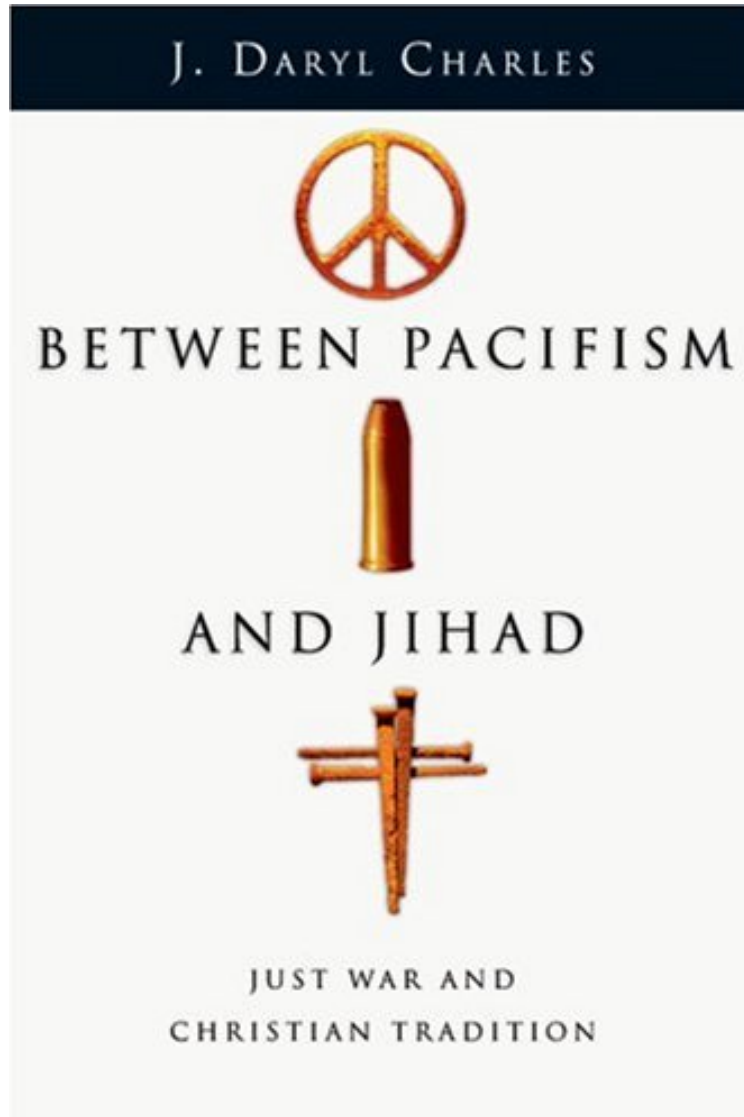


(Mobile ebook) Between Pacifism and Jihad: Just War and Christian Tradition

Between Pacifism and Jihad: Just War and Christian Tradition

J. Daryl Charles

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34.Mb

J. Daryl Charles : Between Pacifism and Jihad: Just War and Christian Tradition before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Between Pacifism and Jihad: Just War and Christian Tradition:

35 of 40 people found the following review helpful. Moral Clarity in an Age of Terrorism By Bill Muehlenberg Over 20 years ago Christian social commentator Michael Novak wrote a book entitled Moral Clarity in the Nuclear Age. In

it he urged us to think clearly and with moral discernment about the issues of nuclear deterrence, justice and warfare. This volume serves a similar function, except in the context of the modern dilemma of international terrorism. The main focus of the book however is to provide a thorough description and defense of classic just war theory. Written by a Christian ethicist mainly for the Christian community, the author lays out the various options relating to issues of war and peace. Of course the two major options throughout church history have been pacifism and just war doctrine. The former, while always a minority opinion, has had many champions throughout the ages. The latter position, just war theory, has had a long and honorable heritage, both in religious and non-religious circles. The position holds, in brief, that there are some occasions in which a war may be fought with moral justification. It stipulates some of the reasons why it may be just to enter into such a conflict (*jus ad bellum*) and how such a war may be justly waged (*jus in bello*). Charles traces the development of this doctrine through Christian history, and seeks to defend it in the face of numerous objections. Like Novak before him, he especially seeks to sharpen our moral clarity concerning the difficult questions raised in the debate, and equip believers to think deeply and critically about how their faith intersects with such contentious social and political issues. And like Novak, he is unhappy with the sloppy thinking and muddled moral waters that often occur in these debates. Just as Novak could object to the foolish notion of moral equivalence prominent during the Cold War era (which sought to show that there was no moral difference between the free and democratic West and the oppressive Marxist regimes), so Charles rejects the glib claims that actions to resist international terrorism are no better morally than the terrorist act themselves. If Novak had to deal with moral myopia and intellectual vandalism at the time of the Cold War era debates, the matters have only gotten worse. As Charles points out, our post-modern climate has only exasperated the problem. Not only are we no longer thinking with moral clarity and vigor, but we have abandoned the very notion of a moral framework in which to make ethical judgments. Indeed, post-modernism discourages us from making moral judgements at all. Thus the need to once again state the case for just war theory, to show its historical and intellectual roots, and to demonstrate how it is an important tool by which we assess armed conflict and geo-political conflict. The urgency of the terrorist threat requires some hard thinking, moral realism, and theological discernment. As such a number of issues are canvassed. For example, does the biblical injunction against vengeance preclude the right of nations (and individuals for that matter) to defend themselves? Charles rightly reminds us that retribution is not the moral equivalent of revenge. Retributive justice does not equal vindictive revenge. Societies have an obligation to maintain peace with justice, to defend the innocent, and to actively work against injustice and exploitation. Other crucial questions are considered. What about pre-emptive strikes? Are they ever morally justified? What about the use of coercive force in peace-keeping missions? Is that an oxymoron? All of these specific questions need to be debated within a larger theological and ethical matrix. And Charles argues that a thoroughly biblical understanding of important concepts such as peace, justice and the right use of force clearly lead to a doctrine of just warfare. The particulars of any individual case will of course be open to discussion and debate. But in an age in which no one is now safe from the deadly hands of terrorist bombers, it is vital that Western nations in general and people of the faith community in particular do some sober and profound thinking about these issues. This volume is a very helpful tool in such an endeavour.

20 of 36 people found the following review helpful. More careful thinking required. By Customer. By incorporating the word 'Jihad' within the title of his book, one might think that Daryl Charles intends to critically evaluate, in light of Just War theory, the US-led "War on Terror" against a postulated emergence of a global fundamentalist Muslim movement. However, if this is one's expectation, the reader will surely be disappointed. Instead, this book is little more than an extended polemic against Christian pacifism, and a veiled apologetic for US foreign policy in the wake of the events of September 11. At several points Charles emphasizes his familiarity with Christian pacifist thinking, since his father was from the Anabaptist tradition, and a conscientious objector. Yet, his interaction with pacifist thinking is egregiously lacking. He frequently makes claims that "Pacifists believe this," or "Pacifists say that," but he never actually cites a pacifist thinker who actually says or believes those things (though he quotes Just War theorists extensively). The only pacifist that he engages with at any length is John Howard Yoder and his book, "The Politics of Jesus." This is hardly a substantive engagement, though, since he thoroughly trivializes Yoder's argument, and completely neglects the theological discussion which lies at the heart of his argument. You might think, after reading through Charles' book, that all pacifists prefer to seal themselves off into their own little room, complaining when any murderer is tried and put in prison (or even worse, executed), self-righteously denouncing foreign wars, while not lifting a finger to try to help the oppressed and persecuted in this world. This is a gross distortion of the truth, derived from a methodology hardly befitting one with a PhD after his name. Charles repeatedly muddies the waters of the whole Just War discussion by freely mixing the concepts of the role of the civil magistrate in maintaining the rule of law within a nation state, with the supposed moral imperatives of a nation to intervene in other countries where there is a perceived injustice or imminent threat. Following though on his logic, if one is opposed to the latter, he is expected to be opposed to the former. That is, his reasoning would have us believe that if we object to a military invasion of a country to depose a totalitarian ruler, then we must also believe that it is also wrong for a national police force to capture and imprison a serial rapist. This is obviously absurd, yet his craftiness in writing inevitably leads to this kind of conjecture. While Charles goes to some length to describe how evil the terrorists are, and how they must be opposed in order to protect the innocent, and while

he includes a section that tries to rationalize Pre-emptive War within the purview of Just War theory, he remains surprisingly silent about the actual actions of the US administration. Afghanistan does not even appear anywhere between the front and rear covers of the book. Iraq receives only minor attention, and that only in the context of speaking about rebuilding of the country. There is no discussion whatsoever about the "justness" of the US invasion of that country. Charles appears to want his reader to assume that since he has painted such an evil picture of terrorists, and since he has been able to validate Pre-emptive War as "just," then the US actions are inherently "just." I would suggest, though, that he is fully aware that when these acts of aggression are tested against historic Just War theory, they simply are unable to withstand scrutiny. It is better to remain silent than prove yourself wrong. Perhaps my greatest criticism of the book, however, is that it lacks any specifically Christian theological reflection. His argument basically reduces to nominal moralism with a thin Christian veneer. While he is no doubt indebted to centuries of historical Christian reflection upon the basis for Just War, his appreciation for, and engagement with, the broader biblical contours that ought to inform contemporary Christian ethics is sadly lacking. For example, in defense of the occupation of soldiering, Charles points to the fact that John the Baptist does not encourage the soldiers who came to him to leave their occupation, but merely to act justly and be content with their wages (Luke 3:14). But what about Paul who encourages slaves to remain as slaves (1 Cor. 7:21)? Does Paul endorse slavery? Modern slavery (at least in the western world) was abolished largely through the efforts of Christians. Was this foolish on their part since Paul endorses the practice? More to the point, Charles completely ignores the core of biblical theology that Jesus has overcome evil by his obedience to the Father in his own submission to sin and death. He concludes his book by mentioning (for the first time) the dual biblical characterization of Jesus as both Lion and Lamb. He claims that "Christians live in the constant awareness that our sins are covered by the Lamb of God. But that Lamb, behold, is also a Lion. He is simultaneously the sacrifice and a warrior. The vanquished and the Vanquisher. The conquered and the Conqueror" (p. 180). But by what theological method is he able to infer that the Lion-character of Jesus shall be equated with that of a warrior or a military conqueror? Indeed, the crux of Revelation 5 is completely the opposite of what Charles states. The Lion of Judah! Behold, he is a Lamb who has been slaughtered! Human wisdom suggests that the act of conquering is accomplished through the use of dominant physical force. In fact, the way that Christ has conquered is through suffering and death in submission to the world's evil. Charles has gotten the biblical model completely backward! In the end, this book seems to be a thinly-veiled attempt to give biblical justification for the Bush administration's current War on Terror, and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, without actually attempting to discuss whether these actions are "Just." To do so, he needs to belittle those who tend to read the Bible more holistically. To those who read this book, please do not let this be the final word on the subject.

Pacifism. Jihad. Militarism. Are these our only alternatives for dealing with global injustice today? J. Daryl Charles leads us to reconsider a Christian view of the use of force to maintain or reestablish justice. He shows how love for a neighbor can warrant the just use of force. Reviewing and updating the widely recognized but not necessarily well-understood just-war teaching of the church through the ages, Charles shows how it captures many of the concerns of the pacifist position while deliberately avoiding, on the other side, the excesses of jihad and militarism. Aware of our contemporary global situation, Charles addresses the unique challenges of dealing with international terrorism.

"Contemporary Christians tend to approach questions about the proper use of force in international relations naively, as though no one had reflected about them until our own time. In a fallen world, such ignorance is not only intellectually inexcusable but an invitation to moral disaster. Between Pacifism and Jihad is an excellent resource for evangelicals who desire to reacquaint themselves with the 'consensus' tradition on the ethics of justified war." (J. Budziszewski, Professor of Government and Philosophy, University of Texas at Austin, and author of *Written on the Heart: The Case for Natural Law and What We Can't Not Know: A Guide*) "In this erudite, timely and helpful book, Daryl Charles surveys the landscape of just-war thinking, past and present, and helps us to understand why war should not be severed from ethical considerations and constraints. His book is a wonderful introduction to just war as well as a major contribution to the contemporary debate." (Jean Bethke Elshtain, The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics, The University of Chicago) "Few people are reconsidering the just-war theory in light of the threat of radical Islam. Fewer still are doing it with the biblical insight, historical depth and careful moral analysis of J. Daryl Charles. An indispensable book in our age of terror." (Joseph Loconte, William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society at the Heritage Foundation) "This is an important book. Daryl Charles helpfully surveys Christian perspectives, past and present, on the issues of war and peace. Then he offers some wise counsel about how we are to reappropriate just-war theory for the unprecedented challenges of our own day. And best of all he shows us why all of this requires careful theological reflection." (Richard J. Mouw, President and Professor of Christian Philosophy, Fuller Theological Seminary) "Here is an intelligent, articulate presentation of just-war thinking by a leading evangelical scholar. The lure of pacifism and the call to holy war have both found their champions in the Christian tradition. Daryl Charles draws on the wisdom of Niebuhr, Ramsey, Elshtain and others to present a mediating position: the sanction of force by the state as a means of justice bearing peace. An important evangelical

engagement with this debate." (Timothy George, Dean, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, and executive editor, Christianity Today)"Daryl Charles has read widely and thought carefully about the role of government and the place of warfare in Christian thought. Arguing for a view that neither baptizes force whenever it is used for patriotic purposes nor rejects force when it is needed to serve just ends, Charles provides both helpful historical background and probing moral argument. Christians who want to reflect more carefully about these matters will find here a valuable resource." (Gilbert Meilaender, Duesenberg Professor of Christian Ethics, Valparaiso University)About the AuthorJ. Daryl Charles (Ph.D., Westminster Theological Seminary) is director and senior fellow of the Bryan Institute for Critical Thought Practice, Bryan College, and served as the 2007-1008 William E. Simon Visiting Fellow in Religion Public Life, James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, Department of Politics, of Princeton University. He is the co-author (with David D. Corey) of *Justice in an Age of Terror* and (with David B. Capes) of *Thriving in Babylon: Essays in Honor of A. J. Conyers* and the author of *Retrieving Natural Law*. The translator of *Roots of Wisdom* by Claus Westermann, he serves on the editorial advisory boards of the journals *Pro Ecclesia* and *Cultural Encounters*, and is contributing editor of the journal *Touchstone*.