

[Ed. note: The first five pages (comprising pages 1–8 of the original) of this manuscript are transcribed verbatim (correcting only small and obvious typographical errors) from the original. The Ditto ink on these pages has faded to near-imperceptible levels, necessitating this transcription to restore the text to readable condition. From (the original) page 9 to the end of the manuscript, the ink remains in good condition.]

Conscientious Objector Statement of Maurice Zaffke Bethel College, Class of '70

Today's problems will not be resolved by metaphysical consensus nor by any statement on creation or eschatology or even the nature of God. The question we face does not ask "Can you verbally describe your ideology?" but instead, "Can you demonstrate the validity of your ideology in action?" These questions are not new. 1900 years ago James responded saying, "Yes, I will show you my faith with my action." More recently Bonhoeffer stated that our first concerns were righteousness and its corporate expression. This statement attempts to interpret what it means to follow Jesus (act rightly) and to belong to the church (corporate). In honesty it must be emphasized that this still remains a verbal statement not a demonstration of faith, but from this basis, I do develop the following concept of the church the follows Jesus.

In my understanding, the church (as described in the New Testament) is a voluntary community of cooperation. This is what the body metaphor of the church means. (I Cor. 13:12-31). "But now there are many members but one body, and the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you. Or again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. There should be no division in the body but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. If one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it." What could more perfectly illustrate a community of cooperation than a human body, with its parts working for the sustenance of life.

This is no blob concept of total behavioral conformity, but instead a description of a community bound to a common purpose. "For even as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all members of the body, though they are many, are one body. So also is Christ. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body, is it not for this reason, any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them in the body, just as he desired. And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

Jesus himself pushed the idea of "cooperation" further. He instructed his followers to extend this kind of action also to those outside the community, even to the enemy of the community. After all everyone loves his friend but Jesus insisted one love his enemy. Even his ethical statements ("Love your neighbor as yourself" and "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you") affirm the cooperative concept. I use cooperation to describe the methodology for living, in which a man achieves well being by contributing to the well being of others. This approach must be viewed as antithetical to the competitive approach of the world

(one survives and gains good by winning over others). The church refers to the community of cooperation — non-exclusive cooperation both inside and outside the community.

To focus more completely on what I mean let me delineate what I do not mean by describing Christendom and the world. Before I begin, I must insist that it is mandatory that one reject the American religion to follow Jesus. This description divides very nicely into two categories. First, are the attitudes toward deities? Bonhoeffer aptly describes these. First, the idea of God is presented as the “Deus ex Machinas” that is called to the front when human knowledge fails. For instance, when a man dies, he screams to the Deus ex Machina. Or when one faces a cataclysmic event, like a flood of epidemic, he again calls on God. Second, but very much related to the first, is the god of the gaps. That means the explanation of the unknown receives the name God. Like when it rains, contrary to the prediction. Or more seriously, as was illustrated in the Christian response to scientific knowledge discoveries. Perhaps (Bonhoeffer suggests) it might be better to call the gaps gaps and not God. The third attitude calls God a majesty object. This approach is a meditative, contemplative, super-relevant, agonise-in-the-worship-building-for-an-hour-then-go-home torture. Bonhoeffer insists this reduces God to an object of adoration. Is not the Jesus of the New Testament something radically different from that? He didn’t ask us to fall down before his cross in awe. He told us to pick up our own and follow him. There’s nothing unique about this problem. Even in the Old Testament, Israel was rather forcefully reminded that God didn’t [go] for grand sacrifice and prayer. Read Amos. In case you don’t have time, here is a part. Amos, chapter five, versus eighteen through twenty-four, RSV:

Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord
Why would you have the day of the Lord?
It is darkness, and not light;
as if a man fled from a lion,
and a bear met him;
or went into the house and leaned with his hand against the wall,
and a serpent bit him
Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light,
and gloom with no brightness in it?
“I hate, I despise your feast,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and cereal offerings,
I will not accept them,
and the peace offerings of your fatted beasts
I will not look upon.
Take away from me the noise of your songs;
to the melody of your harps I will not listen
But let justice roll down like water
and righteousness like an overflowing stream.

Does this description fit today? Fourth, religion emphasizes personal salvation in a decadent way. Colloquially put, it says, Man, if you do not hassle the authorities or anyone else; If you do as you are told and believe in a God out there and several other metaphysical truths; when you die, you won't." This is called salvation; or more appropriately, by certain more honest souls, "the opiate of the people." Recently, I saw this attitude of salvation after death expressed in a hip Christian newspaper in an article about the revolution. It warned that a revolution was impending, and that during a revolution, one could die. Then it asked, where will your head be? From this point, it proceeded to present the gospel of salvation after death. The whole emphasis falls on salvation from death, not on Jesus, the way, the truth, our life. The follower of Jesus is not safe from physical death. He is saved to life. He is born again. Alive. Jesus emphasized that the hastle was not with those who can kill the body, but with those who can kill the soul... Luke 12:4. Bonhoeffer makes his point on this subject like this, "What does it mean to interpret in a religious sense? I think it means to speak on the one hand metaphysically, and on the other hand, individualistically. Neither of these is relevant to the Bible message or to man of today. Has not the individualistic question about personal salvation almost completely left us? Are we not really under the impression that there are more important things than the question (perhaps not more important than the matter itself, but more important than the question.) I know it sounds pretty monstrous to say that, but fundamentally, is it not actually Biblical?" Individual salvation is important, as Bonhoeffer says. But it is not the question of today. Perhaps, salvation is like making bricks. They are primary in the sense that without bricks, no brick building can be constructed. However, the American religion in relating to the salvation, often becomes a brick factory and storeyard. More and more bricks are made. More and more bricks are stored. The question is not whether we could produce more bricks, but rather a question of what we should build with the bricks. The proposed design as before stated is that we should build a voluntary community of cooperation — that we should build a church. Bonhoeffer claims that these four attitudes, God the rescue service, the knowledge filler, the worship object, the savior after death, all have the same result. They put the church outside the village of life in the realm where knowledge fails and fear pervades. Now let's enter the village and find out what the American religion means inside. Inside the village, Christians are characterized by their inconspicuousness. There is no significant difference in the way that the contemporary Christians relates to those individuals, groups, and social structures around him. He may [unclear, meaning is probably "seclude"] himself in the tower of virtue where, perhaps, he may abstain from certain social evils, work hard, and love his family. But is this enough? Private virtue can become an escape mechanism from the way Jesus called us to. Bonhoeffer again has the idea, "Here and there people flee from public altercation, into the sanctuary of private virtuousness, but anyone who does this must shut his mouth and his eye to the injustice around him. Only at the cost of self deception can he keep himself pure from the contamination arising from responsible action. In spite of all that he does, what he leaves undone will rob him of his peace of mind. He will either go to pieces because of this disquiet or become the most hypocritical of pharisees."

Perhaps this idea is more understandable in the context of Bonhoeffer's own dilemma. He lived at a time when the Nazis usurped power in Germany. Many of his fellow churchmen

responded, stating they would do good personally, work hard and meet their obligations, and by default they supported the regime that brought such terror into the world.

Today in escape from action the ethic of the American religion has been reduced to a perverted doctrine of niceness. The niceness of a church can make it the loneliest place in the world. It constitutes a complete denial of the way Jesus related with other humans. Niceness becomes social insulation, a way to avoid contact. To me, another spirit is more valid, that spirit is committed to the expression of what is thought and felt. I value one touch on the bare skin of another over a thousand caresses across the fabric of altruistic niceness. Fortunately, this is only part of Christendom's great response-concern syndrome. People in this religion neurotically move, over-concerned about what others are thinking. Ironically, Jesus came to free man from such sickness by offering man a secure relationship in his acceptance by God from which basis he could pursue right action unaffected by popular pressure.

As Christians are being "nice" and "sensitive" personally they are cooperating with the world. Today the American thing is rich. The American religion responds, engaging in the great cycle of waste/consumption, waste/consumption. We can talk of food, clothing, housing, transportation. We gorge ourselves in luxury. This is picky only until one sees an American [unclear — two words] malnutrition (not to mention Asian children).

Have we forgotten that we have a cause, the church, the community of cooperation? That we have a responsibility to share inside and outside the church? Instead, we are a well-oiled part of the American capitalistic, economic system. We act as if this economic system were ordained by God. We take the privileges we have acquired through this system and thank God for giving them to us. Am I being unpatriotic? If so, ask yourself, what is capitalism? It has declared itself to be the most efficient way to produce material goods. Perhaps it is. But only that. The most efficient way to produce materials goods. Capitalism accomplishes its objective by harnessing the most destructive aspect of man to the economic machine. That is, a man's desire for himself. His desire to beat another. And this means more than natural survival instinct. This competitivism reaches extreme forms in self aggrandizement and security striving. Do I hear anyone scoffing, saying "It is healthy to be competitive." Or "That this is the way this country was build." Or "I raise my kids this way so they won't get walked on." This health is only illusory. America deceives itself by pointing to material goods piled up to its corporate ears. What does America pay for its material well being? Look at the sickness of pouring men into what Dylan calls the heart attack machine of American industry. Look at the man converted into a "three-dollar-an-hour robot to rivet." W.H. Auden describes the scene like this: "...The Greeks were harder hearted than us, but clearer headed. They knew that labor as such is slavery. And that no man can feel a personal pride in being a laborer. A man can be proud of being a worker. Someone, that is, who fabricates enduring objects. But in our society, the process of fabrication has been so rationalized in the interest of speed, economy, and quantity, that the part played by the individual factory employee has become too small for it to be meaningful to him as a work, and practically all workers have been reduced to laborers." Paul Tillich expressed a similar sentiment with his machine metaphor in *Theology of Culture*, paraphrased... he described it as a huge machine that man constructed to serve himself. But now, he suddenly finds himself a cog supporting with his life the sustenance of the machine. I am sure he doesn't mean just blue collar machines, or blue collar cogs either. Such pain as this must be charged against economic

competitiveness which finds its rationale in the efficient production of materials to be hoarded unequally. Competitivism, unfortunately, has done more than harm individuals. It also threatens our corporate existence. Look at the ecological hell that we have created. Why did it happen? Because Americans are oriented toward private profit in a competitive system, instead of toward corporate cooperation. America lost its forests and the air. Look at America's ugly international face. Did America get that by being the good guy? Or did it acquire such a contortion by winning to its own advantage so often in international competition? You might call this imperialism. Much more can be said on the subject, but I hope that this establishes the point that competitivism does not mean health, and that America in growing this way created her own coffin. To raise your children this way is to raise them to death. For those that live by bruising shall die by beating. How does the American religion respond to these factors? With functional support for the capitalistic system? No, more than that. It attempts to sacralize the monster by adoring it as God's ordained. If you don't believe me, try attacking capitalism in an American religious temple. Let me know what happens (if you survive).

Now that I have abstractly defined church and more concretely stated what I do not mean, I will contrast the society that follows Jesus from the "world" society. Perhaps before I do that, I should note that Jesus came to give us another way to live. He made it possible for us to love. Love is a social term. It refers to a state and method of relationship. As a result, the church must be defined as a new society — a new way of relating and living.

1. In American society the supreme value is material. Simply as I quoted earlier, production is rationalized for speed, economy,

and quantity of material.

On the contrary, the supreme value of the church is personal. Fabrication in this community should be distinctive because it allows the worker meaningful participation. What that means specifically depends on many variables. For this conversation it is sufficient to say that fabrication should meet the creative needs of the human worker, as well as produce material goods. I can hear the industrialist scorn such waste, but I emphasize that as a follower of Jesus I must resist that which converts a human into a machine. (note: I am not just talking of assembly lines. I also address corporation offices.)

How do we achieve these goals in fabrication? By organizing our own systems for fabrication. We should create our own production organizations. Does this seem fanatical? This method would demonstrate the faith better than sending a brother to work in a dehumanizing GM warehouse. Do you claim there is no precedent? Perhaps not, but such action probably wasn't necessary before the industrial revolution and more especially before the assembly rationalization of industry that occurred in this century. The situation of Paul the tentmaker is radically different than that of George the employee of American Tent Company, a subdivision of Super Conglomerate.

2. The American systems method is one of competition, basically the harnessing of man's desire for himself. The Church's method of cooperation stressed achieving with and for each other. This statement on cooperative method and motivation seems as absurd as Jesus' command to love the enemy.

3. The American education system prepares people for the American capitalism of information and by acculturating them in the method of competition and in the great value of information (to achieve material ends). This system in its method cannot

prepare men for participation in the community of cooperation. In fact it teaches the opposite. It teaches the world's system. Beyond this the church claims knowing is secondary while love is primary.

4. The church distributes according to need, while the world distributes according to everything else - accident, family, intelligence, thievery, etc.

5. The church offers mercy and redemption. The world at best offers justice and fair punishment.

6. The world finds security through accumulation. (Like building new barns.) The church finds security for its members in its internal sharing.

Quite simply, this is a call for profound change, even revolution. However, again I must emphasize while I claim Jesus began a social church, I reject the church as political. The world organizes its communities from the basis of force. On the outside it maintains itself with the military, internally with the police. It attempts to achieve good through forcing conformity to "fair" laws. This seems logical, but the church has another way. It doesn't attempt to coerce good. As a community it is dedicated to good action regardless of the consequence. It grows not by conquest, but by attracting others to join on their own volition. In short this revolution is not established by forcing others to good, but by committing oneself to corporate good.

Again I must emphasize, this change is profound. It is not a reform. Bonhoeffer claims,

"The reasonable peoples' failure is obvious. With the best intentions and the naïve lack of realism, they think that with a little reason, they can bend back into position the framework that has got out of joint. In their lack of vision, they want to do justice to all

sides and so the conflicting forces wear them down with nothing achieved. Disappointed by the world's unreasonableness, they step aside in resignation or collapse before the stronger party."

The church is not a simple adjustment of the world, but instead a complete, presuppositional change.

Author:

Maurice Zaffke

The first part of this statement presented the nature of the church. This part explicates how the church tactically relates to the world system. This part discusses the relationship of the new man, of the new society, the church, to the old world authorities, established and maintained by force.

Let us look at the New Testament. One of the ironies of Jesus' work was that people, including his disciples, expected him to establish a political kingdom. That is, to establish a community and to protect this community from the external tyranny, (Rome), and from internal destruction (crime) using the traditional tools of state, the military, and the police. This seemed to be the spirit of expectation of that day we now commemorate as Palm Sunday. How quickly circumstances change!

After Gethsemane Jesus finds himself mobbed by men armed to the hilt. I can hear Peter saying, "Ah, the fight at last. We are out numbered, but we are right. God and justice are on our side. Like the judges and kings, we will win in spite of impossible odds." How swiftly he must have pulled sword, and then the blood. It must have been hard for Peter when Jesus shouted, "Stop! No more of this!" It must have been more difficult to understand when Jesus proceeded to heal the man Peter had wounded. That must have seemed especially strange to Peter, especially when it appears that he was armed that night on Jesus' instructions. (Luke 22:36-38) From the perspective of Jesus' mission as a whole, I can't understand the purpose of these instructions any more than Peter must have, but I know that in that moment of confrontation, Jesus said, that those who live by the sword will die by it. (It is interesting to note that this was one of the wilderness temptations of Jesus, a political temptation like unto ours.)

The final shattering of the political illusion occurred when Jesus appeared in the Roman court. Pilate, the judge, asked Jesus if he was the king of the Jews. Jesus eventually responded like this: (John 19:6-38) Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then my disciples would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews. As it is, my kingdom is not of this world. Pilate therefore said to him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.' Pilate said to him 'What is truth?'" (Pilate's last speech is thrown in for academic interest.)

No, Jesus didn't come to establish a political kingdom. He came to found another kingdom with his death and life. This kingdom is maintained by power that the ultimate political force cannot touch. This kingdom provides the only way in which one can successfully live. This kingdom in our time, we call the church. It began at Jesus' death and extends to the end of history. This church, a community of cooperation finds its ultimate basis in its power to change enemies into brothers.

But still, does that explain how one relates to established authority? It does in the sense that the only hope for the world is the church. Political states are bankrupt when it comes to saving men, primarily because they rely on force which is by its very nature self-destructive. It is only logical that if the church is hope and the state failure, that our efforts will be church-oriented exclusively.

Does that mean we abandon the world we are in but not a part of? The answer of the New Testament is, I believe, precise but fragile. To understand this relationship of the new man to the world let us

quickly review the relevant passages from the Epistles.

I Peter 2:13-17. paraphrased: and condensed: "We are to submit to every human institution for the Lord's sake for they have been sent by Him to punish evil and reward good. Do right so that the foolish man will be silenced. Again, you are free, but don't use your freedom to do evil." These are summed up with the admonitions to honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

Romans 13:1-7 "Be subject to the authorities because they are established by God. In fact, to oppose authority is to oppose God. This should not be a problem since the authorities are established against evil. So if you do good, you will be praised by the rulers. Again, though, if you do evil, the sword of state, as the minister of God, will come against you. Now fear isn't the only reason. One should also pay for what he receives. This payment should be made through taxes, customs, fear, and honor."

Titus 3:1-11 "We are to be subject to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be conscientious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. In brief, we are to be good. We will do this because we were once just the opposite, hateful, hating one another, and because then due to the kindness of our Savior, we were made newmen. Not, of course, because of anything we did, but because of mercy. This statement is trustworthy and should be spoken confidently. So that we who have believed might be careful to engage in good works."

All three of these passages say basically the same thing. Submit yourself to the authorities that are established in the world, because they are there to punish evil and reward good. As such, they serve God. Now in this basis can we say, "The authorities are ordained by God. God has allowed them to exist in authority over me. Therefore, everything they command me to do, I will do. The responsibility of the action will not be mine. Instead it will be the states. By extension, since God allows the state, God himself is responsible."?

First, Bonhoeffer has an appropriate answer for such people: "From the perplexingly large number of possible decisions, the way of duty seems to be not the sure way out. Here what is commanded is accepted as what is most certain, and the responsibility for it rests on the commander, not the person commanded. But no one who confines himself to the limits of duty ever goes so far as to venture on his sole responsibility to act in the only way that makes it possible to score a direct hit on evil and defeat it. The man of duty will in the end have to do his duty to the devil too."

Second, such a statement violates even the corrupt tradition of Christendom. From the time of the Roman emperor worship, to the more recent time of German massacre of the Jews, to Russian atheism today, Christendom has always maintained has always maintained that civil disobedience is appropriate under the right circumstances.

Third, such statements are based on the phony idea of corporate responsibility or guilt, which by making everyone responsible, makes no one responsible. This itself is a complete violation of the three summarized passages, which is an emphasis on individual responsibility. They read, "Do good and you will be rewarded. You are freemen but don't misuse your freedom. If you do good, the government, as a punisher of evil, will not harass you." It doesn't say, however, that by doing good we will always be rewarded, but it emphatically states that we should always do good. This principle is further developed in how a new person, as a servant, relates to the authority of his master.

(I Peter 2:18-23) "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly

treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth; while suffering, being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting himself to him who judges righteously."

What more is needed? The man in the authority construct. The master-servant is directed to the example of Jesus in that strange situation where Jesus was a criminal, an enemy of state and religion. Jesus was punished by the state for his good works, but would not threaten or even revile his murderers. For final explication of this principle, I will quote I Peter 4:14-16.

"If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evil doer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God."

Perhaps I could sum up what I've said about these teachings in three principles. First, The Christian is responsible as an individual for his own behavior, in all circumstances. Second, that civil disobedience can be appropriate for the follower of Jesus. It should not be political action designed to topple established power as much as an action that results from an insistence on doing good works. Third, when confronted by authority, even authority exercised for evil, the Christian is to submit, but not in the sense that he capitulates or participates in that evil, for we have established that he must proceed with good works. Instead it means that the Christian, when punished by the authority for his good works - he should accept that persecution, following the model of Jesus.

In brief, the Christian is not to meet force with force, but instead to meet it with consistent demonstration of good works. We simply are not in a political power struggle for force. In fact, the irony in the contemporary treatment of the three passages being discussed is this: That these statements which teach the follower not to engage in a political power struggle are most often used to rationalize Christian participation in political power struggles on the international level (war).

Our purpose is to establish the church as a volunteer community of cooperation. We establish this with righteousness, with good works, with love, with sharing. Yes, we will be vulnerable, because we will be committed to meeting evil with good. (Romans 13:21) But there is no fear for we fear only those who can kill the soul, not those who can kill the body. To suffer for the cause of Christ, for the good of mankind, for life itself, will hurt only our bodies, but inside our souls will be ecstatic, because we will know we are doing good, we are being, we are living, we are contributing to life.

"Who stands fast? Only the man whose final standard is not his reason, his principles, his conscience, his freedom, or his virtue, but who is ready to sacrifice all this, when he is called to obedience and responsible action in faith and in exclusive allegiance to God. The responsible man who tries to make his whole life an answer to the question and the call of God. Where are these responsible people?" (Bonhoeffer)

Does this seem naive? No, It isn't. There is no utopia here, no land of goody-goody chocolate cake or strawberry ice cream cones. There is realization of the world's nature but more than this there is a confrontation of this world with good, regardless of the

consequences. It is will for the future, the most real kind of optimism. It is a commitment to finding, life in its most complete sense and never tradin- it for anything less. Does it seem strange to believe that people are capable of such action? Yes, outside the new life that begins with bein- born again. And it is with this new tactic, this capacity to change a man into a brother, that the church will be built. The new birth cannot be proven by syllogisms, or his- torical studies, or by speculation. It can only be demonstrated in the lives of new persons, in a new society called the church.

In summary, there is no real hope in attemptin- to force people to be good. The only hope comes from the creation of new men in Jesus who as such have the capacity to be good. As Christians we must be skeptical of participation in operations on a force methodology (be it revolutionary, police or military force). This is especially true because force generates counter force in an escalating spiral that resolves nothing while threatening human existence. The answer is a Christian community open to all whose social structure (in all its implications) is radicall different fro, the world being oriented to persons and to cooneration.