

Martin Luther on the doctrine of Just War

IDE Symposium: The Just War Doctrine

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Introduction

Martin Luther wrote and preached to Christians in Germany about a wide range of issues, many of which we might hesitate to mention in congregations of the United States today. One of those issues is the debate on whether a particular war is just or unjust. This paper will analyze eight of Luther's writings on the doctrine of just and unjust war. In his pastoral writings, Martin Luther defined the terms just war and unjust war, definitions which are assumed and listed but not detailed in the Lutheran Confessions.

Martin Luther did not write a systematic treatise on a just war theory with regard to the history or to the political ramifications of just and unjust war theory. Luther simply wrote doctrinal treatises, drawn directly from the Holy Scriptures, and he applied God's eternal Word to Christians, both as the corporate Body of Christ and as individual consciences and souls for whom Jesus Christ died and rose again from the dead. In an important sense, it does not do justice to Luther's writings to categorize them systematically into a framework of the doctrine of just and unjust war.

Nevertheless, this paper will treat the public theological positions of Martin Luther on just and unjust war systematically, according to the ancient divisions of that doctrine, specifically, whether going to war is just in the first place, and whether the conduct of those who engage in war is just in the second place. All theology is systematic because the rational human mind inevitably categorizes and systematizes, even if the systemization of one theologian clashes with that of another. Furthermore, Martin Luther did not write in a vacuum. He freely cited ancient and current examples of warfare, addressing both the justice or injustice of the war itself and the justice or injustice of the conduct within the war.

Most importantly, Luther never did, and neither should any Christian pastor or teacher today ever, write theology solely for the sake of an interesting study, or solely for the sake of intellectually and academically advancing a field of inquiry. The study of Luther's writings, just like the study of the Bible or of any theologian, is not to be done merely for the sake of increasing mental knowledge, but ultimately to to proclaim the eternal Word

of God in each and every time and place, providing opportunities to confess and forgive each other within the various callings into which God has placed His people. Therefore, the third part of the paper deals with similarities and differences between the political and spiritual circumstances of Luther's time and ours. The Scriptural Lutheran doctrine of just war should be taught to the people of God also in our circumstances carefully and pastorally, neither offending souls needlessly, nor promoting popular thought regarding war at the expense of God's Word and the Christian conscience.

A final note by way of introduction is a list, in chronological order, of the eight writings of Martin Luther which will be cited. Four of these writings deal specifically with cases of rebellion and insurrection among the German people. The other four writings deal with the difference between the Kingdom of God's left and of God's right hand, the conscience of the Christian soldier, and war with the Turks.

A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to all Christians to Guard Against Insurrection and Rebellion was written in 1522. *Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should be Obeyed* was published in 1523. *Admonition to Peace, A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants in Swabia; Against the Robbing and Murderous Hordes of Peasants; and An Open Letter on the Harsh Book Against the Peasants* all came out in 1525. *Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved* from 1526, *On War Against the Turk* in 1529, and *Luther's Warning to His Dear German People* in 1531, together give a solid foundation for understanding Martin Luther's theology of just and unjust war over an extremely turbulent 10 years.

***Jus Ad Bellum* in Luther's writings on Just and Unjust War**

The question of whether a particular war is just or unjust must be considered first, rather than considering first just or unjust conduct within a war. *For although there can be unjust conduct within a war that is just overall, there cannot be just conduct within an unjust war. The historic criteria for conducting a just war have included some or all of the following principles, which are listed according to the order in which Martin Luther's observations will be treated: just authority, just cause and right intention (which, along with just authority, are the most important), last resort, proportionality and comparative justice, and probability of success.

The first aspect of whether a war can be considered just is just authority. Martin Luther wrote pastorally and precisely on the current events of his time for the benefit of all Christians according to their God-given vocations. In four of Luther's writings cited here, Luther is dealing with the imminent Peasants' Rebellion of 1524-1525 headed by Thomas Muentzer and others.

These writings, as so many others of Luther also do, uphold the God-given calling of ruler, emperor, head of state, and bearer of the sword in the civil realm. Warfare against justly constituted authority is rebellion and cannot be considered a just war, because there is no justly constituted authority to wage such a war. Luther gives both Scripture and practical wisdom in warning the German people against rebellion:

“Although the hand, therefore, will not get far, and there is hence no need for me to restrain it, I must nevertheless instruct men’s hearts a little. As regards the hand, I leave matters to the temporal authorities and nobility. They should, of course, take action, each prince and lord in his own territory, by virtue of the obligations incumbent upon such duly constituted authority; for what is done by duly constituted authority cannot be regarded as insurrection.” “For insurrection lacks discernment; it generally harms the innocent more than the guilty...for this reason governing authority and the sword have been established to punish the wicked and protect the upright, that insurrection may be prevented...”¹

Martin Luther did not write these words merely to uphold good order or to promote a conservative worldview. He cited Romans 13:1-4, which includes: “Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment,” and 1 Peter 2:13-14: “Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.” Every article of faith and life, teaching and practice, is established only by the written Word of God, Holy Scripture, in Luther’s writings. This must also be true of the writings and proclamation of God’s pastors and people today.

In his writing, “Temporal Authority: To What Extent it should be Obeyed,” Luther maintains that the office of the sword and of civil government is established by the Word of God even from the beginning. “The law of this temporal sword has existed from the beginning of the world,”² after which Luther cites Genesis chapter 4 regarding Cain and his mark from God to protect anyone who might kill him unjustly, and also Genesis chapter 9 regarding the just use of capital punishment for murderers. Luther then distinguishes temporal, civil authority from spiritual, churchly authority.

“There appear to be powerful arguments to the contrary, Mt. 5:38-41 [do not resist the one who is evil, turn the other cheek], Rom. 12:19 [never avenge yourselves], Mt. 5:44 [love your enemies], 1 Pt. 3:9 [do not repay evil for evil]...these and similar passages would certainly make it appear as

1 AE 45: “A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to all Christians to Guard Against Insurrection and Rebellion” (1522), 61, 62-63.

2 AE 45: “Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should be Obeyed” (1523), 88-89.

though in the New Testament Christians were to have no temporal sword." "If all the world were composed of real Christians, that is, true believers, there would be no need for or benefits from prince, king, lord, sword, or law." "All who are not Christians belong to the kingdom of the world and are under the law...God has provided for them a different government beyond the Christian estate and kingdom of God. He has subjected them to the sword so that, even though they would like to, they are unable to practice their wickedness, and if they do practice it they cannot do so without fear or with success and impunity."³ And, finally, regarding whether Christians may serve as civil ruler, soldier, executioner, and other legitimate positions of authority in the civil government: "A Christian too may bear the temporal sword and punish the wicked...you would be entering entirely into the service and work of...your neighbor and to others."⁴

It is important to recognize that the just authority of war and of force, the sword, and punishment, is given to the civil authorities, and not to the church authorities. Many passages could be cited, but Luther gives a succinct contemporary example that says it all in his writing "On War Against the Turk" of 1529: "If the banner of Emperor Charles or of a prince is in the field, then let everyone run boldly and gladly to the banner to which his allegiance is sworn...If the banner of a bishop, cardinal, or pope is there, then run the other way..."⁵ The teaching of Luther, drawn directly from the Holy Scriptures, distinguishes private vengeance by individuals from public vengeance by officials holding a God-given office. Luther also then distinguishes civil authority from church authority, as our Lord Jesus does in His Word.

To summarize this first criteria of just authority to wage war: since the fall into sin and the first murder, there is a justly instituted office through which God punishes evil and rewards good. This office is for the benefit of unchristian people, who are not guided by God's Word and faith, but rather by force, punishment, and reward. The office of civil government is not something taken by private individuals, but rather given by God, as Luther wrote in his "Admonition to Peace" of 1525: "No one, by his own violence, shall arrogate authority to himself..."⁶ Finally, Christians may hold a civil office with a good conscience, as long as they act in accordance with God's Word and will and do what He commands with regard to the purpose and function of civil government.

3 Ibid., 89-90.

4 Ibid., 95-96.

5 AE 46: "On War Against the Turk" (1529), 169.

6 AE 46: "Admonition to Peace, A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants in Swabia" (1525), 25.

The second criteria of just war is just cause and right intention. While just authority may often be easier to apply, clearly excluding all but duly constituted authorities of nations, just cause and right intention is often complex and difficult to discern. Nevertheless, this criteria, too, is not solely political, but is more importantly also a spiritual issue, an issue of life and death, an issue that affects the consciences as well as the bodily lives of Christians and non-Christians alike.

Luther did not attempt an exhaustive list of the just and unjust causes of war. It is clear that Luther sought to speak when God speaks through the Word of Holy Scripture, and to be silent on questions where God does not speak. "I will say nothing here of the temporal dealings and laws of the governing authority. That is a large subject, and there are too many law books already..."⁷ "It is not fitting that I, an evangelist, should judge or make decisions in such matters. I am to instruct and teach men's consciences in things that concern divine and Christian matters; there are books enough about the other things in the imperial laws."⁸

However, Luther did, simply and pastorally, write that just war is defensive, and unjust war is offensive. The following quotes regarding just cause for going to war are from Luther's 1526 writing "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can be Saved": "It is not right to start a war just because some silly lord has gotten the idea into his head. At the very outset I want to say that whoever starts a war is in the wrong." "Worldly government has not been instituted by God to break the peace and start war, but to maintain peace and to avoid war." "Wait until the situation compels you to fight when you have no desire to do so." "No war is just, even if it is a war among equals, unless one has such a good reason for fighting and such a good conscience that he can say, 'My neighbor compels and forces me to fight, though I would rather avoid it.' In that case, it can be called not only war, but lawful self-defense, for we must distinguish between wars that someone else begins because that is what he wants to do and does before anyone else attacks him, and those wars that are provoked when an attack is made by someone else. The first kind can be called wars of desire; the second, wars of necessity. The first kind are of the devil; God does not give fortune to the man who wages that kind of war. The second kind are human disasters; God help in them!" "But if a lord or prince...rejoice in his power and wealth and honor...he is a fool. That kind of prince would start a war over an empty nut and think of nothing but satisfying his own will. God restrains such princes by giving fists to other

7 AE 45: "Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should be Obeyed" (1523), 118.

8 AE 46: "Admonition to Peace, A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants in Swabia" (1525), 40.

people, too. There are also people on the other side of the mountain. Thus one sword keeps the other in the scabbard.”⁹

Many comments are appropriate for these vital assertions on whether the cause in fighting a war is justified. The first assertion is that, even though the just authority to wage war criteria is met, the cause is not always justified. A second assertion based on Luther’s above writing is that that one belligerent in a war might be justified, but they cannot all be, for whoever starts the war is in the wrong. A third assertion, and many more could and should be made, is that even if one participant in a war has just cause on its side, if it is not waged with right authority, its cause cannot be entirely justified.

An example in Luther’s time of a possible just cause matched with unjustly constituted authority is that of a holy war, also known as a crusade, which Europe had experienced many times over the five centuries preceding the time of Luther. The crusades were declared and headed mostly, and originally, by popes. This means that, even if the cause was justified, as in, the armies of Europe were justified in defending against the attacks of Islamic armies, the authority aspect of those wars was not justified.

A few quotes from “On War Against the Turk” illustrate this point from Martin Luther. “In the first place, the Turk certainly has no right or command to begin war and to attack lands that are not his. Therefore his war is nothing but an outrage and robbery with which God is punishing the world, as He often does through wicked scoundrels, and sometimes through godly people.” “In the second place, we must know who the man is who is to make war against the Turk so that he may be certain that he has a commission from God and is doing right.”¹⁰

“In the first place, if there is to be war against the Turk, it should be fought at the emperor’s command, under his banner, and in his name.” “In the second place, this fighting under the emperor’s banner and obedience to him ought to be true and simple.” “The emperor and the princes should be exhorted concerning their office and their bounden duty to give serious and constant thought to governing their subjects in peace and to protecting them against the Turk. This would be their duty whether they were Christians or not, though it would be very good if they were Christians.”¹¹

Luther boldly and succinctly denied that the Turks had just cause to attack Europe. But Luther also boldly and succinctly denied that the pope, or any other authority in the church, had any authority to command, lead, or

9 AE 46: “Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved” (1526), 118-122.

10 AE 46: “On War Against the Turk” (1529), 170.

11 AE 46: “On War Against the Turk” (1529), 186.

organize even a defensive war with a just cause. And yet Luther also stressed the importance of justified, lawful defense against the unjust aggression of the Turks, under a just and right authority, namely, the emperor and the princes.

Theory gives way to reality when these assertions are made. Emperors, princes, and all who bear the sword in offices of civil authority must not go to war without a just cause. However, they must go to war if war is entirely unavoidable, defensive, a last resort, the lives of the people they govern are at stake, and there is no chance for peace, but there is a chance of winning.

Theory also gives way to reality, not just regarding the duties that civil rulers must do and must not do, but also regarding the duties that citizens must do and must not do. Luther makes this quite clear in “Temporal Authority”: “In this matter subjects are in duty bound to follow, and to devote their life and property, for in such a case one must risk his goods and himself for the sake of others. In a war of this sort it is both Christian and an act of love to kill the enemy without hesitation, to plunder and burn and injure him by every method of warfare until he is conquered (except that one must beware of sin, and not violate wives and virgins). And when victory has been achieved, one should offer mercy and peace to those who surrender and humble themselves.”¹²

The last part of that quote belongs in the next section on just conduct within war, namely, distinguishing between combatants and non-combatants, men and women, belligerents and innocents, as well as just treatment of prisoners. But the first part of the quote details the duties of citizens and subjects in the case of a war with a just, defensive cause, waged by just and rightly constituted authority. Citizens owe it to their rulers to serve in the military if they’re able, fight in order to win, support their leaders, and use all other lawful means to end the war swiftly.

But what if the cause of the war is unjust? What then is the duty and calling of Christians with regard to their earthly, temporal, civil authorities? Luther addresses this as well. “What if a prince is in the wrong? Are his people bound to follow him then too? Answer: No, for it is no one’s duty to do wrong; we must obey God (Who desires the right) rather than men [Acts 5:29]. What if the subjects do not know whether their prince is in the right or not? Answer: So long as they do not know, and cannot with all possible diligence find out, they may obey him without peril to their souls.”¹³

This counsel from Martin Luther is very wise and important for us to consider and learn today. It has been taught in some circles that Christians

12 AE 45: “Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should be Obeyed” (1523), 125.

13 AE 45: “Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should be Obeyed” (1523), 125-126.

only ought to refuse to obey their leaders if the Gospel is at stake, that is to say, if one is called on to renounce Christ or stop preaching in His Name. Luther cites Acts 5:29, which is admittedly during a time of persecution of Christ's by church authorities because Peter and the apostles were teaching in Jesus' Name. However, Luther applies this passage here also to the God-given calling of every Christian not to participate in the evil of unjust war. God does not call us to do wrong, even if we are just obeying orders. God does call us to suffer, rather than to do evil.

But the other part of the quote above is very important as well. The full extent of whether war is just or not cannot always be known. This doesn't excuse willful ignorance, but it does comfort the conscience of the soldier, or ruler, or citizen, who, with all diligence, tries to know whether the authority and cause for war is just, and, in a time of uncertainty, acts to the best of his knowledge. To quote loosely an unwise ruler, there are known unknowns. These are things we know that we don't know.

The role of a preacher and teacher of God's holy Word in the Church is vital, whether a just war or an unjust war is being waged. Pastors must, above all else, pray for peace. By 1531 it seemed apparent that the pope was about to convince the emperor to declare war on the Germans and crush the churches of the Reformation militarily. The following quotes are from "Luther's Warning to His Dear German People" regarding the role of a pastor in such a situation:

"In the third place, it is not fitting for me, a preacher, vested with the spiritual office, to wage war or to counsel war or incite it, but rather to dissuade from war and to direct to peace, as I have done until now with all diligence. All the world must bear witness to this. However, our enemies do not want to have peace, but war. If war should come now, I will surely hold my pen in check and keep silent and not intervene as I did in the last uprising." "I repeat what I said earlier, that I do not wish to advise or incite anyone to engage in war. My ardent wish and plea is that peace be preserved and that neither side start a war or give cause for it. For I do not want my conscience burdened, nor do I want to be known before God or the world as having counseled or desired anyone to wage war or to offer resistance except those who are enjoined and authorized to do so. But wherever the devil has so completely possessed the papists that they cannot and will not keep or tolerate peace, or where they absolutely want to wage war or provoke it, that will rest upon their conscience."¹⁴

This was somewhat of a complex case, involving higher and lower civil authority, whether justice remained with the right authority, the just cause,

14 AE 47: "Luther's Warning to His Dear German People" (1531), 18, 34.

or both. Luther was convinced that the pope and the emperor were about to wage war on the Germans because of the Gospel, in order to stamp it out and suppress the true teaching of Christ and His saving Word. Luther's reaction to this might seem surprising, but his advice does lie within the tradition of the just war doctrine.

Luther simply viewed the attack of the papists and of the emperor as wrongful authority waging an unjust war with the unjust cause of attacking Christ and His Church. He not only advised Christians not to take up arms to help in such a cause, but even allowed for armed defense against such an attack. One more quote from "Luther's Warning to His Dear German People" follows:

"Furthermore, if war breaks out - which God forbid - I will not reprove those who defend themselves against the murderous and bloodthirsty papists, nor let anyone else rebuke them as being seditious, but I will accept their action and let it pass as self-defense. I will direct them in this matter to the law and to the jurists. For in such an instance, when the murderers and blood-hounds wish to wage war and to murder, it is in truth no insurrection to rise against them and defend oneself. Not that I wish to incite or spur anyone on to such self-defense, or to justify it, for that is not my office; much less does it devolve on me to pass judgment or sentence on him. A Christian knows very well what he is to do - namely, to render to God the things that are God's and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but not to render to the blood-hounds the things that are not theirs." "For the papists are deliberately starting the war; they refuse to keep the peace, they do not let others rest who would like to live in peace. Thus the papists are much closer to the name and the quality which is termed rebellion."¹⁵

***Jus in Bello* in Luther's writings on Just and Unjust War**

Martin Luther commented briefly and only in passing on just conduct within war. An earlier quote from "Temporal Authority" included these vital stipulations: that Christian soldiers may employ "every method of warfare until [the enemy] is conquered (except that one must beware of sin, and not violate wives and virgins). And when victory has been achieved, one should offer mercy and peace to those who surrender and humble themselves." As much as humanly possible, rulers and soldiers must distinguish between armed combatants and unarmed civilians. Luther clearly calls rape within war a sin, and he cautions against the mistreatment of prisoners.

In his "Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to all Christians to Guard Against Insurrection and Rebellion" of 1522, Luther forbids rebellion, not only because it has no just authority to wage war, but because rebellion by its

¹⁵ AE 47: "Luther's Warning to His Dear German People" (1531), 19-20.

very nature doesn't discriminate between guilty and innocent people. "For insurrection lacks discernment; it generally harms the innocent more than the guilty..."¹⁶ Although Luther had earlier quite severely scolded both peasants and princes and denounced both their causes as unjust, he had advised the princes to crush rebellion quickly and brutally, lest the entire country be destroyed. But the princes went too far. Several hundred thousand peasants were slaughtered. Luther wrote afterward to the princes: "Did I not in that very book beg the rulers to show grace to those who surrender?"¹⁷

Luther noted that wisdom is required for princes and rulers to wage just war, not just proportionately to the attack or invasion that justified such defensive just war, but also proportionately within the conduct of the war. "[A prince] must take care to deal justly with evildoers. Here he must be very wise and prudent, so he can inflict punishment without injury to others." "A prince must punish the wicked in such a way that he does not step on the dish while picking up the spoon, and for the sake of one man's head plunge country and people into want and fill the land with widows and orphans. Therefore, he must not follow the advice of those counselors and fire-eaters who would stir and incite him to start a war, saying, "What, must we suffer such insult and injustice?" He is a mighty poor Christian who for the sake of a single castle would put the whole land in jeopardy."¹⁸

The Application of Luther's writings on Just and Unjust War in the Christian Church today

Firstly, it is just as vital in our day to have faithful students of God's holy Word, preachers, pastors, and teachers, who will shepherd the flock of Christ in His one holy Christian and apostolic Church, as it was in Martin Luther's day. This involves not avoiding difficult and contentious issues such as just and unjust war, but rather patiently, boldly, confidently, and with much study and prayer, proclaiming God's Word on these issues and relating them to our lives and times. Since we are without a preacher and prophet like Luther in our day, we should not seek individually to draw conclusions on these issues and present them as the teaching of the whole Church, but first discuss, debate, study, present, and pray with each other, so that godly consensus might be reached, and God's people edified by a united speaking of the truth.

Secondly, the theological, political, economic, and spiritual differences between our day and Luther's day are far less than the similarities.

16 AE 45: "A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to all Christians to Guard Against Insurrection and Rebellion" (1522), 62.

17 AE 46: "An Open Letter on the Harsh Book Against the Peasants" (1525), 69.

18 AE 45: "Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should be Obeyed" (1523), 123-124.

Specifically with regard to the just war doctrine, God is still God. We are still sinners. Christians are still justified by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. God still establishes civil authority for the benefit of believers and unbelievers. God still rules and governs the entire world through earthly rulers. God still allows and commands qualified Christians to serve in positions of earthly government, such as presidents, soldiers, and policemen.

Through these offices, established immediately after the fall into sin, God continues to punish evildoers and reward those who do good. Through just, defensive warfare, God continues to protect the innocent and defeat those who delight in war and bloodshed. Through Christ's Church, God still gives new life through faith and Baptism. Through parents, God still gives bodily life, and all that we need to support this body and life. And, according to His good and gracious will, where and when He pleases, God makes wars cease to the ends of the earth.

God is still the God of life and the God of peace. It is the devil who delights in war and bloodshed. It is the sinful flesh that desires to rule and conquer and destroy other human beings for whom Christ died. It is the fallen world that swarms with terrorists and bombs, threats and violence, weapons and pride. Death is still the wages of sin, not merely the wages of a failed foreign policy or of a momentary lapse of reason. Not much has changed.

Some things have changed. The Christian Church has far less influence, or, at least, far less political and economic and military influence, today, than it did in the nations of the Holy Roman Empire in Europe during medieval times. Popes no longer grant divine right to kings, although they haven't yet learned to shut up regarding every sociopolitical issue that might encourage them to pen an encyclical. Princes no longer raise armies to defeat nearby princes who disagree on the nature of justification or on the bodily presence of Jesus Christ in the Lord's Supper, although wars based on religious differences continue to be fought around the world.

Today, Islam still inspires psychotic, satanic violence among its most dedicated and radical adherents, although its jihad of terroristic warfare is more often waged by young unemployed malcontents hiding in caves and hospitals than by empires or by nation-states. Today, Christians are still confused and often completely wrong about the distinction between the authority of the Church and that of the state, although it's also true that the great American experiment of a constitutional republic has caused the beginning of some fruitful discussions that may yet point to the fact that God rules the world in quite a different way through the state than He does through the Church. And today, the mighty power of global surveillance and

endless overwhelming caches of information might seem to make it easier to ascertain the truth about what really happens during war, or whether war can be just in the first place, but quite often, the opposite proves true.

So, what then shall we say today as the Christian Church and as shepherds under Christ of His flock? We must start and end where Martin Luther did – with the written Word of God, Holy Scripture, alone. All theologians, preachers, preaching, resolutions, synods, committees, politics, politicians, nations, and people must be subordinated to Jesus Christ and to His eternal Word.

We must speak where God speaks. We should be silent where God does not speak. God does not address every contingency of whether warfare is justified. And yet God is clear, and black and white, on good and evil. Civil authority and earthly government is established for the ultimate purpose of punishing evil, with force if necessary, and of rewarding those who do well.

And we must not be so quick to try immediately to justify a war, or a particular aspect of a war. War is always evil. Defending one's nation and people against unjust war can be just, but the fact that war exists and is waged is evil. God is the God of life and the God of peace. War destroys peace and life. There was no war in Eden, neither will there be war in the heavenly Jerusalem.

War can only be just, therefore, relatively, to the criteria that God has established: only if it's a last resort, and everything else has been tried, if the proper authority declares war, if the cause is defensive and just, and if the conduct within the war is just. The Church must not relinquish her voice regarding this vital pro-life issue, as she has too often in the past. Neither should the Church become too involved in the matters of the state, and thereby disobey God by seizing the sword which is not given to the Church.

So where do we stand today? We are in the world, but not of the world (John 17:14-16). We are sons and daughters of God the Father, in the Kingdom of our Lord and Brother Jesus Christ, Whose Kingdom is not of this world. And yet we are still in the world. We may hold public office, exercise civil authority, serve in the military, help to wage just war, and use force and other punishments in the administration of such authority, not as a separate realm from God's Almighty power, but as a distinctive way that God rules in the world still today.

We are Lutheran Christian pastors and people, hearers of God's Word, confessors of the Bible, and of the Book of Concord as a correct interpretation of the Bible against heresy, and we are also citizens of this nation, the United States of America. Who or what is the rightly constituted

authority in this nation that may wage just war? The President of our nation is not the highest civil authority. Neither are the House or Senate, the Court(s), the vote of the people, the military commanders, or any king or emperor.

In this constitutional republic, the Constitution of the United States is the highest civil authority – a written document. This document is not perfect or divine. But it is the ultimate authority, to which all other, lower, authorities, appeal in case of disagreement. Checks and balances have been built into the three branches of this government by the founding document and its ratified amendments.

As the highest authority, to whom does the Constitution grant the authority to wage just war? A reading from the United States Constitution, Article 1, Section 8: “The Congress shall have power...to declare war, grant letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water, to raise and support armies...to provide and maintain a navy...to provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions.” After studying carefully the history of kings, emperors, wars, occupations, and the suffering incurred thereby, a brilliant founding father and author of this Constitution remarked: “The constitution supposes, what the history of all governments demonstrates, that the executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It has accordingly with studied care vested the question of war in the Legislature.”

This means that just authority, the *sine qua non* of whether a war is just, lies only in constitutionally declared war by the legislature of this great nation. How many times has the Congress declared war since World War II? Is it lawful, or constitutional, for the Congress to grant an “Authorization for the Use of Military Force” to the last two presidents? These are some questions that we must ask and answer with regard to the just or unjust policies of our leaders, as we pray for them, and as we exhort them and the Christians to be wise and just in all we do.

Many questions arise also concerning whether the cause for war is just. Can a just war be waged against an idea, such as terror, or against a tactic, such as terrorism? Can a just war be waged against a nation that has not attacked, that cannot attack, or that wouldn't likely risk an attack for fear of rapid destruction from a superpower? Should Christians support a war because their favorite agenda, party, or president supports it, or because the country to whom they owe allegiance wages it? Or should Christians risk many things in order to speak the truth, protect the innocent here and

abroad, and call civil authorities to account based on God's eternal Word, even when it is unpopular, or regarded as unpatriotic, or even treasonous?

Regarding the just war doctrine generally, it is a doctrine, not merely a theory. The details of this doctrine are still being worked out, not in their Scriptural God-given foundation, but in their application to changing times and circumstances. Furthermore, a doctrine is not just an idea, or a philosophy, or an intellectual thing to be discussed and debated.

This doctrine of whether war is just or unjust has temporal and eternal ramifications for real, living, breathing people, men, women, and children, Christian and unchristian alike. The innocent children and women who are slaughtered, and this happens in every war, just or unjust, they don't care much whether they're being slaughtered in a just war or an unjust war. They just want to live. Living people don't usually want to be killed. War isn't natural. It's not just the end of a long political process. War stops a beating heart. War is anti-life. To begin a war is always wrong. War is only just if it is waged in order to limit and stop the bloodshed as soon as humanly possible, and after all other means have been exhausted.

It is the duty of every Christian constantly to pray, for our elected leaders and for our soldiers and for all civil authorities who enforce justice. The old agendas and hymnals had a prayer that God would give us perpetual victory over our enemies. Before we pray that, we need to pray for peace. And even while fighting a just war, perhaps especially then, we must continually pray with all urgency, as if God might immediately end the war just because we've prayed, that He would do so, that He would spare innocent lives, that He would protect our soldiers who are in harm's way, and that He would prevent further war, bloodshed, violence, and all things that lead to war as well.

One final note, and this deserves a paper all on its own, is the importance of pastoral care for Christians who serve in the Armed Forces. This example addresses just conduct within a war. It's also a good example of not just studying Luther's writings on war as an historical curiosity, but on faithfully and pastorally applying the just war doctrine to Christian consciences and souls who need forgiveness and healing and resurrection.

Veterans need many things: insurance, medical care, sometimes psychological counseling, housing, encouragement, appreciation, and much more. But they don't need any of that as much as they need good preaching, spiritual care, and Confession and Absolution. Sometimes veterans will begin to confess to others that they are ashamed of some things they did during a war, and those listening will silence them, not to offer Absolution or direct

them to Church and to pastor, but rather to say: You did what you had to do. More injurious words have rarely been spoken.

The people in the armed services of this nation continue to suffer from PTSD and depression and suicide and guilt, and the solution is not merely better budgets, housing, healthcare, or psychology, although all those things can be good and important. Soldiers need the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ, Who died rather than take up the sword, Who rose again from the dead so that His victory over death is ours too, Who places us into callings where we proclaim His truth and protect innocent life, and Who forgives our sins against our callings richly and daily in the Christian Church.

To conclude, I end with a declaration from Psalm 120:7: "I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war!" And also a prayer - let it be all of our prayer - that Luther also prayed often, to God, from Psalm 68:30, "... scatter the peoples who delight in war." Amen.

Additional note: [Luther was fallible, and we don't subscribe to all his writings. But even the Lutheran Confessions, to which Lutheran pastors do subscribe, both promote the waging of a just war by Christians generally, as in AC XVI (Civil Affairs), and cite specific instances, such as the emperor "making war to drive away the Turk from his country," AC AP XXI (On the Invocation of Saints). AC XXVIII establishes both true civil authority and true church authority, taking the power of the sword and physical punishment from the Church and granting it to the civil government on the basis of God's Word alone. AC AP V, 120 (on Love and Fulfilling the Law) even mentions a case of unjust war: "Dissensions, [Proverbs 10:12] says, increase by means of hatred. We often see that tragedies arise from the most trifling offenses. Certain petty offenses occurred between Gaius Caesar and Pompey. If one had yielded a very little to the other, civil war would not have arisen. But while each gave into his own hatred, the greatest commotions arose from a matter of no importance." Of course this is an illustration on a topic of theology, not a systematic or dogmatic treatment of either the just war doctrine or of its entire application to that particular civil war.]

Appendix: Direct Quotes from Martin Luther's Writings

AE 45: "A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to all Christians to Guard Against Insurrection and Rebellion," 1522

"Although the hand, therefore, will not get far, and there is hence no need for me to restrain it, I must nevertheless instruct men's hearts a little. As regards the hand, I leave matters to the temporal authorities and nobility. They should, of course, take action, each prince and lord in his own territory, by virtue of the obligations incumbent upon such duly constituted authority; for what is done by duly constituted authority cannot be regarded as insurrection." p.61.

"For insurrection lacks discernment; it generally harms the innocent more than the guilty...for this reason governing authority and the sword have been established to punish the wicked and protect the upright, that insurrection may be prevented, Romans 13:1-4, 1 Peter 2:13-14." 62-3

[First, if the authorities are unwilling to act, confess...then pray...then speak!]

AE 45: "Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should be Obeyed," 1523

"Matthew 5:25, 39-40, and Romans 12:19, were used long ago against St. Augustine by the prince Volusian, who charged that Christian teaching permits the wicked to do evil, and is incompatible with the temporal sword."

81

"The law of this temporal sword has existed from the beginning of the world,

Rom. 13, 1 Pt. 2, Gn. 4:14-15, 9:6, Ex. 21:14, Mt. 26:52 which is to be interpreted exactly like the Genesis 9 passage, Luke 3:14.” “Second. There appear to be powerful arguments to the contrary, Mt. 5:38-41, Rom. 12:19, Mt. 5:44, 1 Pt. 3:9...these and similar passages would certainly make it appear as though in the New Testament Christians were to have no temporal sword.” 86-7

“Those who belong to the Kingdom of God are all the true believers who are in Christ and under Christ, for Christ is King and Lord in the Kingdom of God, Ps. 2:6, Jn. 18:36-7, Mt. 4:17, 6:33, 10:7...now observe, these people need no temporal law or sword. If all the world were composed of real Christians, that is, true believers, there would be no need for or benefits from prince, king, lord, sword, or law.” 88-9

“All who are not Christians belong to the kingdom of the world and are under the law...God has provided for them a different government beyond the Christian estate and kingdom of God. He has subjected them to the sword so that, even though they would like to, they are unable to practice their wickedness, and if they do practice it they cannot do so without fear or with success and impunity.” 90

“A Christian too may bear the temporal sword and punish the wicked...you would be entering entirely into the service and work of...your neighbor and to others.” 95-6

“The testimony of John the Baptist in Luke 3:14 stands unshaken on this point...So likewise, St. Peter in Acts 10:34-43...the eunuch in Acts 8...the proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, Acts 13:7-12...the same policy was followed by many holy martyrs who continued obedient to pagan Roman emperors, went into battle under them, and undoubtedly slew people for the sake of preserving peace...” 98-9

“If the governing authority and its sword are a divine service, as was proved above, then everything that is essential for the authority’s bearing of the sword must also be divine service. There must be those who arrest, prosecute, execute, and destroy the wicked, and who protect, acquit, defend, and save the good. Therefore, when they perform their duties, not with the intention of seeking their own ends but only of helping the law and the governing authority function to coerce the wicked, there is no peril in that...” 103

[Part Two] “Where government is given too wide a scope, intolerable and terrible injury follows; on the other hand, injury is also inevitable where it is restricted too narrowly. In the former case, temporal authority punishes too much; in the latter case, it punishes too little. To err in this direction, however, and punish too little is more tolerable, for it is always better to let a scoundrel live than to put a godly man to death.” “Therefore, where the temporal authority presumes to prescribe laws for the soul, it encroaches

upon God's government and only misleads souls and destroys them." 104-5

"For faith is a free act, to which no one can be forced." 108

"There is no justice, integrity, or truth to be found among [the temporal lords]." 109

"Let me illustrate. In Meissen, Bavaria, the Mark, and other places, the tyrants have issued an order that all copies of the New Testament are everywhere to be turned in to the officials. This should be the response of their subjects: they should not turn in a single page, not even a letter, on pain of losing their salvation." 112

[Part Three] "Now that we know the limits of temporal authority, it is time to inquire also how a prince should use it...Luke 22:25...I will say nothing here of the temporal dealings and laws of the governing authority. That is a large subject, and there are too many law books already...Pr. 28:16 [Vulgate]." 118

"Therefore, a prince must have the law as firmly in hand as the sword, and determine in his own mind when and where the law is to be applied strictly or with moderation, so that law may prevail at all times and in all cases, and reason may be the highest law and the master of all administration of law."

119

"[A prince] must take care to deal justly with evildoers. Here he must be very wise and prudent, so he can inflict punishment without injury to others." "A prince must punish the wicked in such a way that he does not step on the dish while picking up the spoon, and for the sake of one man's head plunge country and people into want and fill the land with widows and orphans. Therefore, he must not follow the advice of those counselors and fire-eaters who would stir and incite him to start a war, saying, "What, must we suffer such insult and injustice?" He is a mighty poor Christian who for the sake of a single castle would put the whole land in jeopardy." 123-4

"Here you will ask: "Is a prince then not to go to war, and are his subjects not to follow him into battle?" Answer: This is a far-reaching question, but let me answer it very briefly. To act here as a Christian, I say, a prince should not go to war against his overlord - king, emperor, or other liege lord - but let him who takes, take...If, however, the antagonist is your equal, your inferior, or of a foreign government, you should first offer him justice and peace, as Moses taught the children of Israel...Dt. 20:10-12." 124-5

"In this matter subjects are in duty bound to follow, and to devote their life and property, for in such a case one must risk his goods and himself for the sake of others. In a war of this sort it is both Christian and an act of love to kill the enemy without hesitation, to plunder and burn and injure him by every method of warfare until he is conquered (except that one must beware of sin, and not violate wives and virgins). And when victory has been achieved, one should offer mercy and peace to those who surrender and

humble themselves.” 125

“What if a prince is in the wrong? Are his people bound to follow him then too? Answer: No, for it is no one’s duty to do wrong; we must obey God (Who desires the right) rather than men [Acts 5:29]. What if the subjects do not know whether their prince is in the right or not? Answer: So long as they do not know, and cannot with all possible diligence find out, they may obey him without peril to their souls.” 125-6

“If neither party is a Christian, or if one of them is unwilling to be judged by the law of love, then you may have them call in some other judge, and tell the obstinate one that they are acting contrary to God and natural law...” 127

AE 46: **“Admonition to Peace, A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants in Swabia,”** 1525

“It is indeed right and proper that no one’s conscience should be instructed or corrected except by Holy Scripture.” 17

“We have no one on earth to thank for this disastrous rebellion, except you princes and lords, and especially you blind bishops and mad priests and monks, whose hearts are hardened, even to the present day.” 19

“A cartload of hay must give way to a drunken man – how much more ought you to stop your raging and obstinate tyranny and not deal unreasonably with the peasants, as though they were drunk or out of their minds! Do not start a fight with them, for you do not know how it will end. Try kindness first, for you do not know what God will do to prevent the spark that will kindle all Germany and start a fire that no one can extinguish.” 21-22

“Indeed, no ruler ought to prevent anyone from teaching or believing what he pleases, whether it is the gospel or lies. It is enough if he prevents the teaching of sedition and rebellion.” 22

“To the Peasants: you, too, must be careful that you take up your cause justly and with a good conscience.” 23

“No one, by his own violence, shall arrogate authority to himself, but Rom. 13:1, Mt. 26:52” 25

“For no one is a Christian merely because he does not undertake to function as his own judge and avenger but leaves this to the authorities and the rulers.” “Because you are acting against this law, you see plainly that you are worse than heathen or Turks, to say nothing of the fact that you are not Christians.” 27

“These, dear friends, are our Christian laws [Rm. 12:19, 1 Pt. 2:18, Mt. 5:39-41, 44, 26:52, 1 Cor. 6:1-8, 2 Cor. 10:4, 11:20, 12:9]” 28-29

“Anyone who reads through the chapters cited will realize that they speak very little in favor of what you are doing.” 35

“You want power and wealth so that you will not suffer injustice. The Gospel, however, does not become involved in the affairs of this world, but speaks of

our life in the world in terms of suffering, injustice, the cross, patience, and contempt for this life and temporal wealth.” 35

“It is not fitting that I, an evangelist, should judge or make decisions in such matters. I am to instruct and teach men’s consciences in things that concern divine and Christian matters; there are books enough about the other things in the imperial laws.” 40

“Take a hold of these matters properly, with justice and not with force or violence and do not start endless bloodshed in Germany. For because both of you are wrong, and both of you want to avenge and defend yourselves, both of you will destroy yourselves and God will use one rascal to flog another.”

“In short, God hates both tyrants and rebels; therefore He sets them against each other, so that both parties perish shamefully, and His wrath and judgment upon the godless are fulfilled.” 40-41

AE 46: “**Against the Robbing and Murderous Hordes of Peasants,**” 1525

“The peasants have taken upon themselves the burden of three terrible sins against God and man; by this they have abundantly merited death in body and soul. In the first place, they have sworn to be true and faithful, submissive and obedient, to their rulers, as Christ commands, Luke 20:25, Rom. 13:1...in the second place, they are starting a rebellion, and are violently robbing and plundering monasteries and castles which are not theirs; by this they have doubly deserved death in body and soul as highwaymen and murderers...in the third place, they cloak this terrible and horrible sin with the gospel...thus they become the worst blasphemers of God and slanderers of His holy Name.” 49-50

AE 46: “**An Open Letter on the Harsh Book Against the Peasants,**” 1525

“There are two kingdoms, one the kingdom of God, the other the kingdom of the world [AE 45, 75-129, 231-237!!].”

“Did I not in that very book beg the rulers to show grace to those who surrender?” 69

“The merciless punishment of the wicked is not being carried out just to punish the wicked and make them atone for the evil desires that are in their blood, but to protect the righteous and to maintain peace and safety.” 73

“If the punishment hurts, stop doing evil.” 74

“When I have time and occasion to do so, I shall attack the princes and lords, too, for in my office of teacher, a prince is the same to me as a peasant. I have already served them faithfully in ways that have not made me very popular with them; but I do not care about that. I have One Who is greater than all of them, as [Mt. 3:11] says.” 75

“It is our duty to call upon God for help and to resist sin and wrong. If you die

or suffer for it, good for you! Your soul is blessed before God and highly honored by the world! But if you yield and obey, you must die anyhow, and your death is shameful before God and the world because you have allowed yourself to be forced to do wrong.” 77

“Isn’t this what it is like in wartime, when the innocent must suffer with the guilty? Indeed, it seems that the innocent suffer most, for it is they who become the widows and the orphans. These are plagues that God sends; and they are always well deserved. And we must suffer them together if we want to live together at other times.” 78

“So long as the head remains, no one ought to attack such a murderer, because the head can punish. Everyone ought to await the judgment and command of the head, to whom God has committed the sword and the office of punishment. But a rebel attacks the head himself and interferes with the exercise of his sword and his office, and therefore his crime is not to be compared with that of a murderer. We cannot wait until the head gives commands and passes judgment, for the head himself is captured and beaten and cannot give them. Rather, everyone who can must run, uncalled and unbidden, and, as a true member, help to rescue his head by stabbing, hewing and killing, and risk his life and goods for the sake of the head.” 80

“I am a called clergyman and am a minister of the word, but even if I served a Turk and saw my lord in danger, I would forget my spiritual office and stab and hew as long as my heart beat. If I were slain in so doing, I should go straight to heaven.” 81

“I earnestly ask you, and everyone, to read my book fairly, and not run through it so hurriedly. Then you will see that I was advising only Christian and pious rulers, as befits a Christian preacher. I say it again and for the third time. I was writing only for rulers who might wish to deal in a Christian or otherwise honest way with their people, to instruct their consciences concerning this matter to the effect that they ought to take immediate action against the bands of rebels both innocent and guilty. And if they struck the innocent, they were not to let their consciences trouble them, since they were by the very act confessing that they were bound to do their duty to God. Afterward, however, if they won, they were to show grace, not only to those whom they considered innocent, but to the guilty as well.” 83-4

AE 46: **“Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved,”** 1526

“One would think that war was such an absorbing matter that they were unable to think about God and their souls. Actually, however, we ought to think most about God and our souls when we are in danger of death.” 93

“Whoever fights with a good and well-instructed conscience can also fight well.”

[Dt. 28:20, 25 – Luke 3:14 – John 18:36 – Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Judges, Samuel, kings – Romans 13:1-4, 1 Peter 2:13-14. 1 Kings 15:25-29,

16:8-10, 2 Kings 9:27-28. Matthew 10:23 on fleeing, Rom. 12:19, Ex. 22:28, 1 Tim. 1:1-2, Mt. 7:1, Pr. 24:21, Eccl. 10:20, Job 34:30, 1 Sm. 24:1-7, 26:6-12 on rulers. Psalm 68:30!! Defensive war: Nu. 21:21-30, Dt. 2:26-37; unnecessary war, Nu. 14:40-45, 1 Macc. 5:55-60, 2 Ki. 14:8-14, 1 Ki. 22:2-40, Judg. 12:1-6, 2 Ki. 23:29, Acts 5:29. Without fear and care, but confidently, and were beaten, Josh. 7:1-5]

“We must distinguish between an occupation and the man who holds it”

“I am speaking here about external righteousness which is to be sought in offices and works”

“What else is war but the punishment of wrong and evil? Why does anyone go to war, except because he desires peace and obedience?” 95

[...it is a great plague...but...how great the plague is that war prevents ...a doctor...amputates...but only to save the whole body

...those who begin war unnecessarily are beaten...God’s justice finds them]

“For if it is wrong to use a sword in war, it is also wrong to use a sword to punish evildoers or to keep the peace.” 98

[...it is impossible to establish hard and fast rules and laws in this matter.]

“In a just war a whole crowd of evildoers...are punished at once...although

some of the men of whom we speak were innocent in their hearts...” 98-103

“War may be made by three kinds of people. An equal may make war against his equal...or an overlord may fight against his subject. Or a subject may fight against his overlord.” 103

[regarding the third kind] “That certainly could happen if God decrees that it should, and the lords must expect it. But that does not mean that it is right and just for the people to do it.” 104

“Indeed, a wicked tyrant is more tolerable than a bad war, as you must admit from your own reason and experience.” 109 [said before the century of Stalin and Hitler!]

“God can raise up foreign rulers...thus there is vengeance, punishment, and danger enough hanging over tyrants and rulers...” 110

“It is easy to change a government, but it is difficult to get one that is better, and the danger is that you will not. Why? Because it is not in our will or power, but only in the will and the hand of God.” 112

...be satisfied with the worldly rulers...[who] cannot harm the soul, as clergy and false teachers do

“articles that have been agreed upon and then does not keep the agreement - he thereby forfeits his right to rule.” 113 “Another ruler would have to come between you...”

“What would become of the world if everyone who was in the right punished everyone who did wrong?” 114

“How good God is to me! He has not sent every disaster to me in this one hour.” 117

Second point: "It is not right to start a war just because some silly lord has gotten the idea into his head. At the very outset I want to say that whoever starts a war is in the wrong." 118

"Worldly government has not been instituted by God to break the peace and start war, but to maintain peace and to avoid war."

"Wait until the situation compels you to fight when you have no desire to do so."

"Look at the real soldiers, those who have played the game of war. They are not quick to draw their sword, they are not contentious; they have no desire to fight. But when someone forces them to fight, watch out! They are not playing games."

"No war is just, even if it is a war among equals, unless one has such a good reason for fighting and such a good conscience that he can say, 'My neighbor compels and forces me to fight, though I would rather avoid it.' In that case, it can be called not only war, but lawful self-defense, for we must distinguish between wars that someone else begins because that is what he wants to do and does before anyone else attacks him, and those wars that are provoked when an attack is made by someone else. The first kind can be called wars of desire; the second, wars of necessity. The first kind are of the devil; God does not give fortune to the man who wages that kind of war. The second kind are human disasters; God help in them!" 121

"But if a lord or prince...rejoice in his power and wealth and honor...he is a fool. That kind of prince would start a war over an empty nut and think of nothing but satisfying his own will. God restrains such princes by giving fists to other people, too. There are also people on the other side of the mountain. Thus one sword keeps the other in the scabbard." 122

"I do not trust, however, in the justice of my cause, but in Your grace and mercy..." 123!

"War against equals should be waged only when it is forced upon us and then it should be fought in the fear of God. Such a war is forced upon us when an enemy or neighbor attacks and starts the war, and refuses to cooperate in settling the matter according to law or through arbitration and common agreement, or when one overlooks and puts up with the enemy's evil words and tricks, but he still insists on having his own way." 125

[I AM ASSUMING THROUGHOUT THAT I AM PREACHING TO THOSE WHO WANT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT IN GOD'S SIGHT.]

[regarding the third question]: whether overlords have the right to go to war with their subjects

"...the question arises whether a man ought to hire himself out for wages..."

"Suppose my lord were wrong in going to war." I reply: If you know for sure that he is wrong, then you should fear God rather than men, Acts 5:29, and

you should neither fight nor serve, for you cannot have a good conscience before God." 130!!!

AE 46: **"On War Against the Turk,"** 1529

"They undertook to fight against the Turk in the name of Christ, and taught and incited men to do this, as though our people were an army of Christians against the Turks, who were enemies of Christ. This is absolutely contrary to Christ's doctrine and name, Mt. 5:39." 165

"Christ declared that He has come to save the world, not to kill people [Jn. 3:17], 6:15, 18:36, Mt. 26:52." 166

"I say this not because I teach that worldly rulers ought not be Christians, or that a Christian cannot bear the sword and serve God in temporal government...But what I want to do is keep a distinction between the callings and offices..."

"...priests' army or, as they call it, a Christian army...I would exhort my bishops and priests to stay at home and attend to the duties of their office..." 167

[Eph. 6:12; Gn. 7:1-24, 19:24-28, Jer. 18:7-8, 18:9-11, Ps. 7:12-13; David, Ahab, Manasseh]

"If the banner of Emperor Charles or of a prince is in the field, then let everyone run boldly and gladly to the banner to which his allegiance is sworn...If the banner of a bishop, cardinal, or pope is there, then run the other way..." 169

"In the first place, the Turk certainly has no right or command to begin war and to attack lands that are not his. Therefore his war is nothing but an outrage and robbery with which God is punishing the world, as He often does through wicked scoundrels, and sometimes through godly people." 170

"In the second place, we must know who the man is who is to make war against the Turk so that he may be certain that he has a commission from God and is doing right."

[Know Your Enemy: Luther teaches on prayer, Islam 171-184]

"...the first man, namely, Christian...may know and see how much need there is for prayer, and how he must first smite the Turk's Allah, that is, his god the devil, and overcome his power and divinity; otherwise, I fear, the sword will accomplish little...the second man who ought to fight against the Turk is Emperor Charles..." 184

"In the first place, if there is to be war against the Turk, it should be fought at the emperor's command, under his banner, and in his name." "In the second place, this fighting under the emperor's banner and obedience to him ought to be true and simple."

"The Emperor is not the head of Christendom or defender of the gospel or the faith."

"The emperor and the princes should be exhorted concerning their office and

their bounden duty to give serious and constant thought to governing their subjects in peace and to protecting them against the Turk. This would be their duty whether they were Christians or not, though it would be very good if they were Christians. But since it is and remains uncertain whether they are Christians, and it is certain that they are emperors and princes..." 186

"An emperor or prince ought to learn well that verse of the Psalter, 44:6-7, 60:10-12; Judg. 20:18-25, [Dt. 1:19-46], 1 Macc. 3:19." 191

"...God bestows good fortune and success upon a whole land and kingdom through one single man, Naaman 2 Ki. 5:1-27, Joseph Gn. 39:5, Jehoshaphat 2 Ki. 3:14, Ehud Judg. 3:15-30, Gideon 6:11-8:28, Deborah 4:4-5:31, Samson 13:2-16:31, Abraham Gn. 14:17, 18:24-33, Jonathan 1 Sm. 14:6; just as on the other hand, Eccl. 9:18, Doeg, 1 Sm. 22:18, Absalom with Ahithophel, 2 Sm. 16:22-17:23.

...preachers must diligently impress on such people...you were disloyal to your overlord

...they make themselves a party to all the abominations and wickedness of the Turk...

"I do not advise men to wage war against the Turk or the pope because of false belief or evil life, but because of the murder and destruction which he does." 198

"Doubtlessly they know better than I how cruelly the Turk treats those whom he takes captive. He treats them like cattle, dragging, towing, driving those that can move, and killing on the spot those that cannot move, whether they are young or old." 200

"Finally, I would have it understood...we should arm and prepare ourselves, and not underestimate the Turk..." 201

"If it helps, it helps; if it does not, then may our dear Lord Jesus Christ help..." 205

AE 47: "**Luther's Warning to His Dear German People**," 1531

[Introduction: ...a departure from Luther's earlier, more passive attitude toward "the powers that be."]

[Introduction: 1523 counseled to disobey the edict calling for the confiscation of the German New Testament...Luther himself had lived in a state of civil disobedience since the proclamation of the Edict of Worms in 1521. What distinguishes the *Warning* is that Luther goes on to sanction active, armed resistance to the emperor.]

[Luther's new position amounts to saying: Insurrection, to be sure, is still forbidden to the Christian; but defensive action in protection of the Gospel – even if military means be used, and even if these be directed against the emperor – is not to be counted as insurrection. The use of force in such circumstances may be justified, as in the case of a "just war" according to the classic doctrine, if the end is just, the means appropriate, and if all

peaceful means of settlement have failed.]

“longing...toward the establishment of peace...and freedom for the gospel”

11

“our prayers and supplications for peace, even though lost on the impenitent...” 12

“For there is indeed danger – we are now speaking as in a dream, as if there were no God – that if they initiate a war, an armed troop will organize and a mob band together, perhaps even among their own people, so that both they and we will perish.” 13

“Since our conscience is clear and pure and assured in this matter, and that of the papists must be guilty and impure and filled with misgiving, let come what may, even the worst, be it war or rebellion – whatever God’s wrath decrees.” 15

“On the other hand, if this ends in a war, I will again have to resign myself to it, together with my followers, and await what our God will advise and decree in this matter.” 16

“In the second place, we know that they are unable to begin such a war in the name of God, nor are they able to pray for it and invoke God’s help.” 17

“However, God can easily raise up a Judas Maccabeus (even if my followers and I sit by quietly and suffer) who will smash Antiochus with his army and teach him real warfare, as he taught us how to wage war and how to keep the peace through the Bohemians.” 17

“In the third place, it is not fitting for me, a preacher, vested with the spiritual office, to wage war or to counsel war or incite it, but rather to dissuade from war and to direct to peace, as I have done until now with all diligence. All the world must bear witness to this. However, our enemies do not want to have peace, but war. If war should come now, I will surely hold my pen in check and keep silent and not intervene as I did in the last uprising.” 18

“Furthermore, if war breaks out – which God forbid – I will not reprove those who defend themselves against the murderous and bloodthirsty papists, nor let anyone else rebuke them as being seditious, but I will accept their action and let it pass as self-defense. I will direct them in this matter to the law and to the jurists. For in such an instance, when the murderers and blood-hounds wish to wage war and to murder, it is in truth no insurrection to rise against them and defend oneself. Not that I wish to incite or spur anyone on to such self-defense, or to justify it, for that is not my office; much less does it devolve on me to pass judgment or sentence on him. A Christian knows very well what he is to do – namely, to render to God the things that are God’s and to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, but not to render to the blood-hounds the things that are not theirs.” 19

“For the papists are deliberately starting the war; they refuse to keep the

peace, they do not let others rest who would like to live in peace. Thus the papists are much closer to the name and the quality which is termed rebellion." 20

"But since I am the "prophet of the Germans" - for this haughty title I will henceforth have to assign to myself, to please and oblige my papists and asses - it is fitting that I, as a faithful teacher, warn my dear Germans against the harm and danger threatening them and impart Christian instruction to them regarding their conduct in the event that the emperor, at the instigation of his devils, the papists, issues a call to arms against the princes and cities on our side. It is not that I worry that His Imperial majesty will listen to such spiteful people and initiate such an unjust war, but I do not want to neglect my duty." 29

"This is my sincere advice: If the emperor should issue a call to arms against us on behalf of the pope or because of our teaching, as the papists at present horribly gloat and boast - though I do not yet expect this of the emperor - no one should lend himself to it or obey the emperor in this event. All may rest assured that God has strictly forbidden compliance with such a command of the emperor." 30

"I repeat what I said earlier, that I do not wish to advise or incite anyone to engage in war. My ardent wish and plea is that peace be preserved and that neither side start a war or give cause for it. For I do not want my conscience burdened, nor do I want to be known before God or the world as having counseled or desired anyone to wage war or to offer resistance except those who are enjoined and authorized to do so. But wherever the devil has so completely possessed the papists that they cannot and will not keep or tolerate peace, or where they absolutely want to wage war or provoke it, that will rest upon their conscience." 34

"If you are open to advice, this warning against obeying the emperor and your prince in such circumstances will suffice. As the apostles say, "We must obey God rather than men." 54