

# BLESSED PEACEMAKERS (οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί)

Mt 5:9

## I. At Peace with God

- A. Christ “made peace by the blood of the cross” revealing “the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Heb 13:20), Who was “reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (2 Co 5:19, 20).
- B. Which “passes all understanding”.
- C. Billy Graham’s *Peace With God*

## II. At Peace with Themselves

- A. Peaceable temper rooted in tempered ambitions, emotions
- B. Resigned/surrendered/committed to reality—“*Wu Wei*” Way
- C. Purity of Heart needed to diffuse peace

## III. Making Peace in Their World

- A. Avoid conflicts, contentious confrontations
  - 1. Abstain from gut-reaction responses (e.g. road rage)
  - 2. Absent oneself from potential conflict situations
- B. Negotiate concord, reconciliation between neighbors, brethren
  - 1. Bridge between disputes in neighborhood
  - 2. Seek to avoid lawsuits
- C. Work to end wars
  - 1. Pacifist Tradition
    - a. Roland Bainton: *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace*; Bainton declares “pacifism” is the only legitimate Christian position making normative what has been a decidedly minority stance in Church history. In his final chapter he rejected natural law arguments that support “just wars.” Bainton seems to reduce the “kingdom of God” to the social gospel utopia so popular in the 20<sup>th</sup> century liberalism.
    - b. Society of Friends (Quakers) make pacifism virtually an article of faith
  - 2. Just War Tradition
    - a. In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis says: “Does loving your enemy mean not punishing him? No, for loving myself does not mean that I ought not to subject myself to punishment—even to death. If one had committed a murder, the right Christian thing to do would be to give yourself up to the police and be hanged. It is, therefore, in my opinion, perfectly right for a Christian judge to sentence a man to death or a Christian soldier to kill an enemy. I have always have thought so, ever since I became a Christian, long before the war, and I still think so now that we are at peace. It is no good quoting ‘thou shalt not kill.’ There are two Greek words: the ordinary word to kill and the word to murder. And when Christ quotes that commandment He uses the murder one in all three accounts, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And I am told there is the same distinction in Hebrew. All killing is not murder any more than all sexual intercourse is adultery. When soldiers came to St. John the Baptist asking what to do, he never remotely suggested that they ought to leave the army: nor did Christ when He met a Roman sergeant-major—what they called a centurian. The idea of the knight—the Christian in arms for the defense of a good cause—is one of the great Christian ideas” (pp. 91-92).
    - b. Darrell Cole, in *When God Says War Is Right: The Christian’s Perspective on When and How to Fight* sets forth the position finely honed by Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin in particular. That these two theologians—arguably the greatest Catholic and the greatest Protestant thinkers—agreed in teaching the responsibility for waging a “just war” lends credence to Cole’s view that war is rightly considered a “good” endeavor when carefully implemented. This is because Christian love, rooted in the very character of God, prompts one to use force when appropriate to protect innocent people and to establish the peace that is good for everyone.
      - 1. Criteria generally invoked on behalf of *jus ad bellum* (just reasons for going to war): “(1) proper authority, (2) just cause, (3) right intention, (4) war as the only way to right the wrong, and (5) reasonable hope of success” (p. 78).
      - 2. Additionally, criteria for *jus in bello* (justly waging war): “discrimination” (fighting without deliberately taking civilians’ lives) and “proportion” (appropriately limiting the means employed).

## IV. Called Children of God