

**The Obligation Nation: America's Involvement in the Affairs
of the World**

By

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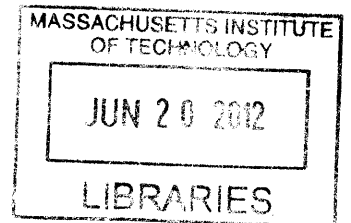
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Abstract

Does America have an obligation, whether through foreign aid, military involvement, or by spreading democracy, to change the world?

This thesis answers these above questions in intimate detail through the moral framework of the teachings and life of Jesus. It is not a paper designed to evangelize or convert; rather, it is designed to assess whether America's current involvement on the international stage is done with respect to Jesus' primary teachings of compassion and love.

Ultimately, we discover that the US has a lot of work to do, and that this country does not fully follow Jesus' word. The foreign aid America provides has many negative consequences, our military involvement is often unneeded and leads to failure, and our efforts to spread democracy have often been marred by violence.

This is not a thesis decrying America and all it stands for. Instead, it is a thesis that analyzes America's past, present, and future involvement in the world, and recommends how America can better follow the moral framework of love and compassion laid down by Jesus Christ.

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To my late thesis Advisor, Alice Amsden: I have included my final email to Professor Amsden below.

Subject: A final note from a sad but grateful student

Professor Amsden,

I don't know exactly how you will get this message from me. I thought I might try a couple ways. I have tried some prayer, and then this email; hopefully someday, somehow, you will get this message.

I never told you this in person, although now I wish I had: you, Professor Amsden, have had a major impact on my life. You influenced me in so many ways, even though I have only known you for but a few short years.

You always believed in me. You told me to DREAM BIG. I loved how you never said to me, "no, this is too broad, this is too big, this is too hard..." You helped me realize that I can follow my dreams, that I can make a difference, and that I can truly change the world if I so choose. And you also taught me how to put things in perspective and to not get overly stressed about the small stuff!

You showed me unconditional support. Few people have done that for me in my life. And for that, I will always be grateful.

For the rest of my life, I will remember that any success I may have was partially because of you. You helped teach me not to give up, to follow my dreams, and to keep a balanced perspective. I will always remember you, and I thank you.

To my thesis and academic advisor, Bish Sanyal, and reader Stephen Van Evera:

You both had the opportunity to tell me no. To tell me to get help from somewhere else. But you didn't, and I cannot thank you both enough. You have both had a huge impact on me over my years at MIT. You were both superb

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teachers that influenced my way of thought, and have now had an immeasurable impact on this document. Thank you.

The Obligation Nation: America's Involvement in the Affairs of the World.

Chapter 1 - America's Obligation?

Does America have an obligation, whether through foreign aid, military involvement, or by spreading democracy, to change the world?

The United States of America is the most powerful nation this world has ever known. The Roman Empire, for all its power and influence, pales in comparison to America. Imperial China, Hellenic Greece, and Industrial Revolution Britain all had a massive impact on the world, but none had the influence in world affairs that America now has.

Americans have a mixed record when it comes to their nation's involvement with the rest of the world. We are the nation that came to the world's rescue as it collapsed and burned under the oppression and maniacal terror of Hitler, and yet we are the same nation that dropped Agent Orange on the impoverished villagers of Vietnam. We have, since the American Revolution, been the inspiration for countless democratic rebellions worldwide, and can indirectly claim the freedom of billions of people from the chains of authoritarianism. Yet

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our same America continues to be a major culprit in the current slavery of the African continent; we watch nonchalantly as our policies contribute to starvation, warfare, and intense poverty in the continent that is the birthplace of humankind.

We are the America of dreams. Millions worldwide believe in the American dream, believe in the power of our government, believe in the power of the individual, and believe that they too can achieve the freedom and justice they deserve. Unlike most developed countries, the USA has an increasing population, and is still the destination of choice for those looking to better their lives and to achieve success.

Yet we are the America that has realized its power, and not been afraid to use it against the helpless of the world. Our imperial aggressions are in direct contrast to our ideals of freedom and justice, and we are often seen as a nation of hypocrites due to our oppressive, militaristic, and heavy-handed foreign policy.

We must change

Our Founding Fathers tried a grand experiment. They saw a nation of diverse people that could coexist and create something great. We are the product of their dreams and hopes. We have one of the highest per capita incomes in the world, which is

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incredible because we are also a massive nation of well over 300 million. We are a nation that steadfastly believes in the rights of the individual, the belief that "...all men are created equal".

Yet we must change. It is not too late. While we have retained the ideological ideas and wishes of Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and Benjamin Franklin, for the most part, in our own nation, we have refused to grant the same rights to our enemies and our allies worldwide. Yet did Jefferson speak only for America? His dream for individual freedom so eloquently phrased in our Declaration of Independence is a belief that can be expanded worldwide. We must, as a nation, treat the world as we have promised to treat ourselves. As we have committed to treat ourselves. Every life, every person, every citizen of this great nation is worthwhile, never to be discarded, forgotten, or viewed as a member of a lower caste in the eyes of the law. We are all created equal. Yet was Jefferson alone in his immortal words, or was there someone centuries before him that also declared the freedom and equality of man?

A moral framework

Jesus Christ provided a framework that focused on the equality of man, love for one's enemies, and I will also argue

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for a foreign policy that is far different than the one America pursues today.

I chose the teachings of Jesus Christ, found in the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as my moral framework for numerous reasons. First, I know Christ's teachings better than the teachings of any other prophets or leaders of the major religions of the world. My knowledge of the teachings of Muhammad, Buddha, or Confucius are very slight in comparison to my knowledge of Christ. This is due to my Christian, specifically Lutheran, upbringing, and also my continued observance of the faith. Second, his teachings inspire and guide me, and the parables and stories found in the Gospels are the only books in the Bible that are just about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. That does not mean that other religions, or other teachings, are wrong! In fact, I believe that all religions or beliefs say relatively the same thing at the most fundamental level. But the words of Jesus and his dedication to humanity, and not only the spiritual, make his teaching incredibly relevant, and very logical to apply to the world of today.

Thus, the teachings of Jesus provide my moral framework. His parables and teachings found in the Gospels of the New Testament inform my opinions on the foreign policy of the USA.

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While I will quote and comment on the beliefs of later leaders of the Christian Church, all that is written will inevitably come back to Christ. I believe these great men, like Martin Luther, Thomas Aquinas, and St. Augustine, all have added a tremendous amount to understanding and interpreting the teachings of Jesus, but Christ alone informs my final beliefs.

Jesus...and America?

Yet the obvious question is, "how does Jesus possibly inform or understand the policy of 21st century America? How can we use his two millennia old teachings to inform the vastly different world of today?" My argument is that the world is not so different as it was then. Humans are still humans. People are still people. We all have evil within us. We all have good as well. We desire power, yet also desire love, compassion, and acceptance by society. Jesus spoke to this. He spoke to our wants, our desires, our temptations. He also spoke to our relationships, our human interactions, and our views towards one another.

In no way is this a thesis designed to convert a person to Christianity. While my personal experience of living with a Christian missionary in Tanzania at the tender age of eighteen have educated me on the ways of evangelism, that is not my

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intent in any way. My desire is to provide a document, using the moral teachings of Jesus, that can inform the foreign policy of the USA. While it is tempting to comment on American internal politics, that is another paper. Today I write only on Jesus and his teachings and how they can inform how the America we love can interact with the world we may not know or understand.

America, most Christians believe, was not on Jesus' agenda. He never commented directly on America, and never spoke of the impending (two thousand years later) American hegemonic power. Yet, did he not actually comment on the uses of power? The interactions with your neighbor, regardless of their intentions? And the morality of war? Jesus spoke about these subjects often. Somehow, some way, humans interact the exact same way they did two thousand years ago, and undoubtedly similar to the way they did even before them. Surprise! Those with power often use their power for nefarious purposes. Those without power blame those with power for their condition, without taking responsibility for their own actions. Yet, after sifting through these arguments and human tendencies, there still lies a truth, a truth that can provide a better life for all. A truth that can inform American foreign policy.

America and foreign aid

Foreign aid and America have been closely linked since the Bretton Woods Conference following World War II. America has committed billions to foreign aid in the form of government-to-government transfers, yet what can we show for this?

One of the purposes of this thesis is to address foreign aid using the moral framework of the teaching of Jesus Christ. What automatically comes to mind? Of course, a rich and powerful America giving of its riches to the poor and helpless 3rd world nations of the world is exactly what Jesus wants! Yet...after some contemplation, does this belief concur with the teachings of Jesus? It is difficult to argue otherwise, because Jesus makes clear in Luke 6:20-21, "*Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.*" and also in Luke 6:24-26, "*But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry.*" Wow. Jesus has just, in one fell swoop, said that the poor are the ones blessed in his eyes, and the rich are to be punished for their selfishness and obsession with wealth. Thus, it seems obvious that poverty is the key to heaven, the key to everlasting life, and in a less afterlife-focused fashion, the key to true blessings from Jesus and God. So America, a massive

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nation of tremendous wealth seems to fall in the second group, the well fed and the rich. The one who Jesus says "woe to..."

Yet let us look at a slightly different translation. Using the translation from The Message, the translation provides us a slightly different understanding, "*You're blessed when you've lost it all. God's kingdom is there for the finding. You're blessed when you're ravenously hungry. Then you're ready for the Messianic meal.*" Interesting, as this interpretation focuses less on human wealth and hunger and poverty. Instead, it speaks of a spiritual message, a message that does not even encounter the everyday world. Rather, it discusses the spiritual relationship of every man and woman. But the spiritual world does not just exist in some far off, never to be seen place called heaven. It is here. It is among us. This Earth is where we can carry out the work of Jesus.

Jesus is not just sitting there, talking to the wealthy American, and encouraging them to say to their impoverished brethren, "Hey, you are a poor country. Jesus says give to the poor. I think we should dump tons of money on you, over the course of decades, regardless of who your leader is, and help you modernize. But only in the way we desire you to be more like us. And only if you buy our stuff along the way. Does that make sense? Take our money, buy our stuff, waste the rest

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of it on whatever you want, even if it includes oppressing or murdering your own people, and then don't worry...we will give you a lot more next year! Without exception!"

This is American foreign aid. Whether it goes through the American-controlled channels of the IMF, World Bank, or the Department of State as USAID, or even through the semi-autonomous and accountability-focused Millennium Challenge Corporation (Girod et al. 2009), this is American aid.

One main moral argument is made. It is loaded with "white guilt", and it is that we should help fix those continents we destroyed as imperialist European powers. If trillions over the course of a few decades does not help out those poorer people, then it obviously was not enough. We need more money focused on these poor! Then we, as white Europeans and their American descendants, can finally end this guilt, and finally feel that we have helped those people that our ancestors oppressed.

And is this altruistic thinking so wrong? We need to do something to help, right? Our European ancestors did ravage Africa. Certainly, helping is better than the opposite, which is actually hurting the continent. But with foreign aid, does dumping money actually hurt or help? Is doing nothing the most helpful tactic? We need to somehow benefit Africa, but is propping up corrupt regimes the best way?

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Foreign aid thinking is dominated by the Marshall Plan, and its success in rebuilding Western Europe following WWII. Obviously, if money is spent in building or rebuilding, it is argued that countries will benefit, and the Marshall Plan is always used as that example of success. But it is doubtful that this type of thinking can apply to the developing world due the fact that America would not be assisting with rebuilding, but building anew. This makes a big difference in the form of institutions and cultural traditions.

Foreign aid has been advocated by governments, including our own, multinational institutions like the UN and IMF, and by civil society. Yet the question we must ask ourselves is if foreign aid is the path that is best for the poor and for the rich, the best choice for the receiver of aid and the giver of aid, and the choice that follows the teachings of Jesus Christ.

America's military

America has more than 1000 military bases outside of the United States (Turse 2011). It is very interesting that the name of our military branch of government is called the "Department of Defense"...yet does 1000 overseas bases and over half a million employees in these bases really portray a government focused on defense, or a government focused on empire

and aggression?

The Cold War is over. Any argument made to have bases surrounding the former Soviet Union is ludicrous; it has been 23 years since the USSR collapsed. I was barely three years old, and am now in my mid-twenties. Yet America still has thousands of soldiers preparing for an attack of the USSR against Europe. This is either Newton's first law of motion, the law of inertia, at work, or it is a symbol of empire. A symbol of the powerful nation exerting its power over the smaller nations of the planet. There is no reason for this kind of military after the collapse of the bipolar world (Betts 2012).

A subject that will be touched on in far more depth in the subsequent pages is the theory of just war. Just war theory has been advocated by Christian theologians and secular theorists alike. Yet the main question I address is whether Jesus ever really discusses just war, or if it is rather a permutation that is at odds with the teachings of Christ. Is there criteria that must be met before violence is allowed according to his teachings?

America now trusts its power above all else (Borg 2011). While we may be one of the most religious developed countries, we do not trust in Christ's teaching. Rather, we think that we can deal with a jealous and violent world through our own means.

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Yet these means perpetuate a jealous and violent world. Until we comprehend the moral framework of Jesus, one that decries an imperialist nature that advocates violence, we will find ourselves in the familiar cycle of terrorism and war.

America and democracy

To most Americans, democracy is the most developed form of government; most people of this nation do not seem to even comprehend a non-democratic form of government. In fact, if another nation is not democratic, it seems that most Americans associate it with communism; not the Marxist ideals of communism, but the murderous form of communism performed under Stalin and Lenin.

Yet one of the questions developed in the subsequent pages is whether America should force its form of government upon other nations. Obviously, the world has taken a liking to democracy. Around 115 countries have some form of democratic government, compared to the significantly smaller number that existed before the American Revolution. The Arab Spring of the past few years proves the attraction that democracy has for all people, regardless of race or cultural background.

Should America encourage this form of government? And if so, how far should we go? Should we go to war with a nation to

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force democracy upon it? If the world has transformed merely by our example, then it is quite intelligent to think that maybe our example is enough, and that we do not need to create the destruction of war in order to spread democracy.

Democracy promotion is not something that just grew out of the Bush administration. Many scholars argue that Woodrow Wilson actually did the most to push America into the world of democracy promotion and international change at a fundamental level (McFaul 2010). Since Wilson's time, America has, for the most part, been heavily engaged in foreign affairs (Ikenberry et al. 2009). Reasons for this have ranged from security to moral reasons to a belief in world order. Regardless of reasoning, the facts are the same: America has been on a democracy promotion binge since the First World War. It continues to this day, with the last decade witnessing American attempts at advancing democracy in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Egypt, among others.

As with the other subjects of foreign aid and military involvement, democracy promotion will be looked at using the lens and moral framework of the teachings of Jesus.

America's hopeful future

America has an incredibly bright future. By almost any

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world calculation, we have one of the best situations of any nation. We have a high GDP, high innovation levels, and high levels of democracy; we are a beacon for people around the world in education. Our farmers feed a starving world, and our bankers finance economic growth from China to Brazil.

Yet our government's foreign relations show a different side. We are at times oppressive, heavy-handed, and incredibly violent. I firmly believe that this is against the teachings of Jesus.

The teachings of Jesus are important for another reason, beyond their moral framework or guidelines for living, or their attention on the afterlife. Jesus's teachings are important because Jesus is important to such a large number of Americans. And Americans, inevitably, shape American foreign policy through support of their democratically elected political leaders. Thus, my purpose is to fully convey the teachings of Jesus when it comes to foreign aid, military involvement, or democracy promotion.

A note on planning

One of the most fascinating things about writing this thesis is that it is not a conventional planning thesis. In fact, for most of the paper it will seem to be very much a

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political science paper. Yet planning is about action, and this paper is about action. I look at the real changes that can be made in this world, which I believe to be the core belief of the planning field.

As I plan to involve myself in politics at some point in my future, I hope that my work can be an influence and a guiding force, in the least for myself, in the goal of a better America, forged out of the love and openness of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 2 - The morality of Jesus

The life and teachings of Jesus Christ are about one principle: compassion. Compassion means "to feel with". Yet in the ancient Hebrew bible, the Hebrew word is the plural of the equivalent English word "womb" (Borg 1994). The word is not only about feeling another's pain and empathizing. It is a way of life. It is a way of existence. It is a way of being.

The concept of purity was a major focus of the Jews for much of their history. Yet purity, and its link to greater or lesser holiness, was about division. It was about exclusion and telling people that they were not good enough. It was about deciding who was closer to God in the omnipresent concept of *imitatio dei*, or "imitation of God" (Borg 1998). Those that were unclear or impure were not imitating God. Women, tax collectors, the sick, prostitutes, even the poor were far from God and impure. This hierarchy of humanity was essential, and it seemed that the Old Testament allowed and encouraged this human hierarchy.

Yet Jesus did something very strange. Instead of purity and holiness, there was compassion. Rather than exclusion, there was inclusion. The tax collector and the prostitute, those lowest in purity, were welcome alongside the Pharisee and

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the wealthy, the self-proclaimed holiest of Israel.

Jesus ate with the downtrodden, he healed the sick, he had prostitutes amongst his band of followers. This man understood their plight, and loved them in equal measure to the man of incredible wealth or incredible religious power. Jesus of Nazareth spoke of God's incredible compassion, and that a life of *imitatio dei* meant not wearing a certain color of cloth, or living a certain lifestyle, or eating certain foods. Rather, *imitatio dei* meant and means living a life of compassion!

The compassion of Jesus today

A central teaching of Jesus was that viewing the world with compassion, as he does, means love. As Jesus states in Mark 12:31, "...love your neighbor as yourself," there is no more important command from God than this. So compassion for one's fellow man means to love him, and to have a caring regard for him, even if you do not particularly like him.

This is a revolutionary thought. For its time, this belief was radical and unheard of. Yet even today, 2000 years later, it is still revolutionary. It still commands us, as humans, to live every day thinking not only of ourselves, but of our neighbor as well. That we must treat him with the same love and compassion as we treat ourselves. Regardless of whether our

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neighbor is black or white, male or female, rich or poor, we must love them the exact same way we love ourself.

Jesus makes it clear to us who our neighbor is in the Story of the Good Samaritan, found in Luke 10: 29-37, "...But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

'Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?'

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

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Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Our neighbor is every man; even our enemies, like the Samaritans once were to the Jews. Every person on this Earth is our neighbor.

Yet we go to war. Millions have died in the name of Christ since Jesus' life. Not only from martyrdom, but at war with non-Christians. Millions have died at the hand of Christ's servants as well. There is no justification for death at the hand of Jesus. In no place, at no time, did Jesus Christ allow for murder or pain in his name. Rather, he preached of love and compassion for the enemy.

No verse of the bible tells this truth more strongly than Luke 6:27-31:

"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you."

Jesus commands a policy of compassion, even for those who hate you (Borg 2011). He commands that you love those who treat you poorly. If evilness is done to you, you must accept it,

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and continue to love them. Treat them as you would want to be treated.

Can we extrapolate this belief from the individual to the nation? In fact, Jesus was speaking to all humanity. In all acts of life, whether as an individual, a family, a city, a state, a nation, or the world, we must all love one another and treat each other with compassion.

This is also the lesson for American foreign policy. The impoverished African must be treated with compassion and love. Not with a barely concealed sense of condescension and disapproval due to his dependence on your handouts. Do not treat the Muslim Arab with a hatred and feeling of disgust due to his ethnic association with global terrorism. Do not treat the European haters of Christ with contempt.

Love and compassion are needed for all these people. Not just by you and me, but by the United States of America when it deals with diverse peoples from all corners of the globe. America, if it is truly to follow the teachings that Jesus taught us, those of compassion and love, must stop its declarations of war, its bombing of innocent towns and villages in the never-ending search for terrorists. It must stop its creation of a world of dependence of much of the African continent, and its propping up of dictators that murder, starve,

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and mutilate their own people.

But isn't that what we are already doing?

Many American Christians believe that the words of the Bible are infallible. The absolutely astounding thing about this is that they do not find the original writing of the Book to be inerrant; rather, they believe their current English version to be the one straight from God! There are many reasons why this is not the case. While this may seem to be a matter for experts in theology, translations and understanding of the origins of the Bible are essential for American foreign policy, as an incorrect understanding could (and has) led to beliefs that have not been as full of compassion as Jesus commanded.

Most of what Jesus talks about is not the path to heaven or hell, but the path to a transformation of this world. Worldly transformation was the desire of Jesus. He came as a human not to teach us how to leave our human lives and go elsewhere. He came to our world as a human to teach us how to be a human, yet in the image of God. He came to revolutionize our world, to teach us compassion, and to teach us openness, tolerance, and acceptance.

Yet even domestically, Christians are often viewed as close-minded, hateful, and intolerant. If there is any group

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needing acceptance by society, you can count on hordes of Christians to oppose their acceptance. If there is any group needing love and compassion, you can guarantee that there will be many Christians up in arms to oppose this compassion. Some would argue that Christians, like the Jews of two millennia past, have a focus on purity and holiness above all else. They desire a stratification of society, with the strong Christians atop the totem pole, and the non-Christians or somehow other undesirables further down. When it comes to foreign policy, non-Americans can be viewed with contempt; in fact, they can be viewed as not only lesser in the eyes of God according to many Christians, but worthy of elimination. The ultimate goal for these people has nothing to do with the transformation of our world; they focus almost entirely on the afterlife, and believe Jesus came to teach us about heaven and how to get there, rather than how to change the here and now on Earth.

When these people are in positions of power in this nation, our country is intolerant of other beliefs and of other nations. We find ourself at war. We believe only in our form of democracy, and refuse to accept, nigh, allow, any other form of government. We give aid to the third world to apologize for the past, without thinking of what our actions may have on their future. Because what does their future matter? They will live,

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and they will die. In pain and poverty, they will die without believing in Jesus. Thus, their future is irrelevant to us as Christians. Right?

Wrong! This is exactly what Jesus spoke to. Love your enemies (in this case, non-Christians). Show them compassion. Do not commit evils against them. Do not oppress them with violence.

We are at a turning point in this nation. We must embrace the world of compassion and love Jesus instructed us with. We must transform this world to one devoid of hatred, and this starts with an America that is not hypocritical. It starts with an America committed to peace and to justice. It starts with an America that treats other nations as it treats itself. Where all men are created equal.

Christ alone is the moral framework for the remainder of this paper.

Chapter 3 - America and Foreign Aid¹

Aid must end. There, I said it. Foreign aid cannot, has not, and will not, bring the poor out of poverty. It cannot, has not, and will not, end the starvation of thousands. It cannot, has not, and will not, create a world where leaders are accountable to their people.

As the author Dambisa Moyo tells us, after well over \$1 trillion sent from the developed world to the impoverished nations of Africa, Africa is no better off (Moyo 2009). And no matter how much more money we throw at Africa's problem, it will not change. Government-to-government transfers of wealth and their negative impact are the focus of this chapter.

My story

When I was 18, I packed my bags and headed off to the "real world", as I liked to call it. Following my high school graduation, I left for Tanzania, and later Bolivia, ready to witness a new world. What I saw has been seared in my memory since then. I pursued this academic degree with Tanzania and Bolivia always in my mind.

What I witnessed was a people that were full of incredible

¹ My two most important sources for this chapter were The Bible NIV, and Dead Aid by Dambisa Moyo. Both were essential to my understanding of the issues discussed in this chapter.

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generosity and openness. They welcomed me with open arms, spoke to me of their culture, and over the months, let me really live amongst them. Yet the poverty was very obvious for a young man who had grown up his entire life in the USA. Every single day, I wondered why the people there were so poor, why they lived in huts made of dirt, and why there were always reports of villages that were without water and food. This was a mystery I had to solve, and it has empowered me throughout my academic career.

Jesus and the poor

In Luke 14:13-14, Jesus says, *"But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed."* This passage seems to clearly state that the poor and all other outcasts from Jesus' society should be included as one's neighbor. Not just your neighbor that looks like you and lives like you needs your love; all do, especially the oppressed and outcast.

This is where we come to one of the most difficult moments for me. It seems, so clearly, that Jesus wants us to just give to the poor. In fact, he seems to want us all to be poor: *"...Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor..."* Mark 10:21. Sell all your material bonds to this Earth, and give it to those who truly need it.

It seems that this is what foreign aid is trying to do. America has a lot of money. The developed world has a lot of money. Even China has a lot of money. According to Jesus, it seems that we should give this away to the poor.

Yet it must be kept in mind that there is a difference between just giving to the poor, and what I believe is giving of yourself to the poor. Giving to the poor just means giving a handout. A handout that creates dependence. Yet giving of yourself requires one care first and foremost about the plight of the poor, and doing whatever possible to lessen their suffering.

Giving oneself to the poor means making a difference in their lives for the better. It means devoting your life to them. It means not giving up on them. It means helping them become self-sufficient, and not your eternal slave as they depend on your "charity". As Jesus says in Luke 12:48, *"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."*

The inevitable talk about globalization and capitalism

When one talks about globalization or capitalism, it inflames a controversy so large that there seems to be no

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convincing people that they are wrong. People have so ingrained in their mind that globalization and capitalism are either good or bad that it is impossible to have a conversation, so I am reticent to even touch on the subject.

This paper does not really focus on capitalism or globalization. That being said, it is inevitable that I must touch on what I believe to be basic truths about them both.

First, there is no greater way to eliminate poverty than through capitalism (Bhagwati 2004). Capitalism has provided America the wealth it enjoys today, it is currently pulling millions per year out of poverty in China, and is beginning to actually lift the African continent (Griswold 2009). Capitalism is the only system that can truly reduce poverty (Bhagwati 2000).

Second, America's form of capitalism is America's form. It should not be forced on other nations. Nations should be free to embrace capitalism, and thus globalization, in whatever way they choose. America has a history of both encouraging local decision-making and homegrown capitalism, and a history of empire, where we forced our beliefs about growth, capitalism, globalization, markets, religion, and customs on countries that had to do our bidding and change to accommodate our demands (Amsden 2007).

Finally, the world will globalize with or without the

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governments of the poorest countries of this world. We are becoming increasingly connected, and so are the poorest people. America needs to recognize that the world is changing, that even the poorest person in the smallest village in the most remote nation knows what is happening throughout the world.

Globalization is more than just buying goods from abroad. It is about empowerment. It is about giving people a greater say in their government due to their increased wealth (Wolf 2004). It is about increasing knowledge for all. America should embrace this change in the world.

Aid kills

Foreign aid has disabled the third world. It is as simple as that. The developing world that did not receive much aid has exploded with growth. Asia is changing the dynamics of power, whereas sixty years ago Japan was the only Asian country that could be considered an industrialized nation. Yet the nations that refused massive amounts of aid, and eschewed dependence on the developed countries, are changing the lives of billions. China is obviously the most visible example, but we have watched, since the end of WWII, the transformation of even small nations such as Singapore from an impoverished and slum-ridden territory of the British Empire to being one of the wealthiest

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and most dynamic nations on Earth. Granted, America has still been involved in the Asian Pacific region since WWII, but the matter I speak of is foreign aid for development in the form of government-to-government transfers.

Asia proves that it is possible for growth to occur without foreign aid. But can it be proven that aid actually inhibits growth? That aid kills off the possibility of growth? That aid, indeed, actually kills thousands of people every single year due to its structure? Indeed it can, and through the moral framework I have laid out previously, I will argue that aid must end. Immediately.

First and foremost, aid causes corruption and a lack of accountability. Vicious killers are propped up by our own American government. Dangerous nations with maniacal leaders are basically given free cash to spend on the destruction of their nation. It is impossible to comprehend, within the corridors of power and influence in our nation's capital, that we could be contributing to such brutality. But that is only the beginning.

With these brutal and mindless leaders (that again, American supports), many nations experience egregious violations of their laws. When this happens, entrepreneurs within the country do everything they can to get out, and outside investors

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refuse to enter a place with such contempt for laws. Thus, the people with the ideas and the people with the money refuse to have anything to do with the nation. This leads to no ideas and no money being circulated, leading to no growth, leading to continued impoverishment. On top of that, as if the people were not subjected to enough torture, the leaders are often mass murderers, the coups that overthrow these leaders consist of mass murders, and thus, the cycle cannot be broken. Yet we must remember that the initial contributor is foreign aid. It allows the process to continue unabated as the leaders' funds continue to flow in from the USA.

At this point we must address the obvious question: why does America still give aid when it knows that this is the result? Because we must! We employ so many people to give out aid. But the dependence on US funding doesn't just end with American entities like USAID or the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). The World Bank, UNDP, and IMF also rely on American involvement, and they employ thousands of well-paid and highly educated employees. The money flows because their jobs depend on it. Also, most agencies must get rid of their funding by the end of the year; they cannot carry it over to the following year's budget (Tendler 1975). Finally, the funding is virtually unlimited, or at least it is treated that way. So

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the goal is to get rid of the money quickly, and as much as possible. No business that wants to continue existing operates this way, but foreign aid does.

So corruption and a lack of accountability inhibits the effectiveness of foreign aid. Yet it would seem that if even a dollar made it to each poor person, that some good would have been done. But it is not so. Rather, because so many millions are spent, and hardly anything makes it to the truly poor, conflict erupts. It becomes quite obvious that whoever is in power also has the money. Wars can be initiated a multitude of ways, but foreign aid certainly is a major factor. Even from a common sense perspective, rather than an academic one, it makes sense. An outside organization is willing to give you almost limitless funds. You don't trust the leader of your nation, and believe that that money is not rightfully theirs. Therefore, as an insurgent, you fight for what you believe to be yours. Then, when you are in position of power, and the developed world and world of foreign aid have barely even noticed the change of power that has occurred, the cycle continues: you keep extra money for yourself and neglect the citizens of your nation, and some revolutionary attempts to topple your regime. It is the story of most of Africa since the 1960s and much of the continent's independence.

Without delving too much into economics, aid absolutely destroys a local economy. Moyo states that due to foreign aid there are decreases in domestic savings, increases in inflation, decimation of the export industry, and government inefficiency in handling the inflow of such massive amounts of funding; countries have to fully spend the aid dollars and then have to issue debt in order to pay the interest payments on the foreign aid (Moyo 2009). Let me use one small example: say a celebrity from Europe goes on a campaign to deliver shoes to an impoverished African nation. Obviously the children of the slums of the largest city do not have access to shoes, and neither do many of the millions of poor people in the rural areas. That being said, there is a manufacturer that makes decent quality shoes for a pretty cheap price in one of the largest cities, and her factory employs a few hundred people. In addition to these employees, most of the employed have a number of children, parents, and siblings that they are somehow helping out. Thus, the impact of this one factory is quite large, and helps many people. Then this good-hearted European celebrity suddenly finds that the most important thing that your nation is missing is shoes. Suddenly your nation's market is inundated with shoes. These shoes are generally free, and far more people of your nation now have their feet covered.

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Awesome, right? Sure, in the short term. But then these shoes wear out within a year or two, and the nation is left in the same position. Almost. Except that that factory on which so many people depended is now out of business. That entrepreneur that had been providing a service to the nation was unable to employ her workers because of the flood of new shoes, and she had to close her factory. If only the aid industry had asked her factory to be the provider of the shoes, then maybe she would have been able to stay afloat, or possibly even expand at an exponential rate for at least the short term. Alas, the shoes were made in China, where there are no brownouts of power, the infrastructure system is superb, and the people are just as cheap to employ as Africans. Thanks for the short-term shoes, foreign aid. And also, we might as well thank you for your total destruction of a domestic industry that had found a niche in the market and was providing a better life for at least a small number of people.

Let us touch on one more subject: dependence. Why tax your people when funding comes from the outside? While I am fairly certain that no person in any country cheers taxes, they are quite essential for a nation to function. In the very least, they give people a stake in their nation. If a person is paying taxes to their government, they will demand certain things of

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that government. If there is no taxation, then people have a far lesser stake in their government. Yet aid does not just create dependence because it negates the reason for internal taxation within a nation. It creates a culture of dependency so great that it creates a world dynamic where there exists the elite, the world of wealth, and the dependents, the poor, the people that cannot exist without the altruism/control of the rich nations.

The theory of being dependent upon another is incredibly psychological, and actually influences us all. Africa is, without a shade of doubt, dependent on the developed nations of this world. And the crazy thing is that this is great for them (at least for their leaders) and great for us. As long as we, as Americans, or through our multinational organizations like the IMF, World Bank, or UN, control them, they are indebted to us, both monetarily and psychologically. They will always owe us money. They will also always owe us allegiance, or else we can cut off their funding. While this seems a bit grotesque from the African perspective, it works out perfectly for leaders of African nations. Basically the only requirement for a leader of an African nation is to spend the money given to you, and to pledge allegiance to America and its cronies, or in a slightly lighter tone, posse of development institutions. Then, you are

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free to spend as you wish. In some sick way, America and Europe get to continue the ways of the past, when us white people truly did rule the world. So maybe Asia is rising...we can deal with that. But as long as the Africans stay low, as they have always been in our eyes, this world is still something we can believe in. In fact, as long as they continue to prove to us that they are not mentally capable of development or being civilized, then life is as we intend it to be, and we can still rule over someone at least. This way of thinking is not in line with the teachings of Jesus Christ, so I reject it wholeheartedly, and argue for a way where we view our brother as a man "...created equal", and a man that would should love unconditionally as we continue to "*love our neighbor as ourself...*"

But this thesis is not meant to just be a diatribe against African leaders or American and European whites. There may actually be some incredibly great leaders on the African continent, and plenty of white people that advocate for their brothers in the third world. Unfortunately, their voices are often not heard, as they are drowned out by the voices of the aid agencies of which they are subjects, or to celebrities whose hearts are in the right place but whose actions contribute to African dependence. The greatest crime concerning dependence is against the African people. I know that Africa is not a

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country, and I know that it is one of the most diverse places on Earth; I regret having to lump an entire continent of vastly different people together. Alas, foreign aid has had equally devastating influence on countries that are very dissimilar to one another. And it has created a dependence which must be broken. It all comes back to the quote that we all know by that elusive unknown author, *"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."* We cannot create dependence of the third world on the first world. If we must do anything, we must not just give the man a fish. We must teach him to fish if he so wishes to learn. Also, if we listen hard enough, he may just have quite a lot to teach us as well.

The world of continuous growth

One thing I have always battled with is my personal belief that growth can bring about a better life, but also that it can bring about a life of first world problems, like unneeded stress, a focus on money, and a focus on always becoming the best, or being better than your neighbor. America thrives on competition, and is great because of it. There is no doubt that the American competitive spirit has created a nation that views all problems as solvable, and that if you work hard, you can

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achieve a better future. But we also have problems. I promised that this would not be a paper on domestic culture, so I will not address our problems, but I believe that they do exist, and some are attributable to our obsession with individuality and our incessant and never-ending competitive spirit.

This is not a culture we need to force upon the developing world. This is our culture, and we can adjust it over time as we choose. Yet it is not the culture of much of the rest of the world, and we should not force it upon them. My late thesis advisor, the great Alice Amsden, quoted a US Trade Representative in her powerful book Escape from Empire: *"It is vital to the long-term prosperity and prestige of the United States...to take full advantage of our strong global position and continue to push our trading partners for even more open markets and economic liberalization. If we abdicate our strength, we risk missing a prime opportunity to advance those policies and values that have been so instrumental in making our economy the strongest and most efficient in the world,"* (Amsden 2007). The focus of this man, a man I do not know, is to advance our lifestyle to the rest of the world. Yes, America is the strongest and most efficient economy this world has ever known, by far! There is no doubt of this. We dominate almost all intellectual fields, our military powerfully scours the

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globe (more on this later), and we are and have been, since 1776, the role model for democracy worldwide. Yet we do not, and cannot, force our lifestyle and beliefs on the rest of the world. Through soft power, we may influence them.

Technological changes are increasingly connecting this world, and American influence can spread at an even faster rate. But we cannot force others to change and be more like us. This was a powerful message from my time in Tanzania and Bolivia, and in all trips to the developing world since. These are cultures and nations with a history of which they are proud. There are so many ethnic groups that believe in their traditions, and who are we to tell them that they are wrong? Maybe if we just listened for a moment, we would learn something! We could make tweaks to our way of life, or our medicine, or our treatment towards one another that could be incredibly beneficial, and make our America even better. Maybe we could learn more about having a sense of community and interpersonal relationships; we so often lack this in our society, but it often flourishes in many of these undeveloped nations. If anything, America is a nation of immigrants, with different cultures that have influenced our daily practices. We must continue to listen to the world outside our borders, and better ourselves at every possible turn.

Maybe we are not always right

When I lived with groups like the Maasai of Tanzania, I grew to appreciate their unique approaches to the world. Some were oppressive, sexist, and overtly disrespectful, but over time these beliefs may change with increasing globalization. Others were incredibly insightful, and I wished our nation had embraced similar concepts years before. Without going into great detail, I recognized that America could learn from these people, as they could learn from us. Our lifestyle and culture is not greater, our focus on economic development and global capitalism not better. It is our choice. If they choose to participate in parts of our culture, great. If they accept some and reject others, that is alright too. It is a world of choice, of personal and cultural choice, and of personal and cultural decision-making in a changing world.

But the current setup is not one of equal power. It is one of overwhelming and suffocating American power. It is one of foreign aid that oppresses people, that allows for the continuation of repressive and diabolical governments, and that, most importantly, creates a culture of dependence. Never should a man depend on his brother; it is inexcusable for this to occur for generations. Never should a man need to acknowledge that

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his situation is only due to this faraway person that could care less about him.

In fact, let us put this in even harsher, but more logical and exact terms: Africa is absolutely, undoubtedly, 100%, addicted to receiving foreign aid. And America, the World Bank, and the IMF are absolutely, undoubtedly, 100%, addicted to giving foreign aid. Yet with these loans, Africa cannot receive foreign loans from private institutions. No one is willing to invest in a dependent nation. No entrepreneur is willing to create a product that will be provided for free through aid institutions. And no nation can grow with these loans hanging around their neck, and incompetent leaders staying in office long past their due date.

The planner provides some alternatives

China has a lot of this whole thing figured out. Forget foreign aid. Forget free money. Let's invest. Africa has what China needs: oil and resources galore. These countries cannot extract for themselves, as they do not have the technological wherewithal or capital to pursue such projects. So China is free to enter to take these resources and get a tangible good for their investment in the African continent, while America and its developed nation partners can look at their record books

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and see literally nothing accomplished after nearly a trillion dollars spent. While that is disappointing, it is not too late for America to change.

But before we discuss how America must change, it would be nice if much of Africa changed too. It takes way too long to get business permits. Streamline the process. The African continent is full of people on the edge of starvation; at least make it easy for outside companies to come in and pay a few of your people a decent wage. In fact, they often do quite a bit more than that, and can contribute massively to your infrastructure inventory. Help outsiders invest in your nations, or the viewpoint of a continent paralyzed by war, ineptitude, and lack of safety will discourage any foreign developer.

China seems to care little about the internal situation in Africa. Without discussing the fascinating and incredibly complicated Chinese culture at length, one comment can be made: China is indifferent to African politics, as long as the objective is secured. Usually, the focus of the Chinese is some natural resource. While we can sit and shake our heads in America and decry the lack of morality of the Chinese and their absolute blindness to human rights violations, we would be wrong to do so. Guess what? China has begun the process of economic

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growth of Africa. China, one of the few remaining communist nations on Earth (although communist only politically; certainly not economically) has been the catalyst for African economic growth. Not America. Not the nations that invented industry. Not the nations that brought the world from a generally agrarian and impoverished existence to a life of incredible wealth. No, it is the nation that still has over 800 million living on just a few dollars per day. China has changed Africa. This will not be forgotten. As Africa now shoots past one billion people, Africa will always remember that the country that enabled it to grow was not the altruistic people of America, Europe, and Japan, through their proxies of the World Bank and IMF, but the nation that itself was selfish and focused on its own needs, China.

Yet I am banking on a power far greater than the economic power of China. I am banking on the moral beliefs of the United States. As has been mentioned before, America is incredibly diverse. America has huge connections to every culture and nation, with large immigrant populations from literally every nation living all over our great country. China does not. It is not nearly as diverse, and due to its relative homogeneity is not as capable of intense cultural connections. Additionally, America is almost unbelievably religious. While some would like

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to claim that it is only semi-educated (or less) Midwesterners and Southerners within America that have anything to do with religion, we all know that America is absolutely inundated with religious institutions from sea to shining sea. Whether the institutions are Christian, Jewish, Muslim, or Buddhist, only in American can all these groups truly worship without fear of oppression. And as I have mentioned previously, the primary concept of these religions can all be summed up with a belief in treating one's neighbor with love and compassion, as that person would wish to be treated. Thus, the Golden Rule is a powerful moral compass for nearly all Americans. And through this rule, American can finally change Africa for the better.

If American policy can be swayed to believe in what the Golden Rule teaches us, we can end foreign aid. We can end the wars over aid money. We can influence and lessen the incredible amounts of corruption. We can end the economic destruction. And we can end the culture of dependency. We must end this. As Jesus commands us to embrace the poor, to give of ourselves to the poor, and to recognize their suffering, we must end foreign aid. It only exacerbates the aforementioned problems.

The counterargument

Jeffrey Sachs, the famous economist, argues for a very

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different way to increase development in poor countries in his 2005 book The End of Poverty (Sachs 2005). Rather than a decrease or elimination of aid, as I have argued above, Sachs argues for a massive increase in aid. He states that the world's poorest countries are stuck below the bottom rung on the development ladder, and thus need an influx of funds to increase personal income to a point where they can actually tap into the global economy. Right now, these countries are too destitute to actually even participate in industrial activities.

The problem with this argument is that personal income will not increase, and in fact may decrease as money is siphoned off by leaders that receive government-to-government transfers. Also, many of the developing countries in Asia that have received little or no foreign aid, and have quickly growing economies today, began development when they were just as poor as many African countries were. The major failure to Africa was that aid continued over time, inhibiting growth.

So what can we do?

My initial answer to the above question is: do nothing! Stop interfering and making their lives worse! Let us eliminate the devastating World Bank and USAID and MCC and UNDP and IMF (there are more acronyms I can throw out as well), or at least

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require them to consolidate into one (Calderisi 2006).

But the question arises: if they depend on us now, won't it be catastrophe if we end aid? Logically, the answer is no. Nothing will change. So little reaches the poor anyways that lives will not change at all. Less money to fight over, so wars would not increase. Can it get any worse for these nations? It cannot; the only direction is up, and the only way to achieve it is to eliminate foreign aid.

I am more accepting of infrastructure development and healthcare provision. I don't see much wrong with building roads and bridges in developing countries, or providing vaccines to the sick. So if aid must continue for some reason, infrastructure or health care would be a sound investment in the future of a nation. Roads and ports, airports and rail lines, water and power facilities, medicines and antibiotics are all acceptable. All these projects must be carefully observed (Banerjee et al. 2008), and must be designed in a sustainable manner so that the receiving nation can properly take over control of the infrastructure after development, or so that local medicinal beliefs are not discarded or trampled upon. Infrastructure projects generally require substantial amounts of capital and can also complement rather than destroy local culture. Thus, I believe infrastructure development to be

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warranted if aid is to continue in any form. Also, the provision of medicines to the poorest and the sickly should also be allowed. That being said, it is difficult to determine what a country's greatest needs are, and who are we, as outsiders, to know (Easterly 2006)?

What America can do to help the developing world is to take into account the true needs of the people. The severely impoverished of the world do not need more handouts. The developed world cannot keep deciding what the poor need, and cannot keep having expensive summits in exotic locales to discuss development for the poor. We cannot transform their governments by getting more involved in countries' affairs as sovereign nations. Rather, we can transform countries by ending aid. We must not just give to the poor, but give of ourselves. This is what Jesus has taught us to do.

Chapter 4 - America and military involvement

Early American and Founding Father Benjamin Rush commented that there should be two signs placed above the Department of War office in Washington DC: "An office for butchering the human species", and "A widow and orphan making office," (Healy 2008). This is the world of war, and it is in direct opposition to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Few would argue against a military to protect a nation. But what is now known as the US Department of Defense does far more than protect America, and we must, as a nation, deeply analyze the purpose and mission of this governmental institution.

PART I - The causes and consequences of war

Civilian Horror

America fails to admit and publicize the death of civilians when America attacks with its military. The American public has little concern for the plight of civilians in American-made wars, which increases the hatred and anti-Americanism that is prevalent around the world. This does not mean that Americans want these people to die; it means that we just plain do not acknowledge the horrors wrecked on entire societies by our

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military.

Joseph Stalin has a horrifying quote, "a single death is a tragedy, a million deaths are a statistic," (Tirman 2011), which can pretty adequately sum up the American point-of-view concerning civilian death. It may seem that I am being coarse and harsh, but no less crass than when an American general indicates that the US military does not do body counts of dead civilians.

There is no winner when nations go to war. There are only losers. And when America goes to war, the main losers are the civilians of the nation under attack. We must first acknowledge this cold, hard truth before we make any additional changes to the structure of the way America goes to war. We must acknowledge that our actions and invasion can drastically change the lives of the men, women, and children that live there.

Who is America's military?

America's military is the most powerful this world has ever known (Kreps 2011), but by putting some data to it, it is a bit easier to visualize its size. For example, US military spending is about five times more than China, the second largest spender on their military (Burman 2007). In fact, America's military spends more than the next five largest militaries combined! The

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US Navy is larger than the next thirteen navies combined, and while our Air Force is barely the most powerful air force in the world, the second most powerful is the US Navy (Borg 2011).

Some more numbers: America has over half a million troops abroad, over 1000 bases outside the USA (although, strangely enough, no one seems to actually know how many there are), and from 1945-1989, America entered into conflict and intruded militarily into the domestic affairs of over thirty nations in order to curb the spread and influence of Communism. Also, there have been ten military conflicts since the end of the Cold War (Kreps 2011), with a huge proportion of them being domestic religious, ethnic, or culturally driven (Fox 2004).

To be clear, America's power does not purely stem from its military strength; rather, it is vice versa, with America's economic power being the reason for its strong military (Zakaria 2011). This is an important point, because America is not a military dictatorship, and in no way does the majority of American policy need to be approved by the military, unlike the situation in many developing nations. The military answers to America's political leaders, who in turn respond to the American voting public. Thus, America is a nation where its citizens indirectly control its military, meaning that there are opportunities for the American public to push for changes to be

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made.

The problem with presidents

Against the best interests of the Founding Fathers, America's executive branch, over the course of many presidencies, has obtained substantial amounts of power, and far more than what was intended in the 1770s. According to the Constitution, Article One, Section Eight, "*Congress shall have power to declare war,*" yet instead, American presidents have successfully entered into wars without Congress' approval. Even after the passage of the War Powers Resolution, in actuality another attempt to curb Executive power by requiring Congressional approval unless in the case of an emergency, Presidents still do not obtain the permission of Congress before going to war.

One of the main reasons for the Founding Fathers' goal of giving the power to declare war to Congress was to keep the power of the Executive in check. Without this control, Presidents that will in no way experience the hell and horror of war send American troops in harm's way; they will not witness the many civilians that will end up meeting an untimely end, but the American President will receive the glory of victory at the war's conclusion (Maddow 2012). In addition, many early

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Americans had an incredible fear of standing armies and believed that military power was actually poisonous; Benjamin Franklin even declared that military service was like slavery (Healy 2008). But American presidents have usurped Congressional power, and seem to have an almost messianic complex that grows with every new administration, allowing them to enter into military conflicts without Congressional approval.

This presidential prerogative to declare war is dangerous because it gives too much power to one person. American soldiers go to war and die, but as was mentioned previously, Presidents will only have to deal with the negatives of war politically. This means that the true horror of war goes unfelt by the President after war has been declared. Abraham Lincoln indeed perfectly captured the sentiment, stating that, "*...Kings had always been involving and impoverishing their people in wars, pretending generally, if not always, that the good of the people was the object. This our Convention understood to be the most oppressive of all Kingly oppressions; and they resolved to so frame the Constitution that no one man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us...*" (Maddow 2012).

How to finish wars

America does not know how to end wars, or what to do after

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the war is over (Rose 2010). As Gideon Rose states, America is often "...trapped in the fog of war..." and has "...repeatedly stumbled across the finish line without a clear sense of what would come next or how to advance American interests amid all the chaos...". America does not know how to exit and leave.

The Prussian military theorist and soldier Carl von Clausewitz argued that a nation must understand the purpose of their war before engaging in it, and also what they plan to achieve (Rose 2010). Additionally, plans must be made for how to conduct the war once it begins. Without policy questions being asked and answered, the war will ultimately be a failure.

Indeed, when America is unready to fight wars, it also is unready to end wars. The Creighton Abrams Doctrine is a doctrine that argues that a country must ultimately go fully into war (Maddow 2012). Creighton Abrams' proposal was one that the Reserves must be called up, so that each community could witness their loved ones and friends departing for war. The country must understand that it is their people that are leaving, and that this drastic departure would inhibit their desire to declare war. As Abrams himself declares, *"I don't want war, but I am appalled at the human cost that we've paid because we wouldn't prepare to fight..."* (in reference to the Vietnam War), meaning that America does not seem to understand

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why it is fighting the war, does not seem to have an exit strategy, and also has no plan for determining whether their goal was achieved or not.

The results of war

America must understand why it is going to war. We must understand how to end wars. We must understand how to limit civilian deaths. We must understand how to control our own Presidents and their desire to change the world through the military. Every time we go to war, we must have a plan for how to get out, a way to determine whether we have achieved our goal, and must ensure that the American people understand the fact that their nation is at war.

For example, let us look at one of America's most recent wars: Iraq. Bush told the American people that we attacked Iraq because there were weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). America finds, over time, that there were no WMDs to be found, and that either intelligence was faulty, that President Bush lied to us, or that WMDs existed but somehow were moved in time. Regardless, the important point is that America was then at a loss for an entire decade on what to do next. The problem had been solved: WMDs were no longer a threat. But we had deposed the leader, Saddam Hussein. Was this our actual goal?

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Was Bush actually driven by democratic peace theory, the belief that dangerous and murderous dictators like Hussein needed to be removed in order to increase worldwide (and primarily American) security (Ikenberry et al. 2009)? Thus, was our actual goal to bring democracy to the Middle East? We will never know the truth, but there is one glaring fact: America had not prepared for post-Saddam Iraq. After his removal, what was our plan? How were we to end the war? After almost a decade, the violence lessened, either due to the American troop surge or a fatigue on the part of Iraqi radicals; regardless, America had no plan for when to leave, while thousands of American soldiers and unknown numbers of Iraqi civilians perished. Iraq was not an anomaly. It is a pattern, as the same situation had occurred a generation before in Vietnam, was concurrently happening (and still is happening) in Afghanistan, and obviously occurred in Korea as well, with thousands of American troops still stationed there. We do not know how to leave. We do not know how to end wars. We must strategize beyond the battlefield and know how to effectively complete the mission, end the bloodshed, and go home. Just as Fred Charles Iklé titled his 1971 book, we should always focus on this important and inevitable reality: every war must end (Iklé 1971).

PART II - Jesus and war

What did Christ say concerning war?

In Luke 6:27-28, Jesus says, "...Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." In Matthew 5:9, Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount speaks directly to peace, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God," and later in the sermon, in Matthew 5:38-39, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also..."

Jesus was undoubtedly a pacifist. As will be seen later, Christians have not lived according to the laws of nonviolence as Jesus instructed. Some of Christianity's most influential thinkers have designed theories, such as just war theory, that allows for war and violence if certain preconditions are met. The secular world has also embraced just war theory, and it has been used to advocate for military intervention since the time of Christ.

But Jesus provides no wiggle room on this issue. There is no alternative. Jesus does not advocate for weakness. Instead, he argues for peace, for nonviolence, and for doing good to your enemies. He wants you to love your neighbor as yourself, even

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if that neighbor considers you their enemy. Jesus condemns violence and war, and is known by many Christians as the Prince of Peace. Not war, but peace. Christians carrying the banner of Jesus Christ during the Crusades in the Holy Land, with that image of the cross, is one of the most ironic and painful chapters of human existence.

As if Jesus' words were not enough, his actions speak louder than any words ever could. Jesus died on the cross. He was beaten, he was tortured, he was spat upon. He was kicked over and over again. He was crucified, and he was killed. Yet through it all, Jesus prayed for those who hurt him, who hated him, who despised him. The man had come to change the world, had come to bring humankind back to the ways of love and compassion. Yet the response of that world was to destroy his life and to put him through insufferable pain and anguish.

Indeed, this point must be reiterated. Christ's life was eliminated. He was murdered. He was beaten. He experienced horrific pain. Yet never, not once, did he curse those who hurt him. Not once did he try to fight them away. It wasn't like he had resigned himself to having lost, and was just heading off to his fate. No, he had won. As he was dying on the cross, he said, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" Luke 23:34. Take a minute to think about this: Jesus is dying

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and has been beaten incessantly. He is hanging on a cross, and what does he do? He prays for those who hurt him! His life ended exactly the way he had preached, that we must love our neighbor, even when they cause us pain. And that we mustn't fight them back with violence of our own.

There is no action ever done by human beings to better advocate for nonviolence. Jesus preached a life of peace, love, and compassion. He died because of those radical words. Yet his words live on, and have indeed changed the world. He intended for those principles to inform our lives to this day. No man has had a greater impact on this world than Jesus Christ.

This world still knows violence and war

Yet this world has endured unfathomable violence, both before Jesus' life and after. This same world has experienced wars at the hands of Christianity countless times. Whether it was the Crusades or the imperialism and colonialism of the non-European from the 17th through the 20th centuries, Christ's name was evoked to kill millions.

On the other hand, Christians watched and did nothing as Hitler gained power in early twentieth century Germany; Christian passivism allowed Hitler to conduct his reign of terror and death. The world attempted to appease Hitler through

nonviolence. Yet war still came. Was this what Christ wanted? For millions to die, some estimates as high as 40 million? How does nonviolence stop a maniac like Hitler? The case of Hitler is by far the most difficult issue for the theory of pacifism, and the example where one would be most likely to temporarily throw aside the nonviolent teachings of Christ and allow violence in order to defend the world from Hitler's quest.

Does the issue of Hitler allow for nonviolent opposition?

While it is difficult to conceive, Hitler could have been stopped without violence (Meyer 1992). This requires an understanding of the nations surrounding Germany, and how Hitler was able to effectively manipulate the German people.

It starts with the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The Germans felt oppressed by the rest of Europe after WWI. This perception, whether correct or not, should have been addressed. Germany should never have been punished, or even felt like they were. They should have been accepted back into the world community. This forgiveness after WWI would have done wonders in limiting Hitler's traction within his nation, as there would have been no external enemy; rather, the Germans felt that the whole world was their enemy. Again, the forgiveness preached by Christ should have been of paramount importance when the treaty

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was drafted.

After Hitler came to power, the rest of Europe heavily armed themselves, leading to an even greater arms race. They excoriated Germany's expansion, while also being imperialists. They attacked Hitler's armies with deadly force, and actually led many proactive offensives against Germany. They did nothing to try to persuade the German civilians that their leader was actually leading a war dedicated to the slaughter of millions, and did nothing to embrace the German people or to understand their plight. There was no major focus to learn the German language or to learn more about the German culture, thus limiting any impact the outside world could have on the German people.

Hitler brainwashed his people, but he was not a popular leader when first elected. As Hitler's intentions became clear, the path of nonviolent resistance to Hitler's advances would have destroyed the stupendous support he later received from his people. While Hitler's people, the people of Germany, were lied to, and often believed Hitler's fallacies, they were not stupid. Yet the Germans felt that they were the ones that were on the defensive against the rest of the world, witnessed the deaths of their own children and neighbors, and watched as their cities burned and their countrymen suffered.

It is important to note that the German elite were definitely military aggressors. They indeed attacked Poland unprovoked. But the reason that these aggressors even were able to attack and win the democratic support of their people was because the people had been so emotionally defeated and were fighting an horrendous economic depression; they were desperate and Hitler gave them pride in themselves once again. He declared that the rest of the world was the enemy; the rest of the world should have fought back nonviolently. As Christ told us to turn the other cheek, the world should not have responded with words of hate towards Hitler. Rather words, of understanding of the German condition would have absolutely sunk Hitler's ship. People would not have been so easily swayed by his thinking.

The greatest strength one can have is by truly turning the other cheek. During Jesus' time, when the right cheek was hit, and since most people were right-handed and the left hand was considered unclean, your right cheek was hit by a backhand. By receiving a backhand, you were demeaned and insulted, but Christ says that you should never retaliate in this situation. The stronger man is one that knows he can respond, but does not. He chooses not to take revenge. He chooses, instead, to love his neighbor. This tactic should have been used with the German

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people. No one will ever know if Hitler was actually insane, and incapable of responding to overtures of compassion from his neighboring nations; even if he could not, the German people could. This is where we failed to use the teachings of Christ to inform us in a situation of the greatest magnitude.

Our major issue is aggression

The primary issue we must deal with with the current American government is aggression. America has no problem with using its military might to achieve its goals in this world.

The problem is the theory of just war. Secular scholars and Christian leaders have advocated for the theory of just war. Just war doctrine states that the use of violence is morally permissible, and sometimes required (Kennedy 1994). The political realist argues that humanity is actually inhumane, and war should be used to defend against this inhumanity.

Just war

The theory of just war originally derives from the teachings of Saint Augustine of Hippo (Gill 2006). Augustine argues that war and killing can be justified if one is ordered by God or a monarch. Saint Thomas Aquinas was influenced by Augustine, but took it a step further: war can be undertaken

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if commanded by God or a sovereign leader, and there must be good intentions, with the spread of good and the destruction of evil preeminent (Gill 2006). Later, Martin Luther writes that we must obey earthly rulers and their instructions to fight, and that temporary war can prevent greater evils from occurring (Gill 2006).

Jus ad bellum are the conditions that must be met in order to enter into war, *jus in bello* are the rules on how to fight a justly, and *jus post bellum* requires one to look at the consequences of a war and what obligations are had in the rebuilding process (Heft 2011). These Latin terms have guided Christian thinking on war and violence, and Christians have allowed war to exist as long as it is deemed just.

The theory of just war is one of the greatest counterarguments to pacifism. In the most gracious light, just war doctrine argues that a small amount of violence can occur to prevent greater violence later on. For example, why not assassinate a leader that is planning to declare war on your nation? Or why not attack preemptively to prevent greater catastrophe? One small evil is much less than the greater bloodshed that could be experienced later.

One reason to not initiate violence is because we do not know or understand the consequences of an attack. For example,

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the assassination of a leader could leave a power vacuum. Or a preemptive strike, like in Iraq, could lead to a decade of war between various ethnic groups, or could demand retaliation, like suicide bombs directed at American troops. Additionally, as discussed above, Jesus explicitly states that we must love our enemies, and that undoubtedly means that we should also not kill, assassinate, or destroy them.

Almost full circle

The early Christians were devout pacifists (Heft 2011). Over time, due to the influence of the aforementioned saints and leaders, war became just. For hundreds of years, men fought one another, evoking the name of Christ. Yet the 20th century witnessed a completion of the cycle, and a near return in much of Christianity to the teachings of Christ concerning nonviolence. For example, the Catholic Church, with fear that the atomic bomb could obliterate humanity, began to push for peacemaking, and that just war theory no longer applied with such weapons of mass destruction (Gill 2006). Pope John Paul II, a man who had experienced the tragedies of war and violence in his native Poland at the hands of both the Nazis and the Soviets, really helped in the transition for the Roman Catholic church (Heft 2011). He made public statements that preached

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nonviolence, such as "...The Christian who is committed to non-violence opposes any violation of human rights and actively, but non-violently, opposes all such evil, but in doing so does not use coercion or force. The warrior, on the other hand, also opposes evil, but in using force and creating violence runs the risk of leaving things in an even worse state than before...", and, "...war is the most barbarous and least effective way of resolving conflicts..." (Heft 2011). While the Roman Catholic Church has nearly come full circle, have other denominations? And has America? I believe not.

Did Gandhi have it right?

"If Christians would really live according to the teachings of Christ, as found in the Bible, all of India would be Christian today," proclaimed Gandhi (Samuel 2008). "If Jesus came to earth again, he would disown many things that are being done in the name of Christianity," Gandhi later stated. Gandhi seemed to not only have respect for Jesus, but also believed that the word of Christ was a guiding force in his own life. Gandhi's nonviolent protest freed India from the power of the British Crown, and his steadfast belief that one can accomplish the greatest of things without bloodshed is testament to

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Gandhi's understanding of the preachings of Jesus².

In fact, Gandhi had some instructions for the Christian faithful of the world: "...I would suggest that all Christians, missionaries begin to live more like Jesus Christ....emphasize love and make it your working force, for love is central in Christianity...study the non-Christian religions more sympathetically to find the good that is within them, in order to have a more sympathetic approach to the people." Love is central to Christianity, says Gandhi. Christ is love. Compassion, not only for other Christians or the people we love, but for all.

Even though Gandhi was not a Christian, he is one of the best examples of how to live a life in the teachings of Jesus. He is an example for all Christians on how to live a life preaching nonviolence, while still changing the world of today. Gandhi saw oppression, and lived his life trying to bring about justice for his people. Jesus did this for his people as well. His people are all humans that have ever lived and will ever live. Jesus and Gandhi both argued for a change in how we change the world, and that way is through nonviolence.

PART III

² Obviously, Christ was not the only influence on Gandhi's life, as he was not a Christian. But Gandhi believed in the truth of Jesus' words.

America's violence and addiction to war

Former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright once made a comment to former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, *"What's the point of having this superior military you're always talking about if we can't use it?"* (Healy 2008). Well, Secretary Albright, that actually is the point. One never wants to use their superior military unless absolutely needed.

Let us use a more personal example. I am a really tall guy, around 6'6". I am usually the tallest and largest person in any room I enter, and also probably one of the strongest. Yet I do not walk around the room, picking fights with smaller people. I don't beat people up that don't agree with me. It is quite possible that I could use my power, size, and strength over them...but what does that help me? It doesn't. In fact, if I did this, the room would resent me, shun me, and appease me but generally try to avoid me.

While I do not equate myself with America, it is a useful analogy. America is that biggest kid in the room. As a nation, we can make a choice about whether we want to beat up on the little guys, i.e., going to war with them or forcing them to do our bidding, or whether we want to be that person that the rest of the room looks up to and respects without fear.

America often enters into war with smaller, third world

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nations (Van Evera 1992). We enter to promote democracy and thus human rights; we also fight to preserve the global balance of power. Yet it is quite obvious that we cannot reform another society through force and socially engineer democracy, and most third world countries have almost no economic impact on the USA. There is absolutely no reason to enter these countries, like President George Bush Sr. did in Cambodia and Kuwait, and like President Bill Clinton did in Bosnia and Somalia. We often claim that we are providing humanitarian aid, but instead, we often trying to internally transform a nation from the outside; to change the government, to change the culture, and to increase any economic connections we may have. These are not plausible justifications for war and violence according to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

A new dawn

America can still change the world. But we must do it without military intervention. Our Department of Defense has been a Department of Offense for too long. We have far too many troops outside of this nation, in far too many bases. We get far too involved, with force, in international affairs.

I am not advocating for an isolationist American foreign policy. America's soft power abilities are second-to-none, and

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we can still influence the world through inspirational leadership. We can advocate for nonviolence, and can argue for improved human rights against oppressed peoples. In fact, I believe that Jesus teaches us to be voices of hope for the hurt and those in need through our love and compassion, and many Christians have taken up the cross and worked tirelessly for these people (Hertzke 2004). My professor, and thesis advisor, Bish Sanyal, influenced me mightily with a piece of his that we were required to read for Gateway (Sanyal 2010). In his article, Bish argued that we must look past our differences, rather than focusing on them, and that there are some universal goals we need to solve together. Many of these issues involve outright oppression and violence against other people. In Afghanistan, it isn't "just part of their culture" to blow themselves up and kill innocent people. We must evoke the love and compassion Jesus has so clearly asked for, and be beacons of hope for these oppressed people. We should understand and respect national sovereignty, but should not fear criticizing, first privately, and then publicly, those that continue to violate human rights so overtly (Charles 2010).

Against the better wishes of political realists, who believe that morality has no place in foreign affairs (Beitz 1979), I believe that the morality of Jesus Christ should guide

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American foreign policy. We should only evoke the Jesus of love and compassion, not the unreal Jesus twisted to force war and violence on our brothers in this world. Yes, this is still a separation of church and state, as we should not use our government as an instrument to evangelize. Rather, we should use it to promote peace through love and compassion for our neighbors. Our intervention through the use of force and war will, in no way, better the world (Niebuhr 1994). Our ability to restrain ourselves from war will be the beginning of peace the world over (Walzer 1977). This new dawn is possible, and is upon us. Let us change the world through compassion.

Chapter 5 - America and Democracy Promotion

America and democracy. Do two words anywhere have a stronger tie? When one thinks of an ideal America, one thinks of democracy, freedom, liberty. One thinks of opportunity created from political justice, a land where every man and woman can have a voice on the future of their nation, their state, or even their small town. A land based on freedom and democracy was a concept that was truly revolutionary, and one that was to change the world like no system of government had ever done before.

Yet the moral framework given by Jesus Christ makes no specific mention of democracy. There are passages that tear down the monarchical structure, such as Matthew 23:8-9: *"...for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on Earth 'father', for you have one father, and he is in heaven."* But Jesus does not discuss or promote democracy explicitly. Due to this fact, it is difficult to determine exactly what Jesus would say about the spread of democracy under the American empire.

Jesus, the Founding Fathers, and our current predicament

As has been mentioned previously, Jesus spoke of compassion

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and love. He focused on what is known secularly as the Golden Rule, and believed in the power of nonviolence. Yet did Jesus believe in what we know today as democracy? Did he believe that everyone should have an equal vote in politics?

One of the most intriguing comments Jesus made on politics seems almost cryptic initially. In Matthew 22:17-22, the Pharisees asked, *"Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial taxes to Caesar or not?"* But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, *"You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax."* They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, *"Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"* *"Caesar's,"* they replied. Then he said to them, *"So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."* When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away."

What is Jesus saying here? Thousands of theologians, thinkers like Tolstoy, and even non-Christians like Gandhi, have commented on this passage. It is fascinating because, first, Jesus refuses to answer their question directly. Secondly, he actually does answer their question, but the meaning is very difficult to understand. If read literally, Jesus directly says that money goes to Caesar, and that everything else goes to God. Material goods, money, and wealth, are things of this world;

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love, compassion, forgiveness, and a spiritual relationship with God are of the world of the Spirit.

This is why it is so complicated to decipher Jesus' feelings on government and on democracy. The above passage does make one thing very clear though: the material world is absolutely insignificant to Jesus, and that an obsession with the superficial is not what we have been called to do. Instead, we have been called to give back to God what is God's, and that is love and compassion.

Democracy seems to be the governmental system that most intimately embraces the theories of love and compassion. The theory devised by the Founding Fathers, that all men are created equal, was written in a document where the writer, Thomas Jefferson, at least theoretically, understood the concept forwarded by Jesus centuries before, that one must love one's neighbor as oneself. That one would treat every other human being one comes into contact with with absolute equality and love, and that democracy was the best way to tear down the barriers of power. For too long had America lived under a monarchy that it did not know or respect, and for too long had the voices of Americans gone unheard in the halls of power in London. Jefferson and his cohorts recognized this opportunity to stage a revolution, to envision a new world based on

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equality, and even evoked God in the Declaration of Independence with these unforgettable, and world-altering words: "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*" Jefferson understood the meaning of Jesus' words. Jesus was about creating a new world. One where love and compassion would reign, and one where all people are equal in his eyes. The early American Republic attempted to follow in the words of Jesus by creating a nation where equality also reigned. This new world was democracy.

A small disclaimer

We all know how that worked out. Yes, thousands of people gained the ability to influence their government. But there were still marginalized groups. Blacks, women, and obviously the American Indians had no place in this supposedly equal nation. It is truly regrettable, but the unfortunate way of the world. After many hundreds of years, finally we have begun to understand what our forefathers wrote, and to finally believe in their words of equality, even when many of our forefathers themselves did not obey their own sacred words!

I regret that Americans did not create a nation with full

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equality. And while I do not mean to give these early Americans (and many today) a free pass, Americans weren't the first ones to ignore the words that demanded equality. When Jesus spoke these similar words two thousand years ago, people ignored him, and ultimately crucified him. Equality, love, and compassion were not exactly the revolutionary terms that Jesus' generation wanted to hear, or what the 1770s Americans wanted to hear in their fight for freedom, or what the 1860s Americans wanted to hear in the midst of their Civil War in yet another fight for freedom (and also to the fight to preserve a governmental system that was still a grand experiment). Even into the 1960s, another fight for freedom was fought for groups as diverse as African Americans, Native Americans, Female Americans, and all other marginalized groups within the democratic and supposedly free American society. Even today, there is a fight for equal opportunity, with America's children sometimes facing nearly insurmountable hurdles when it comes to education.

Democracy is not perfect. At least America's isn't. I will be the first to say that we have made great strides since our early days. But we have a long way to go.

America's promotion of an imperfect system

It seems that democracy is actually the government that is

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closest to the wishes and teachings of Jesus Christ. Unless a jurisdiction is ruled by a truly benevolent dictator³, no system gives every person the ability to completely remove themselves from a society of hierarchy and stratification, yet democracy is the system that most closely resembles Jesus' wish for a society where love is equal amongst neighbors.

But the crux of the issue is that America now promotes democracy worldwide. Since the administration of Woodrow Wilson, America has focused not just on the internal promotion of democracy, but also the external promotion of democracy. In other words, from Wilson to the present, US presidents have taken the perspective that America must change the world at a fundamental level (McFaul 2010). For much of the 18th and 19th century, America had a truly isolationist policy, expanded only through the Monroe Doctrine. Until the presidency of Woodrow Wilson and WWI, America made few attempts to promote its system of government. After this point, everything changed, and we entered an era where America promotes democracy at every turn (Traub 2008).

Let us focus on the recent administration of President George W. Bush. Countless books and article have been written

³ I would argue that there are no benevolent dictators. The closest I have ever observed is Lee Kuan Yew, former leader of Singapore. He dedicated his life to actually improving his people's way of life, but even he was not truly benevolent, as can be read in his own book, From Third World to First.

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condemning his foreign policy (Burnell 2011). But from a basic level, Bush wanted to expand democracy. He believed that our system of democracy and devotion to personal choice and individual freedom was what the world should adopt, and places like Afghanistan and Iraq that were strangled by Islamic fundamentalist terrorists and a dictator, respectively, needed to change. These autocracies posed a danger to the safety of the entire world, and Bush felt that the way to improve the world's safety was to enforce and encourage democracy in these places.

But isn't democracy safer?

There are many strong arguments in favor of democracy, the primary argument being that democracies rarely fight one another. Democratic peace theory argues that democracies are relatively pacifist towards one another, while not necessarily afraid to go to war against non-democracies. Thus, autocracies seem to be the catalysts of war. Shouldn't America at least push for governmental systems that increase the safety of the world?

Does economic development require democracy?

History shows us that economic development and economic

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growth can very easily occur without democracy (Chang 2002). France did not allow universal male suffrage until 1848, and the USA did not allow blacks to vote if they did not own property or did not pay poll taxes, even after the culmination of the Civil War. In addition, females could not vote for much of modern history. Yet these restrictions did not inhibit economic growth. In fact, both France and the USA experienced massive growth while these societal restrictions were still in place.

The United States always desires trading partners around the world. The theory that democracy leads to economic growth helps to drive American policy and American enforcement of democratic norms. I would argue that this is the second greatest reason, after safety arguments, that the American government so stringently attempts to push for democracy worldwide.

Does America need the world to be democratic?

America has a history of promoting democracy, but also has a history of promoting governments that are non-democratic while still being supportive of the current American administration. Indeed, in some nations, America has been against the promotion of democracy, rather than for its promotion. The Cold War was the perfect example of this phenomenon. Over and over again,

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American troops entered countries and fought against the democratic government in order to ensure that the controlling power of the nation was dedicated to America and not to the Soviet Union (Smith 2000).

Since the Cold War, America has both unilaterally and multilaterally entered nations and declared a change of government. Oftentimes, Europeans fully support our movements; it is often a primary concern of European governments to promote democracy outside their borders. That being said, there are different tactics to encouraging the spread of democracy (Magen et al. 2009). Europeans tend to think that they like to pull democracy within nations, meaning that their democratic institutions are attractive to developing nations that adopt their form of government. Americans, on the other hand, tend to push democracy upon a nation, and force other nations to adopt their form of democracy. There may be a bit of truth in this. As the first nation to really spread democracy, Americans tend to be overly-confident in their democracy's effectiveness; most European nations emulated or adopted some form of American democracy and were once imperial empires (Rawls 1999), so there is often a bit more humility when it comes to their trust in democracy. That being said, democracy is only a force of attraction. It is never a lifestyle that can be effectively

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forced on a nation from the outside.

Most American presidents think that democracy promotion is almost a no-brainer. It makes sense: the American people love democracy, you are doing something to increase freedom in the world, and it seems to require minimal force to institute a democratic regime. Also, since Woodrow Wilson's tenure, it has become quite obvious that increased democracy means increased safety.

Is it our responsibility?

As Americans, do we have an obligation to promote democracy around the globe? Should we do it just to keep our economy humming, and to keep introducing new markets for our goods?

Most, if not all, presidents since Wilson would argue yes. Many scholars would argue yes. But I argue no. It is actually a sad moment to sit here and say, "No, I vote against freedom and liberty. I do not believe America should spread what it has learned to the developing or non-democratic developed world."

One reason is that democracy will come to all places on Earth in due time. If America gets directly involved, we will actually impede the process rather than catalyze it. There is a deep-seated anger in the developing world from democracy forced upon a nation by the US government (Gills 2000). This

anger will spread the more we try to force our governmental institutions upon other nations.

The primary reason why America should not force democracy on the rest of the world is that we often promote democracy through military intervention (McFaul 2010). In the past decade alone, we have promoted democracy militarily in Iraq and Afghanistan, and have been stuck in a morass of perpetual war for around a decade.

There are some ways that America can encourage democracy through the world without requiring military forces. America should live by its values. As Slaughter makes clear in her book The Idea that is America, "*...our history is a process of trying to live up to our ideals, falling short, succeeding in some places, and trying again in others,*" (Slaughter, 2007). We have had some truly rough spots when we did not live up to our ideals: the massacres and near annihilation of the Native Americans, the removal of foreign democratic governments during the Cold War, and the suspension of civil liberties in America when at war, to name but a few. But we are still the beacon of freedom to the rest of the world, and these ideals, in addition to soft power as termed by Joseph Nye, matters far more than we give it credit for (Parmar et al., 2010). Living by our own American values of freedom, liberty, democracy, and justice

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can inspire and motivate much of the unfree world to freedom. Whether we like it or not, the world's eyes have been on us since we declared our independence in 1776; as Thomas Jefferson once said, "...*this ball of liberty...it is our glory that we first put it into motion...*" (Slaughter, 2007).

Democracy will reign

There is no doubt in my mind that democracy will one day reign the world over. It is the system, even with all its flaws, that is most closely connected to the teachings of Jesus Christ. We should preserve it and cherish it here in America, as we generally do. Our system of government has inspired a world for over two hundred years, and American-inspired democracy will continue to spread to all corners of the globe. Yet America must hold dear to its ideals of justice and liberty and freedom. We must not subject other sovereign nations to change their government to be more like us. We must not start wars in order to spread freedom. We are a nation that can inspire, not a nation that either demands changes or demands bloodshed. Political realists often believe that the promotion of democracy can stoke anti-American fervor, can weaken our allies, and create greater instability rather than the stability we desire (McFaul 2010). America demands security,

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understandably, yet a violent promotion of democracy does not improve our security.

Finally, the violent promotion of democracy goes against the teachings of Jesus Christ due to its violent nature. Jesus preached non-violence; Tolstoy makes this abundantly clear in his book The Kingdom of God Is Within You, where he argues that Jesus advocated for absolute non-violence (Tolstoy, 1904). In Luke 6:29-31, Jesus says, *"If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also...Do to others as you would have them do to you."* While the previous chapter discussed extensively Jesus Christ and war, the promotion of democracy often leads to military conflict and violence, which are explicitly in violation of the teachings of Jesus Christ. Thus, America must end its desire to transform the world through the spread of democracy if that promotion of the American ideal is the cause of violence.

Democracy will indeed capture the entirety of the world's population someday, as long as America focuses on its influence of inspiring other nations, rather than forcing its will upon them.

Chapter 6 - America's Triumphant Future

As the planet's lone remaining superpower, America believes that the world order that it helped to create must be preserved (Friedberg 2011). Woodrow Wilson believed that a peaceful order relies upon free trade and a community of states that settles disputes in international courts and dispute resolution bodies (Ikenberry et al. 2009). Some argue that the sovereignty of nations must be preserved while the implementation of global security can be done through international forums and organizations like the UN (Slaughter 2004). Regardless of any future world government or economic system, America does have a place in this world's future (Nye 2011). Whether it be as the world's most powerful nation, or some other less grand future, we must promote and catalyze the creation of a better world.

So to answer our initial question, "Does America have an obligation, whether through foreign aid, military involvement, or by spreading democracy, to change the world?", the answer is yes, we must change the world, but not through detrimental foreign aid, violent military involvement, or by the militaristic spreading of democracy. We must change it through the powers of love, compassion, nonviolence, and peace, just as Jesus preached two millennia ago.

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As Nick Vujicic, the inspirational speaker with no arms and no legs, says in his book Life Without Limits, "...understand that sometimes you may not see a way out, but know that change is always possible. When you can't find an alternative path, look for help..." (Vujicic 2010). America can change itself, and can change the world. We just need to look for help. And that help can be, and in my opinion, should be, in the words of compassion and love spoken by Jesus Christ.

A note to our America: let us love our neighbors as ourselves, whether they would be deemed our enemies or our friends, and our greatest days will be ahead of us.

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