Worldviews

**The Christian and Violence**

**Mt. 5:43-48**

**Responding to Criticism of Nonresistance:**

1. *“You’re gonna let somebody beat up on you or kill you without putting up a fight? Nuh-uh! Not me, you gotta be crazy!”*

I’m not just going to sit there like a bump on a log; I’ll try to figure out a way to resolve the problem; but I’m not going to resort to violence to stop the guy. After all, didn’t Jesus allow himself to be killed? What am I saying if I am willing to kill someone else? That my life is worth more than that person’s life? And if I’m saved and he’s not, wouldn’t it be better for me to enter eternity than to send him to eternal hell, never having another chance to repent?

1. *“What if somebody attacks your family? You going to stand there and let them hurt your wife and children? That’s ridiculous, in fact that’s downright irresponsible.”*

Are there only two options here? To kill or be killed? Of course not! There are many other options available: Talk to the person, reason with them, disarm them with gentleness and calmness. If it would come down to violence, I would be willing to step into harm’s way or even to restrain someone in a nonviolent way. My plan for a house intruder is to start singing! What kind of person would shoot someone who’s singing “Amazing Grace”? We also have to consider what could happen if we would resort to violence. Realistically, we could very easily make the situation worse. A violent response provokes a violent response. A plan to respond violently to this kind of situation sets a family up for tragic accidents. And if we are willing to shoot someone who threatens our family, aren’t we saying that my wife’s life is more valuable than his? Is that true? Isn’t she saved and ready to go?

1. *“Not going to war? What’s the matter? You yellow-bellied? A wimp? You’re a mommy’s boy, huh? Too scared to face the guns…”*

It’s not a matter of fear…Mennonites in the past have faced severe mistreatment and even execution for not participating in war. If they had just been afraid of hardship, they would have gone to war. Furthermore, we should be willing to face hardship and danger for the sake of the gospel. And prove our willingness with our actions. Maybe we should be going into the war zones with the message of the gospel, presenting an alternative to the killing.

1. *“So what are you doing to pull your share of the load? Or are you just going to sit here in this country and enjoy all of the freedoms that thousands of men have died for—you are enjoying these freedoms but refuse to pay anything for them—you’re just being a sucker off of society.”*

Whoa, wait a minute…let’s think about this. This is one of the most commonly accepted ideas in the United States—that we owe our freedom to the United States military—but I’d like to ask, “Exactly which freedom has been gained by the military?” And which war has been fought to protect the freedom of the United States? Really. And even if a freedom is at stake—let’s say some economic privilege is threatened—what are we willing to pay for that freedom? Is that freedom so important that we are willing to wipe out and destroy entire groups of people, families and all in order to maintain our privilege? Do you realized how incredibly selfish that is? Our level of comfort is worth more than your very life. I would much rather live with fewer comforts than live in luxury with blood on my hands.

We should seek the good of our country and the people in it, but we should seek the good of people in other countries just as much. Christians cannot be America-centric and allow a political border to limit our love and service to others. Jesus wasn’t a patriot for his country, and we can’t be either. Do I love my country? Yes. Do I love the countries that are the enemies of the US? Yes!

1. *“But God condoned war in the Bible; the Israelites went to war; David was a man after God’s own heart.”*

God is the only one who has authority to take life. He used the Jewish nation to bring judgment to other nations. But the only way to use this as a justification to war would be to claim that the United States or whatever country you’re a part of is God’s one and only special country in the world. A person would have to be a little bit crazy to claim that for the US.