

God's" (Luke 20:24–25). However, she foregoes serious analysis of this cryptic saying in historical and literary context, instead simply invoking it repeatedly as proof that Jesus affirmed a wide gulf between church and state (for instance, 28–30, 159). Other resources—such as Augustine, Luther, and liberal democratic theory—determine what is to be placed on either side of the gulf.

Elshtain also has little use for pre-Constantinian Christian voices in the second and third centuries, and badly misleads the reader concerning the evidence from this era. She contends that the claim that Christianity was a pacifist movement during its first three centuries and subsequently fell away from its nonviolent origins “does not bear up under close scrutiny.” In support of this contention, she offers only a dismissal of Tertullian and Origen as “outside the Christian mainstream,” after which she immediately points the reader to the more “powerful” and “more mainstream” teachings of Saint Augustine, Saint Ambrose, and Saint Thomas Aquinas (51).

Of course, all of these teachers come after the first three centuries of Christianity and the Constantinian revolution—a fact that a reader uninformed or rusty

on church history would be forgiven for overlooking. Without definite knowledge of when these men lived, the natural assumption would be that the whole paragraph deals with the first three centuries.

Although there is evidence of some scattered Christian participation in the military beginning in the late second century, prior to Constantine “all of the outstanding writers of the East and West repudiated participation in warfare for Christians” (Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace*, 68–73). In other words, Elshtain’s “mainstream” did not exist before the Constantinian revolution.

To be strong and credible, a Christian case for adapting the just war heritage to American democracy must address, much more effectively than Elshtain has, the issues of sacred legitimization of democracy, the wholistic, communal character of Christian ethics, and the pre-Constantinian witness. I must leave to other respondents analysis of Elshtain’s application of just war principles to the contemporary situation.

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A Lucid, Closely Reasoned Book

By David A. Pendleton

Jean Bethke Elshtain explains how one prominent Christian tradition understands the use of force by first providing the context for understanding just war doctrine. There is a spectrum of perspectives with respect to war that can be grouped into four schools of thought (56).

Realism holds that politics is about power. War, being merely politics by another means, is also about power. Hence pragmatic concerns always override moral analysis or at least assume the morality of exercising power.

Holy war is the belief that religious faith authorizes and compels killing of certain others. This is associated with some extreme forms of Islam.

The pacifist holds peace as above all other values. This is the categorical position that use of force is never justified and is therefore always morally wrong.

Fourth, and finally, there is the just war position. *Justice* is seen as the reigning word. This is the long-standing tradition going back to Augustine. Peace is a goal of the civil society. Yet just war recognizes that peace at any cost may be a peace purchased at the price of injustice—or at least inaction in the light of injustice perpetrated by others against third parties.

Elshtain, in classic just war fashion, argues that as long as there are those who would engage in violence against innocents, the strong must be prepared to protect the innocent.

The first criterion of a just war, then, is that war be entered into to prevent harm to the innocent. Other criteria include having legitimate authority, right intentions, and war as a response to a specific act of aggression against one's own people or an innocent third party; and war as a last resort (57-58). There must also be a reasonable chance of success. Even if all these criteria are met, they only justify entering war (*jus ad bellum*). Once engaged in war, one must conduct a war considering proportionality and with a clear distinction between combatants and non-combatants (*jus in bello*).

The last set of criteria contrasts holy war with just war theorists. Osama bin Laden does not discriminate between military personnel and civilian women and children. "For holy warriors or crusaders, the occasion for war is the simple intention to spread their gospel, whether political or religious, through violence, whenever or wherever possible, against the infidels. For just warriors, both aims and means are limited, even if one has been grievously harmed" (58).

Elshtain writes an unapologetic apologetic and does not seek to update just war doctrine. Morality does not change—despite advances in warfare technology.

Elshtain confronts difficult moral problems and militants of the peace movement. They have cast a false choice—peace or war—and she calls them on it. "Looking the other way is irresponsibility cloaked in Christian terms," she writes, commenting on Paul Tillich's outspoken support for military action against the Nazis. "Peace is a good, and so is justice, but neither is an absolute good. Neither automatically trumps the other" (53).

Peace has rarely been achieved because reasonable minds negotiated a blessed coexistence. Rather, one party ceased aggression because it was compelled by force to do so, à la Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany. Pacifism assumes aggression can end on its own absent a countervailing use of force. History demonstrates the falsity of that assumption.

Just war tradition recognizes that "justice and force are not mutually incompatible" (55). It does not overstate the case by claiming war is a social good; rather, it makes the more limited claim that war "may be better than the alternative" (57).

Elshtain quotes Clausewitz's famous description of "the fog of war." She argues, "As with waging war, the most certain thing about governing is its uncertainty. It is the armchair critics commenting from the sidelines who think the choices are absolutely clear.... The

just, or justified, war tradition recognizes this difference by giving us an account of comparative, not absolute, justice" (53).

The nuanced, case-by-case approach to war rather than the categorical approaches of holy war or pacifism is going to be more difficult to implement.

Elshtain argues hard but evenhandedly for her position. She could easily quote the sloganeering of protestors. But to do so would be unfair. The simple-mindedness of "Wage peace, not war" or "Drop Bush not bombs" reveals the sincerity but superficiality of some pacifists. Instead, Elshtain cites a diverse and representative spectrum of writers who hold to the pacifist position.

Yet it is one thing for me to "turn the other cheek." It is another for me to turn the cheeks of someone else's children targeted by terrorists. The only reason why pacifist Americans can freely express such ideas under our First Amendment is because police and soldiers stand ready to use force to defend them against those like bin Laden. There is nothing we can do as Americans to exempt us from the indictment of being "infidels." Our very commitment to a religiously free and politically tolerant society condemns us to death in the eyes of a bin Laden.

Some questions arise throughout the book. For example, Reinhold Niebuhr and Tillich spoke in favor of the use of force—but in a very different war. I think Elshtain's marshaling of their thought in support of her position is defensible, yet our circumstances today against terrorism are less black and white than during America's fight against uniformed border-violating Nazis in the last century.

The biblical basis for just war doctrine is another question. It arises with Augustine, years after Christ and after the close of the canon. Does *Sola Scriptura* disqualify just war as unbiblical?

As a Trinitarian, I am not terribly concerned that "Trinity" does not appear in the biblical text. I do not doubt that belief simply because of the timing of its development in Christian history. Inherent need not be expressed.

Elshtain has written with a lucid hand and a charitable tone a closely reasoned book I recommend to those who honestly wrestle with how Christians are to relate to war.

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