, trans. Huntingdon Smith (London: Walter Scott, 1889), 38.

²⁰ See Tolstoy, *My Religion*, especially chap. 1–4. It is difficult to ascertain exactly what nonresistance would entail for Tolstoy. For a strong criticism of Tolstoy on this score, see Lloyd Steffen, *The Demonic Turn: The Power of Religion to Inspire or Restrain Violence* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2003): 143–65.

²¹ My category of 'absolute pacifism' is Taylor calls 'pacifist'. Cady also calls it 'absolute pacifism' and Ceadel terms it 'force-pacifism' (see above).

disputes between nations. U.N. peacekeeping operations — even when armed soldiers are used — would be justifiable to many classical pacifists.²²

3. *Separatist or Integrationist?*

Separatist pacifists seek an existence at a remove from the concerns of the world. Christians should seek insofar as possible to avoid the taint that involvement with the world inevitably brings. Separatist pacifists therefore often form communities that literally separate themselves, living as self-sufficiently as possible outside normal social structures. They do not acknowledge that they have political responsibility in the wider society, and so recognize no necessity to consider what a nation needs from them in order to thrive. This commitment to pacifism is straightforward and uncomplicated by external demands—unless community members are conscripted or attacked. When that occurs, separatist pacifists tend to practice nonviolent resistance or nonresistance; for instance, they will go to jail rather than be drafted. Separatism was a mark of some of the Reformation peace churches, and is still seen in Amish communities today.²³

Integrationist pacifists believe their faith requires them to take an interest in the ordering of the common life of the nation-state. They do not see Christians as excused from political responsibility. Christians should therefore engage in reflection and conversation about how law and government should be ordered nationally and internationally. These pacifists clearly have much in common with just war thinkers

²² The classical pacifist position could be further subdivided in terms of how permissive it is, with reference either to Ceadel's scale of what is prohibited, or Cady's distinction between pacifists who object to the use of force, to killing or to war (see above).

²³ Related categorizations in the authors surveyed in the first part of this paper are Brock's 'separational' pacifism, Yoder's 'cultural isolation' category, and Ceadel's 'separationist/withdrawal' strategy (see above).

on the matter of political responsibility, but they believe that using violence is not a proper way to participate in political life. This pacifist political engagement can take a variety of forms: Tolstoy's pacifism drove him to be involved in the causes of protection for Russian pacifist dissenters and opposition to the Sino-Japanese War. His writings and his correspondence with Mohandas Gandhi profoundly influenced the latter's nonviolent movement against British rule in India, though Tolstoy would have disapproved of some of Gandhi's later political activities.²⁴ Others are drawn to adopting classical pacifism by their political engagement. Both are distinguishable from separatist pacifists, however, in their belief that Christian life can be lived in the context of a diverse society where many do not share their beliefs.²⁵

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4. *Communal or Universal?*

Communal pacifists believe that pacifism is demanded of their own community, but not of everyone in society. This is true, for example, for Christians who believe that nonviolence is a requirement of Christian discipleship but is not a wider moral demand. *Universal pacifists* believe that pacifism is a moral demand on everyone irrespective of their beliefs. At first glance, this fourth scale seems related to the previous one: it is certainly the case that separatist pacifists are most likely also to be communal, in that they have little expectation that the wider society will share their commitments. However, communal pacifists can equally well be integrationist:

²⁴ Ernest J. Simmons, *Leo Tolstoy* (London: John Lehmann, 1949), 791–92.

²⁵ I am grateful for the conversation following my presentation of this paper to the joint Society for the Study of Christian Ethics and Societas Ethica conference in Oxford, August 2006. Amy Laura Hall suggested that the 'separatist/politically engaged' terminology I was using for this polarity was tendentious in disallowing a political role to those who choose to live separately. My use of 'integrationist' in this version of the paper is an attempt to find a more neutral term to characterize the difference here.

believing that the prohibition on violence only applies to Christians while having an interest in the order of society. Origen and Tertullian are good examples of this position: prohibiting Christians from joining the Roman army while recognizing the essential role of the imperial forces in maintaining peace — even to the point of praying for their victory in battles.

Pacifism has been most commonly espoused in a Christian context by communal pacifists: those who believe it is a demand on the Church, rather than society at large. Universal pacifism has more often been proposed by idealistic humanists. This is partly because most Christians have less optimism about how far we are likely to be able to transform the world given human sinfulness. It is also easier to make the case for pacifism in a communal form, as it does not require facing hard questions such as what would be the fate of an unarmed nation-state. With the spread of democracy and its broad approval by the churches in the twentieth century, it has proven somewhat easier for Christians to maintain a communal stance in their attitude to the Church and to work for peace in political affairs. The middle of the spectrum on this axis could be phrased this way: Christians *must* be pacifist, and the world *might* become more peaceful through Christian witness and activism, in cooperation with other pacifists.

In order to see how these scales can be used to identify particular pacifist positions, it may be helpful to take some specific examples, which are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Mapping Examples of Christian Pacifists

	Principled or Strategic	Absolute or Classical	Separatist or Integrationist	Communal or Universal
1. Origen and Tertullian	principled	classical	engaged	communal
2. Hutterites	principled	absolute	separatist	communal
3. Leo Tolstoy	principled	absolute	engaged	universal
4. Emil Brunner	strategic	classical	engaged	universal

1. Origen and Tertullian believed that Jesus prohibited Christians from taking the sword, so their pacifism was principled, rather than strategic. There is no evidence that they were unhappy for Christians to participate in other civil roles in the Roman Empire so their position was classical, rather than absolute. They affirmed the support

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of Christians for the Roman Empire, so their pacifism was integrationist, rather than separatist. However, as noted above, they only considered the prohibition on the use of the sword to apply to Christians, so their position is communal, rather than universal.

2. The Hutterites were one of the 16th century Anabaptist groups that formed their own settlements in order to live out the Christian life more consistently. They believed that pacifism was a biblical teaching, so were principled, rather than strategic, and did not believe that Christians should use force in any form, so were absolute, rather than classical pacifists. Their desire for new settlements indicate that they were separatist rather than integrationist, and their belief that the teaching of Jesus applies only to Christians indicates that they are communal rather than universal in orientation.²⁶

3. Leo Tolstoy believed that the gospel made a radical demand on all Christians of nonviolence. He also considered, however, that the whole of society would be better off if everyone adopted nonviolence, and was prepared to accept the implications for a very different view of political authority as a result. His pacifism was therefore

²⁶ For more information, see Robert Friedmann, *Hutterite Studies* (Goshen, Indiana: Mennonite Historical Society, 1961).

principled, rather than strategic, absolute, rather than classical, integrationist, rather than separatist, and universal, rather than communal.

4. We noted above that Emil Brunner was an example of a strategic pacifist, because he believed that war was justified in the past, but given the destructive power of modern weaponry, it was no longer an effective tool. Brunner had no problem with use of force in policing, was concerned for the implications for the whole of society, and thought everyone should take a similar view of war, so his pacifism was strategic rather than principled, classical rather than absolute, integrationist rather than separatist, and universal rather than communal.

III. Towards an informed conversation

What should be clear from this typology is that the pacifist strand of the Christian tradition is a diverse and complex phenomenon. Given this diversity, it is obvious that not all arguments either in favour or against pacifism will apply to each alike. I will conclude by briefly indicating the directions where the typology makes clear that critiques go astray.

First, there is the common charge that pacifism is politically irresponsible. Here the separatist/integrationist dimension of the new typology discriminates between types of pacifism that are more and less vulnerable to this critique. The separatist Hutterites undoubtedly did believe that they were not responsible for the wider polis, and so could legitimately be accused of political irresponsibility. In relation to the politically engaged pacifism of Emil Brunner, however, it is much harder to make this charge

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stick: Brunner became pacifist precisely because it was his view that this would be for the common good of the society to which he belonged and for the good of its neighbours. Non-pacifists might doubt his political judgement, but should not doubt his commitment to take his share of political responsibility. Brunner is perhaps the easiest case because he is a strategic pacifist, believing only that war cannot be justified in the modern context. There is a strong case, however, that many principled integrationist pacifists have also contributed constructively to the political process: John Howard Yoder is one example. The critic might counter that it was refusing to fight, or refusing to countenance the use of force, that was the irresponsible feature of pacifism. At this point we have located a real area of difference and debate, with much to be said on each side. But it is already clear that political irresponsibility in itself cannot be ascribed to many forms of pacifism without serious misrepresentation.

Second, at the beginning of the paper I cited the critique that pacifism is unrealistic and idealistic, or in Anscombe's words a fantastic corrupting illusion. On this point the principled/strategic dimension is most relevant. Principled pacifists need make no claims about how things will turn out as a result of their actions, with the possible exception of an eschatological confidence in the realization of God's purposes. The charge of being unrealistic is therefore largely irrelevant to their position. They could be accused of being deluded in their commitments, but Anscombe could also be so accused. Strategic pacifism, on the other hand, is based on the judgement that war should be renounced on the basis of particular features of the modern context. Since this view does depend on judgements of real consequences, there is more discussion to be had here. A critic who doubted strategic pacifists had a good grasp of reality would have to engage in a substantial argument over what the likely consequences of such a policy would be, and how they should be compared to alternative scenarios in

which wars are fought. Only if the pacifist were to be obviously unreasonable in assessing these consequences would the charge of being unrealistic, idealistic or deluded succeed: otherwise all that would have been demonstrated was that the disputants took different views of reality.

The third group of charges I identified were that pacifism is incoherent, self-contradictory, and logically untenable. Jan Narveson, who made this charge in an influential article, started from the stipulative definition that pacifists believe violence is evil and that it is morally wrong to use force to resist, punish or prevent violence. It is clear from our typology that this could only apply to principled absolute pacifists, so Narveson's argument could only possibly tell against this small part of the mapping of pacifist positions. Tom Regan's view of pacifism as bizarre and ludicrous because it means a woman may not resist a man who is trying to rape her similarly only possibly relates to principled absolute pacifists. There is much to say in response to these critiques from the perspective of these kinds of pacifism, but my point here is not to argue this point, but merely to show that once again a better understanding of pacifist positions shows where such critiques are relevant, and where they cannot be.

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Even this brief discussion of critiques of pacifism shows, I think, how the four-dimensional typology I am proposing has the potential to clarify discussions of pacifism, and locate more precisely the key areas of disagreement between pacifists and their critics. I do not claim that using this typology will resolve such disputes, but it at least promises to ensure less ink, breath, or electronic characters are wasted on critiques that miss much of their target by a wide margin. In turn, this more fruitful conversation will allow the Christian tradition in relation to war and peace to be heard

in its entirety, attending to an adequate account of the diverse pacifist tradition instead of maintaining a narrow view of the just war tradition alone. This more comprehensive view of Christian thinking about conflict and what it takes to resolve it will strengthen, deepen and broaden the contribution of Christian thought to contemporary questions of political practices and international order.