Theologies of Peace and Ecologies of Violence

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation engages "ecologies of violence" as a problem for Christian ethics, investigating cases where environmental issues intersect with dynamics of conflict and violence, and exploring how prominent streams of Christian ethical thought may adapt to address them. What distinctive challenges arise where natural environments mediate or transmit political violence? What keeps these issues out of view within Christian ethics? How might the field begin to address ecologies of violence? The dissertation raises these questions through case studies in three distinct types of violence-environment connection. It argues that major streams of Christian ethics in the North Atlantic struggle to address such ecologies of violence largely thanks to a longstanding disjuncture between political and environmental thought in Christian traditions. It develops this claim with special attention to the theological accounts of *peace* orienting the prominent frameworks of Christian environmental stewardship, Just War Tradition, and the Just Peacemaking Perspective. The dissertation models a method of Christian ethics centered on dialogical exchange at sites of ecological violence, generating original critiques of all three frameworks, and pointing each toward intriguing new expressions with sharpened capacities to engage ecologies of violence. The project's efforts to overcome perennial blind spots for ecologies of violence open spaces where politics can rediscover its vital relations to ecology in the Christian imagination.

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Introduction

The United States initiated Operation Desert Storm on January 17, 1991, launching missiles and bombers into Iraq from ships floating in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. By the time the war ended six weeks later, the victorious U.S. military had dropped 88,000 tons of bombs onto the earth, and Saddam Hussein had lived up to his promise to weaponize the Kuwaiti oilfields—recently conquered, and now lost—setting them alight and loosing crude oil into the Gulf. The war played a major part in consolidating the roles of both the U.S. and fossil fuels in the post-Cold War world order; it was also one of the great environmental catastrophes of the modern age. By the end of February, rivers of oil were flowing across the Arabian Peninsula, while a million tons more oozed into the Gulf. Fires raged for months on hundreds of ignited oil wells, depleting ozone near the inferno and releasing another 1.3 million tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Temperatures in the Gulf region plummeted under a blanket of soot and other airborne particles—a short-term climatic change of 4-10 degrees C.[1] The following year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its First Assessment Report, arguing that, globally, ongoing greenhouse gas emissions would change the climate forever, and this was likely to heighten conditions for violent conflict over increasingly scarce natural resources, most notably water.[2] Those predictions have only grown more grim, with the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report (2014) devoting a full chapter to the security dimensions of climate change.[3] As a GHG

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[1] Mohammed Sadiq and John C. McCain, *The Gulf War Aftermath: An Environmental Tragedy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1993), 60, 64; Samira A.S. Omar, Ernest Briskey, Raafat Misak, and Adel A.S. O. Asem, "The Gulf War Impact on the Terrestrial Environment of Kuwait: An Overview," in *The Environmental Consequences of War: Legal, Economic, and Scientific Perspectives,* ed. Jay Austin and Carl Bruch (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 320. Omar et al. report that up to 900 km² of land were contaminated. For more on the environmental impacts of the Gulf War, and of war more broadly, see Chapter 3 below.

[2] IPCC, *Climate Change: The 1990 and 1992 IPCC Assessments*, World Meteorological Organization and United Nations Environment Programme, June 1992, p. 101.

[3] IPCC, *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects,* ed. Christopher B. Field et al., (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 755-792, 1060-1061. Dire

intensive and environmentally destructive clash over the political order of fossil fuel development, the Gulf War illustrates what this dissertation refers to as *ecologies of violence*. Understanding the war, and so much else about the past, present, and future of violence, requires attending to its complex interrelations with the environment.

This dissertation engages ecologies of violence as a problem for Christian ethics. The Gulf War and its environmental impacts, discussed in Chapter 3, is one of three case studies examined in order to surface the distinctive moral challenges arising at the intersections of human conflict and environmental systems. Chapter 2 explores conflict over the use and ownership of land, focused by a study of the 2016 militia occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. Chapter 4 investigates water politics in the Jordan River Valley as a case study on resource conflict under the stress of environmental change. Each of these cases raises questions for Christian ethics by showing how ecological systems and environmental conditions become sites of conflict, carrying and conveying relationships of violence among human communities and between human beings and the rest of nature. By looking to places where environmental issues are entangled with dynamics of conflict and violence, the dissertation sheds light on dimensions of contemporary politics that are chronically under-analyzed within Christian thought—namely, their ecological dimensions, where negotiations over collective ends are inseparable from peoples' embeddedness within local and global environmental systems. The cases also widen and complicate the tasks of environmental ethics and theology, for they indicate how humanity's relations to non-human nature take shape within the complex, conflictive, sometimes coercive ways human communities relate to one another.

In short, ecologies of violence pose distinctive challenges for Christian ethics because they function in the hazy and inarticulate spaces between the tradition's political and environmental outlooks. The challenges are especially important now, when global climate change and other unsettling trends of environmental change seem to weave the threads between social and ecological systems into increasingly taut patterns. Ecologies of violence represent more than a theoretical problem for Christian ethics. They encompass some of today's most pressing public issues, and will do for the foreseeable future. These arguments are the central subject of Chapter 1, "Christian Ethics and Ecologies of Violence." There, I organize the interdisciplinary study of

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predictions are not unanimous, however. For more on the projected impacts of climate change on violent conflict, see Chapter 4 below.

ecological violence into four broad types, or four distinct "links" between violence and the environment: (1) the ecological drivers of conflict and peace, (2) the environmental consequences of war, (3) conflict over land use and ownership, and (4) structural violence conveyed through environmental systems. The field of Christian ethics in the North Atlantic is now poorly equipped to engage these links, I argue, because the two sub-disciplines most poised to address them—environmental ethics and the ethics of war and peace—mostly reason in mutual isolation. A thorough disjuncture between Christian ecological and political thought helps maintain blind spots for ecologies of violence, where the purview of each crosses into the domain of the other.

An exception to that general rule is emerging around the fourth type, as a number of important monographs in the field have recently examined climate change as a vehicle of structural violence, or otherwise consider the interlinked political and ecological depredations of climate change as a challenge for ethics and theology.[4] Chapter 1 critically engages this literature in search of insight to guide a wider approach to ecologies of violence within the field of Christian ethics.

Building on these critical conversations, I argue that learning to do Christian ethics for ecologies of violence will entail theological efforts to re-envision human sociality within ecological systems, but also detailed inquiry into various forms and cases of violent ecology. Both are most promisingly pursued in tandem with attention to how Christian and other movements already engage ecologies of violence in critical moral praxis. These criteria, in turn, call for a style of ethical inquiry centered on the analysis of cases, and, more distinctively, focused on the significance of *place* for theological and ethical reflection. Finally, the chapter argues for a dialogical method of Christian ethics, urging case-focused exchanges across the field's traditional gap between environmental and political thought.

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[4] See Catherine Keller, *Political Theology of the Earth: Our Planetary Emergency and the Struggle for a New Public* (Columbia University Press, 2018); Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation* (Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2013); Michael S. Northcott, *A Political Theology of Climate Change* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2013). Kevin J. O'Brien, *The Violence of Climate Change: Lessons of Resistance from Nonviolent Activists* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017); Mark Douglas, *Christian Pacifism for an Environmental Age* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). The latter four are discussed in Chapter 1. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule across all four types, most notably on the environmental consequences of war, which are discussed in Chapter 3. But they are rare, and I argue across the dissertation that ecologies of violence raise deeper questions than most of these works are prepared to address.

The remaining three chapters all attempt to model that approach, putting environmental and political schools of thought in dialogue over cases where altered environmental systems fuel conflict, transmit bodily harms, mediate human enmities, and spark cross-cultural clashes over the demands of justice, the meaning of human dignity, and the nature of peace. Chapters 2-4 each explore one of the remaining three types of violence-environment connection, focused by a case study that, I argue, raises difficult questions for Christian ethics. Each chapter begins with an interdisciplinary and case-focused account of an ecology of violence, and then critically assesses how a prominent stream of Christian environmental ethics (Ch. 2) or ethics of war and peace (Ch. 3 and 4) might come to engage it. The chapters conclude by turning to contemporary movements on the margins or outside of the Christian tradition that have developed forms of place-based engagement with ecologies of violence, suggesting how major schools of Christian thought might learn from them.

The dissertation is a work of practical Christian ethics in a constructivist mode and a pluralist key. It is *practical* in a sense similar to Jeffrey Stout's account of practical philosophy in *Ethics After Babel*, which aims to enrich public reasoning and democratic debate, and so focuses on "taking stock of problems that need solving" and assessing the "available conceptual resources for solving them" in order to fashion or sharpen "a moral language ready to use."[5] These are the dissertation's primary tasks: to take stock of urgent problems, and to organize, analyze, and strengthen the moral vocabularies available for practical response to the emerging links between violence and the natural environment.

It is a work of *Christian* ethics in that it conducts formal reflection on the moral life and thought of the Christian movement, tackling the practical tasks listed above as part of the challenges of interpreting, criticizing, and potentially orienting forms of Christian life in history. It goes without saying that the method employed here is not a full or sufficient approach to the multi-faceted discipline of Christian ethics, most notably because it does not engage seriously with Scripture in its efforts to interpret the meanings of ecological violence for Christian faith and life. Its modest goal, on the methodological front, is to demonstrate the promise of dialogical exchange around cases to contribute to the tradition's ways of orienting life responsively to God.

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[5] Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics After Babel: The Languages of Morals and their Discontents* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 71-77.

The project is *constructivist* in two senses. First, it is constructivist in the technical sense employed within conflict theory—it assumes that collective violence is shaped at least in part by how groups negotiate their shared identities, ideas, and goals in relation to other groups and to broader norms and institutions.[6] A constructivist approach to understanding conflict and violence is the obvious route for a project relying on the interpretive methods of religious studies, but it also offers a way for those methods to exert critical pressure on prevailing models of research and practice related to ecologies of violence. For example, research on environmental conflict frequently ignores the key roles played by discursive identity formation and communal norms in the dynamics of collective violence. This is understandable, as the young field has labored to secure legitimacy for its claims through the rigors of quantitative data analysis, carefully developing the case that material environmental factors like resource scarcity are indeed statistically significant drivers of violent conflict.[7] In effect, however, instrumentalist and positivist forms of conflict analysis have helped produce technocratic and naively functionalist forms of environmental conflict resolution.[8] By attending to the moral construction of environmental and political experience within Christian and other religious traditions, especially under conditions of conflict, my dissertation lays groundwork for more holistic forms of conflict analysis and more culturally competent peacebuilding strategies. At the same time, the dissertation's case analysis of environmental conflict blurs the boundaries between constructivist and instrumentalist theories of conflict, showing how ecologies of violence interconnect basic material interests with complex discursive identities and so demand an analytic and ethical toolkit wider than what's readily available in the fields of religious ethics and/or religion & ecology (see Chapter 4).

The project is also constructivist in the colloquial sense of an effort to build something new from existing materials. Each chapter convenes multiple disciplinary

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[6] On constructivism, and for a wider introduction to theories of collective violence, see Earl Conteh-Morgan, *Collective Political Violence: An Introduction to the Theories and Cases of Violent Conflict* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[7] Halvard Buhaug et al., "One Effect to Rule Them All? A Comment on Climate and Conflict," *Climatic Change* 127, no. 3–4 (December 2014): 391–97.

[8] Karin Aggestam, "Desecuritisation of Water and the Technocratic Turn in Peacebuilding," *International Environmental Agreements* 15 (2015): 327-340. Cf. Lawrence Susskind, "The Political and Cultural Dimensions of Water Diplomacy in the Middle East," in *Water Security in the Middle East: Essays in Scientific and Social Cooperation,* ed. Jean Axelrad Cahan (London: Anthem Press, 2017), 185-206. I develop this argument further, and suggest alternatives, in Chapter 4.

accounts of an environment-violence connection, and puts critical comparisons to use toward an expanded toolkit for interpreting and addressing violence. A central agenda is to cross-pollinate bodies of knowledge and schools of thought that rarely interact—especially between Christian traditions of environmental and political thought, but also between religious ethics and the diverse disciplinary literatures and political engagements transpiring around contemporary ecologies of violence. In the process, it demonstrates how dialogues in religious ethics may facilitate the wider public's adaptive learning, and stimulate moral imagination in the face of problems that transgress traditional disciplinary boundaries.

But while the project aims to enrich capacities to engage ecologies of violence through studies in Christian ethics, it is not a work of apologetics, and does not build toward a comprehensive theory, a systematic theology, a unified ethic, or a single body of "best practices." The project assumes a *pluralist* posture toward the streams of environmental and political thought it engages. Unlike most Christian ethical texts examining a range of prominent moral paradigms on violence and war or the environment, this dissertation does not conspire to vindicate one above the others, or to invent a new one unsullied by the tradition's historical flaws. Each of Christianity's classical frameworks of war/peace ethics "have truth in them" wrote Glenn Stassen, and each "has helped us to order our worlds."[9] I take both those affirmations for granted, and they apply also to the frameworks of environmental ethics I discuss. Approaching the dissertation's multiple interlocutors as frameworks with "truth in them," rather than as either authoritative or hopeless moral positions, each chapter puts a paradigm of Christian ethics through a process of case-driven immanent criticism, then works to draw what I see as the framework's most promising ideas into new light through dialogue with others and in confrontation with ecologies of violence.

Stassen's observation that paradigms of Christian ethics have functioned "to order our worlds" is even more important. The dissertation as a whole advances the argument that prominent schools of Christian ethical thought have helped to order our

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[9] Glen H. Stassen, "The Unity, Realism, and Obligatoriness of Just Peacemaking Theory," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 23, no. 1 (2003), 172. Stassen's approach could be termed qausi-pluralist; he offered this olive branch while arguing in favor of his co-invented Just Peacemaking Perspective, which he viewed as encompassing the paradigmatic ways Christian peacemakers participate in God's grace. Pacifism and Just War were not competitive with the JPP, in part because they "answer a different question" (i.e. about war's justification rather than about its prevention, p. 171-172), and in part because the JPP subsumed them by fulfilling their fundamental purposes: sustaining and restoring peace.

worlds in ways that obscure the moral significance of ecological violence. Each chapter examines a case in which some form of theo-political imagination worked together with socio-political structures to produce a form of violence that Christian ethics has struggled to critically engage, or has been complicit within. The context for this dissertation's inquiry can be summarized in terms of how Christian political and ecological imaginations have helped to order worlds in which ecological violence remains morally opaque. Each chapter excavates a corner of that landscape, hidden in plain sight.

Central to those orderings, I argue, have been Christian understandings of *peace.* Theologies of peace animate the three major frameworks of Christian ethics explored in this dissertation: environmental stewardship, the just war tradition (JWT), and just peacemaking (JPP). All three lean heavily on ideas about how God's active will for the tranquil or harmonious flourishing of human beings corresponds to God's original ordering of creation, so that peace encompasses and interlinks society's aim, humanity's destiny, and nature's proper state. "In the peace of the whole creation we will find our own peace," writes the stewardship theologian Norman Wirzba, discussed in Chapter 2.[10] That pregnant phrase would be equally at home in the Thomist versions of JWT examined in Chapter 3, or in the theological ethic of divine participation presented by the JPP explored in Chapter 4, although it would mean very different things for each of them. In its multiple possible interpretations, the idea indicates how the concept of peace stands at the center of Christian thought about politics and about ecology, and, along this one fertile meridian, binds them together.

At the same time, peace is a profoundly ambiguous concept. It is one way to name Christianity's highest aspirations for collective well-being embraced by the grace of God, yet it has often functioned as a "violent ideal" in Christian history.[11] In Chapter 2, I argue that Christian stewardship repeatedly draws on motifs of peace to lend divine sanction to exceptionalist, exclusionary, and often racialized and colonialist claims about land's proper use and rightful ownership. In Chapter 3, I follow a main line of interpretation placing peace at the center of the Christian JWT, but diverge by arguing that key pre-modern and modern versions drew on its underlying theology of order in ways that made warfare's indiscriminate ecological violence ethically invisible and

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[10] Norman Wirzba, *The Paradise of God: Renewing Religion in an Ecological Age* (Oxford University Press, 2003), x.

[11] Murad Idris, *War for Peace: Genealogies of a Violent Ideal in Western and Islamic Thought* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

morally unaccountable within Christian and Western traditions broadly. Chapter 4 argues that the JPP universalizes its notion of peace while frequently attaching it to a modern liberal and technocratic version that tends to reinforce both material and discursive flows sustaining ecologies of violence.

While each chapter highlights problematic conceptions or uses of peace, the dissertation does not attempt to replace them with a new fundamental theology of peace. Its immediate goal is not a theology of peace but a better toolkit for engaging ecologies of violence. But neither does it reject peace as a bad idea. In every case, the dissertation treats peace as a crucial bridge-concept linking Christian ecological and political thought, explores how ideas of peace within the tradition orient prominent frameworks and movements to the connections between violence and the environment, and asks how the meanings and practices of peace may need to adapt in order to engage ecologies of violence.

Outline and Contributions: Mapping the Dissertation, Mapping a Field

As noted above, Chapter 1 further introduces ecologies of violence as a problem for Christian ethics, identifying four general types, diagnosing a critical gap in the field's resources to engage them, and then suggesting an approach to address that gap centered around case-based and place-attentive conversations that connect streams of political and ecological thought. Those suggestions develop alongside critical review of an emergent body of literature within Christian ethics beginning to engage one of the four types—environmental change as a vehicle of structural violence—and sets the stage for the remainder of the dissertation, which examines the other three types successively in three case-focused chapters.

Chapter 2 explores the 2016 militia occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Harney County, Oregon as a case study in the unique challenges of land use conflict, using the case to raise questions about how the paradigm of Christian environmental stewardship in North America engages ecologies of violence. "Home once to the largest cattle empires in the world, and then to one of the most important wildlife refuges in America, Malheur has long been an epicenter for explosive debates over effective land management."[12] That description, from Nancy Langston's fascinating environmental history of the Harney basin, was written in 2003, well before

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[12] Nancy Langston, *Where Land & Water Meet: A Western Landscape Transformed* (University of Washington Press, 2003), 5.

Malheur became the site of a sensational, media-saturated, armed stand-off between federal agents and anti-government militiamen. The area has a much longer history of conflict, and not just over "effective land management," but also over the land itself—over its place in the nation's destiny and nature's order, and, relatedly, to whom it belonged. Understanding this longer history, I argue, is crucial to understanding the 2016 standoff, so I probe it with particular attention to the contending environmental imaginations that helped shape them. The story suggests that Christian stewardship played an important role in the ways competing groups made claims to Oregon land. I argue further that contemporary stewardship continues to reproduce the adaptable logic of settler colonialism, posing problems for the framework's desired capacity to turn collective land care into an image of God's eschatological peace. To explore possibilities for moving stewardship toward a decolonizing politics, the chapter asks what Christian ethics could learn from the 2016 movement against the Dakota Access Pipeline at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

Chapter 3 explores the environmental consequences of warfare and military-industrial production through the lens of the JWT. It discusses the environmental impacts of the first Gulf War as a case example, and then draws on concepts of environmental justice in search of tools to sharpen the JWT's capacity to reduce and redress the environmental impacts of war. The Gulf War woke many to war's profound ecological impacts, sparking a wave of legal and ethical reflection on possible ways to integrate environmental protections into war conventions, with some suggesting the best path would be "building environmental considerations into how Western militaries view war and peace from the inside out—via the just war tradition."[13] The chapter critically assesses the tradition's readiness to integrate ecological concerns into its theo-ethical vision by investigating how just warriors actually reasoned about the Gulf War. Scholarly and public discussions consistently failed to reckon with the war's environmental risks and repercussions. I trace that failure to a fragmented and increasingly untenable account of peace, arguing that efforts to import environmental concerns into the tradition's ethical criteria are unlikely to meet the depth of the problem without attending to this bedrock issue. Toward that end, I suggest how collaboration and conversation with movements for environmental justice could help

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[13] Mark Woods, "The Nature of War and Peace: Just War Thinking, Environmental Ethics, and Environmental Justice," in *Rethinking the Just War Tradition*, ed. John W. Lango and Harry van der Linden (Ithaca: SUNY Press, 2007), 22.

reform the tradition's reasoning about war by expanding its core concepts of peace, justice, and human rights to encompass the ecological and emplaced dimensions of human fellowship and flourishing.

Chapter 4 investigates water politics in the Jordan River Valley as a case study in resource conflict—conflict driven in part by environmental stresses upon scarce natural resources. It tests the theological practices of Just Peacebuilding against the distinctive challenges of water conflict as illumined by the case, and again turns to an eco-theological paradigm, watershed discipleship, for further insight. While exploring the role of water in twentieth and twenty-first century conflict in Israel-Palestine, the chapter highlights competing nationalist constructions of the Jordan River and its basin, indicating how political relations to nature and to nation are intertwined, co-constitutive within water's material flow and religion's social and symbolic frame. Understanding resource conflict, I argue, may often require attention to how groups regard their ecological environs as matters of communal identity and existential concern. A practical ethic of peacemaking, likewise, needs capacities to conceive peace and justice embedded in the particularities of *places*. The JPP, by contrast, promulgates a "positive theology of peace" marked by a uniform set of principled practices, universally applicable and implanted in a liberal vision of international order. The chapter turns to watershed discipleship, a bioregionalist form of Christian ecological ethics, to suggest possible paths for the JPP to re-envision the theological meanings and concrete practices of peace in terms of the entwined social and environmental forces shaping life within particular ecologies of violence.

Taken together, the chapters acquaint Christian ethics with a set of pressing problems at the intersections of political and ecological systems, where diverse dynamics of violence connect with complex environmental issues. One of the dissertation's basic contributions, then, is to organize a wide array of under-analyzed and vaguely understood contemporary concerns—along with the multi-disciplinary literatures that are beginning to address each one—into a coherent field. Presenting *ecologies of violence* as field of study for Christian ethics, and mapping some of its main contours, the dissertation makes possible new avenues of inquiry, identifying fresh paths for critical investigations into the tradition, and making visible key horizons of practical moral concern.

The dissertation also suggests strategies for navigating this new terrain, exhibiting their promise by using them to explore three major streams of violence-

environment connection. Acclimating Christian ethics to ecologies of violence will require letting the issues' conceptual strangeness unsettle established habits of thought and soften traditional analytic boundaries. The dissertation exhibits how practicing Christian ethics as a form of dialogical exchange at sites of ecological violence can generate deep critique of Christian moral paradigms, but also point existing frameworks toward intriguing new expressions. In this way, it strengthens the field's capacities to engage a range of important contemporary problems, or, at minimum, directs its attention to those problems within a provocative series of studies unsettling some of the most prominent ways Christians think through environmental issues and questions of violence.

The project's efforts to overcome perennial blind spots for ecologies of violence also open spaces where politics can rediscover its vital relations to ecology in the Christian imagination. The severing of those two, argues Michael Northcott, may be the root error explaining all the social-ecological crises we face in the Anthropocene.[14] I do not defend such a sweeping claim in this text, but I do argue that the disjuncture perpetuates blind spots and constricts moral capacities before ecologies of violence, where the relations of politics and ecology are made manifest in landscapes of injustice and death. To put the point more positively, the dissertation's way of equipping Christian ethics for these challenges highlights possibilities for streams of political ethics to incorporate into their practical and theological repertoires basic insights from the other side of the divide. More than that, it indicates how those conceptual bridges may become sites of transformation. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 all argue for novel integrations of political and ecological thought within streams of Christian ethics, and in every case this moderate adjustment entails a profound upheaval in the framework's moral outlook and practice. I can only offer suggestive and preliminary arguments for how such integrations and transformations might transpire in the actual life of the moral traditions the dissertation engages—the more important role of these suggestions is that they lay bare distinct possibilities for Christian ethics to sharpen its theological and moral vision in confrontation with ecologies of violence.

The most consistent sites for such transformative possibilities are the theologies of peace undergirding each framework. This dissertation develops that argument and advances Christian thought on peace in both critical and constructive engagement with the tradition. Christian ideas of peace, I argue, commonly link political theology to

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[14] Northcott, *A Political Theology of Climate Change*.

doctrines of creation in ways that obscure the links between our social and ecological relationships. In the case of American Christian stewardship, peace couples nature's purpose to human environmental responsibility, but in the process ties land's redemption to the territorial expansion of exceptional communities, naturalizing colonial arrangements as though written into the continent by the finger of God. The JWT helped build environmental indifference into the West's prevailing morality of war by both authorizing war and orienting its practice in terms of the sovereign obligation to preserve and restore God's ordained order of peace, while at the same time denying that non-human nature was a participant in that peaceable order. The JPP sees that environmental conditions are important to justice and peace, but in a generalized and standardized way that tends to obfuscate the more complex and intractable dynamics of violence where interests and identities are entangled within stressed local ecology.

In response, I propose a series of novel ethical collaborations, seeking to generate theological practices of peace that can illumine rather than obscure ecologies of violence. The dissertation generates not a new theological ethic of peace, but a set of relationships, a network of moral exchange, where the practical meaning of peace can adapt in living relation to a changing environment. Its contribution, then, is to cultivate conditions for an ecology of peace in the field of Christian ethics.

Chapter 1: Christian Ethics and Ecologies of Violence

INTRODUCTION

The interconnections between violence and the natural environment are attracting attention, and for good reason. When the United States Department of Defense urged Congress to consider climate change an "urgent and growing threat to our national security" in 2015, they echoed a widening corpus of scholarly literature suggesting that human-caused environmental changes compound the conditions for violent conflict.[1] At the same time, researchers have drawn attention to the enormous ecological significance of contemporary warfare, as modern weaponry and military-industrial production exert both immediate and long-term impacts on non-human species and ecological systems.[2] Understanding the links between violence and the environment will be critical to the pursuit of justice, peace, and sustainability in the twenty-first century. How Christian ethics engage ecologies of violence will help determine how the field conceives its purposes and executes its methods, and will play a major role in shaping what the Christian tradition comes to mean in an era of entangled social and environmental systems.

Ecologies of violence often evade political action and escape moral attention because they do not fit comfortably within any of the fields requisite to address them.

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[1] United States Department of Defense, *National Security Implications of Climate-Related Risks and a Changing Climate* (Washington, D.C: US Department of Defense, 2015); Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1999); Paul F. Diehl and Nils Petter Gleditsch, eds., *Environmental Conflict* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001); Marshall Burke, Solomon M. Hsiang, and Edward Miguel, "Climate and Conflict," *Annual Review of Economics* 7 (2015): 577–617.

[2] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Ecological Consequences of the Second Indochina War*, ed. Arthur H. Westing (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1975). Arthur H. Westing, *Environmental Hazards of War: Releasing Dangerous Forces in an Industrialized World* (London: SAGE Publications, 1990); Richard J. Grunawalt, John E. King, and Ronald S. McClain, "Protection of the Environment During Armed Conflict," in *International Law Studies* (Newport: Naval War College, 1996); Jay Austin and Carl Bruch, *The Environmental Consequences of War: Legal, Economic, and Scientific Perspectives* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Joseph P. Hupy, "The Environmental Footprint of War.," *Environment & History* 14, no. 3 (Aug. 2008): 405–21.

The causes and consequences of violence exceed the purview of ecological ethics, environmental policy, or resource management; frameworks responsive to political violence do not account for the conveyance of harm and hostility through ecological systems. Especially within North Atlantic Christianities, the available resources for confronting these issues—"environmental issues" and "peace and conflict issues"—exist in two separate toolkits. The field of Christian ethics in particular has neglected to develop discourses or practices addressing their progressively merging spheres of concern.

This chapter introduces ecologies of violence as a problem for Christian ethics. It distinguishes four broad types of connection between violence and natural environment, all prominent and morally urgent in diverse places across the globe today. It offers an explanation for why these issues have rarely been treated as matters of Christian concern despite clearly falling within the scope of the tradition's ethical interests, before turning to a few recent works in the field that take initial steps toward Christian ethics attuned to the links between climate change and violence. The essay builds from critical engagements with these pioneering works toward a constructive argument for how to do Christian ethics for ecologies of violence. Doing Christian ethics at the intersections of violence and environmental change will require careful attention to environmental ethics as well as to the ethics of violence. More than that, it will require judicious efforts to navigate between them, to develop possibilities of ethical discernment and reparative action that do justice to the deep entanglements of ecological and sociopolitical systems.

With rare exceptions, the gap in moral discourses and practices connecting ecology and violence spans the entire range of Christian denominations and theological schools in the North Atlantic. Focused efforts to critique and expand Christian capacities to engage violent ecologies will no doubt take diverse paths, drawing from distinctive theological, cultural, and sociological sources. But the conceptual and functional rift at the intersection of sociopolitical and ecological systems is a remarkable point of confluence among the tradition's many streams. That rift is this essay's point of departure.[3]

ECOLOGIES OF VIOLENCE

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[3] An adapted version of this chapter was published as Luke Beck Kreider, "Christian Ethics and Ecologies of Violence," *Religions* 10, no. 509 (2019): 1–22.

Violence can be propelled by, committed against, and conveyed through ecological systems. This has always been the case, but a number of factors converged in the late twentieth century to make the environmental dimensions of violence more visible and more pressing.[4] Several media-saturated military campaigns—notably the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War—perpetrated catastrophic environmental damages, raising alarms about the ecological consequences of armed conflict. In the United States in the late 1970s, grassroots groups organized in opposition to public and corporate land use practices that disproportionately exposed working class minority communities to harmful toxins, ultimately spawning a national movement and a moral paradigm ("environmental justice") focused on how discriminatory patterns of land management diminished the lives of people of color by contaminating their environments and thereby poisoning their bodies; they thus drew attention to how ecological systems may become channels of racialized violence.[5] Most prominently, ever-increasing concerns about climate change have forced attention to the intimate relations of human society, political economy, and earth, as planetary forces shaped increasingly by human forces threaten to generate or intensify social and political turbulence at multiple scales.

In short, there has been a general trend toward seeing the natural environment entangled with various forms of violence. But seeing this as a trend requires gathering together distinct and disparate strands of contemporary discourse on conflict, violence, and ecological stress. For the most part, these issues emerged independently and have been treated under separate cover. A rare effort to engage several in tandem is made in Nicole Detraz's book *Environmental Security and Gender*, which distinguishes but also interlinks three now-prominent fields at the intersections of security and environment: (1) *environmental conflict*, which considers armed conflict over natural resources, (2) *environmental security*, which engages environmental degradation as a problem for human health and well-being, and (3) *ecological security*, which treats environmental degradation as a problem in itself, assessing strategies to protect non-human creatures and ecological systems from the negative effects of human behavior.[6] In addition to

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[4] See Christopher D. Stone, "The Environment in Wartime: An Overview," in *The Environmental Consequences of War: Legal, Economic, and Scientific Perspectives*, ed. Jay Austin and Carl E. Bruch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 16–35.

[5] See Robert Doyle Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990).

[6] Nicole Detraz, *Environmental Security and Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 25–57.

providing one of the most lucid and comprehensive overviews available, Detraz shows how each of these intersections is further entangled with gender, and so develops a compelling argument for a feminist environmental security discourse.[7] In the fields of Christian theology and ethics, the idea that despoliation of the environment is intimately linked to the oppression of women has been well-established by eco-feminists and ecowomanists since the mid-1970s,[8] and the gendered dimensions of warfare were famously raised by Jean Bethke Elshtain and more recently by Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite.[9] Conceptual parallels and historical alliances between white supremacist violence and colonialist patterns of environmental exploitation have been highlighted by James Cone, George Tinker, and Dianne Glave, among others,[10] while Martin Luther King, Jr. is only the most celebrated name to have preached about the interlocked dynamics of racism and militarism in the United States.[11] But rarely have Christian thinkers followed Detraz in closing the triangle, engaging identity-based oppressions where environmental issues and political violence converge. Still fewer consider these intersections together in light of the religious practices and frameworks through which they are often experienced, constructed, reinforced or resisted.

To treat links between violence and environment as a problem for Christian ethics means to ask questions about Christian moral life amidst this tangled web of relations. It means struggling to orient ecclesial responses to complex systems of suffering that traverse conceptual boundaries and bind together spheres of life that Christians (of the North Atlantic) have traditionally considered separate.

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[7] Detraz, *Environmental Security and Gender*, 58–86.

[8] See Rosemary Radford Ruether, *New Woman, New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (New York: Seabury, 1975); Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Karen Warren, *Eco-Feminism: Women, Culture, Nature.* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997); Delores Williams, "Sin, Nature and Black Women's Bodies," in *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*, ed. Carol J. Adams (New York: Continuum, 1993), 24–29; Karen Baker-Fletcher, *Sisters of Dust, Sisters of Spirit: Womanist Wordings on God and Creation* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1998); Melanie L. Harris, *Ecowomanism: African American Women and Earth-Honoring Faiths* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2017).

[9] Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, *Women's Bodies as Battlefield: Christian Theology and the Global War on Women* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[10] James Cone, "Whose Earth Is It Anyway?," in *Earth Habitat: Eco-Injustice and the Church's Response* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 23–32; George E. Tinker, *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2008); Dianne Glave, "Black Environmental Liberation Theology," in *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History*, ed. Dianne Glave and Mark Stoll (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2006), 189–199.

[11] Martin Luther King Jr., "A Time to Break Silence," in *A Testament of Hope*, ed. James M. Washington (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 231–44.

The term *ecologies of violence* attempts to capture this complexity. The field of ecology engendered a paradigm shift in the life sciences in the early twentieth century, as the new discipline endeavored to understand organisms in terms of their relationships with others and with their environments, examining how the cycling of energy and nutrients through the biotic and abiotic elements of a community shape the patterns, quality, abundance, distribution and diversity of life in a place. Natural scientists do not typically use the term "ecology" as a plural noun—the dynamic systems they study are not "ecologies" but rather "ecosystems." But humanists and social scientists speak of "ecologies" to describe the systemic interrelations that shape the conditions and the experiences of human communities, especially in light of the environmental channels—transformations of land, extractions and distributions of water and minerals, energy regimes, emissions of particulates into the air, alterations to global atmosphere, and so on—through which humans interact with each other and with other creatures. In this modified usage, *ecologies* entail the many ways human individuals and communities continuously shape and are shaped by their social and natural habitats. The term *ecologies of violence* directs attention to how ecological systems and environmental conditions affect, integrate, and convey relationships of harm, domination, and diminishment among human beings and between human communities and the rest of nature.

Understood in this light, the connections between violence and the environment are not narrow concerns or niche interests reserved for specialists. They encompass the intersectional dynamics of violence in exceptionally wide scope. For Christian ethics, attention to ecologies of violence invites thinkers to reconnect political theology to creation and theological anthropology to place; it attunes social and environmental ethics to systemic and intersectional problems, raising questions about how to conceive and orient Christian life where the orders of creation bear the wounds of human sin; it keeps the field responsive to lived reality, and elicits virtues of dialogue now crucial to the discipline and basic to moral engagement in pluralist environments.

Ecologies of Violence: Four Types

One possible reason that the ecology of violence has not been treated as a subject for Christian ethics is that the links between violence and environment are so many and so varied that they confound integrated analysis. An important first step is to map the relations at a legible scale. Although a fair bit of reductionism is involved in any such

effort, Christian ethics could begin to engage ecologies of violence with attention to four basic types.

The Ecological Drivers of Conflict and Peace

The first type tracks the various ways that environmental changes, ecological forces, and natural resources factor into the onset, objectives, and resolutions of violent conflict. This encompasses what Detraz and others refer to as "environmental conflict," meaning conflict over scarce natural resources. Knowing that heightened climatic variability is likely to create severe stresses—and in many places critical scarcities—for the basic necessities of human life (e.g., water and food), many now predict a marked rise in "resource wars." The logic is straightforward: if environmental change leads to resource scarcity, and if people groups compete and often fight over scarce resources, then environmental change is likely to occasion inter-group competition and probably violent conflict.

But competition over resources like water and arable land is just one way ecological forces bear on conflict. Another is that planetary changes—e.g., sea-level rise and ocean warming—and related extreme weather events contribute to human migration, which in turn seem to affect the entrenchment of national identities and to deepen ethno-religious resentments, uprooting vulnerable populations and often driving them into other ecologically marginal and/or politically hostile lands. Another is that changing land- and seascapes factor into the transformation and renegotiation of regional and global political economy, threatening to unsettle already unstable civil and international relations.

The prevalence, probability and relative causal force of all these (and more) ecology-violence connections are debated; what is no longer questionable is that they merit urgent attention. The oft-cited potential for global climate change to displace peoples, catalyze resource conflicts, and aggravate social hostilities[12] is only the most sensational aspect of a growing body of scholarship tracing the relationships between environmental conditions and the prevalence of violence. Political scientists attempt to measure the impact of environmental factors on the outbreak of armed conflict, and

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[12] Michael Klare, *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict With a New Introduction by the Author* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2001); Christian Parenti, *Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence* (New York: Nation Books, 2011); Alex Alvarez, *Unstable Ground: Climate Change, Conflict, and Genocide* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017).

debate the causal mechanisms at play.[13] Scholars in the adjacent fields of international relations and strategic peacebuilding discuss the significance of resource management and sustainability for violence prevention and conflict resolution.[14] "Environmental peacemaking" is now an active field of research and practice,[15] and climate change is arguably "the hottest issue in security studies."[16]

The issues have attracted so much attention, in fact, that many now worry about the "securitization" of ecological discourse and environmental politics.[17] Hans Günther Brauch argues that national security and defense now constitute the main reasons offered in public for combating climate change, at least in the Global North. He tracks a marked increase in global climate policy discussions framing Anthropocene challenges in terms of existential threats and national security concerns. Interpreting climate change as a national security risk (rather than an environmental problem or a justice issue) has been instrumental in mobilizing the climate change mitigation and adaptation regimes of North Atlantic countries, he claims.[18] It is therefore no surprise to notice that the Department of Defense and the armed forces are arguably the sectors of the U.S. federal government that have engaged most seriously with climate change. Timothy Doyle and Sanjay Chaturvedi point to the recent "securitization and often militarization" of state responses to human migration as a key reason to be cautious

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[13] Diehl and Gleditsch, *Environmental Conflict*; Solomon M. Hsiang, Kyle C. Meng, and Mark A. Cane, "Civil Conflicts Are Associated with the Global Climate," *Nature* 476, no. 7361 (August 2011): 438–41; Halvard Buhaug et al., "One Effect to Rule Them All? A Comment on Climate and Conflict," *Climatic Change* 127, no. 3–4 (December 2014): 391–97.

[14] David Jensen and Stephen Lonergan, *Assessing and Restoring Natural Resources In Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (New York: Routledge, 2013); United Nations Environment Programme, *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment* (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme, 2009).

[15] Ken Conca and Geoffrey D. Dabelko, *Environmental Peacemaking* (Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2002). See also https://environmentalpeacebuilding.org.

[16] Rymn J Parsons, "Climate Change: The Hottest Issue in Security Studies?," *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 2010): 87–116.

[17] Nina Graeger, "Environmental Security?," *Journal of Peace Research* 33 (1996): 109–16. Barry Buzan et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Pub., 1998); Jon Barnett and Stephen Dovers, "Environmental Security, Sustainability and Policy," *Pacifica Review: Peace, Security & Global Change* 13, no. 2 (June 2001): 157–69.

[18] Hans Günter Brauch, "Securitizing Global Environmental Change," in *Facing Environmental Change: Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts*, ed. John Grin et al. (Berlin: Springer, 2009), 65–102.

about embedding climate politics within a security framework.[19] Daniel Deudney and Mark Zeitoun worry that security frameworks inject parochial assumptions, antagonistic norms, and militarized institutions into environmental politics, replacing important values like justice, participation, and human rights.[20]

Securitized environmental discourses also tend to view the significance of climate change and ecological degradation in an entirely anthropocentric frame. They risk foreclosing moral considerations or political strategies that include the interests of non-human creatures or the earth itself, or that honor the intimacies of human communities with their ecological relations. Relatedly, they often reinforce what Pope Francis calls the "technocratic paradigm," which treats creation as an inert object awaiting rational management by human experts and elites. The field's dominant disciplinary frameworks sheer the issues of key religious and moral valences. This poses both a problem and an opportunity for Christian analyses of environmental conflict. These same challenges attend Christian reflection on ecologies of violence across all four types. I discuss the ecological drivers of conflict and peace, with special attention to water conflict, in Chapter 4.

The Environmental Consequences of War

The second type concerns the impacts of warfare and military industrial production on natural environment. Armed combat endangers human and non-human inhabitants in and around warzones as it destroys or intoxicates the ecosystems in which they live. Used as a weapon, threatened as a target, and imperiled as collateral of military aims, the environment has never been immune to the violence of war. War's environmental impacts are especially pernicious in the advent of modern weaponry, the production and deployment of which releases chemical and biological particulates that cycle through water, air, and soil, and often into human and non-human bodies. For this reason, environmental scientists now attempt to track the impacts of modern

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[19] Timothy Doyle and Timothy Chaturvedi, "Climate Refugees and Security: Conceptualizations, Categories, and Contestations," in *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*, ed. John S. Dryzek, Richard B. Norgaard, and David Schlosberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[20] Daniel Deudney, "The Case against Linking Environmental Degradation and National Security," *Millenium: Journal of International Studies* 19 (1990): 461–76; Daniel Deudney, "Environmental Security: A Critique," in *Contested Grounds: Security and Conflict in the New Environmental Politics*, ed. Daniel Deudney and Matthew, Richard A. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999).

warfare on war-zone ecologies, biodiversity and the human environment,[21] and military ethicists and international lawyers seek frameworks to evaluate and regulate the environmental effects of war-making.[22]

Much of this scientific, legal, and moral attention to wartime environmental destruction was catalyzed by the international scrutiny that followed the Vietnam War, during which the United States used herbicides and high-explosive munitions, systematically cleared land and bombed dams, and tinkered with the possibilities of strategic climate modification, endeavoring to turn the weather into a weapon of war.[23] The Persian Gulf War prompted another wave of consternation, when Iraqi troops set oil wells ablaze and caused the world's worst-ever oil spill, while coalition forces used cluster bombs and depleted uranium shells to destroy Iraq's water and sanitation works. The fallout from these conflicts illustrated how the environment broadens and magnifies war's destructive power, lengthening its temporal horizon, widening its spatial reach, and carrying its sting across the borders of species and into the guts of the earth.[24]

The environmental impacts of war are distinct for the ways they spread the hazards of battle through ecological ripple effects—violence relayed through ecosystemic relations.[25] The effects of a discrete, carefully calibrated combat action may fan out through food chains and energy cycles, or leave its toxic legacy blowing in the wind or flowing through rivers, aquifers and pipes. When the environment is a victim of war, it also becomes a medium of political violence toward creatures great and small. When wars degrade the natural conditions necessary for life and well-being, they perpetrate arbitrary harms on civilians and other noncombatants. In the traditional language of military ethics, environmental destruction in war is *indiscriminate*

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[21] SIPRI, *Ecological Consequences*; Westing, *Environmental Hazards of War*; Hupy, "Environmental Footprint of War."

[22] Grunawalt et al., "Protection of the Environment;" Austin and Bruch, *The Environmental Consequences of War*; United Nations Environmental Program, *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law* (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme, 2009); Rayfuse Rosemary Gail, *War and the Environment: New Approaches to Protecting the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflict* (Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2014).

[23] Michael D. Diederich, "'Law of War' and Ecology: A Proposal for a Workable Approach to Protecting the Environment Through the Law of War," *Military Law Review* 136 (1992): 137–60.

[24] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Delayed Toxic Effects of Chemical Warfare Agents* (Stockholm: Amkqvist & Wiksell International, 1976).

[25] Michael Schmitt, "Green War: An Assessment of the Environmental Law of International Conflict," *Yale Journal of International Law* 22 (1997), 96.

violence—it extends the brutality of combat into the dwellings of innocents, human and non-human alike.

In fact, some ethicists have begun to consider how the Just War Tradition (JWT) could be adapted to interpret and address war's environmental impacts. Gregory Reichberg and Henrik Syse attempt "to show how the rich soil from which the just war tradition has grown includes elements relevant to the contemporary debate on the environmental consequences of war."[26] They draw on the theology of Thomas Aquinas to suggest how the tradition's philosophical foundations could also ground the moral value of nature, and so bring environment under the protections of the JWT's *in bello* principles. Mark Woods argues that careful considerations of potential environmental impacts should be part of just war deliberations *ad bellum*.[27] More recently, Matthew Shadle and Laurie Johnston have engaged Catholic Social Teaching on war in light of environmental degradation.[28] These efforts indicate the potential for Christian ethicists to deploy classical concepts in new ways to confront the challenge of ecological violence.

Yet the standard frameworks for morally assessing violence as well as the established ways of doing environmental ethics are vexed by the environmental consequences of war. Christian ethics of war and peace have not developed conceptual resources to grasp what is at stake—ethically or theologically—in the destruction of nature, and they have limited practical tools to orient lived responses to ecological violence. For environmental ethics, the complex couplings of ecological and human systems always create complications, but war is typically understood as a unique moral sphere, "a zone of radical coercion, in which justice is always under a cloud."[29] There are few precedents for interpreting and applying ecological values under the fog of war. I discuss the environmental consequences of war, and possibilities for Christian ethical engagements with them, in Chapter 3.

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[26] Gregory Reichberg and Henrik Syse, "Protecting the Natural Environment in Wartime: Ethical Considerations from the Just War Tradition.," *Journal of Peace Research* 37 (2000), 451.

[27] Mark Woods, "The Nature of War and Peace: Just War Thinking, Environmental Ethics, and Environmental Justice," in *Rethinking the Just War Tradition*, ed. John W. Lango and Harry van der Linden (Ithaca: SUNY Press, 2007), 17–34.

[28] Matthew Shadle, "No Peace on Earth: War and the Environment," in *Green Discipleship: Catholic Theological Ethics and the Environment*, ed. Tobias Winright (Winona: Anselm Academic, 2011), 407–25; Laurie Johnston, "Just War and Environmental Destruction," in *Can War Be Just in the 21st Century? Ethicists Engage the Tradition*, ed. Tobias Winright and Laurie Johnston (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2015), 96–111. Shadle also addresses environmental degradation as a "cause" of war.

[29] Michael Walzer, *Arguing About War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), x.

Land Conflict

Conflicts over land—including disputes over how to value, use or inhabit particular lands, and clashes over who land belongs to (or who belongs to the land)—entail a third kind of connection between violence and environment. Land conflict in the sense meant here is related to but distinct from what is typically called "environmental" or "resource" conflict. Environmental/resource conflicts are typically defined by competition over scarce resources, and are characterized by the ways ecological forces—especially environmental stresses and changes—stimulate those struggles. But conflicts over land use are not necessarily motivated by resource competition or driven by climatic or other environmental changes. Although they may sometimes feature disputes about the economic value of land, they are ultimately about the moral value and cultural meaning of contested places. Land conflicts share features of religious conflicts in that they are often clashes of identities organized around group-defining lifeways and emplaced worldviews.

In *After Nature*, Jedediah Purdy argues convincingly that the embattled history of American land settlement and management is in part a story of rival "environmental imaginations." Environmental imagination refers to a people's way of thinking about and acting in relation to their natural environments. It is a group's distinct "way of seeing" the natural world, their "pattern of supposing how things must be." Carried by myths, narratives, lifeways, land policies, and so on, environmental imagination encompasses the significance of a group's ecological thought and practice to their constructions of identity and meaning. "It is an implicit, everyday metaphysics, the bold speculations buried in our ordinary lives," writes Purdy.[30]

> From the beginning—unmistakably from the time of the first indigenous settlement, and overwhelmingly from the time of European colonization—the human presence in North America has been ecologically revolutionary, wiping out species, changing soils and plant mixes, and reshaping the surface of the earth. At least since Europeans conquered the continent, that ecological revolution has been deeply involved in contests over imagination, over the meaning of the world and the right way to live in it.[31]

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[30] Jedediah Purdy, *After Nature: A Politics for the Anthropocene* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 9, 22.
[31] Purdy, *After Nature*, 7.

After Nature shows how the bloody struggles over the possession and character of American soil transformed landscapes across the continent according to opposing conceptions of nature—ecological worldviews embodied in communities, enshrined in law, and religious in depth. America's originary history of ethno-religious land conflicts helped mold the nation's cultural and political identities as it fashioned a country speckled with sacred places disputed by many, protected and preserved for some, pillaged, desecrated and displaced for others.

Some of America's most celebrated sacred places—e.g., Yellowstone National Park—remain theaters of conflict between rival cultures and their competing land policies. In *The Battle for Yellowstone: Morality and the Sacred Roots of Environmental Conflict*, Justin Farrell argues that conflicts over the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem remain embittered and intractable because dominant frameworks for understanding environmental policy disputes fail to grasp the "deeper cultural mechanisms" at play. The long-simmering hostilities at America's favorite secular sanctuary are part of "an underlying struggle over deeply held 'faith' commitments, feelings, and desires that define what people find sacred, good, and meaningful in life at a most basic level."[32]

Purdy's history of U.S. environmental policy and culture, and Farrell's sociological analysis of conflict at Yellowstone both reflect a pattern visible in diverse political and geographical contexts across the world: Land use disputes are more than inter-group conflicts over competing interests; they are cultural, ideological, and religious clashes. This is true even where parties are avowedly "secular" actors. At stake are the intertwined histories of nature and culture, of environment and identity— the pairs bound together by the embodied environmental imaginations hosted within a place, by their everyday ecological politics and their engagements with the sacred.

There is no field of study or body of research dedicated to land conflict so defined. Here is an opportunity for scholars of religion to lend their field knowledge and disciplinary tools to the critical study of ecologies of violence. For Christian ethicists to contribute to this work, however, the field will have to develop strategies for historically-informed and place-based inquiry into conflicted ecological faiths. Christian communities have lived such faiths in many times and places, with monumental implications for the formation of the tradition, for the moral lives of its practitioners, for

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[32] Justin Farrell, *The Battle for Yellowstone: Morality and the Sacred Roots of Environmental Conflict* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2015), 3.

their neighbors, and for the lands they passed through and in which they dwell. Chapter 2 develops these themes further.

Structural Violence Conveyed through Environmental Systems

Many climate justice advocates argue that the injustices associated with climate change reflect and even mediate deep-seated patterns of violence. Climate change is a symptom and a vehicle of *structural violence*, they argue.[33] Johan Galtung, a pioneer of peace and conflict studies, famously defined structural violence as "violence [that] is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances."[34] For Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, structural violence names systemic, interlocking processes which operate through human agency but function independently of any individual humans to "degrade, dehumanize, damage, and kill people by limiting or preventing their access to the necessities for life or for its flourishing." It is "harm that certain groups of people experience as a result of unequal distribution of power and privilege," and it includes the "complicity or silent acquiescence of those who fail to take responsibility for it and challenge it."[35]

Calling climate change structural violence focuses moral attention on the conditions of persistent inequality that follow climate change from its origins in the developed world's disproportionate uses of environmental resources and atmospheric space, through its political negotiation in global arenas marked by radical imbalances of power, to its projected consequences, which will be most severe for the poor and other vulnerable groups. A close look at climate change attunes us to the strange possibility that violence may flow through ecological and atmospheric systems. This sort of violence, despite its structural scope, environmental medium, and accidental infliction, is no less real: it still strikes, still harms, still coerces and deprives.

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[33] Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013); Kevin J. O'Brien, *The Violence of Climate Change: Lessons of Resistance from Nonviolent Activists* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017); Tom B.K. Goldtooth, "Respect for Mother Earth: Original Instructions and Indigenous Traditional Knowledge," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Ecology*, ed. John Hart (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2017); Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain, *Global Warming in an Unequal World: A Case of Environmental Colonialism* (New Delhi, India: Centre for Science and Environment, 1991); Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[34] Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969), 171.

[35] Moe-Lobeda *Resisting Structural Evil*, 72–78.

The idea of ecologically-mediated violence need not seem strange, suggests Willis Jenkins, because ecology itself is political.[36] Nothing reveals that more clearly than persistently unequal distributions of environmental hazards. In the U.S., for example, toxic exposures, ecological degradations, and severe resource deficiencies are distributed along lines of class and especially race. The color of your skin is the best sociological predictor of how many unwanted chemicals have penetrated your body through your water, air, and soil.[37] Globally, the environments of the poor and the indigenous are degraded and destroyed through long-term dynamics of "resource capture" and "unequal ecological exchange."[38] Those historical relations are also implicated in the global poor's special vulnerabilities to climate-shaped threats like sea-level rise, severe drought and flooding. In short, the wounds wrought by climate change and other forms of environmental change highlight how harms flow gradually across time and space, finding vulnerable victims through the politically forged channels of ecological systems. Rob Nixon calls this "slow violence"—ecologically-transmitted violence that occurs "out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction…an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all." Slow violence is "incremental and accretive," with "calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales."[39]

The concept of slow violence makes visible processes and relations that degrade and destroy through hidden channels. It thereby aims to subject environmental injustice to the strict moral censure reserved for acts of violence, and elicits moral and political responses that take seriously the suffering of its victims and the malice, negligence, or complicity of its perpetrators. Similarly, when advocates of climate justice place the causes and effects of climate change under the category of violence, they present a more dire account of the problem, and arguably appeal to a more demanding and holistic set of responsibilities. The category also guards against seemingly effective, efficient

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[36] Willis Jenkins, *The Future of Ethics: Sustainability, Social Justice, and Religious Creativity* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013).

[37] Robert D. Bullard et al., *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty, 1987–2007* (Cleveland: United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ, 2007).

[38] Juan Martinez-Alier, *The Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation* (Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2002); J. Timmons Roberts and Bradley Parks, *A Climate of Injustice: Global Inequality, North-South Politics, and Climate Policy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); J. Timmons Roberts and Bradley C. Parks, "Ecologically-Unequal Exchange, Ecological Debt, and Climate Justice: History and Implications of Three Linked Ideas for a New Social Movement," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 504, no. 3–4 (2009): 385–409.

[39] Nixon, *Slow Violence*, 2.

"solutions" that would nevertheless reinforce underlying patterns of inequality and exploitation.[40]

Typically, the field of climate justice is concerned with how to allocate fairly the costs of mitigating and adapting to climate change.[41] It argues over what factors should matter most when assessing those allocations, and how to measure and weigh harms and risks that are inequitably distributed across the globe's already uneven geographies of vulnerability, wealth, and power. Movements for environmental justice likewise take systemic inequalities and structural oppressions into account when meting out justice, but typically remain within a proceduralist and distributivist paradigm.[42] Acknowledging climate change, racist ecologies, and resource capture as forms of ecologically-mediated structural violence implies that justice requires more than fair cost allocation and burden sharing, more than due process and equitable distributions of benefits and burdens. At minimum, interpreting such relations within the moral and political jurisdiction of violence seems to call forth practices of rebuke, accountability, and repair.

A full picture of the requirements of justice will depend on which moral frameworks and political precedents for responding to violence are brought to bear on cases of ecological violence. Here is another opportunity for Christian ethics to take up the challenge of addressing crucial contemporary connections between violence and the environment. But the challenge here is considerable. While structural violence seems an apt description of many of the evils of climate change, determining just responses to climate violence is difficult because responsibility and culpability is hard to track across all the confounding spatial and temporal scales through which climate change contributes to human suffering. Another important question is whether the paradigm of structural violence can make moral sense of humanity's relations to the non-human world, or whether the typically anthropocentric category of violence obscures the pain

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[40] Goldtooth, "Respect for Mother Earth;" Pope Francis, "Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home" (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015).

[41] E.g., James B. Martin-Schramm, *Climate Justice: Ethics, Energy, and Public Policy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010); John Broome, *Climate Matters: Ethics in a Warming World* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012); Henry Shue, *Climate Justice: Vulnerability and Protection* (New Haven: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[42] Dina Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long As Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice from Colonization to Standing Rock* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2019), 22-26.

and silences the cries of "Sister, Mother earth."[43] Some recent studies in Christian ethics have begun to explore these challenges, and I review them in the following section.

More Types, Other Maps

The typology of ecological violence above is not the only possible way to map this material, nor is it necessarily comprehensive. As the fourth type makes clear, the question of how violence relates to the environment is partly an interpretive question, and always a discursive strategy, an attempt to frame pressing moral issues in terms of their social-ecological intersections. As all four types indicate, interpreting these issues at their intersections is a strategy with both promise and peril, risking, among other things, anthropocentering and securitizing environmental discourses, overextending and thus weakening the moral scope of violence, and overwhelming ethical competencies. Yet ethical reflection at these junctions holds considerable promise, not only for helping Christian moral life to catch up to Anthropocene challenges, but also for restoring Christian faith to an integral understanding of human personhood in the context of creation, and so to help Christian communities remain responsive to God's self-disclosive activity in the world.

Other possible maps might chart anthropogenic environmental degradation as a form of direct violence against non-human creatures or against the earth. Perhaps high-intensity agriculture does violence to the soil, or deforestation commits violence against forest creatures, and this should be treated as a distinct form of ecological violence. While plausible, this interpretation is not explored here. The interpretive frame of *violence* is powerful and potentially profound for Christian environmental thought—it should be subject to certain limits. As a concept describing acts and relationships, "violence" illumines some qualities of relations and obscures others. Applying it in so direct a way to human treatments of nature may crowd out ecocentric ways of understanding our ecological connections, even as it attempts to de-anthropocentralize the concept of violence. Yet this is only a provisional judgment, serving mainly to keep this dissertation's scope of analysis manageable. As scholarship on ecologies of violence grows, I expect lively debate on this point. This study obviously raises questions about the meaning and scope of violence, but I leave this particular question—about how to

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[43] Francis, *Laudato Si.* Willis Jenkins raised questions like these in Jenkins, "Is Climate Change Structural Violence?" (Annual Meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics, New Orleans, LA, 2017).

conceptualize violence against earth and other creatures—mostly in the background, as a key subject for future conversation.

A strong argument could be made for adding a type to encompass the use of armed force to protect the environment[44] and the militarization of ecological conservation.[45] If these dynamics continue to grow in prominence, they may come to warrant separate treatment, but for now can be treated as distinctive forms of land conflict. Still other possible maps would create special places for the ecological dimensions of race-, class- or gender-based violence. But these intersections permeate the entire range of violent ecologies, so they are not treated as distinct types here. Instead they should be understood as pervasive features of the sociology of ecological violence. All four types should be investigated with attention to these penetrating and constitutive dynamics.

What the four types have in common are the embedded inter-relations of human societies within ecological systems, and thus the ways environments bear the forces of human enmity and strife. Despite their differences, they all demand integrated moral analyses that cross environmental, political, and religious thresholds. Can Christian ethics do such work?

PERENNIAL GAPS, UNPRECEDENTED PROBLEMS, AND SOME RECENT CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Long-standing efforts to call attention to the ecology of violence—notably on land use conflicts and climate change, and mostly from thinkers from the Global South, indigenous communities, and liberationist traditions—struggle to influence the dominant Christian ethical discourses in the North Atlantic, where a violently won sense of environmental security combines with a deeply rooted conceptual poverty, making claims of ecological violence from the margins appear morally unimportant, if not theologically unintelligible. One way of accounting for the incapacity of North Atlantic Christian ethics to grasp the nature and significance of ecologies of violence can be found in Willie J. Jennings's extraordinary book *The Christian Imagination*, in which

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[44] Robyn Eckersley, "Ecological Intervention: Prospects and Limits," *Ethics & International Affairs* 21, no. 3 (September 2007): 293–316. Eckersley proposes "ecological intervention" as an ecocentric corollary to humanitarian intervention, probing the ethical implications of the "responsibility to protect" in light of imminent threats to nature.

[45] Rosaleen Duffy, "Waging a War to Save Biodiversity: The Rise of Militarized Conservation.," *International Affairs* 90, no. 4 (July 2014): 819–34.

he argues that modern Euro-American Christianity was born in the severance of peoplehood from land. Recall Jedediah Purdy's notion of *imagination* as a "way of seeing, a pattern of supposing how things must be" and an "implicit, everyday metaphysic." Jennings argues that the dominant North Atlantic Christian imagination has seen human beings in terms of race instead of place, portable bodies enfleshed in color rather than integral peoples in kinship to earth. With the colonial construction of race as a category of human identity—forged in processes of frontier settlement through land seizure that displaced millions, and patterns of land and property ownership that objectified places into resources and people into slaves—Christianity "rendered unintelligible and unpersuasive any narratives of the collective self that bound identity to geography, to earth, to water, to trees."[46]

If these colonial histories seem remote—they are not—the underlying religious imaginations still readily appear. The Native American theologian George "Tink" Tinker writes of native peoples' continual frustrations in the struggle to have their collective identities "recognized and respected as distinct political entities based on specific land territories." Instead, well-meaning liberals bundle native concerns under the placeless logics of race- or class-based politics.[47] "The earth has been taken from us and given back to us changed," laments Jennings. "Thus our lives, even if one day freed from racial calculations, suffer right now from a less helpful freedom, freedom from the ground, the dirt, landscapes, and animals, from life collaborative with the rhythms of God's other creatures."[48] Perhaps this is one reason Christian ethics has struggled to grasp ecologies of violence as problems for Christian life: the Christian imagination, even in its progressive forms, will not conceive social or political life as enmeshed in ecological relations.[49] Ethicists have inherited practical and epistemic incapacities to do politics with nature, symptoms of a still deeper split between collective identity and place.

Further evidence for such a divorce is reflected in the near total separation between environmental and political theology, between the tradition's ecological ethics

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[46] Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 59.

[47] Tinker, *American Indian Liberation,* 23.

[48] Tinker, *American Indian Liberation,* 290.

[49] Willis Jenkins, "White Settler Christianity and the Silence of Earth in Political Theology," *Political Theology Network, Symposium on Political Theology and Ecology*, 2018, https://politicaltheology.com/naturalized-white-settler-christianity-and-the-silence-of-earth-in-political-theology/.

and its moral reflections on violence, conflict and peace. Christian environmental thought has developed quite a large library since the 1970s, but has almost never treated the problem of inter-human violence as part of its domain. Christian ethics hosts rich streams of reflection and practice on the ethics of violence, justice, and peacemaking, but these seldom encompass relations with non-human nature or the slow flow of harms through ecosystemic processes and atmospheric space.

The tradition's moral and practical frameworks for confronting environmental issues and political violence rarely overlap. Environmental ethics and the ethics of violence and peace remain discrete domains, even as their spheres of concern entwine in increasingly visible ways. Both want to promote flourishing in a world where it is no longer possible to think about justice and peace apart from ecological systems and environmental conditions, but both face questions foreign to their fields. How should environmental ethicists respond to resource conflicts spawned by both environmental change and social divisions? How do peacebuilders assess and redress the ways environments mediate structural violence? For now, each field works with tools adapted for its own parochial environs, and a lack of dialogue threatens to leave both disciplines lagging behind the demands of their subject matter.

Climate, Politics, and Violence: An Emerging Discourse in Christian Ethics

Yet growing concerns about climate change are just beginning to spark efforts to do ethics across some of these boundaries and to tackle the intersectional issues of climate violence. Perhaps that is because some in the field are beginning to see that the tradition's typical moral patterns are "imperiled by unprecedented problems," as Willis Jenkins has put it. The complexities and uncertainties of climate change occasion ethical innovation "when reform projects take their incompetence as a demand to create new possibilities from their inherited traditions."[50] Four Christian ethicists have recently tackled connections of violence and climate change, offering clues to how the field could proceed.

Michael Northcott diagnoses a problem similar to the one discussed above, but instead of implicating the Christian imagination Northcott blames the "modern West" and its secular analysts with their Enlightenment roots. "The foundational Enlightenment separation between nature and culture, and hence between natural history and the history of the earth, is the core conundrum of climate change," he writes

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[50] Jenkins, *Future of Ethics,* 1, 6.

in *A Political Theology of Climate Change*.[51] Northcott argues that Western political scientists miss the connections between climate and conflict because they tend to "decontextualise politics from geography, and culture from nature." To make sense of the fractious politics of a warming world, contemporary conflict "needs to be presented in ways that make the connections between climate and culture."[52] He claims that the "Enlightenment distinction between nature and culture, facts and values," has left moderns with an objectified vision of nature, rendering the moral and political significance of climate change conceptually opaque.[53] For Northcott, the modern West's continual resistance to the reality of climate change is rooted in an ingrained Kantian folly—namely, the decoupling of scientific and practical reason, and the segregation of rational human activity from the sacramental vitality of the natural world.[54] Climate science takes on theological significance as it "reveals that the cosmos is again, as it was for the Ancients, a source of value and revelation, a living being with which humans are in a living relations, involving exchange and negotiation."[55] Christians learn the same in church (or they should), where eco-structural sins are repented and worshippers "rediscover the primordial unity of all persons and creatures."[56]

Northcott takes pains to argue that Christian leaders and organizations were among the very first to address climate change as a genuine moral and political challenge.[57] But while he claims that Christian political theology has the necessary resources to confront environmental conflict, he offers no explanation for why the field has overwhelmingly failed to do so. Even Northcott's own work, which acknowledges climate conflict as a problem worthy of theological reflection, does not attend to the particular relations between environmental change and human violence from a Christian perspective. Still, if the conceptual alienations of nature and culture, place and identity, underlie the practical incompetence of Christian ethics before ecologies of violence, then Northcott's project represents one plausible way forward, focused on theological repair of public imagination. On the other hand, when his self-assured, even

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[51] Michael S. Northcott, *A Political Theology of Climate Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 188.

[52] Northcott, *Political Theology of Climate Change*, 7-12.

[53] Michael S. Northcott, "Climate Change and Christian Ethics," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Ecology*, ed. John Hart (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 291. See also Michael S. Northcott, *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2007).

[54] Northcott, *A Political Theology of Climate Change*, 161–200.

[55] Northcott, "Climate Change and Christian Ethics," 291.

[56] Northcott, *A Moral Climate,* 184.

[57] Northcott, "Climate Change and Christian Ethics, 287.

triumphalist account of Christianity attempts to evade complicity in the entangled legacies of colonialism, white supremacy, and the anti-ecological imaginations he agrees are at the root of climate change, Northcott abdicates responsibility for his own tribe's history of violence, and so replicates the very kinds of politics that insulate from scrutiny the structural violence of climate change.

Mark Douglas's important new book *Christian Pacifism for an Environmental Age* takes a much more critical approach to Christian history and theology. He argues that Christian pacifism formed around a mythologized narrative of immaculate origins, and that early pacifist pretensions to ecclesial purity were implicated in the formation of an imperial church that pursued political power by recourse to coercion and exclusion.[58] The early church's pacifism was furthermore bound up with anti-Semitism, developing supersessionist hermeneutics and "schismatic tendencies" that have endured in pacifist theological politics, tendencies too often "rooted in judgments against and condemnation of other politically weak, marginalized, and/or oppressed communities."[59]

But Douglas's criticisms are part of an effort to reconstruct the Christian ethics of nonviolence in light of natural history and especially "climate-shaped conflict." "We are entering a new social imaginary shaped by environmental concerns," he writes. Living in the Anthropocene—Douglas calls it "the Environmental Age"—humans now understand the world and their place within it "through environmental lenses." Christian pacifists need to reform their ideas and practices for this emerging epoch, when conflict and violence are increasingly "environmentally shaped."[60]

Reconstructing Christian pacifism begins by "understanding our place in *time*."[61] By this he means primarily three things. First, it means understanding something about the particular moral challenges of the Environmental Age, including environmental conflict. Second, it means better understanding the history of Christian pacifism. And finally, it means interpreting both of the above within a theological understanding of God's action in history.

The vast majority of the book is devoted to the second task, which for Douglas is an effort to use historical method to complicate and destabilize the mythic narratives

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[58] Mark Douglas, *Christian Pacifism for an Environmental Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 65–111.

[59] Douglas, *Christian Pacifism*, 60.

[60] Douglas *Christian Pacifism*, 2–3.

[61] Douglas, *Christian Pacifism*, 3.

pacifists have rallied around. "In demythologizing pacifism, I hope to temporalize—and thereby humanize—it," he explains.[62] It is by humanizing pacifist history that he hopes to help today's pacifists acclimatize to the Environmental Age. When pacifists realize that the early church was never uniformly pacifist and that the tradition's founding theologians were anti-Semites complicit in the theological formation of empire, perhaps they will stop closing ranks, stop turning their noses up at the rest of the world, and instead learn to accept responsibility for their contributions to global environmental problems and to "pursue common cause with disparate others in dealing with climate-shaped conflict."[63]

One of the most illuminating features of the book is that Douglas attempts to narrate the roles played by weather, climate, and geological events in the formation of pacifist tradition. As climatic changes shaped conflicts in late medieval Europe, "they also shaped the movements of pacifist thought."[64] Climatic changes have shaped the Christian ethics of violence and nonviolence—this is a momentous insight, especially for an environmental age, when ecological changes are predicted to be unsettling at unprecedented scales.[65] By arguing that traditions of Christian moral thought developed within communities' theo-ethical responses to environment, Douglas takes a step toward relocating religious history in its ecological setting, and so opens space for Christian ethics to grasp ecological violence within the orbit of lived faith.

Where Northcott rehabilitates a premodern doctrine of Creation to re-stitch culture and politics to earth, Douglas turns to recent work in environmental history to show how natural forces usher traditions through time. Both are efforts to link Christian political imagination to ecology in order to prepare Environmental Age communities to address problems fundamentally linked to planetary change. But the most forceful conclusion drawn from *Christian Pacifism for an Environmental Age* is not about the natural world but about the nature of history. "When we ignore the impact of climate on history, we unnecessarily and unduly truncate the range of forces that shape history."[66] The theological significance of climate change seems primarily to reinforce certain best practices for religious historians: It is one reason among many to adopt a

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[62] Douglas, *Christian Pacifism,* 2019, 9.

[63] Douglas, *Christian Pacifism,* 60–63, 79–81, 103–111, 125, 226.

[64] Douglas, *Christian Pacifism,* 236.

[65] Cf. Willis Jenkins, Evan Berry, and Luke Beck Kreider, "Religion and Climate Change," *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 43, no. 1 (October 17, 2018), 97–99.

[66] Douglas, *Christian Pacifism,* 239.

more subtle hermeneutic of tradition, so that those who look to history for moral inheritances can supply more complex and ambiguous readings of the past. Complex and ambiguous religious histories are, in turn, useful in the Environmental Age—more useful than essentialized, mythologized histories—because the moral postures they support are unburdened of perfectionism, purity, and divisiveness, and more open to irony, bricolage, and collaboration. Irony, bricolage, and collaboration will be virtues in the environmental age because climate change reveals moral conditions of universal complicity, ambiguity, and interconnectedness, and because meaningful solutions require working together. These are important points, and the overall achievements of the book are a tremendous contribution to the history and historiography of Christian pacifism and an insightful effort to renew the tradition for a new era.

But what that renewed tradition can offer in terms of orienting practical pacifist moral engagement with climate-shaped conflict remains under-developed in the book. What can pacifist ethics do for climate violence? In the Afterward, Douglas envisions another book, one "that picks up where this one leaves off. How will Christian pacifism respond to violence caused by the movements of climate refugees, the competitions over increasingly scarce basic resources like grains and water, the political destabilizations of new pandemics, and other politico-ecological crises?" He says he hopes to write this book soon.[67]

Writing that book well will likely require some engagement with environmental ethics and Christian environmental thought. For a project aiming to renew traditions of Christian morality in light of environmental concern, Douglas's book has surprisingly little to say about the moral or theological significance of natural environment. How, where, and why does the non-human world have moral and/or theological value? Of what import is ecology to Christian faith? How does creation make claims on Christian lives? These questions matter for how Christian ethics engage ecologies of violence, and any practical approach to issues like climate-shaped conflict will answer them implicitly if not reflectively. Douglas's account seems to frame environment primarily as a set of external conditions creating social pressures. Mainly, it is the weather, which over time or through extreme events can be "disordering" to established ways of thinking and living. Climate change is a theological problem just because all serious shifts—"whether technological, political, or economic"—to the objective conditions of social life prompt

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[67] Douglas, *Christian Pacifism*, 248.

people to ask questions, some of them theological, typically about God's presence in history.[68]

"In Euro-American (and European) philosophical and theological history it is more common to see intellectual reflections on the meaning of time; it is far less common to see intellectual reflections on space," observes Tinker. Most Native American worldviews and lifeways centered on space, he says. This has been reflected in their deep attachments to particular places, where peoplehood is conceived in responsible kinship to earth, to land and its diverse inhabitants. The genocidal displacement of native peoples in North America was the triumph of *time*—the conquest of land and people within providential history, interpreted as progress, sustained still in liberal narratives of development and in the banishment of earth from political imagination.[69] "The most destructive value that the European invaders imposed is the quantification and objectification of the natural world," writes Tom Goldtooth (Executive Director of the Indigenous Environmental Network) in a paper about the moral dangers of many seemingly reasonable responses to climate change.[70] Where history replaced creation as the primary domain of God's presence, environment was desacralized, and promptly desecrated.

These are of course fairly sweeping narratives, and perhaps they are just the kinds of monochrome histories Douglas works so strenuously to unsettle in his book. But stories about the erasure of place and the expulsion of earth from modern North Atlantic theological imagination proliferate in environmental theological literature. They are important in the context of arguments about how to respond to climate violence because they show what is at stake ethically and theologically in how climate change is interpreted as a problem and, relatedly, how human communities decide to address it. For Goldtooth, responses to climate problems that replicate the objectification of earth also tend to "entrench and magnify social inequalities," and worse, they "promote violation of the sacred, plain and simple."[71] Pope Francis argued much the same thing in *Laudato Si*.[72] Understanding why indigenous peoples, religious leaders from the Global South, many theologians of color in North America, and many others see things this way requires, in part, an effort to understand the social and

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[68] Douglas, *Christian Pacifism*, 235.

[69] George E. Tinker, "An American Indian Theological Response to Ecojustice," *Ecotheology* 3 (1997), 96–99.

[70] Goldtooth, "Respect for Mother Earth," 464.

[71] Goldtooth, "Respect for Mother Earth," 462.

[72] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, §84-92, 106-111, 115-18, 170-172.

theological significances of place, natural environment, and ecological relationships. An effort to see ecology in its social and theological depth is requisite to the capacity to engage issues like climate displacement, land conflict, and "resource" scarcity in full moral scope. By focusing on the Anthropocene's recalibration of *time,* Douglas misses an opportunity to consider how climate change and other ecological stressors illumine the ethical import of *place.* Dialogue with some meaningful segment of the now voluminous moral and theological literature on the environment seems a necessary next step for Christian ethics aiming to approach ecologies of violence.

Two other books—Cynthia Moe-Lobeda's *Resisting Structural Evil* and Kevin O'Brien's *The Violence of Climate Change*—show how attention to religious environmental thought can help inform responses to climate violence. Both present compelling arguments that climate change should be understood as structural violence. Climate change is a keystone example of how economic and ecological exploitation interlock in complex, hidden, systemic patterns, argues Moe-Lobeda.[73] "To see climate change as violence is to see it as the product of a destructive system that degrades human lives, other species, and the world upon which all living beings depend," writes O'Brien.[74]

Writing to over-consuming, mostly North Atlantic Christians, Moe-Lobeda attempts to help readers see structural violence, recognize their complicity without lapsing into "moral oblivion" or overwhelmed paralysis, and develop theological resources for individual and collective resistance and reform. A central task is to develop the "ecological dimensions of love." Interpreting neighbor-love in the context of creation ties acts of justice and compassion toward non-human creatures to the fundamental vocation of Christian life. It binds human practices of minding "voices of earth" to the person of Jesus and the mystery of God—"an incarnate God, a God embodied in life's extravagant complexity and variation."[75] It also raises complicated questions about how moral norms forged for human individuals and societies apply to non-human species and biotic communities. Christian environmentalists too often ignore disjunctions between values of Christian morality and the principles of biology and especially Darwinian evolution, argues Lisa Sideris. Where this is the case, Christian ethics actually fails to attend to nature in its own integrity, and so pursues

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[73] Moe-Lobeda, *Resisting Structural Evil,* 2013.
[74] O'Brien, *Violence of Climate Change,* 4.
[75] Moe-Lobeda, *Resisting Structural Evil,* 169, 200.

practical strategies unsettling to ecological systems.[76] Moe-Lobeda acknowledges these complexities, but does not attempt to resolve them. "The challenge of retheorizing love as an ecological vocation" remains "a weighty and morally compelling challenge for religion of the early twenty-first century."[77] Still, Moe-Lobeda claims a theologically grounded and ethically articulated praxis of love can transform moral agency for meaningful confrontation with ecological violence.

Kevin O'Brien draws on religious environmental thought to help interpret the multi-dimensional and multi-scalar problems of climate change, and turns to five famous leaders of nonviolent social movements for insight and inspiration in the struggle for climate justice. O'Brien develops a brief argument (in conversation with environmental theologian Whitney Bauman) for treating climate change as a global problem requiring a '"planetary' morality, which embraces the wide diversity of life on planet Earth in each of its diverse local expressions." Because climate change is rooted in "anthropocentric habits of thought and behavior," ethics responsive to the violence of climate change must expand their moral visions to include other creatures and earth as a whole.[78]

While O'Brien includes ecological degradation as part of his account of the violence of climate change, he also argues that concern for non-human species and natural processes should be valued "pragmatically" in movements for climate justice. "Small steps in the right direction that have been democratically agreed upon are far more powerful than boldly radical statements that are widely dismissed," he writes. Eco-centric accounts of climate violence are politically marginal, and make the claims of climate justice significantly more demanding. Extolling the example of Jane Addams, O'Brien urges pragmatism, which in this case means narrowing the scope of moral attention to the human dimensions of ecological violence in order to allow wide cooperation toward meaningful progress on climate justice.[79] O'Brien is willing to countenance what Goldtooth calls "violation of the sacred" in exchange for piecemeal, majoritarian improvements to climate politics. But the trade-off is made consciously, with a pragmatist's faith in the capacity of grassroots democracy to gradually cultivate

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[76] Lisa Sideris, *Environmental Ethics, Ecological Theology, and Natural Selection: Suffering and Responsibility* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).
[77] Moe-Lobeda, *Resisting Structural Evil,* 200–2.
[78] O'Brien, *Violence of Climate Change,* 106, 111.
[79] O'Brien, *Violence of Climate Change,* 109–11.

the cultural and political shifts that may one day recognize the cries of the earth and the justice claims of indigenous communities.[80]

O'Brien's approach to the violence of climate change is also pragmatic in another sense. His book "begins not with an abstract claim but with a concrete challenge," i.e., the structural violence of climate change, understood at its many levels of moral, scientific and political complexity. By locating climate change in the realm of violence, O'Brien emphasizes that the problem's ethical demands are not entirely unprecedented; moral communities have successfully resisted violence before. His approach seeks to cultivate capacities to engage climate violence by learning from social movements, with attention to how their ways of seeking justice and peace present both practical tools for climate action and theo-ethical insight about life in a warming world.[81]

DOING CHRISTIAN ETHICS FOR ECOLOGIES OF VIOLENCE

When O'Brien describes his approach to climate ethics as "pragmatic," he refers to the work of Willis Jenkins, who distinguishes between two broad strategies, two ways of doing religious ethics in response to social-environmental problems. In Jenkins's taxonomy, a pragmatic strategy "starts from concrete problems and works with the ideas and practices generated from reform projects attempting to address them." It holds that "the meaning of moral beliefs and practices lies in the patterns of action they support," and therefore looks to how moral communities adapt their traditions "to see and solve problems." The ethicist's task is to help moral communities use their traditions better. The other strategy is "cosmological." It attempts to meet moral challenges by telling "a new story or retrieving a forgotten moral vision in order to reorient humanity's moral consciousness." Where a pragmatic strategy trusts practices to transform moral vision, a cosmological strategy wagers that renewed worldviews can reshape moral practices.[82] Where cosmology centers on core convictions and root metaphors, pragmatism looks to concrete cases of collective problem solving. Taken together, the books discussed above indicate that efforts to help Christian ethics discern responsibilities for ecologies of violence will have to do both.

A major task for Christian ethics at the intersection of violence and the environment will be to re-envision social, political, and religious life within ecological

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[80] Cf. O'Brien's discussions of the climate threats to Kivalina, pp. 100–1, 113–4.

[81] O'Brien, *Violence of Climate Change*, 8–9, 34–37.

[82] Jenkins, *Future of Ethics*, 1–15.

systems—a challenge of moral cosmology. As Jennings and others point out, the segregation of corporate life from the wider communion of nature has circumscribed the Christian imagination in ways directly complicit with racialized violence, economic exploitation, and environmental desecration. It has also effectively obscured links between ecology, conflict, and structural violence, channeling Christian moral thought on politics and environment into separate pools, making it difficult to reckon with ecologies of violence whether in theory or in practice.

"After hundreds of years of thinking of war as primarily fought for political purposes," writes Douglas, "the return of resource wars, the weaponizing of environmental goods, the destabilizing effect of climate refugees, and the reshaping of mutually beneficial alliances (not to mention what will count as mutual benefit)…will lead to a rethinking of the causes, types, exacerbating factors, and understandings of war in a warming world."[83] This is all true, and yet war will still be fought primarily for political purposes. The defining mark of the environmental age is not the supersession of ecological forces over political life, but their mutual entanglement. Ecology is political; politics involves ecological relations, is shaped by landscape and nature's processes, and always has environmental ramifications.

Northcott, Douglas, and Moe-Lobeda all, in their own ways, attempt to reform the Christian imagination toward the capacity to see and accept responsibilities for violent political ecologies. Northcott restores God's presence to creation in order to reverse the catastrophic rupture of nature from culture. Douglas locates God's presence in the movement of Christian tradition through time in order to help communities tell their formative stories in ways that orient them to the distinct moral demands of an environmental age. Moe-Lobeda develops the meaning of Christian love to encompass the non-human world and to confront violence hidden in the convergences of economic structures and ecological relations.

If environmental conditions affect, integrate, and convey relationships of violence and domination, the flip side is that peace and flourishing are bound up with ecology. Another important site of attention for Christian ethics could be to flesh out the theological significance of God's peace for the moral challenges of political ecology. A number of Christian leaders have already indicated the importance of expounding the ecological dimensions of Christian conceptions of *peace*. "In our day," stated Pope John Paul II in his message for the 1990 celebration of the World Day of Peace, "there is a

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[83] Douglas, *Christian Pacifism*, 102.

growing awareness that world peace is threatened not only by the arms race, regional conflict and continued injustice among peoples and nations, but also by a lack of *due respect for nature*, by the plundering of natural resources and by a progressive decline in the quality of life."[84] "Protecting the natural environment in order to build a world of peace is…a duty incumbent upon each and all" argued Pope Benedict XVI at the same celebration twenty years later.[85] Pope Francis built on such themes in *Laudato Si*.[86] While the Popes argue that environmental protections are crucial to peace, the World Council of Churches (WCC) insists that peace is generative of ecological integrity: "The earth calls for and is in desperate need of a vision of peace that will enable it to restore itself in accord with its own intrinsic dynamism."[87] For the popes, the WCC, and a number of other Christian environmental thinkers, environmental issues are peace issues not primarily because ecological problems spark violence. Peace is a fundamental category of environmental ethics, they suggest, because biblical or theological conceptions of peace are holistic and expansive. The Hebrew word for peace, *shalom*, involves not only inter-human harmony within conditions of social justice, but further denotes God's ultimate intentions for the flourishing of all creation in loving fellowship with the Creator.[88] God's will for peace is coextensive with God's designs for creation, such that the earth's travail frustrates God's longing to draw the world into communion with Godself. According to this framework, ecological degradation sabotages *shalom*, and warped visions of peace devastate the environment.

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[84] Pope John Paul, "Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation. Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace," January 1, 2012, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html, §1.
[85] Pope Benedict XVI., "If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation," Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1 January 2010, available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/ peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20091208_xliii-world-day-peace.html, §14. For critical commentary, and a "creatiocentric" extension of Catholic Social Teaching's ways of linking environmental issues to peace and nonviolence, see J. Milburn Thompson, "Treating Nature Nonviolently: Developing Catholic Social Teaching on the Environment through Nonviolence," in *Violence, Transformation, and the Sacred*, ed. Margaret R. Pfeil and Tobias Winright (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2012), 225–38..
[86] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si.* See Tobias Winright, "Peace on Earth, Peace with Earth: Laudato Si' and Integral Peacebuilding," in *All Creation Is Connected: Voices in Response to Pope Francis's Encyclical on Ecology*, ed. Daniel R. DiLeo (Winona: Anselm Academic, 2018).
[87] World Council of Churches, "Peace on Earth and Peace with the Earth," WCC Symposium Peace on Earth is Peace with the Earth: Peace of Creation, Geneva, Switzerland, 2008.
[88] Norman Wirzba, *The Paradise of God: Renewing Religion in an Ecological Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Diverse theologies of peace undergird many of the most prominent political and ecological frameworks through which Christians engage environmental issues and matters of violence. In the three chapters that follow, this dissertation critically assesses how users of these frameworks may develop and deploy their conceptions of peace to confront ecologies of violence. Peace is a fraught and contentious concept in Christian ethics—even more so in the "real world" of politics and conflict. It has often been a "violent ideal," "provincial" in its origins yet universalizing in scope, trotted out to authorize war, demonize enemies, or pacify movements for social change.[89] But ideals of peace are also basic to Christian thought, ubiquitous but often inarticulate in the many diverse ways Christians attempt to act in faith in response to pressing problems. In particular, peace is a potent moral and theological concept bridging Christian political and ecological thought. Peace, the next three chapters indicate, is a fertile field of inquiry for examining how Christian ethics may come to grips with ecologies of violence. In turn, attention to ecologies of violence helps to denaturalize theologies of peace—to bring their assumptions and limits into stark relief, their palates juxtaposed upon the backdrop of new moral, political, and environmental terrain. This dissertation brings peace back into the realm of debate, scrutinizing it in the light of new cases and places, aiming to spur the kinds of moral creativity needed for an era of profound environmental change.

Cosmological strategies become necessary, suggests Jenkins, when "a culture's moral inheritances can no longer be trusted."[90] Faced with a set of unexamined ethical challenges—ecologies of violence that are not only ignored but also entrenched and concealed within North Atlantic Christian traditions—it may be useful to let constructive theology mend the moral imagination. "Ethics may need the religious capacity to reconsider the basic story by which [the] culture lives."[91] On the other hand, Christian ethics has a tendency to overestimate the power of theological beliefs to transform cultures, and cosmological strategies direct attention to grand theories and big ideas, funneling energy away from "concrete problems, scientific learning, pluralist

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[89] Murad Idris, *War for Peace: Genealogies of a Violent Ideal in Western and Islamic Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[90] Jenkins, *Future of Ethics,* 159.

[91] Jenkins *Future of Ethics,* 166. This is roughly the argument and the approach taken by ecofeminist theologian Sallie McFague across a number of books responsive to climate change and other environmental challenges. Among others, see McFague, *Body of God;* Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001); Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001).

negotiations, and the dynamics of cultural change."[92] Pragmatic strategies attempt to correct these liabilities.

If the cosmological challenge is to re-envision human life within ecological systems in tandem with revised theologies of peace, the pragmatic challenge is to equip ecological communities to practically engage problems linking violence and environment. A key step will be to attend carefully to the details of various types and instances of violent ecology. The four types outlined above are all quite different, and all take on distinct aspects when the scope of attention changes from general types to specific cases. Land conflict looks different in America's eastern coal country than it does in western ranchlands; both take on new valences where native peoples claim rights to ancestral lands; there are other kinds of differences between North American conflicts and those in the Middle East or in South Asia. Each form of ecological violence is embroiled in important debates in the natural and social sciences, and each has provoked morally significant political, legal, and philosophical discussions. Just as reckoning with the challenges of modern economy or contemporary politics requires scrutinizing over how each of these systems actually functions,[93] understanding what is at stake for Christian ethics in ecologies of violence will require getting acquainted with today's political ecologies.

Another step will be to consider how Christian communities and other movements around the world are already engaging ecologies of violence in practical ways. Collaboration with and critical reflection on real efforts to confront contextual problems is at the heart of Jenkins' pragmatic strategy, which runs on "the moral creativity in religious reform projects."[94] This may be particularly important when attempting to come to grips with problems like environmental conflict, the environmental impacts of war, land conflict, or the structural violence of climate change, because the tradition has virtually no history of scholarly reflection on these issues, and because its conceptual tools for addressing them are underdeveloped.

Allowing problems and the practical projects that engage them to tutor Christian ethics will require case-based analyses and place-based forms of moral reflection. Taking responsibility for ecologies of violence involves re-envisioning Christian ethics

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[92] Jenkins *Future of Ethics*, 4–5.

[93] E.g., Kathryn Tanner, *Christianity and the New Spirit of Capitalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019); Luke Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics: The Conditions and Possibilities of Faithful Witness* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

[94] Jenkins *Future of Ethics*, 5.

as a practice of orienting Christian life within the diverse relations constitutive of a place. Reflecting on cases of violence grounded in environmental conditions or conveyed in ecological systems rivets attention to the geography of moral life, so the field of Christian ethics must find ways to geo-locate its work, perhaps by finding its source materials within embodied Christian communities living their body politics in confrontation with violent ecologies.

Both cosmological and pragmatic strategies for reckoning with ecologies of violence will need to employ a third approach: Christian ethics must develop a *dialogical* method. Where contemporary problems transgress traditional intellectual and agential boundaries, ethics needs ways to orient moral life in processes of integration, critique, collaboration and exchange. Doing Christian ethics for ecologies of violence involves several kinds of dialogue, including interdisciplinary investigations needed to grasp the issues, inter-religious and cross-cultural dialogues necessary to understand and address particular cases, theological exchanges between schools of environmental and political reflection, and participatory learning across movements of practical response. Christian engagements with ecologies of violence will inevitably take on the diverse and distinct theological and methodological habits of the Christian spectrum, but dialogue should characterize the full range.

Traci West argues that dialogue is central to doing Christian ethics because the field's central task is "to make responsible contributions to the shared values of our pluralistic world." Collaborating toward moral engagement with intersectional problems within conditions of pluralism entails putting the tradition's theo-ethical inheritances in conversation with the moral wisdom embedded in communities of practice. In *Disruptive Christian Ethics*, West develops a method of ethics driven by "conversations between text and social context," allowing "the theories and practices, texts and contexts that are examined [to] critique each other." Doing Christian ethics for ecologies of violence may press the field in the directions blazed by scholars like Traci West—toward ethics as dialogical negotiation over intersectional problems with the goal of "building more ethical communal relations."[95]

One key area for dialogue will be between environmental ethics and the ethics of war and peace, including conversations between each field's moral and theological frameworks and between the communities of practice that carry them. The reasons for

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[95] Traci West, *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter* (Lexington, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), xv–xxi.

such dialogues are clear. Having developed in mutual isolation, and now facing problems that outstrip their respective ethical competencies, in part by crossing into the other's domain, each stands to learn from the other what a Christian response to ecologies of violence might entail. Paradigms of war/peace ethics each have practical repertories for criticizing violence, for limiting, preventing, and even healing it. They can stimulate debate about the acceptability, scope, ends and means of violence and warfare. Paradigms of environmental ethics have capacities for criticizing environmental degradation, and have shown themselves especially creative in working with inherited moral traditions to develop new forms of ethical responsibility. They also have experience articulating forms of responsibility that cross social, political, ecological, and biophysical spheres of live.

The grounds for such dialogue are also transparent. Both subfields frame their moral inquiries under the general task of orienting Christian life in response to God. Although specialized ethical arenas, they share common, theologically articulated norms (e.g., love and justice, and, of course, peace), as well as key inheritances (e.g., scripture and other authoritative texts, theological motifs, and exemplars) that have always shaped Christian ethics, so that the sources and structures of human obligation and Christian responsibility within both subfields cluster around common themes or debates.

Yet there are important differences between environmental ethics and the ethics of violence. While the two must now be interwoven, they cannot be collapsed into each other without problems. In practice, the two reason differently about what is at stake in ecologies of violence; they work with incommensurable criteria to evaluate adequate responses, and they supply divergent resources to get there. Still they must develop practices of critical collaboration if they are to contribute to practical reasoning about the connections between violence and natural environment.

The era of thinking ethically about justice and peace in abstraction from ecological systems and environmental conditions is passed. What this means for Christian ethics depends in part on how Christians come to interpret and perform the moral and theological significance of humanity's relations with non-human creation, and so on how ethics discerns the significance of *place* for moral reflection and Christian life. It also hinges on how Christians understand, evaluate, and inhabit their ecological connections with both neighbors and enemies, and so on how they adapt the tradition's theories and practices of violence, nonviolence, warfare and peacemaking. It will rely

on developing dialogue as fundamental to the discipline, and allowing conversations across texts and contexts to stimulate moral imagination. The three chapters that follow model possibilities for integrating these needs within the study of Christian ethics for ecologies of violence.

Chapter 2: Empire of Nature: Christian Stewardship, Environmental Imagination, and Land Conflict

INTRODUCTION

On January 2, 2016 Ammon Bundy led a group of armed militants into the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Harney County, Oregon to protest the federal government's ownership of land in the American West. The U.S. Government owns and manages roughly 75 percent of the land in Harney, one of the largest and most sparsely populated counties in the nation. In Malheur—a wildlife sanctuary established in 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt and now beloved of birders and ornithologists—the men set up defensive positions around Refuge headquarters, girding themselves for a prolonged occupation, and declaring intentions to stay until the government relinquished its claim to the property and allowed local ranchers to "use these lands as free men." They lasted 41 days, until February 11, when federal agents arrested the final holdouts.

On the face of it, #OregonStandoff, as it came to be called, looks like an overwrought skirmish about grazing rights on public lands, a simple environmental policy dispute escalated out of hand. But the conflict at Malheur has much deeper roots, and illustrates the volatile rifts at the core of America's national landscape. Bound up in this clash are competing environmental worldviews, contrasting religious legacies, and contentious racial politics. This chapter looks to the Malheur standoff to explore how these elements combine and combust in the soil of U.S. democracy. It probes this history in search of a clearer picture of how race and religion entwine within violent contests over the meaning of nature and the uses of land in American politics. The story indicates how land use conflicts reflect divergent environmentalisms, which in turn have key religious dimensions.

Views on environmental politics in the United States are "less empirical judgments than badges of cultural identity, signs of who is with you and who is against

you," argues Jedediah Purdy.[1] In *After Nature*, he describes these oppositional cultures in terms of divergent "environmental imaginations," and describes how these various ways of seeing nature help tell the complex, conflicted story of American settlement and land management. Environmental imagination is a shorthand way to describe a group's interconnected ideas, norms, and practices related to nature, including nature's moral status and it significance to human society. It encompasses "the link between ways of seeing, encountering, and valuing the world…and ways of acting, personally, politically, and legally, that have shaped the world in concrete ways."[2]

Before Purdy, political ecologists had begun to explore the role environmental imagination plays in land conflicts and land use disputes. In *Liberation Ecologies*, Peet and Watts argued that "environmental imaginaries are…the prime site of contestation between normative groups." Movements spurred by environmental imagination may be "fundamental movements in that they challenge the very basis of society—how people use nature, how human nature comes about, how imaginations are imagined," they wrote.[3] *Liberation Ecologies* aimed to advance theory in the field of political ecology, but the approach helped direct scholarship on land conflict toward empirical attention to local and regional discourses on environment and nature. "Struggles over environmental resources and patterns of development are as much struggles over how nature is understood as they are battles over material practices," argue Nesbitt and Weiner in the introduction to their case study on conflict in Central Appalachia. Environmental imaginaries, understood in relation to particular environmental histories and "place-based nature politics," are now key areas for analysis of land conflict.[4]

These insights shape the way this chapter examines land conflict through the Malheur case study. "Americans' political, spiritual, moral, and material values are all

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[1] Jedediah Purdy, "American Natures: The Shape of Conflict in Environmental Law," *Harvard Environmental Law Review* 36 (2012), 170.

[2] Jedediah Purdy, *After Nature: A Politics for the Anthropocene* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 7. Cf. Charles Taylor's description "What is a Social Imaginary" in *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 171-177. In this chapter I use "environmental imagination" and "environmental imaginary" interchangeably.

[3] Richard Peet and Michael Watts, *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 268.

[4] J. Todd Nesbitt and Daniel Weiner, "Conflicting Environmental Imaginaries and the Politics of Nature in Central Appalachia," *Geoforum* 32, no. 3 (August 1, 2001), 337. The fields of environmental history and environmental philosophy in the U.S. have also been attentive to the discursive, imaginative, and even mythological dimensions of various environmental movements and changes to the landscape in American history.

wrapped up in shifting understandings and governance of public lands," argues Brandon Davis.[5] An inquiry into the longer history of land management in Harney County indicates how the American West has always hosted multiple myths, with diverse ways of valuing and inhabiting land, and that these contending imaginations entwine with worldviews of violence, including kindred expressions of white supremacy, and differing views about who may use armed force in the preservation of national values.

These dynamics complicate the question of how the field of Christian ethics might come to address conflict over the uses and ownership of land, because Christian tradition inevitably brings into the frame its own cluster of historically-fraught and often inarticulate environmental imaginaries. The story of conflict in Harney County illustrates how Christian understandings of nature's meaning and value already exert profound influence on American land conflict. By tracking how operative environmental imaginaries clashed, collaborated, and changed in tandem with shifts in the ways land and water were owned and managed in Malheur, this chapter explores one way religion matters within conflicts over land and environment. It illustrates why landscapes of conflict are crucial sites for inquiry into the religious dimensions of environmental change, and for the ecological dimensions of religious identities. In these broad ways, the chapter foreshadows key ideas explored in later chapters. Chapter 4 considers how engaging environmental conflict demands attention to place-based politics and imaginations of nature. Chapter 3 suggests how theological visions of peace shape moral reflection on violence, and how they may fund conventions of war with profound consequences for the environment. More immediately, this chapter explores how cases of land conflict may present new challenges and possibilities for Christian ethics. It focuses those queries by telling a story about one site of persistent conflict in the American West, letting that narrative raise critical questions for arguably the most prominent form of Christian eco-theology: environmental stewardship.

The crusade that sparked the 2016 occupation of Malheur represents the latest wave of a long-standing populist movement in the West, often called the Sagebrush Rebellion, stressing local ranchers' sovereignty over land in the public domain, claiming

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[5] Brandon C. Davis, "Defending the Nation, Protecting the Land: Emergency Powers and the Militarization of American Public Lands," in *Proving Grounds: Militarized Landscapes, Weapons Testing, and the Environmental Impact of U.S. Bases*, ed. Edwin A. Martini (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 22.

birthrights to free use on the basis of settler lineages, constitutional law, and divine will.[6] This chapter follows Purdy and others in interpreting this movement as a variant strain of a much older imaginary: the pioneer myth that first drove settlers into Oregon with a strong sense of *natural* right—and, that is to say, a God-given right—to the land; that to occupy, tame, and cultivate wild country was a religious vocation, a way of living into God's providence.

The Sagebrush Rebellion revitalized earlier conflicts between institutions of federal land management and traditional resource users, especially farmers, miners, and ranchers—many of whom, like Ammon Bundy, traced their lineages and land claims to homesteading pioneers of the mid-nineteenth century. As these groups publically "reasserted their traditional prerogatives" writes Purdy, they "gave notice that older views of nature were not going away."[7] But this "providential" environmental imagination—in which "the world was a potential garden that existed to serve human needs, but only if people developed it with labor and settlement"—was not always so opposed to federal government. Federal troops and federal laws helped purvey this vision all the way to the Pacific Ocean, collaborating with settlers in the nation's ordained destiny: to make private property of so much wasted space.[8] Conflict began later, when prominent politicians gave legal, institutional, and military backing to a new cultural understanding of nature, "a utilitarian picture, in which nature is a storehouse of resources requiring expert management, especially by scientists and public officials."[9]

Reports on #OregonStandoff typically portrayed the conflict as a bizarre but simple case of antiquated and legally misguided rednecks bucking against the ironclad Constitutional rights of the federal government. The Supreme Court has consistently defended the executive branch's congressionally conferred prerogative to own and

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[6] For background, see R. McGreggor Cawley, *Federal Land, Western Anger: The Sagebrush Rebellion and Environmental Politics* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993).

[7] Purdy, *After Nature*, 217.

[8] Purdy, *After Nature,* 23.

[9] Purdy, After Nature, 8. Ethicists and moral philosophers may take issue with Purdy's use of "utilitarian" to name this version of American environmental imagination. The conservationist vision was not strictly utilitarian in the mold of say, John Stuart Mill, Henry Sidgwick, or Peter Singer. Purdy means utilitarian in the commonplace sense of being oriented to the calculus of ends, aiming to maximize countable goods for collective interests. The simplest way to explain why the conservationist imaginary was not strictly utilitarian is to point out that it was not truly egalitarian. As we will see, it was suffused with nationalist and white supremacist presumptions—this colored its vision of how the goods produced on public lands should be enjoyed, by whom, and to what ends.

administer public lands for the good of the nation. By attempting to wrest control of a wildlife refuge from the administration of federal agencies, the militia's cause seemed a threat to the natural entitlements of American citizens, at odds with nature itself. The Sagebrush program "would be a recipe for privatizing a common birthright of all Americans, inconsistent with moral if not legal obligations to future generations," said one commentary in *Ecology Law Quarterly*.[10] In *Science*, ecologists explained that the occupation was a major setback to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's efforts to restore the refuge to ecological health through careful regulation of seasonal water flows.[11]

The Malheur refuge was established at the height of a Progressive Era wave of conservationist coups against what many saw as a rampant trend toward the exhaustion of the nation's most vital qualities: her rugged landscapes and natural resources. The Progressives lobbied to designate places of special quality for federal protection and prudent administration. To set a place aside as special—to protect so as to preserve a place in perpetuity—is to etch into the land a cultural cosmography, a people's map of origins and destiny. It is to make sacred space. Such places were created all over the American West in the first decade of the twentieth century, mostly by the pen of President Theodore Roosevelt. The Malheur refuge has since become one of those special places where, in the minds of many Americans, strict boundaries and meticulous care protect a natural bounty that enriches everyone.

So the standoff in Harney was not just an uprising of religious, anti-environmental, anti-government extremists. It was a *conflict*, with two parties, both heavily armed, each viewing the other—and the land—through environmental imaginations with deep roots in American history. On both sides of the conflict, those imaginations had religious resonances, and both fused with racialized ideologies of natural and national privilege.

And yet the conflict in Malheur is utterly incomprehensible without the central role of a third party, the Wadatika Paiutes, from whom the land was stolen by waves of violence and by legal fiat throughout the nineteenth century. "The land on which the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge is located is in the heart of our tribe's ancestral territory," said the tribe's chair Charlotte Rodrique. The tribe had never ceded that

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[10] Michael C. Blumm and Olivier Jamin, "The Property Clause and Its Discontents: Lessons from the Malheur Occupation," *Ecology Law Quarterly* 43, no. 781 (2016): 781.
[11] Robert F. Service, "Standoff Imperils Refuge," *Science* 351, no. 6271 (Jan. 22, 2016): 326-327.

territory voluntarily.[12] From that vantage, Rodrique and other members of the local Burns Paiute tribal council worked to cast the conflict in a different light. Although especially critical of the Bundy occupation, and positive about recent improvements to their working relationship with the federal Refuge, the tribe was unequivocal: "This is still our land no matter who's living on it."[13]

The Burns Paiutes saw the occupiers as yet another colonizing army, while the authorities and militarized police on the other side were "condoning the illegal occupation" of land the government was obliged by treaty to protect.[14] Historically, Congress and the U.S. military had worked hand in glove with white ranchers and homesteaders to seize the land for the expanding country—the parties joined in arms, and by the power of religious and legal dogma. The collaboration had been successful, but its victory was incomplete, as the tribe's ongoing relationship to the land still challenges the moral standing of both parties. "This is sacred place to the Burns Paiute Tribe," wrote Rodrique, home to "invaluable, irreplaceable and endangered aspects of the tribe's cultural heritage."[15] (As compensation for its theft, tribal members received $772 from the U.S. government in 1969, nine decades late.)[16] In 2016, the two armed groups were, in a sense, still in cahoots, still casting lots over imperial plunder.

This chapter asks questions about how Christian ethics can come to address land conflict. But those questions open into deeper ones, about how Christians think about the meaning, uses, and ownership of land in contexts of settler colonialism. The standoff at Malheur brings these issues into sharp relief because both the conflict and the land in Harney developed along prominent streams of Christian imagination. Their paths had diverged widely by January 2016, but the providential and the

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[12] Quoted in Luke Hamill, "Burns Paiute Tribe to feds: Stop allowing Bundy free passage," *The Oregonian/OregonLive,* 25 January 2016; Ian K. Kullgren, "Burns Paiute Tribe: Militants need to get off 'our land,'" *The Oregonian/OregonLive* 6 January 2016.

[13] Rodrique quoted in Kullgren, "Militants need to get off 'our land.'" Relations with the Refuge had improved in part thanks to what has been widely reported as a successful, collaboratively constructed Conservation Plan in which federal land managers consulted with the tribe and other local stakeholders, including ranchers. See Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, "Comprehensive Conservation Plan," Princeton, Oregon, May 2013.

[14] Sara Sidner, "Native tribe blasts Oregon takeover," *CNN*, January 06, 2016, available at https://www.cnn.com/2016/01/06/us/native-tribe-blasts-oregon-takeover/. Rodrique's letter to U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch is quoted in Hamill, "Burns Paiute Tribe to feds."

[15] Quoted in Hamill, "Burns Paiute Tribe to feds."

[16] Minerva T. Soucie, "Burns Paiute Tribe" in *The First Oregonians*, ed. Laura Berg (Portland: Oregon Council for the Humanities, 2007), 53.

conservationist imaginaries that shaped Malheur's fate both drew from the toxic logic of the Doctrine of Discovery, and all three fed from the mainstem of Christian stewardship. That is a major argument in what follows, adding intrigue to the question of whether and how stewardship might develop to ethically engage conflicts like #OregonStandoff. On the one hand, the chapter suggests that Christian stewardship has always been involved in adjudicating competing claims to contested places. Mostly, though, it raises doubts, arguing that stewardship's theological profile in America bears deep and troubling imprints of its collusion with settler colonialism.

Although Christian stewardship has strong links to the history of land conflict on this continent, most contemporary proponents have not engaged the issue, whether as a subject of the tradition's own heritage or as a matter of modern moral interest. In addition to highlighting the historical connections exemplified by the Malheur case, the chapter considers several strategies for incorporating land conflict into stewardship's sphere of concern. In particular, it explores the peace-focused and witness-based versions of stewardship practiced in Anabaptist agrarian theological traditions, asking whether these show promise for equipping Christian environmental ethics for the distinct demands of U.S. land conflict.

In the end, the chapter looks for alternative strategies by turning to another high profile case—the conflict over the Dakota Access Pipeline's route across the Missouri River immediately upstream of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. There, indigenous activists and allies illustrated how a capacious ethic of environmental responsibility may work in close concert with a localized and particularist politics of decolonization, presenting profound and unsettling indicators of what it could mean for Christians to witness to peace on a continent pervaded by the distinctive ecological violence of settler colonialism.[17]

RELIGION, RACE, AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGINATION AT MALHEUR

The history of Harney County is singular in its details, but in outline resembles the most ordinary of American narratives. Up to the mid-nineteenth century—for at least 6000 years, but likely much longer—the Harney basin was a seasonal home for

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[17] Small portions of this chapter (pp. 90-95 and 111-112) have been adapted from my essay "Varieties of Anabaptist Environmentalism and the Challenge of Environmental Racism," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 94, no. 1 (Jan. 2020): 43-57.

northern Paiute tribes, until Anglo-European settlers armed with guns and divine providence successfully claimed the land as their own. Having mostly cleared the land of its native peoples, however, influential men began to notice the region's unusually rich native wildlife, petitioning President Roosevelt to designate the area for federal protection. The militants who occupied the refuge in 2016 seemed to harken back 150 years, to the vigilantism by which white settlers first secured access to the Oregon territories, and more recently to the populist protests against the very idea of public lands.[18]

The federal government aimed to promote westward settlement in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but the county was quickly dominated by a small number of cattle barons.[19] Many of the most successful cattle barons came to the Harney basin to escape California's restrictive grazing laws, and quickly maneuvered to secure giant tracts of land that would allow control over the most important waterways and thus the best grazing land. At the time, the basin was home to "the largest cattle empires in the world."[20] One notorious rancher-tycoon, Peter French, battled and conned his way into 140,000 acres.

The environmental historian William Robbins describes those early years of unregulated cattle ranching as a "Darwinian environment," where large operations got larger by fraud and by force, while small ranchers and other would-be settlers were effectively pushed to southeastern Oregon's ecological margins. The unmonopolized edges of the Harney basin became sites of conflict between small fry homesteaders and itinerant grazers. In the years before Teddy Roosevelt requisitioned the land for the national interest, bitter settlers set fire to the rangelands of the cattle barons, and Peter French was shot dead.[21]

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[18] Jedediah Purdy, "The Bundys and the Irony of American Vigilantism," *The New Yorker*, 5 January 2016.
[19] For wider context, see Robert B. Keiter, *Keeping Faith With Nature: Ecosystems, Democracy, and America's Public Lands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 15-46. For details on the early settlement of Oregon territory, see James R. Gibson, *Farming the Frontier: The Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country, 1786-1846* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985)
[20] Nancy Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet : A Western Landscape Transformed* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 5.
[21] William G. Robbins, "The Malheur Occupation and the Problem with History," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 117, no. 4 (2016). French's Diamond Ranch headquarters had also come under attack by Paiutes in the last uprising before they were removed from the area along the "Paiute Trail of Tears." A cook was killed, and French nearly lost his wife. In the end, the Paiutes' defeat allowed French to extend his holdings into choice grazing lands in the Paiute's former reservation. When he died in 1897—shot,

"Southeastern Oregon…provides a striking archetype for the dispossession of Indian people, their removal from valuable land, and the arrival of large cattle herders who treated the area's grazing lands as a vast commons to enter and occupy," writes Robbins.[22] The 1850 "Oregon Donation Land Act" instituted a whites-only policy of free land, and was followed by a series of racial exclusion acts, forbidding people of color from settling in the state.[23] The wave of white ranchers and homesteaders expressed their originary sense of land-entitlement through the violent exclusion of the Paiute, making space for private timber and ranching tracts of thousands of acres. By the late 1860s frontiersmen and federal soldiers had harried the Northern Paiute people into unlivable spaces, quelling several years of intense resistance—their native homelands now "under siege from all sides."[24]

In 1872, the Malheur Indian Reservation was established by executive order, a phony consolation that in fact opened more land for grazing and hardened the settler conviction that Paiutes found in the open country could be shot on sight.[25] The unpoliced territory was often encroached on by white ranchers who were determined the land should be theirs. Confined to the reservation, and denied appropriations pledged by treaty, the Paiutes slowly starved. When most of the tribe joined the Bannock Indians of Idaho in an uprising in 1878, federal troops marched the survivors through snow 350 miles to the Yakama Reservation in Washington. The cattle barons quickly descended on the area, jockeying for water sources and the best riparian meadows.[26] The age of the cattle barons in Malheur finally ended with the irrepressible rise of the conservationist era, when "what was once the greatest cattle empire in the West became the greatest bird empire— what some called an 'empire of nature.'"[27]

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unarmed, in broad daylight in front of his entire crew—his murderer was acquitted by a jury of his peers.—Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet*, 28, 47f.

[22] Robbins, "The Malheur Occupation."

[23] See Joshua F.J. Inwood and Anne Bonds, "Property and Whiteness: The Oregon Standoff and the Contradictions of the U.S. Settler State," *Space and Polity* 21, no. 3 (2017) 253-268.

[24] William G. Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story, 1800-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 157. Army contingents were sent to the Harney basin to remove native Paiutes in 1864 and 1867. The first permanent white establishment in the area was Fort Harney, and army fort.

[25] Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise*, 160; Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet*, 32ff.

[26] Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet*, 32-34. President Cleveland formally abolished the reservation on March 2, 1889, more than ten years after it was effectively claimed by settlers.

[27] Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet*, 43. Langston continues: "Yet all of the empires in this valley— the cattle kingdoms, irrigation empires, and empires of ducks— were at heart empires of nature, for they all depended directly on the abundant natural resources of desert riparian areas for their wealth."

#OregonStandoff was not the first armed revolt over land rights in Harney County, and it was not the second or the third. It was, however, the first to be carried out mostly by people who neither lived nor worked nor aspired to either in the region. To understand the conditions that led to the 2016 occupation, it is important to understand how twentieth century changes to the ways the Harney basin's lands were managed came to be seen as an environment of tyrannical abuse, a political ecology contrary both to the will of God and the laws of men. And to understand *that*, we will have to explore what the law and the will of God had to do with Harney County in the first place.

The Occupation of Malheur and the Providence of God

In late 2015, anti-government activists flooded into Harney to protest the imprisonment of Dwight and Steven Hammond, who had been issuing death threats against federal officials and were convicted on multiple counts of arson for burning grazing fields in Malheur. Once again, jilted ranchers were setting fire to the Oregon range, now part of the public domain administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service. The Bundys led a splinter group of these activists to the wildlife refuge headquarters. "The Lord is not pleased what has happened to the Hammonds," Ammon had warned.

Ammon Bundy—named after a missionary in the Book of Mormon famous for converting an entire nation by his bravery in defense of the kingdom's livestock—had determined in the preceding months that God was directing him to take a "hard stand" for the human rights of cattle ranchers in Harney. Soft spoken and profoundly uncharismatic, Ammon became a leader in the ranchers' branch of a simmering Sagebrush-style movement after his family successfully leveraged the help of multiple private militias in a dispute with federal authorities over patriarch Cliven's refusal to pay fees for grazing cattle on federal fields near Bundyville, Nevada in 2014. There, with snipers and counter-snipers squaring off on public land, federal officials relented, agreeing to release Cliven's impounded cattle when the militias refused to back down. The victory emboldened Ammon, who came to believe that God was revealing a method of civilian resistance that could restore liberty to the nation's persecuted West.

On New Years Day, 2016, Ammon released a video describing the "overwhelming urge" that had come upon him, leading him to Oregon. "I began to understand how the Lord felt about Harney County and about this country," he said. Explaining how the Hammonds's situation fit within a wider landscape of

unconstitutional and unconscionable efforts to control what ought to have been private land, he issued a call to action, persistently referring to the 2014 standoff at his father's ranch as a template. Bundy would take this tactic to Harney on behalf of the Hammonds, his neighbors, and all Americans, "that they can get rid of the tyranny and the chains that are upon them." The power of the Bundyville model, and its ordination for Oregon, had become increasingly clear to Ammon. "They are wisdom in the Lord," he assured. Did Ammon's listeners think that he was crazy, or did they have faith that "the Lord truly works through individuals to get His purposes accomplished" he wondered. "I know that we are to stand now," he said. He spoke with prophetic urgency to a people in danger of losing the land given to their ancestors and promised to their bloodline. "We are to do these things now, or we will not have anything to pass on to our children."[28]

The idea that places like the Harney basin are the patrimony of white ranching families was basic to the moral and legal case Ammon and others made in public defense of the occupation. Part of that argument was historical, based on half-truths and a highly selective presentation of the facts. "At one time [Harney basin] run 60,000 head of cattle," said Ammon. "And it was all kinds of ranchers—private ranchers—all across the whole Harney basin. …It was all privately owned at one time. All of it. And now…it's primarily owned by the federal government."[29] Beyond Harney, the argument was rooted in a reading of the Constitution that occupiers admitted had been repeatedly rejected by the Supreme Court.[30] For the Bundys, these complaints were

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[28] Ammon Bundy, "Dear friends," Jan 1. 2016, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7M0mG6HUyk.

[29] Ammon Bundy, "Hammonds need our help," Nov. 24, 2015, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1BCMJlV83E. By contrast, see Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet*, 3-90. Langston's is by far the most detailed and intensively researched history of the Harney basin, discussing its entwined social, political, and environmental histories.

[30] In fact, the Supreme Court had ruled on the issue of the government's claim to public land in Oregon with specific reference to what is now the Malheur refuge, twice, in 1902 and 1935; French-Glenn Live Stock Company v. Alva Springer, 185 U.S. 47 (1902); United States v. State of Oregon, 295 U.S. 1 (1935); The wider Constitutional case was settled in Light v. United States, 220 U.S. 523 (1911) and United States v. Grimaud, 220 U.S. 506 (1911). In the occupiers' Jan. 4 press conference, LaVoy Finicum noted that the Supreme Court had consistently upheld the legality of the federal government's ownership of land. He used the point to buttress a more abstract one, with deep roots in mainstream American political imagination, about representation. Justices aren't elected; neither are the "bureaucrats" who write the regulatory statutes effecting ranchers, and neither are the federal cops who enforce them. That's all three branches of federal government acting like King George, ruling over distant lands without any

invigorated by an interpretation of the traditional Mormon doctrine that the Constitution is a divinely inspired document, a scripture routinely blasphemed by officials in the capital.[31] The imprisonment of the Hammonds was just the latest violation of ranchers' sacred rights enshrined therein. "In their constitutional cosmology…they were the law in Malheur, and the federal agents the usurpers."[32]

Calling themselves Citizens for Constitutional Freedom, spokesmen for the occupiers drew a direct link between "ranching heritage" and the free exercise of human rights. The group seized land devoted to the protection of animals in order to redirect attention to "how important each person is." The Hammonds are *"human beings,"* emphasized LaVoy Finicum in a press conference early in the occupation. Each person has the right "to live here on this earth, has the right to live in liberty, and has the right to own property, and to be able to reap the fruits of their labors" specified Bundy. Earlier generations had killed and died for those rights. They were epitomized in the prerogative of ranchers to settle, claim land, graze widely, and pass on their holdings to the next generation. Restrictions signaled a gathering despotism. The fate of the nation was bound up with the fate of ranchers, who "help make our country self-reliant, free, independent," explained Finicum.[33] The persecution of the Bundy and Hammond families was a portent, "a type and a shadow of what would happen to the rest of the people across this country."[34]

Rights talk and constitutional exegesis propped up what was at root a philosophical argument, a bit of political theory drawing on elemental beliefs about the place of nature in the life of peoples. The notable thing about the occupiers' imaginary was not its anthropocentrism, but its way of seeing nature as the basis of both human flourishing and human conflict, with privatized hereditary land ownership the one essential condition for a free and prosperous people.

"Even though this is for the Hammonds, this is a much bigger issue. This is for *my* children, this is for *your* children, this is for our grandchildren. If the government takes the private property, there will be nothing left for them. Everything comes from the

representation, he suggested. Press conference video available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jB2ss6skwk.

[31] For a reading of the Bundys' politics and its relation to Mormonism, see Betsy Gaines Quammen, *American Zion: Cliven Bundy, God & Public Lands in the West* (Salt Lake City, UT: Torrey House Press, 2020).

[32] Jedediah Purdy, "Ammon Bundy Stands Down," *The New Yorker*, Jan. 28, 2016.

[33] Jan 4. Press Conference, featuring Ammon Bundy and LaVoy Finicum.

[34] Bundy, "Dear Friends."

land…Everything comes from the earth. And if they can get control of the land and resources—if they can control, for example, the water—then they can have full control over the *people*. If they can control all of the resources—the minerals coming out of the ground, the logging, the grazing, the food—if they can control these things, then they have ultimate power over the people….They are after the land and the resources because wealth, all wealth, generates from the land….By standing with the Hammonds we stand for our children and our children's children."[35]

The occupiers saw nature as the seat of power, and power derived from *control*. The only sure measure of control was to acquire and defend the resource sovereignty of nuclear families on privately owned land. The telltale sign of a conqueror was a campaign to control resource-rich land, making people "dependent."[36] Freedom was incompatible with dependency, and true independence meant the ability and vigor to turn earth's raw materials into wealth. This was impossible without property. A government-owned wildlife refuge on land once roamed by industrious private ranchers could only be a subdued, stolen, conquered land.

And what of the ranchers and their tenure? Were they not conquerors and despots? The basis for white families' land claims in the West was not a question Bundy and his posse entertained. "The Native Americans had claim to the land, but they lost that claim," Ryan Bundy said vaguely.[37] Instead the group spoke of a "heritage," an ancestral rancher's culture regulated almost out of existence.[38]

The group's patchy and partisan approach to history was one of its most glaring traits to reporters and scholars alike.[39] By focusing on a later stage of settlement, when the government established and exercised its right to administer public lands, argues Carolyn Gallaher, the militia members deflected attention from an earlier story, in which the government's brutal coalition with ranchers and other settlers took the land from its original inhabitants and secured it for whites, with racial exclusions maintained

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[35] Bundy, "Hammonds need our help."

[36] Bundy, "Hammonds need our help."

[37] Quoted in Kelly House, "Burns Paiutes to Ammon Bundy: You're not the victim," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*, February 7, 2016.

[38] Jan 4. Press Conference.

[39] See e.g. Carolyn Gallaher, "Placing the Militia Occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Harney County, Oregon," *ACME: An International Journal of Critical Geographies* 15, no. 2 (2016), 295. Betsy Hammond, "Supreme Court already ruled that feds rightly own occupied refuge," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*, January 6, 2016; and Char Miller, "The complicated history of who really 'owns' the occupied land in Oregon," *Washington Post*, January 7, 2016.

by both written and unwritten laws. The group often spoke as if "good ranching families" had been in Oregon from time immemorial, placed there by God Himself. "With this timeline in place, the occupiers could argue they were reclaiming the people's land from the government rather than engaging in a second round of white theft of Indigenous land."[40]

The group's use of history was obviously partial, and it no doubt served their interests, but it is not clear that these were calculated moves. Watching Ammon Bundy fight tears as he struggles to convey the injustice of it all, it is difficult not to think him sincere. Bundy knew that his ranching ancestors had not been in the West from time immemorial, but he did seem to suggest they had been brought there by God, the land prepared for them personally and typologically, rightfully theirs as a matter of divine will.

Whether Bundy himself believed precisely this is less significant than the fact that his message resonated so readily with mythic views of nature and of the frontier that had helped earlier generations of Americans make sense of their place in the world. One commentary referred to it as the "mythologized ethos of boot-straps individualism and white property rights." The group's perfect indifference to the land claims of the native Paiutes—past or present—reinforces the judgment that it was a pioneer's strain of settler colonialism that grounded their inarticulate entitlements to the Harney basin and places like it.

"By the middle of the nineteenth century, it was a commonplace that a republic of free men, each dignified by making his living through free labor, depended on the availability of free land on the frontier," writes Purdy. The pioneers' conviction in their own rights to free land rested on "an idea about nature itself": that God had made nature "to collaborate in human progress, as we were made to develop it for our needs." On this view, which built on popular political sentiments as much as on John Locke, America was a virgin expanse, unclaimed and fertile, waiting to be made productive by the industry of settlers. To clear and to settle, to plant and to graze, to dam and to drain—these were the continent's own entreaties, "a mission of republican progress, and also a consummation of divine design." Any of the above was also a relatively straightforward path to federally recognized land rights and private ownership, as statutes like the Homestead Act made official. The Homestead Act and others like it turned natural law into positive law, giving legs to Locke's view that "human labor

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[40] Gallaher, "Placing the Militia Occupation," 295.

turned nature into property."[41]

Such laws, and the tremendous swarm of settlers they unleashed, also effectively blotted out the land claims of native peoples. Since most tribes did not clear forests, turn the soil, or raise livestock, they met neither God's nor nature's standards for productive inhabitance. They seemed not to work the land, and so they had no claim to it. The historian Nancy Langston writes that the first generations of white settlers in the Harney basin "looked at the Paiute and believed they saw a people who had no fixed habitation, no material culture, no cultivation, no livestock, no homes, and no real claim to humanness."[42] When the republic made it to the Pacific Northwest, the Paiutes were an impediment to providence.[43]

Oregon's open range may have been a Darwinian environment, but more deeply it was a country of faith, a promised land for Christian settlers. When the federal government determined that *it* should assume control of that country, apologists drew on a very different idea of nature, while trying to sustain those earlier myths by which the land was first won.

The Management of Malheur and the Naturalization of Power

It was with two histories in mind that President Theodore Roosevelt set aside a large tract of land in Harney County as a wildlife refuge in 1908. One was this mythical history of rugged and godly virtues forged on the western frontier. Roosevelt relished the violence at the heart of this myth, and believed in its justice. "Let the sentimentalists say what they will," he wrote, "the man who puts the soil to use must of right dispossess the man who does not, or the world will come to a standstill."[44] His multi-volume history of America's frontier experience, *The Winning of the West*, "reads like an epic poem to the doctrine of discovery."[45] Oregon conservationists like William Finley and Alva Lewis, whose dispatches convinced Roosevelt to establish a wildlife refuge at Malheur, told the story as a romance rather than a war, but likewise saw the land's true nature attuned to settler society, portraying Harney as an Edenic co-production of God

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[41] Purdy, *After Nature*, 75-79.

[42] Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet*, 28.

[43] Cf. Purdy, *After Nature*, 81.

[44] Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 1 (1889), chap. IV.

[45] Greg Grandin, *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2019), 120.

and cowboys.[46]

On the other hand, there was the worrying history of exploitation and inter-settler conflict in an ecologically sensitive region. The formation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge was part of a wider trend in which Progressives successfully lobbied to requisition vast tracts of "wilderness" for rational administration by federally employed experts. The government would intervene in the reckless over-cultivation of the continent, setting aside national parks, reserves, and refuges. These carefully managed expanses would nurture the nation in both body and soul, preserving a training ground for pioneer virtues, and conserving precious natural resources for ongoing imperial expansion both at home and, increasingly, abroad.[47] The justice of pioneer vigilantism needed to evolve into the justice of technocratic administration, Roosevelt determined, so that a grown-up nation could build regenerative storehouses on undisciplined landscapes, vast playgrounds on the old frontier, sanctuaries for the catechism of future men.

President Roosevelt used the power of his office to fashion enormous portions of American landscape to the conservationist imaginary, placing hundreds of millions of acres under federal administration. In the first decade of the twentieth century, prominent members of the Oregon Audubon Society began describing the area around Malheur Lake as "historic ground for the bird man" and "a domain for wild fowl unsurpassed in the United States."[48] In 1908, they complained to Roosevelt that plume hunters were devastating local bird populations. Birds and other wildlife were also impacted by the significant ecological changes brought about by "four decades of overgrazing, irrigation withdrawals, grain agriculture, dredging, and channelization," in which "Malheur had become a dust bowl."[49] The President signed an executive order creating a wildlife refuge in the Harney basin.[50] The region's native waterfowl would receive federal protection in perpetuity—a benefit never afforded its native Paiutes.

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[46] Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet,* 63-67. This was true most of all of cattle ranchers, "the stockman who pastures his cattle, horses and sheep on the public domain"—L. Alva Lewis, "Report on Conditions of Lake Malheur Reservation, Oregon" (Report for T.S. Palmer, assistant chief of USDA Bureau of Biological Survey, 1912), 7; quoted in Langston, 65.

[47] By Roosevelt's first term, the old continental frontier was now basecamp for a new, global one. For Roosevelt and Beveridge, "the American mission was no longer to conquer the continent but to remake the world, especially its fallow lands and benighted peoples," writes Purdy, *After Nature,* 153.

[48] William L. Finley, "The Trail of the Plume-Hunter," *Atlantic Monthly*, 1910.

[49] Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet*, 5.

[50] Theodore Roosevelt, "Establishing Lake Malheur Reservation in Oregon as Preserve and Breeding Ground for Native Birds," Executive Order 929, 18 August 1908.

The requisitioning of some 81,000 acres—eventually growing to encompass almost 300 square miles—in Harney County can be understood within a wider trend in which, according to William Novak and Stephen Skowronek, centralized governmental authority gradually supplanted a variety of semi-autonomous, self-governing communities in the late nineteenth century.[51] In terms of environmental policy, the new managerial regime took shape in a package of laws strictly regulating the activity of humans and other creatures on and in proximity to federally protected zones, and in "the deployment of a veritable army of wardens, foresters, rangers, scouts, and soldiers to ensure compliance with these measures."[52] Advocates of this new "conservationist empire" stressed "the need to use science and the state to protect nature from the recklessness of rural folk," writes Karl Jacoby in his revisionist history of the movement, "adopting what can only be termed an authoritarian stance toward environmental problems."[53]

Yet many rural folk in Harney County embraced the movement, seeing hope for a more fair and efficient land policy in the model of federal reclamation. Against the monopolistic practices of the cattle barons, struggling agriculturalists lobbied Congress to regulate the land's development according to the Progressive vision of scientific management and fair use. Editorials in the *Harney Valley Items* pitched the basin as "an undeveloped empire, isolated and practically unknown," where "water must be economized so that men may live." "Under wise administration," the editor wrote, "Arid America has a glorious future." If Progressive environmental politics would let small farmers make their living close to earth, places like Harney were sure to become "the sheet anchor of the Republic in times of national peril."[54]

But the vision that would ultimately prevail at Malheur tended to see environmental conservation as antithetical to private agriculture, especially in ecologically valuable regions. One of the most influential figures in the nascent conservationist movement was George Perkins Marsh, who saw human society as "essentially a destructive power." Humanity lives in nature, but "is not of her," he

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[51] William Novak, *The People's Welfare: Law and Regulation in Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 1-19; Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 1-10.

[52] Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 197.

[53] Purdy, *After Nature*, 153-187; Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature,* 197-198.

[54] *Harney Valley Items*, Oct. 5, 1901; June 1, 1901; quoted in Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet*, 48-49.

wrote.[55] In *Man and Nature,* Marsh warned that human survival and nature herself were imperiled by the "human crime and human improvidence" prevalent all across the recently settled country, where unbridled appetites and uncivilized lifeways "subvert the relations and destroy the balance which nature had established."[56] Nature needed enlightened care to sustain its role as the savings trust for a virtuous human society. Marsh referenced a sermon by James Martineau linking coupled processes of social and environmental decay to moral laxity, to sub-Christian laziness. Given any lull in the struggle for a moral landscape, the world "tend[s] downwards, through inverted steps, to wildness and the waste again." Maintaining Christian civilization was a relentless struggle against earth's tendency toward chaos and degeneracy.[57]

This meant that rival understandings of the American project based on common rights to property—ideas that until recently had facilitated the spread of white settlers all the way to the Oregon territories, and notions still popular there—were contrary to reason, based on a fallacious theological anthropology and a wrong view of nature. A mission to overcome such unnatural sentiments—and the even more dangerous ideas implicit in indigenous land claims—animated the conservationist conflict with both white settlers and native populations. In 1882, Franklin Hough noted that the new federal management schemes were especially challenged in places "where a dense native population have, from time immemorial, enjoyed rights of usage…wholly inconsistent with successful forest culture."[58] Marsh reserved especially pointed critiques for the "slovenly husbandry of the border settler."[59]

The borders of national parks and refuges were drawn not only by law but also, again, in a kind of public religion, and again, this religiosity entwined with a way of

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[55] George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature; or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action*, ed. David Lowenthal (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1864), 36. Lewis Mumford called the book "the fountainhead of the conservation movement." Purdy argues that "the American version of conservation was especially indebted" to Marsh's "Protestant and republican moralism in which nature's health…formed a judgment on the country's intelligence, discipline, and public spirit" (*After Nature,* 167).

[56] Marsh, *Man and Nature,* 43–44.

[57] Quoted in Purdy, *After Nature,* 167.

[58] Quoted in Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature,* 196.

[59] Marsh, *Man and Nature,* 233. Here Marsh was concerned chiefly with forest, not the freshwater marshes of places like Malheur. But his concern with the short-term, exploitative outlook of private settlers was widely embraced in the conservation movement, and helped pave the way for the laws that made the establishment of places like the Malhuer Refuge possible, in part by making them seem both ecologically and morally necessary.

imagining nature.[60] In his book *Spirituality and the State*, Kerry Mitchell examines how federal land management still cultivates public religion through its carefully curated ways of organizing natural space and disciplining the bodies that attend to it—"how the state nurtures spirituality through the management of land, bodies, and sense perception." In America's National Parks, for example, visitors are offered ritual encounters with the national sublime, guided by priests in green jackets, helping individuals commune with the cosmos through the ubiquitous medium of the administrative state. On public lands, argues Mitchell, the government enlists landscapes to inculcate reverence for state authority—the "naturalization of power," he calls it.[61]

The religious dimensions of federal land management, suggests Mitchell, are deliberately constructed for the sinister purposes of sanctifying the state and pacifying the masses—wilderness deftly crafted into Orwellian sanctuary, the religion of nature peddled as opiate of the people. But this analysis seems to miss a much longer history, in which the rise of wilderness conservation embodied an abiding faith in the powers of reason and science to guide the unruly forces of nature into the service of the nation. The Parks Department does not need to concoct rituals to make nature spirituality adore the state. Instead, the state's sacred vocation has been to use reason to mold wild nature to the spirit of Christian America.[62]

Either way, a civic religion of land management naturalized state authority, making the federal government's claims to land appear as ecological necessities, instead of contingent products of, among other things, genocidal conquest. To violate the boundaries of these tracts is not just illegal, it is an affront to nature. And so it is a violation of reason—irrational, and thus, in the eyes of the liberal state, a kind of

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[60]Mark Stoll, *Inherit the Holy Mountain: Religion and the Rise of American Environmentalism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 87-111, 156-160. Roderick Frazier Nash, in his landmark book *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 4th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), wrote that, for most of the twentieth century "wilderness appreciation was a *faith*" (p. 239). But Nash used the term pejoratively, in order to contrast contemporary environmental philosophy from the emotive appeals and "unexamined premises" of earlier wilderness defenders. More recent work in the history of American environmentalism has more thoughtfully examined the religious dimensions of conservationist (and especially preservationist) movements. Stoll's work is exemplary in this regard, as is Evan Berry, *Devoted to Nature: The Religious Roots of American Environmentalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).
[61] Kerry Mitchell, *Spiritualiy and the State: Managing Nature and Experience in America's National Parks* (New York: NYU Press, 2016), 3-4.
[62] Or so Purdy suggests in *After Nature*, ch. 5.

fanaticism, a rival religion.[63]

The administrative revolution of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries may have successfully intervened in the tough, "Darwinian environments" of places like Harney County, but "the movement also created new conflicts as conservation authorities and the inhabitants of the American countryside battled over access to the resources contained within the newly protected areas."[64] As the historian Benjamin Johnson has noted, the conflicts were not only over resource access, but also about "different visions of the proper relationship between humans and nature."[65] The rise of the conservation state and its maintenance of wilderness and refuges, argues Jacoby, "did not so much eliminate violence as redefine it, with the legitimate exercise of violence becoming the sole prerogative of the state, and rural folks resorting to violence as a potent but illegal way of resisting or reshaping the new conservation order taking place in their midst."[66]

Settler Imaginaries at Malheur: Conflict and Cooperation

[63] Mitchell, *Spirituality and the State*, 6.

[64] Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature*, 195. Those conflicts continue, obviously. The standoff at Malheur is just one of at least five armed protests over public land ownership in the first two decades of the twenty-first century; see Blumm and Jamin, "The Property Clause and Its Discontents." For a useful account of how the utilitarian paradigm of the Progressive Era came to incorporate ecological principles in its growing commitment to Ecosystem Management as the scientific basis and administrative strategy on public lands, and how this transition became a major catalyst for the escalation of conflict with ranchers, miners, and big business interests in the West beginning in the late twentieth century, see James R. Skillen, *Federal Ecosystem Management: Its Rise, Fall, and Afterlife* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2015).

[65] Benjamin Johnson, "Wilderness Parks and their Discontents," in *American Wilderness: A New History*, ed. Michael Lewis (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 115. It was of course possible for the conflicts to be about both resource access and environmental imaginaries at the same time. "Because a wide range of rural Americans continued to hunt, fish, gather, log, and farm in the new parks and forests, these conservation measures often criminalized their ways of making a living," writes Johnson. The conflicts were not just about resource control on the one hand and abstract nature philosophies on the other, but about the embodiment of both in the lifeways of rural people and the practices of federal agencies.

[66] Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature*, 195. Brandon Davis argues that the expansion of federal land ownership in this period was intimately linked to the intensification and justification of U.S. military strength. "Scholars have not fully recognized how a variety of independent executive powers, including those for contemporary war efforts and security programs, are rooted in the executive power to manage public lands." The federal government's claims to land were always predicated at least in part on the state's responsibility to protect, preserve, and defend the nation. As the Secretary of the Interior E.A. Hitchcock made clear to Congress in 1902, federal seizure of land was justified by the President's emergency powers. But once those land claims were firmly established, the spread of U.S. Military development across the American landscape was in turn justified by the executive branch's prerogative to defend public lands—Davis, "Defending the Nation, Protecting the Land," 19-41.

"To protect wilderness was in a very real sense to protect the nation's most sacred myth of origin," writes the environmental historian William Cronon.[67] Yet that same myth grounded populist revolts against the politics of wilderness protection, because ranchers believed themselves to be heirs to their race's providential rights to own and use western lands. It is tempting to view the Malheur standoff as a short-lived uprising by a fringe group militantly opposed to federal land ownership and, in particular, to wilderness. This is not entirely wrong, but the links between pioneer land rights, federal land policy, and wilderness are in fact much closer and more commonplace, and so even more fraught.

An especially profound example of this link was the collaboration of long-distance federal power with private pioneers, especially cattle ranchers, in settling the Oregon country. In Harney, as elsewhere, the partnership was exercised with laws, guns, and the tremendous ecological forces of irrigation and large cattle herds grazed at the watershed's most important junctions.[68] The coalition successfully transformed the basin from Paiute dwelling to grazing land for the livestock of whites. When Peter Skene Ogden became the first white person to enter the region in the late 1820s, he was astonished to find "the incredible number of Indians" living there. There was "no Indian nation so numerous as these in all North America," Ogden surmised. "We cannot go ten yards without finding them." The nation suffered slowly in the nineteenth century under the ecological and territorial encroachments of fur trappers and itinerant grazers, and then more catastrophically with the mid-century arrival of ranchers and homesteaders, whose now-legal claims to Paiute land were consolidated by Army contingents sent to remove natives from the basin in 1864 and 1867.[69] Today, about 200 people live in the Burns Paiute Reservation, 30 miles from Malheur headquarters.[70] "The fact that there were really so many of us…that so many died—that is something that I think continues to be too painful for most people to face," reflects

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[67] William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness;" in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 77.

[68] The alliance was also economic, as "both ranchers and homesteaders…depended on the army as the surest market for their beef and hay"—Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet*, 34.

[69] The first permanent white establishment in the area was Fort Harney, an Army fort. Along with two other posts in the region, Fort Harney "provided a protective screen for the interlopers and their herds. In that respect, the army served an even larger purpose: it acted as a powerful intervening force to oversee the freeing of the land base to market forces"—Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise*, 159.

[70] Kullgren, "Militants need to get off 'our land.'"

Rodrique. "The erasure of that dying is almost complete."[71]

Leading lights in the conservation movement scrubbed persistently at such histories, polishing bloodstained Oregon into an origin story in which the key collaborators were nature and race. Aldo Leopold, the influential environmentalist and land manager for the U.S. Forest Service, argued that America owes the best of its culture to "the distinctive characteristics of successful pioneers." Such characteristics included "a certain vigorous individualism combined with ability to organize," and an "intolerance of drones." He called these pioneer virtues "the indigenous part of our Americanism," and urged policies to safeguard them through the preservation of wilderness. "Coupled with the character of our racial stocks," he wrote, wilderness is the "thing that made us American."[72]

"From irresistible impulse, from instinct, from unwritten racial laws…our pioneers reclaimed Kentucky and the Mississippi wilderness…crossed Rockies and seized Oregon," exclaimed Albert Beveridge, a Progressive visionary and Senator from Indiana. "They did this because they could not help it," he wrote.[73] It was national destiny, advanced by individuals, supported by government, obedient to "Divine commands," propelled by the natural order and its racial laws. The pioneer's seizure of Oregon was preparatory to a new, higher stage of America's evolving empire, one of "administration and world improvement."[74] This phase would build on settler colonialism but also "improve" upon it in a new strategy on the continent and in the now far-flung reaches of American empire: displacement would give way to supervision and a carefully curated system of acculturation, managing subjects "to bring them into the circle of civilization," while coaxing their former lands into perpetual service—an ambitious project requiring "complex, long-distance governance," with scientific rigor and state power on display at nature's own scale.[75]

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[71] Charlotte Rodrique, quoted in Anthony McCann, *Shadowlands: Fear and Freedom at the Oregon Standoff* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), chap. 9, Ebook (non-paginated).

[72] Aldo Leopold, "Wilderness as a form of Land Use," in *The River of the Mother of God and other essays*, ed. Susan L. Flader and J. Baird Callicott (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 137.

[73] Quoted in Purdy, *After Nature*, 154. Beveridge believed it was "destiny that the world shall be rescued from its natural wilderness and from savage men." Again, this national myth was coupled with racial and environmental imaginaries. "Our race is the most self-governing but also the most administrative of any race of history," he wrote.

[74] Beveridge, "For the Greater Republic, Not For Imperialism," Address delivered at the Union League of Philadelphia, February 15, 1899, in *Famous American Statesmen and Orators, Past and Present*, vol. 6, ed. Alexander Kelly McClure and Byron Andrews (New York: F.F. Lovell Publishing, 1902).

[75] Purdy, *After Nature*, 155.

Rancher pioneers and the federal conservationists both coupled ideas of racial essentialism and cultural superiority in ways that celebrated settler colonialism while occluding its violent reality. Those couplings gave birth to multiple enduring ways of being American. At Malheur in 2016, two of them faced off against one another, estranged siblings of a remarkably fertile myth.

Many commentators depicted the Bundys' occupation as bizarre and irrational, fueled by pig-headed chauvinism and bad readings of constitutional law. *Of course* the U.S. government has the right to own and administer western lands, they seemed to suggest, and of course the policing of Malheur's boundaries against over-grazing is a matter of ecological necessity. The academic literature focuses especially on how the militiamen drew on racialized conceptions of property rights and reinforced the foundational constructions of whiteness through the erasure of native histories and claims.[76] Much of this seems right. And yet *both* sides represented forms of settler colonialism, and *both* relied on claims of natural right and national privilege—both derived from whiteness, and from distinctly white American forms of environmental theology. Both sides continually relied on conceptions of America's natural environment that would naturalize their own claims to the land, that would write their cause into the cosmos, as established by God and self-evident in nature.

"We haven't given up our rights to the land," said Rodrique, speaking for her tribe in a sparsely covered news conference in the first week of the occupation.[77] That defiant claim challenged both sides, and seemed lost on almost everyone.

By the time the Bundys showed up in Oregon, the original partnership of providential private settlement and technocratic governmental management had split and festered. Bundy, professing to be on a mission from God, attempted to occupy public lands and thereby to claim the rich ideological inheritance of frontier environmentalism in the classic form of an ad hoc band of armed white men. On the other side were more men with guns, but they carried also the apostate legacy of centralized environmental management, and with it the power of the state and its multiple agencies of militarized police.

The standoff between Bundy's militia and local authorities began with efforts at diplomacy. Various other armed groups filtered in and out of the county, many

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[76] See e.g. Inwood and Bonds, "Property and Whiteness."

[77] Rodrique, quoted in John M Glionna, "How the Oregon militia standoff became a battle with a Native American tribe," *The Guardian*, 6 January 2016.

attempting to join the occupation, or protect it against the potential of another Waco or Ruby Ridge. FBI and other law enforcement assured the occupiers that they would not take offensive action, initially allowing militia members to travel into town for groceries, and to attend town meetings where, mostly, locals implored them to go home. (For observers across the country, this official indulgence of a white paramilitary invasion on public land was revealing, and infuriating, magnified in light of the previous week's grand jury decision failing to indict two law enforcement agents who had shot and killed Tamir Rice, a black boy of twelve years who had been playing with a toy gun. What if the occupiers had been black, latinx, or heaven forbid, Muslim, wondered Eugene Robinson in a *Washington Post* editorial. "I'm pretty sure it wouldn't be wait-and-see."[78] Local Paiutes had a similar feeling. "I wonder if it was bunch of natives that went out there and overtook that, or any federal land," Jarvis Kennedy said. "Would they let us come into town and get supplies and re-up?"[79]

But by late January, some of the men encamped at refuge headquarters began to sense the mood shifting. "We used to could walk up to them and talk with the FBI agents…but the tenor has changed and they have become more hardened," said LaVoy Finicum on January 25. He noted an uptick in arms and manpower, a "rattling of sabers."[80] The next day, SWAT team members fired their AR-15s into a truck carrying militia-members and Victoria Sharp, an 18-year-old girl, as the vehicle attempted to evade a roadblock at high speed.[81] Finicum was shot dead when he exited the truck and appeared to reach into his jacket. An FBI agent who many alleged had fired into the truck was later judged not guilty on counts of obstruction of justice.

To the shock of most observers, an Oregon jury also acquitted Bundy and six fellow occupiers, deeming them not guilty of conspiracy to impede federal officers from discharging their duties. Eleven had already pled guilty. For more than a year after, refuge headquarters remained closed, as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service installed security upgrades.

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[78] Eugene Robinson, "The Oregon Standoff and America's double standards on race and religion," *The Washington Post*, January 4, 2016.

[79] Kullgren, "Militants need to get off 'our land.'

[80] "Robert "LaVoy" Finicum's last interview with The Oregonian on the day before his death" *The Oregonian*, 26 January 2016, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmaJkt-pyqc.

[81] In the truck were LaVoy Finicum, Ryan Payne, Shawna Cox, and Victoria Sharp. Sharp had come to the refuge from Kansas with her mother and siblings to sing for the occupiers as part of a family gospel choir.

The story of the standoff at Malheur could be told in far richer historical, ecological, and theological detail. Even this brief sketch illustrates the significance of such stories for understanding the religious and political ecology of the United States, and indicates what could be gained through place-based, historical inquiry into the intersections of religion and race in the making of America's contested landscapes. The case suggests how historically-informed scholarship in religion and ecology can offer a critical lens to interpret and engage dominant ways of imagining nature's place in public life.

The analysis of the Malheur occupation offered here purposely redirects attention from the Bundys and their seemingly fringe views in order to focus on the *conflict between* the Bundys and the governmental agencies, highlighting the religious and racial imaginations of land and environment that shaped the ideological, cultural, and legal contexts of that clash. Over the course of one-and-a-half centuries, those imaginaries had also formed and transformed the land over which the two groups now fought. Yet the historical intimacies and ongoing similarities between the two imaginaries also collaborated, once again, to overwhelm and occlude the moral, historical, religious, and legal claims of a third party to the conflict—the Wadatika Paiutes.

The following section explores stewardship as a framework for Christian environmentalism in order to ask how Christian ethics in North America might learn to reckon with such ecologies of violence.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP AND ECOLOGIES OF VIOLENCE

Christian stewardship emerged as a formal framework of environmental thought and practice in North America in the 1970s and '80s, but its logic extends deep into the tradition and has shaped American attitudes to the environment from the time Europeans first settled the continent. In colonial New England, the Puritan theologian Samuel Willard summed up a doctrine that would enjoy a long and eclectic employment in the ways Americans engaged the landscapes of the New World:

> Tho' every Man hath a proper Right to such an Estate as he comes to Possess in a Lawful and Honest way; yet he is not the absolute Lord of it, to do with it what he sees meet; but is put into it as a Steward under God, and to follow His Directions in the Improvement that he makes of it. GOD is the supream Lord of all; we Ourselves are

His, and then surely what we have must be so: And it is He who hath deposited this Portion into our hands…. And it is certain the He will ere long call every one of us to give an Account of our Stewardship.[82]

The key elements of Willard's teaching on stewardship remain the backbone of the framework today: that humans receive land as a gift from God, who remains Lord of all; that this tenancy of earth is central to the human vocation, subject to divine direction and oversight, with expectations of due care and even "improvement." Some of its tenets remain just under the surface, having already affected the landscape so thoroughly as to be almost theologically redundant—for example the idea that property rights are part of God's general providence and also specially conferred to individuals or peoples, with land ownership an evident and accountable sign of grace.[83]

The elements of Christian stewardship that have been emphasized since the 1980s rather reflect widespread perceptions that earth has been poorly stewarded, including by Christians—that, in the words of Steven Bouma-Prediger, "Christians have been complicit in much ecological woe."[84] The development of stewardship as a framework for environmental ethics came at a time when concerns about pollution, extinction, and resource depletion had become large enough to implicate entire

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[82] Samuel Willard, *A Compleat Body of Divinity* (Boston: Green and Kneeland, 1726), 708. John Calvin, in particular, had seeded the Puritan preoccupation with stewardship, e.g. in his Commentary on Gen. 2:15, where Calvin wrote that "men were created to employ themselves in some work, and not to lie down in inactivity and idleness … [S]ince however God ordained that man should be exercised in the culture of the ground, he condemned in his person, all indolent repose…. Moses adds, that the custody of the garden was given in charge to Adam, to show that we possess the things which God has committed to our hands, on the condition, that being content with a frugal and moderate use of them, we should take care of what shall remain… [L]et every one regard himself as the steward of God in all things which he possesses. Then he will neither conduct himself dissolutely, nor corrupt by abuse those things which God requires to be preserved."—available at https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom01/calcom01.viii.i.html.

[83] I am not suggesting that Willard's text had a direct and/or defining influence on later versions of stewardship in America. On the contrary, this passage is in no way extraordinary—it is notable for its concise expression of exceedingly common theological motifs in colonial America, especially in the Puritan strands that, many have argued, exercised an out-sized influence in the development and character of American environmentalism—see Stoll, *Inherit the Holy Mountain* and Berry, *Devoted to Nature.* For my purposes, Willard's text exemplifies prominent motifs; it does not explain their origins or pervasiveness in American and/or Christian thought. Stoll remarks that the "the doctrine of stewardship thundered repeatedly from pulpits across New England" in the colonial era (p. 70), and argues that it was a key source for the young country's continent-transforming enthusiasm for agricultural improvement and, later, for conservationist politics (pp. 68ff).

[84] Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 68.

civilizations. Calls for stewardship were often couched in the language of confession, repentance, and reclamation, voicing an urgent need to return to more authentically biblical faith. "We must learn to read the Bible anew precisely because our behavior is out of line with the ecological vision of Scripture," writes Bouma-Prediger.[85] Expounding scripture's ecological implications became a crucial task, with interpreters stressing, for example, readings of Gen. 1-2 that highlight humanity's responsibilities before God to tend and cultivate earth, to serve under divine appointment as caretakers of creation.

At the same time, contemporary stewardship frameworks emerged in a crowded marketplace of self-consciously "ecological" worldviews, each animated in large part by an interpretation of what was going wrong, an account of the roots of environmental crisis. One especially influential account had come in the medievalist historian Lynn White's 1967 essay "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." White had argued that underlying the crisis were medieval Christian axioms of anthropocentrism and divine transcendence baked into the West's functional understandings of science and technology.[86] The argument strengthened suspicion of Christianity among secular environmental groups, and helped convince many Christian reformers that eco-theology must develop bio-centric or eco-centric motifs, often through cosmologies of divine immanence.[87] Some Christians—most visibly evangelical Protestants—worried about the romanticism and apparent sacralization of nature in mainstream and liberal Christian environmentalisms, and turned to the language of environmental stewardship as a way to re-center "a truly biblical Christianity" in the American environmental zeitgeist.[88] While some Christian stewards pledged (and demonstrated) willingness to

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[85] Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth*, 69.

[86] Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (March 1967): 1203-1207.

[87] Environmental literature explicitly influenced by Lynn White's thesis is far too numerous to cite—and even secondary literature reflecting on his legacy proliferates. For just a small selection of the latter, see Douglas Lee Eckburg and T. Jean Blocker, "Varieties of Religious Involvement and Environmental Concerns: Testing the Lynn White Thesis," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 28, no. 4 (Dec. 1989): 509-517; Elspeth Whitney, "Lynn White, Ecotheology, and History," *Environmental Ethics* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 151-159; Willis Jenkins, "After Lynn White: Religious Ethics and Environmental Problems," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 37, no. 2 (2009): 283-309; Elspeth Whitney, "The Lynn White Thesis: Reception and Legacy," *Environmental Ethics* 35 (Fall 2013): 313-331; Bron Taylor, Gretel Van Wieren, and Bernard Daley Zaleha, "Lynn White Jr. and the Greening-Of-Religion Hypothesis," *Conservation Biology* 30, no. 5 (2016): 1000-1009; Todd LeVasseur and Anna Peterson, *Religion and Ecological Crisis: The "Lynn White Thesis" at Fifty* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

[88] Francis A. Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man: The Christian View of Ecology* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1970), 31. *Christianity Today* ran a series of critical editorials on Christianity's engagements with

work together with others—"whether atheist, Buddhist, or New Ager"—in the mission of "preserving God's handiwork," they also sustained a polemical posture, partly against rival environmentalisms, but also against the world of sin from whence modern environmental problems arise.[89]

A major site of that polemic came in stewardship's particular account of the roots of environmental crisis.[90] Whereas White and others had traced the trouble back to pre-modern forms of Christian faith, stewards argued that the problem spawned from distinctly modern forms of unfaithfulness. The church, in short, had been co-opted by modern Western culture, by modernity's consumerism and greed, its shallow anthropocentrism, and its materialist instrumentalism. "Christian faith in the west has been captive to the assumptions of modern culture which sever God from creation and subject the creation to humanity's arrogant and unrestrained power," wrote Wesley Granberg-Michaelson.[91] Richard Bauckham presents an historical argument for this view, tracing the realized ideology of technological domination to its roots in "Greek thought via Renaissance humanism," especially the Italian humanists and the influence of Francis Bacon. "The secularization of the idea of human dominion," sheared from the crucial theocentric cosmology found in scripture, resulted in "the Western project of dominating nature," he claims.[92] This diagnosis exonerates the true sources of Christian

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the environmental movement in 1970, e.g. "Ecologism: A New Paganism," *Christianity Today* (April 10, 1970): 33-34. By 1971, the journal had endorsed stewardship; "Terracide," *Christianity Today* (April 23, 1971): 706-707; C.H. Reidel, "Christianity and the Environmental Crisis," *Christianity Today* (April 23, 1971): 684-688. See also Raymond E. Grizzle, Paul E. Rothrock, and Christopher B. Barrett, "Evangelicals and Environmentalism: Past, Present, and Future," *Trinity Journal* 19 (1998): 3-27.

[89] "It's Not Easy Being Green," *Christianity Today* (May 18, 1992), 14. Peter W. Bakken, "Stewardship" in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor (New York: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005), 1598f.

[90] Christian stewardship is too sprawling a phenomenon to admit of any singular root diagnosis of environmental problems. The strand noted below is prominent, but not exhaustive. Still, something similar pervades nearly all versions of Christian stewardship, for if the Bible is so transparently green, then stewards are typically obliged to explain how that fact came to be so ignored in the life of the church and the history of Christian thought. Perhaps it was oversight, but more often the blame is pushed to external influences.

[91] Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, *Ecology and Life: Accepting Our Environmental Responsibility* (Waco: Word, 1988), 34.

[92] Richard Bauckham, "Human Dominations of Nature—Historical Origins and Biblical Critique," in *Environmental Stewardship: Critical Perspectives*, ed. R.J. Berry (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 42. Bauckham argues that the beliefs most people associate with "the Christian view" of humanity's relationship to nature "are really Greek philosophical rather than biblical ideas" (p. 33). The logic of Christian stewardship makes it important to show scripture's innocence of any anti-ecological seeds. But Bauckham's argument is more complex than many others, as is his account of stewardship, which, he

thought and formation, casting stewardship as retrieval, a return to the authentic faith of scripture. The problem is that the church has acquiesced to powerful external influences. On this view, the church's ecological culpability is a product of un-Christian acculturation. With frequent reference to the "captivity of the church to modernity," the analysis frames the counter-practices of environmental stewardship as a praxis of liberation.[93] Proper care of creation frees the church from the clutches of a decadent rival culture, restoring both land and people to the way of Christ.

This polemical pattern does not seem to be necessitated by stewardship's basic theological structure, and yet it is a recurrent, remarkably consistent theme. North Atlantic forms of stewardship, at least since the "discovery" of the New World, continually assert motifs of culture clash, with a faithful vanguard reclaiming earth from a violent people of waste. On the ever-extending frontier of eighteenth and nineteenth century America, God's call to till and keep the soil helped refute native peoples' claims to their traditional lands, making conquest and cultivation into moral struggles for the settler's providential vindication of nature. In the conservation movement of the early twentieth century, the need to carefully manage land to protect its bounty from the chaotic forces of greedy and degenerate cultures helped establish the federal government and its experts as nature's enlightened caretakers. By the turn of the twenty-first, God's creation was under siege by an arrogant, materialist, secularized civilization, calling out for a Christian church revitalized under the biblical mandate to deputize for God in defense of the earth. In each case, stewardship mobilized an environmental politics calibrated to a collective's exceptionalism, exhorting reformed land practices as the ordained responsibilities of a chosen people embattled in dualist conflict. These tendencies, I argue below, are evident even where contemporary Christian communities reinterpret environmental stewardship as a ministry of reconciliation patterned after the nonviolent way of Jesus Christ. They raise important questions about the capacity of Christian stewardship to bear witness to peace amidst ecologies of violence.

Dominion and Peace in Contemporary Christian Stewardship

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argues, bears imprints of the domineering legacy of humanist modernity and so must be supplemented by the Bible's more ecocentric motifs.

[93] Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth,* 80.

Since the final decades of the twentieth century, Christian environmental stewardship has exerted a profound influence, produced a voluminous literature, and stimulated significant debate. When Robert Booth Fowler surveyed the field in the mid-1990s, he found—an observation that arguably still holds—that "stewardship remains the leading note sounded within green Protestantism."[94] But he also noted a fair amount of variation within its theological expressions and uses. Stewards disagree about some baseline questions in environmental ethics, including how to describe the moral status and claims of non-human nature, and how to imagine humanity's place in (or above? atop?) the natural order. They also propose a range of answers to theological dilemmas that often preoccupy Christian environmental thought, including how both human sin and the *imago dei* bear on creation's status, how to relate scriptural norms to ecological principles, how (or whether) creation conveys the knowledge and/or presence of God, and how God's salvific work in Jesus Christ matters for the non-human world.

This adaptability may be one reason for its prominence and power in a congested contemporary scene. Its flexibility may help explain how ideas of stewardship have been employed in diverse, often conflicted ways of claiming, using, and caring for/about land in American history.

At the same time, another likely reason for stewardship's success in a Christian context is that advocates have been deft in showing how the framework grows organically out of scripture, portraying its core insights as integral implications of the story of God and the gospel of Christ. By expounding on what scripture says about humanity's—or God's chosen people's—responsibilities within God's providential and redemptive plan, stewardship locates environmental care as a moral directive from the heart of Christian faith.

What these arguments share, and what therefore unifies the tradition as a distinct pattern of Christian environmental practice, is that they appeal to biblical mandates to fulfill a specialized role on earth, identifying human beings generally and Christians especially as responsible to put God's creation to proper use, sustaining and upbuilding its good in accordance with the wider will of God. "Authentic Christian faith requires ecological obedience," writes Bouma-Prediger, and "to care for creation is integral to Christian faith."[95] Where other streams of environmental thought may focus

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[94] Robert Booth Fowler, *The Greening of Protestant Thought* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 76.

[95] Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth,* 14.

on how nature's integrity places duties on humans to give nature its due, stewardship frames environmental ethics as a matter of obedience to God, regarding responsibilities for creation as tasks of "faithful response to God's invitation and command." Because stewardship takes shape as "obligatory service," much hinges on the contested question of how to identify God's purposes for nature in the life of human beings. Stewardship centers on God's election of humans for the vocation of earthkeeper and caretaker, so must describe "how to inhabit the providential landscape created by God's special relationship to humans."[96]

A major site of contemporary interpretive debate on those questions begins with the accounts of creation in Genesis 1 and 2. Francis Schaeffer, a prolific Presbyterian evangelical theologian from Pennsylvania, laid the groundwork for this debate in his 1970 book *Pollution and the Death of Man*, often regarded as the first monograph of the current Christian stewardship movement. Schaeffer had argued that "man's" rightful place in relationship to nature—a place of "dominion" over creation (citing Gen. 1:28), to be exercised as stewardship (citing Jesus' parable of the talents in Matt. 25:15ff) "under God's dominion and under God's Domain"—had been disordered by the fall of humanity into sin (citing Gen. 3). Unyoked from the proper dominion of man, nature had become "autonomous," with environmental crisis the inevitable result. Both man and nature had been misplaced in the order of creation. After the Fall, man "exercised dominion wrongly," exploiting nature instead of tending to it lovingly, like a man to his wife, he wrote. In truth, Christians are called to exercise dominion "without being destructive."[97]

The idea of dominion had been raked over the coals in Lynn White's assessment of the Christian environmental legacy, and later critics railed against stewardship's continued reliance on it. In Clare Palmer's seminal critique, environmental stewardship built from a feudal conception of governance "based on a power hierarchy of control

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[96] Willis Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 77.

[97] Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, 69-72. Interestingly, Schaeffer quotes Francis Bacon approvingly several times in his passage on humanity's proper relationship to nature. Bacon would eventually become one of the most frequent scapegoats within Christian eco-theology, blamed for all manner of bad thought and behavior in the modern history of the West, including by Christian stewards, as Bauckham's essay cited above demonstrates. Schaeffer's statement of stewardship was influential, but part of his import lies in the ways later evangelicals and others adapted and changed his ideas. I follow Schaeffer's use of "man" in this paragraph because Schaeffer's reading of the human dominion over nature seems to be gendered, explicitly likened to man's role in the home: "Man is to be head of the home, but the man is also to love his wife as Christ loves the church. Thus everything is back in its right place. There is to be order in the midst of a fallen world, but in love" (p. 72).

and obedience." It revitalized a political theology of "power and oppression; of server and the served."[98] Stewardship seemed to reinforce what many agreed were root problems: human exceptionalism in the orders of nature, an absentee relation of God to creation, a monarchical or managerial model of environmental practice, and a mandate to control.

Developing stewardship into a persuasive paradigm for environmental ethics required explaining how human dominion could be good for creation, modeling attentive care rather than arrogant mastery—dominion without destruction, but also without unsavory hierarchies or ideals of dominance. Chiefly, this meant "placing the idea of human dominion in its biblical context," as Bauckham put it. Unraveling stewardship's practical meaning called for scriptural specifications and examples of its exercise. For example, having dominion could mean a responsibility to "serve" and "preserve" non-human nature (Gen 2:15), modeled on Noah's obedient act of biodiversity conservation (Gen. 6-8), guarded against overuse or exploitation by the sabbatical laws (Exod. 20:10, 23:11; Lev. 25:4; Deut. 5:14); its political theology tied to both Old and New Testament motifs linking lordship to humble service (1 Kgs 12:7) and meekness (Mt. 5:5).[99] Christians "mirror the sovereignty of divine love in our stewardship of the earth," so, most profoundly, stewardship looks to "the economy of Christ" for insight into "God's way of ruling and giving."[100]

Norman Wirzba picks up each of these themes in his case for recasting dominion as humanity's *servanthood* of creation. For Wirzba, the scriptural perspective on human uniqueness and calling forecloses any possibility of exploitation because it everywhere models lordship as joyful service to others. "The hallmark of Christ's lordship and mastery was his servanthood of all," he writes. Wirzba develops the theological character of the paradigm by interpreting both humanity and non-human creation christologically, binding them together in Christ. God's intentions for creation are manifest concretely in the Incarnation, while Christians, incorporated by grace into the body of Christ, are to bear witness to creation's true character, "modeling in their life together God's original, life-giving intention." The church's collective imaging of Christ

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[98] Clare Palmer, "Environmental Stewardship: A Case Study in Environmental Ethics," in *Environmental Stewardship: Critical Perspectives*, 69ff. Palmer and White do not mention "dominion" directly, but their critiques tackle the idea.

[99] Bauckham, "Human Dominations of Nature," 45-47.

[100] John Douglas Hall, *Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 200; Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 82.

within creation is indeed an obligation, but more deeply it takes shape as gratitude for the gift of creation revealed in Christ as a paradise, a place of utter peace.[101] The responsibilities of dominion, to serve and to care, are specified theologically to mean "the just distribution of the grace of God, the proper ordering of all things in light of their relation to God." Practically, the christocentric account of stewardship means that "our dominion…is to effect a transformation of the world such that it no longer reflects pain and suffering, but rather health and peace."[102]

Wirzba's reference to peace here is not incidental. The idea of peace is central to his theology of creation and his ethic of service to earth. Conceptually its role mirrors the work accomplished by Christ theologically—it illumines the nature and purpose of non-human creation and links it to the shape of redeemed human community. For Wirzba, peace is God's intention for creation; it also names humanity's chief social ideal and its primary political challenge, both of which hinge on how humans understand and engage land. The doctrine of creation offers a "vision of God's original peace," which in turn defines "what it means for a culture to consider itself just and at peace." The relationship runs the other way as well, with peaceable human sociality playing a vital role in the revelation and restoration of creation's true purpose. "A life of peace…is what creation itself eagerly awaits," and "the way to God's original peace will be the way of Christ's ministerial and servant life," a way inscribed in the everyday living of the church. Again, the bridge allowing this reciprocity between nature and culture is the figure of Christ: "The peace evident in the first creation finds its mirror expression in the peace made possible by the cruciform and resurrection life of Christ."[103] For Christians, then, discipleship follows the order of nature, at the same time reordering nature to grace; Christians learn from Christ how to conform praxis to the earth's own peace, learning from both scripture and nature how their life on the land may transform the world to the paradise of God.

Wirzba is not alone in placing peace at the center of Christian stewardship. Because stewardship relies on descriptions of God's will for nature in order to guide

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[101] Norman Wirzba, *The Paradise of God: Renewing Religion in an Ecological Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 135, 124, 53f. The grace of creation and of salvation are linked tightly for Wirzba. "The aim of salvation is to create the space in which the joy and peace of God's creation can be experienced and shared. The attainment of salvation demands that those forces which undermine creation—violence, greed, suffering, jealousy, pride—be confronted and overcome" (p. 19).

[102] Wirzba, *The Paradise of God*, 137-138, 144.

[103] Wizba, *The Paradise of God*, viii, x, 18, 53, 48.

human responsibilities of care, advocates often turn to the biblical concept of *shalom* or motifs of the "peaceable kingdom" to connect the ideals of environmental flourishing to a moral vision of collective human life. For example, Ellen Davis finds the idea of *shalom* undergirding the "basic elements of the Bible's distinctly *theological* land ethic." Like Wirzba, Davis sees creation's shalom encompassing a unity of "humans and land before God," where human fidelity to God and soil elicits grace in the form of productive agriculture, and "makes possible God's continued presence in the land."[104] Richard Wright argues that stewardship "participates in the redemption of the world" in the form of ecological practices that work toward the peaceable Kingdom of God.[105] The role of peace is especially important in the Anabaptist versions of stewardship explored below. In each instance, viewing peace as creation's purpose helps stewards understand their caretaking roles, usually stressing values of harmony, wholeness, reciprocity, and justice as benchmarks for the human use, preservation, and management of nature.

 With peace as the keystone of the christological bridge between humanity and nature, these versions of stewardship also situate environmental ethics within the nonviolent politics of Jesus, interpreting earthkeeping as part of the church's witness to Christ. For Laura Ruth Yordy, creation care is imaged as "eco-discipleship," in which the church's environmental practices must "exemplify the possibilities of eschatological peace." Stewardship follows God's commands not by executing the divine will in the Lord's absence, but by building ecclesial "demonstration plots for the Kingdom," making the church's earthly life into a humble prototype of heavenly shalom: "a realm of nonviolent peace within and among species; justice/liberation/reconciliation among all God's creatures; material abundance and sharing; righteousness and communion with God."[106] Yordy's neo-Anabaptist style of stewardship makes vivid the evangelical character of creation care, casting environmental ethics as a showcase for the blessings of life within the circle of grace.[107] With land practices designed to "interrupt the culture

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[104] Ellen F. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 25-26.

[105] Richard Wright, *Biology Through the Eyes of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 261, 179-180; cited in Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 87.

[106] Laura Ruth Yordy, *Green Witness: Ecology, Ethics, and the Kingdom of God* (Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press, 2008), 127, 131. Cf. Laura R. Yordy, "Witness to God's Redemption of Creation," *Worldviews* 14 (2010), 213, where "the eschaton…is a promise of interspecies peace, diversity, abundance, reconciliation, justice, and communion with God for all of creation."

[107] Here I mean *evangelical* not in the sociological sense, but the theological one. Yordy presents the church's stewardship of land as public testimony to the good news of God's inbreaking reign.

of violence with pockets of reconciliation," the church's green witness demonstrates "an alternative way of life in Christ."[108]

If the stewardship paradigm can help Christian ethics confront ecologies of violence exemplified by the history of land conflict in Harney County, this may be its most logical strategy. Where landscapes are contested within deep-seated environmental imaginaries, any help Christian stewardship might provide cannot come in the form of simple exhortations to care for land. Since settlers first arrived in Oregon, conflicted parties have always been sure that one or another kind of human wardship was good for the land and right for community. In January 2016, the two armed parties carried their land claims and competing visions for Malheur's use on the back of rival versions of Christian stewardship. Instead, the recent flurry of critical and constructive reflection on stewardship could present an opportunity for Christian environmental ethics to develop a discourse that either adjudicates those claims and visions or else models a third way. The following section offers skeptical assessments of both options.

Engaging Land Conflict: Stewardship, Discovery, and Settler Colonialism

One plausible way for Christian stewardship to address land conflict would be to intervene by speaking directly to competing claims and practices, presenting a scriptural vision of earthkeeping in order to mediate and arbitrate between parties. The paradigm's major strategy has been hortatory, focused on instilling Christians with a sense of environmental concern and responsibility; developing it to adjudicate violent clashes over conflicted versions of environmental concern would require concretizing the framework's account of the land practices pleasing to God.[109] But the case study of conflict in the Harney basin suggests serious difficulties for this approach. Even if a theology of stewardship could develop principles of land care with sufficient specificity to offer a Christian ethical perspective on land use in Harney County, the strategy would address the conflict over Malheur at only the most superficial level. The parties to the conflict each drew on deep historical and cultural narratives to vindicate their place on the land, entangling claims about the land's rightful use and belonging with claims about heritage, about past wrongs and future survival. Knowing the details of God's will for creation does not entail knowing who has rightful claim to a particular place.

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[108] Yordy, *Green Witness*, 139, 153.
[109] On the hortatory focus of Christian environmental stewardship, see Bakken, "Stewardship," 1598.

Not anymore. Most contemporary versions of Christian stewardship present broad human obligations to care for creation *in general*, addressing the bearers of God's image with responsibilities for "global stewardship."[110] But earlier iterations, while no less universal in theological scope, developed beliefs about God's purposes for man and nature in the context of laying claim to each new vista of the New World. The ranchers and federal managers that so shaped the history and landscapes of southeast Oregon both incorporated ideas of stewardship within environmental imaginaries that explained why their people and practices belonged on the land. A Christian theology of stewardship played prominent roles in multiple discourses by which whites justified the seizure, ownership, and use of the lands that became the American West. Extrapolating from divine mandates to till and keep, to subdue and cultivate earth in exercise of ordained dominion, these earlier versions of stewardship were especially concerned with God's purposes for particular lands and the natural endowments of particular people.

The logic of Christian stewardship was a key building block for the "Doctrine of Discovery" which explained both ideologically and legally how newly arrived Christian peoples came to own indigenous land. The Doctrine of Discovery posited that European (and Euro-American) Christians had legitimate claims to "newly discovered" lands on the basis of having arrived and settled before other Europeans. The doctrine interwove racial and religious logics to develop an intricate framework for claiming land in the New World.[111] Central to the doctrine in the American context was the concept of *terra nullius*, a legal fiction enshrined within U.S. jurisprudence by the Supreme Court in *Johnson v. M'Intosh* (1823), which recognized settler titles to discovered lands deemed "vacant." To look upon a continent populated by millions of indigenous people and see vacancy requires a rather vivid imagination, and this was supplied in large part by Christian ideas about humanity's divine ordination to rule over creation by tending to soil, improving land, and caring for creatures.

The jurist James Kent summarized the idea in his influential *Commentaries on American Law* in 1826, describing how "people came to own property only by developing the land, turning it to cultivation." The unsettled occupancy of an "uncivilized, erratic, and savage race of men" could only establish a "loose and

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[110] Grizzle et al., "Evangelicals and Environmentalism," 24ff.

[111] See Robert J. Miller et al., *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

attenuated claim" to "use" but not to own land. By contrast, the civilized, republican, Christian race of white America had proven worthy of its providential charge and thus its claims to the country, clearing and planting the continent from east to west.[112] The nation's westward expansion was frequently cast as a mission of Christian stewardship. "Let the poor, the needy, the oppressed of the earth, and those who want land, resort to the fertile plains of our western country, the second land of promise, and there dwell in peace, fulfilling the first and great commandment," wrote George Washington in 1785.[113] That first great commandment was, of course, God's command to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28, to "replenish the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over…every living thing that moves upon the earth."

Arguments for settling the Pacific Northwest frequently appealed to the logic of stewardship within the Doctrine of Discovery, as conflict over the nation's claims to and use of land in the Oregon territory played a prominent role in the development of a distinctly American theology of dominion. In a Senate debate in 1825, one Senator argued for a campaign to settle Oregon's inland regions, asking a rhetorical question that would have been equally at home in a twenty-first century standoff over a federal wildlife refuge in the same locale: "Is [the land] to be kept a jungle for wild beasts?" The answer was pat: "No. It is not in the order of Providence."[114] Colonizing and eventually incorporating Oregon would "open this wilderness to the skilful and preserving industry of civilized man," and settle the "savage wilderness."[115]

When Thomas Jefferson appointed Lewis and Clark to lead the "Corps of Discovery Expedition" to Oregon, a chief goal was to establish an American settlement at the Columbia River in order to lay claim to the region. Under the Doctrine's principle of *contiguity*, a settlement at the mouth of a river gave claim to the entire watershed, suggesting that when sovereignty traveled with a Christian nation's explorers and pioneers, it also poured through them into the land itself, in line with the natural flows

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[112] Purdy, *After Nature*, 82. James Kent, *Commentaries on American Law*, ed. Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., 12th ed., vol. 3 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1873). 387f. Kent continues: The country was "evidently fitted and intended by Providence to be subdued and cultivated, and to become the residence of civilized nations. It was part of the original destiny and duty of the human race to 'subdue the earth, and till the ground whence they were taken.' The white race of men, as Governor Pownall has observed, have been 'land-workers from the beginning'" (p. 388).

[113] George Washington, letter to David Humphreys, Mount Vernon, 25 July 1785; in *Writings of George Washington*, ed. Lawrence B. Evans (New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1908), 498.

[114] *Gales and Seaton's Register of Debates in Congress*, Senate, 26 February, 1825, p. 689.

[115] Quoted in Miller et al., *Discovering Indigenous Lands*, 85.

and physical contours of earth.[116] For John Quincy Adams, American claims to Oregon were pressed forward by "the finger of Nature."[117] The watershed concept of contiguity likely made intuitive sense to the cattle barons who would come to control most of the land in the Harney basin by the end of the century, for their own settlement practices made these abstract claims concrete: whoever occupied the waterways effectively controlled the land.[118]

The idea of Manifest Destiny depended on the logic of the Doctrine of Discovery, but inflected it with an expansive form of American exceptionalism, arguing that the nation's spread to the Pacific was a matter of both divine and natural necessity. The term was first uttered in defense of America's title claims to Oregon, invented chiefly for that purpose.[119] "The God of nature and of nations has marked it for our own," wrote John O'Sullivan in 1845.[120] Speaking on the floor of the House of Representatives the same year, Adams interpreted that providential claim in terms of stewardship, summing up prominent arguments for asserting the nation's rights to the Oregon country: "We claim that country—for what? To make the wilderness blossom as the rose, to establish laws, to increase, multiply, and subdue the earth, which we are commanded to do by the behest of God almighty."*[121]*

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[116] This principle was used explicitly in early debates about the nation's claims to the Oregon territories. In 1823, a House committee appointed to study the question argued on precedent that "the Power which discovered a country was entitled to the whole extent of soil watered by the springs of the principal river or watercourse passing through it, provided there was settlement made, or possession taken ... and become thereby vested with a full right of sovereignty."—Quoted in Robert J. Miller, *Native America Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, and Manifest Destiny* (Westport: Praeger, 2006), 138. For Miller's brief definition of contiguity, see p. 4.

[117] Mr. John Quincy Adams to Mr. Rush, Department of State, Washington, 22 July 1823, in *Congressional Serial Set no. 3501-4000,* p. 33.

[118] Robbins, "Malheur Occupation." Maintaining control of riparian land proved difficult, however, because major ecological transformations wrought by rapid agricultural development meant that the waterlines fluctuated and changed. In Malheur, "the central conflicts rested on what the boundaries between water and land meant in a place where those boundaries were never fixed, and how those shifting boundaries affected legal title"—Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet,* 44ff). When applied to these more local contests, the "finger of Nature" turned out to be rather fickle.

[119] Robert C. Winthrop of Massachussetts introduced the term in 1846 on the House floor to explain why America's title claims to the territory were stronger than Great Britain's. Congressional Globe, 29 Cong., first session, Appendix, p.99. See Julius W. Pratt, "The Origin of 'Manifest Destiny,'" *The American Historical Review* 32, no. 4 (1927): 795-798.

[120] John O'Sullivan, "The True Title," *New York Morning News,* 27 December 1845, quoted in Miller, *Native America Discovered,* 119.

[121] *Congressional Globe,* 29th Cong., 1st sess., 1846, p. 342. Adams "held unswervingly to the conviction that American expansionism derived its legitimacy from the imperatives of the Old Testament.

Oregon's settlers came to the Harney basin comparatively late, invited in by the Homestead Act, the Desert Act and the Swamp Land Act's 1860 extension to Oregon, all of which required applicants to make "improvements" to the land—that is, to adapt it for agriculture or the raising of livestock.[122] An ideology of agricultural stewardship also shaped conflict on the ground once they arrived. First and foremost, ranchers, homesteaders, and federal troops worked together to abolish Paiute claims to the land, "telling a story that justified their actions by claiming that the Paiute had no right to the basin because they weren't cultivating the soil, using water to irrigate crops, or building permanent homes and communities." Since the Paiutes' sense of belonging in the land did not rely on such "improvements" as fenced properties and cultivated fields, "but rather on stories, memories, spiritual ceremonies, and fluid agreements among family bands," they were understood to have neither legal title nor moral standing.[123] Since the basin belonged by natural right to those who would steward it according to God's design, the natives figured as thieves in the settler imaginary.[124]

In a telling bit of irony, white homesteaders would soon use a similar logic to deride the land claims of white ranchers who likewise failed to plant and till and whose cattle roamed far and wide without the prudence or discipline of enclosures and gates. Concerns about such imprudence also bolstered the conservationist arguments that convinced authorities to bring most of the Harney basin under federal protection. Conservationists presented places like Malheur as proving grounds for America's ordained vocation as earthkeepers. Albert Beveridge offered racialized arguments for the nation's role as "steward under God of the civilization of the world." He wrote that "the sovereign tendencies of our race are organization and government." These traits had been given for a reason: "[God] has made us the lords of civilization that we may administer civilization." Rational management projects at home and abroad were

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Nature…existed to be appropriated and improved upon for the glorification of God"—Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 59.

[122] The Homestead Act "institutionalized Lockean thought," writes Daniel Bromley, in which "humans, especially Europeans, were endowed with a special obligation to take possession of God's commons," turning empty space into bounded property by conquest and cultivation, by laboring to improve the land—Daniel W. Bromley, "Private Property and Public Interest: Land in the American Idea," in *Land in the American West: Private Claims and the Common Good*, ed. William G. Robbins and James C. Foster (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 26.

[123] Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet*, 30-34.

[124] Purdy, *After Nature,* 82.

"mighty answers to Divine commands."[125] For people like Beveridge and Roosevelt, dominion was consummated in the white race and the American republic, and environmental conservation was nature stewardship at civilizational scale.

As much as the Doctrine of Discovery was a religious ideology used to justify taking native lands, it was also a legal doctrine developed to adjudicate land claims between colonial powers. Rights of "first discovery" were invented to decide which European nation had legitimate claim of title to newly occupied lands. Establishing title to land required establishing a settlement or a fort in the area, so that the physical presence of a particular Christian people's soldiers or settlers shaped the legal context for dividing the spoils of discovery among competing empires.[126] For the nation's caretakers in the capital, the most pressing issues in the Oregon country until the mid-nineteenth century were boundary and title disputes between the U.S. and Great Britain. When Robert C. Winthrop introduced Congress to the idea of Manifest Destiny in 1846, it was to rebut the discovery claims of rival colonizers in Oregon.[127]

At the Malhuer National Wildlife Refuge in 2016, the conflict was still about two settler powers disputing rights to the land. Both stood on historical, legal, and ideological platforms that openly relied on the intertwined legacies of settlement, stewardship, and discovery, equally sure this heritage had made Paiute land their own tribe's inheritance as God's bequest. "The land titles need to be transferred back to the people," said Ammon Bundy.[128] But the land titles had been firmly established as belonging to the U.S. government by two centuries of jurisprudence—a fact repeated constantly in the press and by legal scholars. "It gets tiring," said Jarvis Kennedy, a Burns Paiute tribal council member. "It's the same battles that my ancestors had. And now it's just a bunch of different cavalry wearing a bunch of different coats."[129]

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[125] Beveridge, "For the Greater Republic," 4-5. For more on the link between American conservationism and stewardship theology, see Stoll, *Inherit the Holy Mountain*, 68ff.

[126] Chief Justice John Marshall wrote the majority opinion in *Johnson v. M'Intosh*, interpreting how the principle had functioned historically in the law of nations, and explaining its implications for domestic politics: "discovery gave title to the government by whose subjects, or by whose authority, it was made against all other European governments, which title might be consummated by possession." For domestic politics, the ruling meant that private individuals could not purchase title to indigenous lands, since discovery automatically conferred title to the government. The decision is still used to adjudicate competing land claims across the U.S.

[127] Pratt, "The Origin of 'Manifest Destiny,'" 795.

[128] Quoted in House, "Burns Paiutes to Ammon Bundy."

[129] Quoted in Sidner, "Native tribe blasts Oregon takeover."

With this deeper context in mind, we can return to the question of whether contemporary Christian stewardship is in a good position to mediate land conflicts like the standoff at Malheur. It depends on how you look at it. On the one hand, the chief use of the logic of Christian stewardship in American history has always been to pass judgment on the competing land claims of colonial powers. In that sense it seems well prepared for the job. Perhaps now, with the benefit of hindsight, uplifted from the imperialist and racialist assumptions of the past, and informed by new, more altruistic and ecological readings of dominion and discipleship, Christian stewards could engage ecologies of violence with clear theological principles on land's proper uses and claims.

But this seems a dangerous, problematic strategy. Today, when Christian stewardship is not consciously calibrated to specific landscapes, or to the moral challenges that arise in contests over particular places, efforts to apply theological generalities to land conflicts are unlikely to succeed; they are even less likely to proceed with due sensitivity to the historical, cultural, and ecological details that mean so much in places like Harney County. Most worryingly, the strategy rehabilitates the religious logic of the Doctrine of Discovery, presuming that Christian theological claims about nature's purposes in the order of Providence should settle questions about what settlers should do with land robbed from others. Speaking into the conflict at Malheur about how to care for the land in a Christian way seems to reinforce the dynamics that justified and consolidated its theft—apportioning power by Christianizing space.

Yordy's interpretation of stewardship as witness represents a different strategy. This approach rejects the idea that stewards should deploy theological principles in political squabbles or bring Christian wisdom to public debates. Instead, the church is its own exemplary *polis*; the task is to shape the church's own communal life in ways that testify to creation's eschatological future, to the peace of God's reign. The purpose of stewardship, on this model, is not to pursue policies making the nation more environmentally sustainable. Christians take care of creation in order to "demonstrate the possibilities of justice, peace, and abundance" God makes possible through grace. As an "eschatological presence in the world," the church's stewardship is not the preservation of creation's goods but the proleptic image of its redeemed future; Christians are not custodians of natural resources, but rather representatives of the reality, evident where creation flourishes in peace, of God's love for the world.[130] The paradigm would confront cases of land conflict not by solving problems, brokering

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[130] Yordy, *Green Witness*, 152, 137, 43.

peace between warring parties or appealing to higher principles, but by modeling reconciled relations between people and land.

In North America, the Christian constituencies most often associated with this model are Anabaptist agrarian communities. Anabaptists settled North America in several waves beginning in the late seventeenth century, beginning near Philadelphia and extending as far as Oregon's Willamette Valley by 1876, drawn west by the appeal of cheap land.[131] Anabaptists brought along a reputation for agricultural expertise developed under conditions of religious persecution in the hinterlands of Europe, where they had "learned to drain swamps, to improve the fertility of poor soil, and experiment with new ways of farming."[132] That reputation has remained largely in tact, despite more than a century of profound change in Anabaptist agrarian life and agricultural technique.[133] With the rise of a Christian environmental stewardship movement in the late twentieth century, many have praised Anabaptist (notably Mennonite and Amish) communities as living examples of earthkeeping ecclesial communities. As environmental theologians, a number of Mennonite thinkers have drawn from that legacy to develop a version of environmental stewardship framing patient nurture of land as witness to peace. To consider whether and how the stewardship strategy of witness may present possibilities for a Christian ethic engaging ecologies of violence, Anabaptist environmental theologies offer a useful test case.

What religious environmentalists tend to like about Anabaptist farming communities is their capacity to perform faith commitments as sustainability practices, and the reciprocity this creates between theology, ethics, and environmental experience. Wendell Berry has pointed toward Anabaptist agrarian communities as exemplars of responsible agriculture, noting how their lived faith orders an entire way of life able to sustain countercultural patterns of earth care.[134] "Amish and Mennonite closeness to the

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[131] See Hope Kauffman Lind, *Apart & Together: Mennonites in Oregon and Neighboring States, 1876-1976* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1990). The scope of this chapter does not permit a detailed examination of Anabaptist environmental or religious history in Oregon, much less in North America. Its focus is on stewardship discourses within recent Anabaptist (especially Mennonite) thought, critically considering how those discourses may contribute to a Christian ethic engaging land conflict.

[132] J. Winfield Fretz, "Farming Among Mennonites in North America," *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, 1956, accessed 25 May 2020.

[133] For a brief compendium of scholarly praise for Mennonite agriculture, see Royden Loewen, "The Quiet on the Land: The Environment in Mennonite Historiography," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 23 (2005), 153ff.

[134] Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977), 210-217; and Berry, "People, Land, and Community" and "The Use of Energy," in *The Art of the Commonplace,* ed. Norman Wirzba (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2002), 189-191, 292.

land leads to a theology that arises from daily life practice," agrees Anabaptist theologian Heather Ackley Bean.[135] Willis Jenkins presents "the peacemaking agricultural traditions of Anabaptist communities" as distinctly promising versions of stewardship for the ways they "morally organize themselves around the kingdom orders of Christ, yet have historically worked in close responsiveness to their land."[136] Anabaptist agrarianism forms coherent communities rooted to particular places and gentle practices, embodying discipleship in intimacy with the land. In this context, beliefs and believers learn to understand the earth while environmental practices are held accountable to God's reign. Whereas popular environmentalisms seek political maneuvers to conserve threatened goods or halt nature's enemies, Anabaptist communities are seen to embrace the more fundamental challenge of creating the cultural and economic conditions for harmonious relations among earth, creatures, and human communities. As the tasks of responsible agriculture mediate concrete challenges of neighbor love and creation care, the community tangibly performs and informs its traditions of faith. Although some worry that this heritage is fading, and others question whether it ever really existed, Anabaptist agrarianism represents a form of stewardship that, for many, exemplifies how collective Christian life can bear witness to the peaceable ecology of God.[137]

The central insight of Anabaptist environmental theologies is usually that God in Jesus Christ redeems *all* creation. Christ overcomes not only human violence and estrangement from God—Jesus also heals the degradation and hostility that plague ecological relationships. Anabaptist environmental theologies easily discern connections between creation care and peacemaking because both concerns arise as responses to God's action toward *shalom.* Christians are called to ecological discipleship, which means to follow Jesus in *all* relations, uncovering or creating signs of God's peace by working to heal violent or unjust ecologies. That core conviction is developed and fleshed out in diverse ways, taking shape in a wide range of theological and practical projects across a varied spectrum of social and natural environments, all seeking to

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[135] Heather Ann Ackley Bean, "Toward an Anabaptist / Mennonite Environmental Ethic," in *Creation & the Environment: An Anabaptist Perspective on a Sustainable World*, ed. Calvin Redekop (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 183; 186; 201.

[136] Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 91.

[137] Walter Klassen, "Pacifism, Nonviolence, and the Peaceful Reign of God," in *Creation & the Environment*, ed. Calvin Redekop (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 142-43.

connect Anabaptist traditions of thought and life to the moral challenges of environmental crisis.

Anabaptist environmentalisms frequently interpret earthcare as a dimension of their historic commitments to peace and nonviolence, marshaling familiar theological arguments for pacifism and combining them with eclectic contemporary thinking about ecology and environmental problems to express what nonviolence means for Christian relations to the earth and its non-human inhabitants. Bean constructs an Anabaptist creation ethic centered on nonviolence, in which "ecocide is placed in the context of Christology."[138] Klassen draws on Anabaptist-Mennonite traditions of nonviolence to transform "the human war against nature," arguing that '"the peaceful reign of God' is not limited to God's human children but includes the whole creation."[139] Matthew Eaton combines an ecofeminist cosmology of "biospherical egalitarianism" with John Howard Yoder's rudimentary earthcare ethic, arguing that "our earth-other-neighbors are worthy not only of dignity but nonviolent treatment."[140] In a recent review of the literature, Peter Dula finds that the stewardship paradigm no longer captures the range of theological strategies employed within Anabaptist environmental thought, but "most early [Anabaptist] writing on creation care was from a stewardship perspective."[141] Stewardship embodied in actual "agro-theological" communities has been

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[138] Bean, "Toward an Anabaptist / Mennonite Environmental Ethic," 194-197.

[139] Klassen, "Pacifism, Nonviolence, and the Peaceful Reign of God," 142-143.

[140] Matthew Eaton, "Eco-Pacifism and the Anabaptist Vision," *Conrad Grebel Review* 29, no. 2 (Spring 2011), 72. John Howard Yoder's rare discussion of environmental ethics can be found in John Howard Yoder "Cult and Culture after Eden: On Generating Alternative Paradigms," *Human Values and the Environment: Conference Proceedings, Human Values and the Environment Conference* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, 1992), 1-10.

[141] Peter Dula, "Anabaptist Environmental Ethics: A Review Essay," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 94, no.1 (Jan. 2020): 7-42. Dula points in particular to a rise in discourses of *ecological spirituality*, but also *eco-justice*. (He borrows the typology Jenkins developed in *Ecologies of Grace* and Laurel Kearns introduced in "Saving the Creation: Christian Environmentalism in the U.S.," *Sociology of Religion* 57, no. 1 (1996): 55-70). Notable early works of Anabaptist stewardship theology include Gordon Zerbe, "The Kingdom of God and the Stewardship of Creation," in *The Environment and the Christian*, ed. Calvin DeWitt (Grand Rapids: Baker House Books, 1991), 73-92; Willard Swartley, "The Biblical Basis of Stewardship," in *The Earth is the Lord's: Essays on Stewardship*, ed. Mary Evelyn Jegen and Bruce U. Manno (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 22-43; Waldemar Janzen, "The Biblical Basis for Stewardship of Land," in *Still in the Image: Essays in Biblical Theology and Anthropology* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1982), 158-169. Calvin Redekop introduces his highly influential edited volume *Creation & the Environment: An Anabaptist Perspective on a Sustainable World,* ed. Calvin Redekop (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000) in the language of stewardship (p. xvii).

Anabaptism's most influential contribution to American environmental thought.[142] Lived witness remains its dominant strategy.

A great deal of North American Anabaptist environmental literature focuses on farming practices and agrarian communities. Anabaptist agrarians tell how the challenge to sustain responsible agriculture across generations trains people in the Christian virtues of earth care and love for neighbors. Virtuous communities form through agricultural toil and long-term commitment to a community and its landscape. As sustainable lifeways connect believers lovingly to the earth, "nature in turn shapes the faithful living of a particular people in a particular place."[143] This is another reason Anabaptist versions of stewardship have been attractive: they seem to model how *place* and *land* can once again take prominence in Christian life and thought, now in the form local nonviolent ecologies rather than sites of colonial conquest.

Localizing stewardship represents one part of how Anabaptist agrarianism might help Christian environmental ethics address issues of land conflict. As the Malheur case indicates, understanding conflicts over land may often require understanding much deeper stories about places, including how landscapes have changed over time, and how those changes have figured in the imaginations of occupants and other interested parties. A Christian ethic of witness relevant to contested ecologies must be able to show how the meaning of peace takes root in the long-term relations of people to place—how their mutual transformations reflect the divine promise of reconciliation and abundance.

But in practice, argues the Amish essayist David Kline, today's Anabaptists cannot offer any such witness to peace because they "are alienated from the land." They left the farm and adopted the violent ways of the world, he suggests. When the intimate bonds of people and soil are so severed, "nature becomes an adversary, something to be subdued," he laments.[144] The sentiment is common. "Most of us [Mennonites] have chosen to join the North American social and economic mainstream," writes Michael

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[142] Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 92. In the theological literature, see for example Duane K. Friesen and Bradley D. Guhr, "*Metanoia* and Healing: Toward a Great Plains Land Ethic," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 37, no. 4 (2009): 723-753. Friesen and Guhr argue that a land ethic begins with intimate local knowledge, and requires practitioners "passionately oriented to 'place,' not just any place, but the wonder and mystery of the particular place where she lives" (p. 728). See also Laura Schmidt Roberts, "The Theological Place of Land: Watershed Discipleship as Re-*placed* Cultural Vision," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 94, no. 1 (Jan. 2020): 59-70.

[143] Jenkins, Ecologies of Grace, 92.

[144] David Kline, "God's Spirit and a Theology for Living," in *Creation & the Environment*, 62-63.

Yoder. How can Anabaptist communities present a green witness if cultural and economic assimilation means they "behave in ways not significantly different from…non-Mennonite and even non-Christian neighbors"?[145] Mennonite pastor and author Roy Kauffman amplifies the critique, radicalizing Kline's assertion that alienation from farmland makes an enemy of nature and undermines a genuinely ecological faith. He writes that the rootlessness of non-agrarians leaves them "seriously deficient in what it is to be human."[146]

Kaufman worries that rural Anabaptist communities are taught by the broader church to "despise [their] heritage" when they are criticized for being ethnically homogeneous. For Kaufman, the criticism is unfair, but not because it is untrue. It is unfair, he says, because ethnic uniformity should be embraced and preserved. He writes (in italics for emphasis) that "*the formation of an ethnic agrarian identity is at the core of the missional life of rural congregations.*" To maintain ethnic homogeneity is central to the divine calling of the rural church. But this is not ethnocentrism, he contends. A strategy of ethnic separation helps to enrich the world's diversity.[147] In this case, it allows white Mennonites of European descent to stay distinctive, which is important, he suggests, because it is the only way for them to form and preserve a culture worth sharing.

"How the language of 'Mennonite ethnicity' blossomed into a widespread discourse during the second half of the twentieth century is one of the great untold stories of Anabaptist history," argues the historian Benjamin Goossen. Goossen traces one important part of that story to Mennonite genealogical practices inspired by Nazi race science during the Third Reich, imported to the U.S. when church humanitarian efforts incorporated the same logic to help European Mennonites migrate to America. Goossen rejects the idea that contemporary discourses of ethnic distinction are remnants of Nazi ideology, but his argument does undercut the thesis that a Mennonite "ethnic agrarian identity" is the product of rural isolation. More strongly, he argues that the language of Mennonite ethnicity in the twenty-first century serves an analogous role to its WWII-era usage in that it "undergirds white supremacy" within the church. When

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[145] Michael L. Yoder, "Mennonites, Economics, and the Care of Creation," in *Creation & the Environment*, 90.

[146] S. Roy Kaufman, "Rooted and Grounded: Yet Holding the Land Loosely in Trust," in *Rooted and Grounded: Essays on Land and Christian Discipleship*, ed. Ryan D. Harker and Janeen Bertsche Johnson (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 20.

[147] Kaufman, "Rooted and Grounded," 21.

Euro-American Mennonites imply that their witness depends on the cultural authenticity made possible by ethnic homogeneity, they contribute to "the construction of a racial hierarchy in the church." Perpetuating the myth that the church's ethnic character stems from cultural isolation within agrarian communities "allows white members to praise their separation from the world…a stance that too often ignores their embeddedness in systems of inequality within and beyond the church," he writes.[148]

The ethnic agrarian paradigm is troubling too in light of what so much Anabaptist agrarianism shares with important elements of the broader agrarian movement in America: a belief in the moral superiority of rural people, and a harsh critique of urban life. There is a dualism running through agrarian thought: between rural nurturers and urban exploiters. "The tendency to become an exploiter instead of a nurturer had its beginnings," writes Kline, when Anabaptist families "jumped the fence from an agrarian life."[149] In the Anabaptist variety of this dualism, traditional agriculture enacts God's *shalom*, while non-agrarian lifeways are defined by the sins of violence and domination. To wit: "The biblical story is God's answer…to the exponential growth of human pride and power seen in the principalities and powers of urban civilization…God's answer is the formation of local agrarian cultures…living on the land in resistance and as alternatives to the dominant cultures of urban

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[148] Benjamin W. Goossen, "From Aryanism to Anabaptism: Nazi Race Science and the Language of Mennonite Ethnicity," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 90 (April 2016), 160-162, 135-163. Discourses linking witness to Mennonite ethnic identity—typically meaning white communities in Europe and America "who believe themselves descended from the first Anabaptists of the Reformation"—persist "at a time when two-thirds of the world's 2.1 million Anabaptists live in the Global South and are people of color" (p. 162). See also Goossen, *Chosen Nation: Mennonites and Germany in a Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 121-146, 200-212.

[149] Kline, "God's Spirit," 63. Kline does not cite Wendell Berry's seminal text of North American neo-agrarianism, *The Unsettling of America,* in which Berry wrote that humanity is divided by tendencies toward "exploitation" and "nurture." Berry linked the former to industrial vocations and the latter to farming. But for Berry (unlike Kline), although the divide between exploitation and nurture is partly geographical and vocational, it also severs the spirits of all who inhabit this continent, "a division not only between persons but within persons." "We are all to some extent products of an exploitative society," he wrote, "and it would be foolish and self-defeating to pretend that we do not bear its stamp." For Berry, the divide did not begin in the twentieth century when families left the farm; the culture of exploitation toward land and people is "as old in America as the white man's presence here." Berry, *The Unsettling of America,* 5-7.

civilization."[150] For Ryan Harker, life on the farm is "a lived benediction within a circle of damnable fire.[151]

These theologies identify agrarian culture with divine providence, framing the virtues of agriculture as earthy alternatives to a wicked world. They link the reclamation of land with God's redemption of sin, the sustenance of soil with God's sustaining grace. These are bold moves, and they are especially risky in North America, where the same claims have been accomplice to genocide, used within the Doctrine of Discovery to denounce native lifeways so as to claim indigenous land for the civilizing mission of God. In many of those same lands, many still see the crux of God's salvific work in the preservation of landed communities willing to sow and till—in redemption of God's groaning creation and in opposition to the evils outside their physical and religious geographies.

North American Anabaptist agrarianism shares with the wider Christian stewardship movement a tendency to frame redemptive land care as the work of an exceptional community struggling against the ungodly cultures looming just over the fence. At worst, it reifies theologically a parochial ethnic identity constructed in direct opposition to the urban other, who is defined as violent and exploitative within a land theology bearing a striking resemblance to the environmental imaginaries of white settler colonialism. At minimum, it too often fails to acknowledge that its multigenerational intimacies to place depend on property rights to stolen land, and does little to disinherit the myths of cultural superiority that grounded its theft. Its diction of peace notwithstanding, Anabaptist versions of stewardship remain embroiled in the continent's defining conflicts over how to Christianize land. It follows common tropes in the history of North American stewardship, recharging those conflicts with theological polarities that morally divide and geographically separate people according to ethnicity and environmental culture.

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[150] Kaufman, "Rooted and Grounded," 25.

[151] Harker quotes Michael Stevens interpreting Wendell Berry to sum up his argument in "Enduring Hope, Patient Toil: Psalm 37 and YHWH's Agrarian Vision," in Harker and Bertsche Johnson, *Rooted and Grounded*, 59. Harker's essay interprets Psalm 37 as "an agrarian call to abstain from the ways of the wicked" (p. 51). He finds in the psalm a dualism between righteous agrarianism and violent wickedness—"between the way of shalom and the way of violent destruction of the land" (p. 51)—and situates it within a conflict between an "agrarian, land-based poor" and a "wealthy, probably urban, elite" (p. 54). For the quote, see Michael Stevens, "Living Peace in the Shadow of War: Wendell Berry's Dogged Pacifism," in *The Humane Vision of Wendell Berry*, ed. Mark Mitchell and Nathan Schlueter (Wilmington.: ISI Books, 2011), 123.

Christian environmental stewardship did not need to be invented in response to contemporary environmental crisis—it had already enjoyed a long career in American environmental politics. The history of land conflict in Harney County bears witness to its impact in fractious microcosm. Versions of stewardship underwrote the providential imaginary that gave white Christian settlers a divine right to the Oregon range on condition of their civilizing and improving the land. Stewardship arguments also supported the formation of a wildlife refuge in the area, bolstering the conservationist case with divine assurance that nature needed oversight by a race of enlightened administrators, not least for its protection against the wolfish hoards. The framework offered a template to mediate competing visions and claims to the land, as the paradigm of dominion dovetailed with scriptural commands to till and keep—a powerful coupling used to explain each title transfer and each ecological transformation in terms of settlers' ordained responsibilities before God. Stewardship was finally rearticulated as a general vision of "creation care," unhitched from moral and legal dogmas on property, once the more immediate and material questions had been worked out—questions about who had what rights to the land and on what basis. In places where those questions remain unsettled, however, the deeper roots tend to resurface, as the 2016 standoff at Malheur exemplifies vividly.

Meanwhile, the contemporary generalist version of stewardship does little to weed out—and in some cases revitalizes—the exceptionalist and exclusionary rhetoric of its forebears. This remains true even where branches of the tradition are nourished by theologies of peace, committed to making communal relations to land display nonviolence and reconciliation. Even in their exemplary, place-based, and pacifist forms, the theological ethics of Christian stewardship risk reviving troubling aspects of the colonial imagination, now within the compelling paradigm of ecological discipleship. This mire is not inescapable, but it is predictable given the prominent roles stewardship played in shaping America's ideological and physical landscapes.

Sarah Augustine, a scholar and activist related to both Mennonite Church USA and the indigenous Wayana people of Suriname, lives on the Yakama reservation in central Washington, where Malheur's Paiutes were once forcibly resettled after a failed attempt to reclaim their land from Christian stewards. In 2014, Augustine helped found the Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery Coalition, which engages Anabaptists and others about the history and ongoing harms of religiously-justified indigenous

displacement. The project aims to raise awareness, to instill a sense of ecclesial responsibility for the work of dismantling the legacies of settler colonialism, and to invite the church to confront its own theological and political complicities. The Coalition represents a small but growing movement in Anabaptist circles that sees reckoning with settler histories and environmental imaginaries as prerequisite to a contemporary peace witness.[152] These de-colonial currents suggest a path forward for Christian environmental ethics aiming to engage land conflict as a matter of moral concern.

Below, another (briefer) case study helps explore where that path might lead. Examining the history of conflict at Malheur has helped to surface key features of land conflict in the US, and to critically assess Christian stewardship in conversation with prominent forms of colonial imagination. Turning now to the movement to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, led by members of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, the chapter now asks what a case of indigenous resistance to environmental degradation and settler colonialism may mean for the possibilities and limits of Christian ethics.

DECOLONIZING STEWARDSHIP: STANDING ROCK, SOLIDARITY, AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

In south-central North Dakota, on April 1, 2016, less than two months after federal police detained the last of the Malheur occupiers, another group set up camp on riparian land under federal jurisdiction. The place, at the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball Rivers, became known as Sacred Stone Camp, named after the sandstone formations that had stood in the area until the 1940s, when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (UACE) built a 250 foot dam and dredged the mouth of Inyan Wakangapi

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[152] One denominational journal recently published a special issue on the Doctrine of Discovery titled "Originating Sins," devoted to "thinking theologically and morally about the roots and foundations of the institutions that are woven into the fabric of North American life"—Malinda Berry, "Editorial," *Vision: A Journal of Church and Theology* 20, no. 2 (Fall 2019), 3. In another recent special issue on Anabaptist environmental thought, Regina Shands Stoltzfus agrees that God gives human beings "a special responsibility for stewardship," but argues that "it is impossible to fully do the work of creation care without an understanding of how race has shaped notions of space and place"—Regina Shands Stoltzfus, "The Effects of Racial Segregation on Theologies of Creation Care," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 94, no. 1 (Jan. 2020), 77-78. These are just two scholarly examples of a wider sphere of theological and institutional activity. Still, they remain marginal movements relative to the wider denominational reality.

Wakpa—"River that Makes the Sacred Stones."[153] The dam was part of a federal plan, a basin-wide conservation project that submerged or otherwise condemned more than 300,000 acres belonging to the seven nations of the Oceti Sakowin, indigenous tribes who had been fighting with the U.S. government and its settlers for water and land rights in the region since the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. For the Lakota, the westernmost of the seven nations, the river was family—a "nonhuman relative who is alive"—and, along with its bottomlands, integral to the community's identity and livelihood.[154] That kin was now ward of the UACE, claimed by eminent domain as a result of the dam project.[155] In 2016, the UACE was working together with private corporation Energy Transfer Partners on a plan to route the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL)—a 1,172 mile artery pumping crude oil to Illinois—beneath the Missouri river, just upstream of the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation. The Lakota and their allies had come to Sacred Stone Camp to stop the pipeline, and so to protect the tribe from pollution and the river from desecration, the two utterly entwined.[156] "We are the river and the river is us," said LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, the camp's founder.[157] As Robin Wall Kimmerer and Kathleen Dean Moore pointed out, the conflict over the DAPL was, in part, a "contest between two deeply different ideas about the true meaning of land."[158]

As in Harney County, however, that contest had deep historical roots, many of them centered on shifting relations between people and water. In both cases, setter society's promethean visions for the land called for major adaptations to the waterways, which in turn required riparian control. The arcane Discovery principle of contiguity showed its common sense again and again: Jurisdiction over shoreline guaranteed a measure of power over the entire watershed, since rivals in the basin inevitably depended on reliable access to freshwater, and on reliable boundaries between water

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[153] LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, "Why the founder of Standing Rock Sioux Camp can't forget the Whitestone Massacre," *Yes! Magazine*, 3 September 2016.

[154] Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* (London and New York: Verso, 2019), 15.

[155] For a full account of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program, which began in 1944, and its significance for the 2016-17 confrontations over the Dakota Access Pipeline, see Estes, *Our History*, 134-167.

[156] Sioux is roughly synonymous with Oceti Sakowin—both refer to the historic confederacy of seven tribes commonly grouped under the regional/linguistic sub-groups of Lakota, Western Dakota, and Eastern Dakota.

[157] Brave Bull Allard, "Why the founder."

[158] Kathleen Dean Moore and Robin Wall Kimmerer, "The White Horse and the Humvees—Standing Rock is Offering Us a Choice," *Yes! Magazine*, 5 November 2016. Cf. Estes, *Our History*, 65.

and land. Conflicts arose especially where settler-induced changes to those boundaries unsettled previous social and political orders. The catastrophic flooding of indigenous lands caused by the damming of the Missouri was one such upheaval, and it had radically altered the balance of power in the region. The Lakota's occupation of UACE territory on the river's banks in 2016 aimed to prevent yet another liquid coup, but it also intended to exercise "an unsettling counter-sovereignty," with some stressing the "long-term goal to restore the Missouri River to its rightful protectors—the Oceti Sakowin—and its natural path." This meant "the Army Corps of Engineers must relinquish its claim to the river and begin to demolish the [dams] so that the river and its people may once again live."[159]

For the inhabitants of Standing Rock, protecting the river was also a way of protecting the tribe. This was not just because the pipeline endangered their main sources of freshwater, and it was more than a spiritual platitude. Movement leaders argued that cultural survival amidst settler colonialism depends on capacities to sustain relations to the places central to their history, cosmology, language, and governance. This is a frequent theme in movements for indigenous rights, that intimacy within particular ecosystems is fundamental to indigenous existence.[160] This may explain some of what Brave Bull Allard means when she says "we are the river." She elaborates, weaving tight bonds between collective history, ecological integrity, and the rights of future generations:

> The U.S. government is wiping out our most important cultural and spiritual areas. And as it erases our footprint from the world, it erases us as a people. These sites must be protected, or our world will end, it is that simple. Our young people have a right to know who they are. They have a right to language, to culture, to tradition. The way they learn these things is through connection to our lands and our history.

The river, too, had rights, and it claimed them through the tribe's exercise of sovereignty at the protest encampments, bearing them as it had borne the people

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[159] Nick Estes, "Fighting for our lives: #NoDAPL in historical context," *Red Nation*, 18 September 2016, available at https://therednation.org/2016/09/18/fighting-for-our-lives-nodapl-in-context/.

[160] See eg. Indigenous Global Peoples' Summit on Climate Change, "Anchorage Declaration," Anchorage, Alaska, 24 April 2009.

through time. "This river holds the story of my entire life," said Brave Bull Allard. "We have no choice but to stand up."[161]

Mni Wiconi—"water is life"—became the movement's mantra, encapsulating these themes of ecosystemic attachment while also opening them to a wider public concerned about the environmental impacts of the pipeline. The #NoDAPL movement was the largest gathering of indigenous peoples in America for more than a century, since 1876 when the Lakota had worked together with Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes to win the Battle of Little Bighorn.[162] Sacred Stone Camp was soon supplemented by several other camps, as members of more than three hundred tribes joined with non-native activists, environmentalists, and other interested parties. Organizers saw the encampments as sites of spiritual resistance, political pressure, and tribal recognition—a multinational movement to "stop the pipeline through prayer and non-violent direct action," and a congregation of thousands joined in "a constant state of Prayer and Ceremony."[163] For the Sioux scholar Nick Estes, centering the movement's ethos on water protection connected its aims to global concerns while also rooting it in the Lakota and Dakota philosophy of *Mitakuye Oyasin* ("we are all related") and its practice of "Wocekiye," which he translates as "honoring relations." Lakotan language has no word for "praying," he notes; the movement's spiritual disciplines were grounded in "*Wotakuye*, or 'being a good relative." As an honored, living relation, the Missouri River was a subject of love and an object of care. "Protecting one's relatives is part of enacting kinship and being a good relative," writes Estes.[164]

While committed to nonviolence, the movement provoked an aggressive response. In efforts to remove or restrict the movement of protestors, police fired

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[161] Brave Bull Allard, "Why the founder."

[162] David Treuer, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2019), 435; Estes, "Fighting for our lives."

[163] Brave Bull Allard, "Why the founder," and the camp protocol of Oceti Sakowin Camp, "Seven Council Fires Camp: Seven Lakota Values," available at
https://healingmnstories.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/oceti-sakowin-camp-protocol-7-lakota-values-final.pdf.

[164] "Indigenous resistance to the trespass of settlers, pipelines, and dams is part of being a good relative to the water, land, and animals, not to mention the human world," he continues—Estes, *Our History*, 15, 21. For more on Mitakuye Oyasin, Wocekiye, Wotakuye, and Lakotan "prayer," see Albert White Hat Sr., *Life's Journey – Zuya: Oral Teachings from Rosebud*, ed. John Cunningham (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 2012), 44; and Josephine Waggoner, *Witness: A Húnkpapha Historian's Strong-Heart Song of the Lakotas*, ed. Emily Levine (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 57; cited by Estes.

tear gas and rubber bullets, and soaked protestors with water cannons in the sub-zero North Dakota winter.[165] The private security firm employed by Energy Transfer Partners used attack dogs and pepper spray. Having recently witnessed the prolonged and seemingly acquiescent approach to the Bundys' armed occupation of the Malheur refuge, some noted how "justice looks different in Indian country."[166]

Still, in conjunction with its legal case, the movement succeeded in reversing UACE support for the plan to route the pipeline under the Missouri River at Standing Rock.[167] That victory stood for just under sixty days, until the first week of Donald Trump's administration, when he made easement for private pipeline construction one of his first official acts as President of the United States.[168]

This account of the conflict at Standing Rock over the DAPL is, by necessity, highly abbreviated; it is somewhat one-sided by design. A longer narration would no doubt yield deeper insight, but would not change the basic argument that understanding land conflict in the U.S. requires attention to background conditions and particular instantiations of settler colonialism, and that one important way to learn moral strategies for engaging such conflicts is by apprenticeship to indigenous struggles for land and water rights. What does this brief case study on the #NoDAPL movement suggest for an emerging Christian ethic of land conflict?

How *Not* to Draw from #NoDAPL

Before answering that question, it is just as important to consider the risks in turning to indigenous peoples and movements for wisdom on land, conflict, ethics, or

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[165] Sub-zero Celsius, that is. NBC News reported temperatures as low as 23 degrees Fahrenheit. Standing Rock chairman David Archambault II said 200-300 people had been transferred to the reservation for treatment for hypothermia and various injuries. https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/dakota-pipeline-protests/dakota-pipeline-protesters-authorities-clash-temperatures-drop-n686581. National media reported many other accounts of violence and harsh police treatment by Morton County police.

[166] David Archambault II, "Justice looks different in Indian country," *New York Times*, updated 2 November 2016. "On the same day that the armed Malheur militants were acquitted, I watched as riot police with military-grade weapons, tanks and helicopters rounded up hundreds of peaceful water protectors in North Dakota," wrote Archambault.

[167] U.S. Army, "Army will not grant easement for Dakota Access Pipeline crossing," *U.S. Army ASA (CW) Press Release*, 4 December 2016.

[168] The White House, "Memorandum for the Secretary of the Army," Office of the Press Secretary, 24 January 2017, available at https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3410448/Construction-of-the-Dakota-Access-Pipeline.pdf

anything else. One way to summarize those risks is to point out that indigenous scholars and activists argue that settler appropriation of indigenous practices erodes native community.[169] "The non-Indian appropriator conveys the message that Indians are indeed a conquered people," writes the Standing Rock Sioux scholar Vine Deloria Jr., "and that there is nothing that Indians possess…that non-Indians cannot take whenever and wherever they wish."[170] In a series of essays reflecting on her experience as a non-native participant in the protest camps, Lily Oster notes that disrespectful and "extractive" forms of appropriation were a significant problem within the #NoDAPL movement, prompting repeated interventions from the movement's indigenous leaders.[171] From a settler perspective, she notes, the concern to avoid appropriation is about more than political correctness, but about rejecting "a colonial orientation to life and land as minable, possessable, [and] exploitable."[172] Looking to the hard fought movement at Standing Rock for portable lessons about land is risky, especially if those lessons are being expropriated for Christian revival, e.g., to feed the renewal of a stewardship paradigm deeply complicit in multiple forms of settler colonial imagination.

The first thing to learn from #NoDAPL, then, is what cannot be taken. Oster's reflections focus especially on indigenous spiritual practices and material culture, but the bigger temptation for Christian environmental ethics would be to appropriate Lakotan principles like Mitakuye Oyasin, Wocekiye, and Wotakuye—that is, to extract some native ideas on ecological kinship and place-based relationality in order to leaven Christian thought or reorient a Christian worldview. Christian environmentalism has known the allure of other cultures' ecocentric imaginaries at least since Lynn White identified "ancient paganism and Asia's religions" as eco-friendly therapies located just out of reach for the Christian West.[173] The idea that Christians have much to learn from

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[169] See e.g. Chief Arvol Looking Horse, "Looking Horse Proclamation on the Protection of Ceremonies," *Indian Country Today*, 25 April 2003; Melissa Nelson, "Becoming Métis," in *The Colors of Nature: Culture, Identity, and the Natural World*, ed. Alison H. Deming and Lauret E. Savoy (Minneapolis: Milkweed, 2011); Nick Estes et al., "Protect *He Sapa*, Stop Cultural Exploitation," *Indian Country Today*, 14 July 2015. All of the above are discussed in Lily Oster's helpful orientation to the issue in Lily Oster, "Field Notes from Standing Rock," *Crosscurrents* 69, no. 2 (June 2019): 128-136.

[170] Vine Delora, Jr., *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 265

[171] Lily Oster, "Decolonizing the Sacred," *Sacred Matters Magazine*, 3 February 2017; and Oster, "Field Notes from Standing Rock." Cf. Sandra Song, "White People Are Reportedly Treating the #NoDAPL Protests Like Burning Man," *PaperMag.com*, 29 November 2016.

[172] Oster, "Field Notes from Standing Rock," 129.

[173] White, "Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," 1205-1206.

Native American ideas about nature is a truism in recent eco-theology. And it might well be true, but there is a certain irony—perhaps even incoherence, and likely a bit of colonial logic—in the drive to export place-based traditional worldviews for consumption outside the biocultural worlds that give them meaning. Just as important, in the case of #NoDAPL, that kind of adoption dislocates the movement's ideas from its political struggle, treating the fight against the pipeline as fodder for a better theory while ignoring altogether its assertion of indigenous sovereignty, the tribe's appeal for recognition and rights to live with traditional lands and waters. Both problems—the theory extraction and the political apathy—reduce to this: they want Indian ideas without indigenous people.

"It is crucial that people recognize that Standing Rock is part of an ongoing struggle against colonial violence," wrote Kelly Hayes. That point was often lost in wider discussions of the movement.[174] Standing Rock's lessons for a Christian ethics of land conflict must stay tethered to it. In other words, Christian ethical engagements with land conflict on this continent should take shape within an overarching commitment to decolonization.

But decolonization, too, has its pitfalls. Too often, argue Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang, the work of decolonization is taken metaphorically to mean, for example, social justice generally, or the use of post-colonial or other critical methodologies in scholarship, or the epistemic or discursive de-centering of settler perspectives. "Decolonization is not a metaphor," they argue; it "wants something different than those forms of justice." Basically, it wants stolen land repatriated to native peoples, relations restored to lost and broken places, and thereby the regeneration of indigenous nationhood, "and not just symbolically." When decolonization becomes a metaphor for more abstract or unrelated goals, it serves a side-stepping politics, a way to evade "the unbearable searchlight of complicity."[175] Can Christian stewardship, with its long-standing complicity in full view, take on such an ethic?

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[174] Kelly Hayes, "How to talk about #NoDAPL: A native perspective," *Transformative Spaces*, 27 October 2016. Wider discussions focused instead on global concerns about GHG emissions and climate change, Hayes noted.

[175] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no 1 (2012): 1-2, 7, 9. Tuck and Yang go on to develop an "ethic of incommensurability" which entails, in part "relinquishing settler futurity, abandoning hope that settlers may one day be commensurable to Native peoples" (p. 36). That is an even more profound challenge to the project undertaken in this chapter. The analysis below does not follow them this far, developing instead an ethic of solidarity. But the point should not go unnoticed: decolonization is a radically

Stewardship as Solidarity

Movement in that direction might follow the Standing Rock campaign into an ethics of solidarity with indigenous struggles for land and water rights. Solidarity tracks a path in between the strategies of adjudication and the strategies of witness more familiar to Christian stewards. On the one hand, solidarity with movements like #NoDAPL stems from and communicates a clear moral judgment on contested questions of land ownership and use (as in the strategy of adjudication); on the other, solidarity with the goals of indigenous rights entails cultivating embodied, publicly visible, long-term patterns of communal life that demonstrate support for decolonial aims (as in the strategy of witness). At its best, stewardship invites Christian communities to sustain collective lifeways that image God's love for the world through their everyday ecological relations—presenting responsibilities to live with land, water, and fellow creatures in ways that surface possibilities for justice and peace. But "peace on stolen land is borne of genocide," reminds Estes, and is therefore a false peace; it must not be mistaken for the peace of God.[176] Equipping stewardship to ethically engage such landscapes of violence, then, means decolonizing the settler imagination of peaceable ecology, in order to re-center creation care around the unsettling work of restoring the severed bonds of people and place.

When the movement at Standing Rock enacted the role of "Water Protectors," they assumed a responsibility not entirely unlike stewardship. Indeed, pan-indigenous environmental movements often use the language of stewardship to describe a relationship of obligation and care toward the earth and for the well-being of future generations. In a 2015 statement to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (COP21), the Indigenous Elders and Medicine Peoples Council referred to their peoples as the "Original Caretakers of Mother Earth."[177] "Indigenous Peoples have a vital role in

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unsettling praxis, and its presence within any settler moral agenda introduces a profound precarity to the whole. Cf. Corey Snelgrove, Rita Kaur Dhamoon, and Jeffrey Corntassel, "Unsettling Setter Colonialism: The Discourse and Politics of Settlers, and Solidarity with Indigenous Nations," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 2 (2014): 1-32, which takes up the issue of incommensurability in conversation with the question of settler solidarity.

[176] Estes, *Our History*, 1.

[177] Chief Arvol Looking Hore, Bobby C. Billie, Faith Spotted Eagle, "Indigenous Elders and Medicine Peoples Council Statement," United Nations Convention on Climate Change, COP21, Paris, France, 30 November 2015, reprinted in *Journal for Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* 10, no. 2 (2016), 255.

defending and healing Mother Earth," said the Anchorage Declaration in 2009.[178] But these versions of stewardship, if they can be called that, are unlike most forms of Christian stewardship in that they shape responsibility "through interdependence and reciprocity with bioregional relations....[S]tewardship is entrusted to humans by other members of an ecological community."[179] The motif shares the familiar theme of specially appointed responsibility, while jettisoning completely the Christian concept of dominion. Kyle Powys Whyte writes that the Lakota and Dakota peoples' "complex spiritual relationships to the places they still inhabit or live nearby…furnish highly practical knowledge of how to steward bison or grasslands or keep clean water."[180] The Water Protectors' stewardship of the Missouri River was imaged as a form of familial care.

For the Standing Rock Sioux, river care was also a form of self-protection and an exercise of tribal sovereignty, a way of staking claim to their place and so refusing to die. Knowing well how colonial power flows through waterways with a tendency to erode other biocultural worlds, the movement's fight against the pipeline asserted the Lakota's moral and political standing in the Missouri basin, highlighting integral links between the tribe's traditional water rights and the entire region's ecological security. In the process, they managed to link a multinational climate movement to the health of the Missouri watershed and the fate of an indigenous nation. In all this, the movement showed how stewardship can enact a decolonial politics.

One thing Christian ethics might learn from that feat is that stewardship gains acuity and power when refashioned as place-based solidarity, where caring for creation is focused by efforts to restore or protect land's relations with beloved kin. Some contemporary practitioners may find that move plausible thanks to some recent theological trends in Christian stewardship. Randy Woodley, a Keetowah Cherokee theologian, develops a biblical theology of shalom inclusive of place-based relations and more-than-human fellowship. "In the shalom intention of the created order, God takes care of creation through people living out shalom," he writes. Human beings have a special role in "seeing that the order is maintained." Woodley adapts that stewardship

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[178] Indigenous Global Peoples' Summit on Climate Change, "Anchorage Declaration," Anchorage, Alaska, 24 April 2009.

[179] Willis Jenkins, Evan Berry, and Luke Beck Kreider, "Religion and Climate Change," *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 43 (2018), 95.

[180] Kyle Powys Whyte, "The Dakota Access Pipeline, Environmental Injustice, and U.S. Colonialism," *Red Ink* 19, no. 1 (2017), 160.

logic in critical dialogue with Cherokee and other indigenous ideas, arguing that humanity's shalom-keeping tasks include "taking into account all creation in reciprocal relationships," inhabiting bonds of healing justice "oriented toward restoring harmonious relationships" in the "community of creation." *Community of creation* is Woodley's revised metaphor for the Kingdom of God, which lost its original anti-imperialist overtones with the colonial expansion of Christendom. For Woodley, Christians "represent Christ" and "exhibit a new order," when they protect and restore the reciprocal and egalitarian relations of ecological community. Woodley's account of stewardship is situated uniquely, within an effort at "redemptive correction" of settler colonialist Christianity, unfolding through an argument for the consonance between biblical themes of shalom and what he describes as a pan-indigenous value system similar to the Cherokee idea of *Eloheh.*[181] These corrections are deftly put in relation to emerging trends in stewardship theology, as they subtly adapt ideas that thinkers like Wirzba, Yordy, and many Anabaptists already embrace.

For Woodley, the bigger challenge to western Christian imagination is the indigenous (and biblical) emphasis on *place,* where shalom is understood to arise within the vital connections among peoples and their local environments. "The west lacks a theology of place," he writes, yet the Bible is full of stories of people encountering God and struggling to live righteously in relation to particular locales. "The Scriptures indicate that land, all land, is attached to divine purpose and that certain lands are meant to host a particular people at certain times."[182]

The latter idea, however, is not at all foreign to Christian stewardship in America. It was basic to the ideology of Manifest Destiny. The continent was meant for Americans, "allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions," wrote John O'Sullivan about the 1845 annexation of Texas. Of Oregon, he claimed the same "manifest destiny to overspread and possess…the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government."[183] O'Sullivan's may have been the first publically printed uses of the term, but the idea that God had ordained the title and ordered the land to reward settlers for their agricultural and political experiments was much older. It was used to explain settler society's unbreakable attachments to every new homeland, and,

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[181] Randy Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2012), chap. 2, 4, Kindle (not paginated).

[182] Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation*, chap. 6.

[183] Miller, *Native America Discovered,* 118-119.

later, adapted to sacralize the growing nation's newly established "natural" sanctuaries. The Doctrine of Discovery was a *white supremacist theology of place*, localizing and weaponizing the theme of Christ's universal lordship and the biblical commands to subdue, multiply, cultivate, steward, and protect. In America, it meant that each new settlement was a little community of reciprocal grace: God had prepared and gifted the land to a uniquely gifted race of men, and the earth would in turn reward those who used their talents to tend the land according to the Giver's commands.

Of course, this is not what Woodley has in mind for a theology of place, and interpreting him rightly requires keeping his claims in context. Contemporary Christian stewards, accustomed to the generalized ethics of creation care developed over the last fifty years, may find it natural to evolve toward a generic and ahistorical theology of place. But Woodley seems to suggest that the revitalization of place as a theological category must occur in memory of the displaced, and in tandem with the praxis of decolonization. For Woodley, theologizing place is part of an effort to "help colonial settler peoples to understand more of the meaning of land to aboriginal peoples, especially those who have been removed from their homelands." The call to retrieve a biblical theology of place is simultaneously a call to reckon with the spiritual implications of land theft. "Land theft in Scripture…seems not only to bring a curse upon the people of the land, but the land itself can be spiritually defiled or polluted," writes Woodley, and land's healing begins with "a remarriage between the people and the land."[184] Read in that context, the challenges of stewardship include the practical politics of indigenous water rights and land repatriation, while a settler theology of place may need to center around questions not only about how people encounter God's grace in local ecology, but also about the perils of living on defiled land.

An attractive model for many Christian stewards might be the agrarian writer Wendell Berry. Few American Christians have been as zealous in the cause of turning stewardship toward intimate place-attachments, or as confessional about the history of settler violence toward indigenous peoples and land. To develop his account of stewardship, Berry turns to the biblical story of God's giving the Promised Land to the Israelites, and opens with a trenchant indictment of the religiously rationalized "aggression and theft" that seem to have marked the conquest of Canaan. "The Israelites were following their own 'manifest destiny,' he wrote, drawing direct parallels to the colonization of America. Both groups of settlers "conquered with the

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[184] Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation*, chap. 6.

same ferocity and with the same genocidal intent." The key difference, writes Berry, is that "the ferocity of the conquest of Canaan was accompanied from the beginning by the working out of an ethical system antithetical to it—and antithetical, for that matter, to the American conquest with which I have compared it."[185] For Berry, then, a genuinely biblical ethic of stewardship represents a challenge to the American colonial project.

That ethic—a "vein of light" streaming through the neverending story of human plunder—begins with the idea of "land as a gift…given upon certain rigorous conditions," of humility, neighborliness, and good husbandry.[186] On Berry's account, stewarding gifted land has much to do with tending the earth, but it is finally about building and nourishing healthy communities. A truly healthy community must be more than human, he says, encompassing "a neighborhood of humans in a place, plus the place itself: its soil, its water, its air, and all the families and tribes of the nonhuman creatures that belong to it."[187] The idea is not unlike Woodley's account of the community of creation, and Berry too likens it to the Kingdom of God, implying likewise that stewardship is a form of order-sustaining participation in local ecological community, and that this kind of everyday obedience is also a form of participation in the redemptive activity of God.[188]

Berry believes that stewardship requires people of virtue and skill, and healthy communities require healthy cultures and spirits. Generally speaking, he argues, the American spirit is broken and vile, its cultural endowments mostly toxic. "My people's errors have become the features of my country," he writes, a statement of both ecological fact and wide societal censure.[189] The dominant tendencies in American history, he writes, have been invasion and avarice, a wheel set irreversibly in motion by the violent displacement of the indigenous tribes. "The first and greatest American revolution, which has never been superseded, was the coming of people who did *not*

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[185] Wendell Berry, "The Gift of Good Land," in *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, D.C: Counterpoint, 2002), 295.

[186] Wendell Berry, "The Gift of Good Land," 295-297.

[187] Wendell Berry, "Conservation and Local Economy," in *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, D.C: Counterpoint, 2002).

[188] Wendell Berry, "Two Economies," in *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*, ed. Norman Wirzba (Washington, D.C: Counterpoint, 2002), 219ff. "The first principle of the Kingdom of God is that it includes everything; in it, the fall of every sparrow is a significant event," writes Berry, who also introduces a preferred metaphor, calling it "the Great Economy" (p.220-221).

[189] Wendell Berry, "A Native Hill," *The Hudson Review* 21, no. 4 (69 1968), 615.

look upon the land as a homeland."[190] This was America's original sin: murdering and otherwise removing a people who "belonged deeply and intricately to their places," and turning the land over to a "*placeless* people" who "had not yet in any meaningful sense arrived in America."[191] Berry knows to that these ancestral errors are congenital, shaping his own mind, spirit, and most devastatingly, his community, notably his own Kentucky farm. For all settler descendants, he suggests, they constrict the possibilities for living shalom, and are the basic dilemmas of life on this continent.

In one especially poignant essay, Berry tells the story of how he chose to return to live on his family farm, only to find his inheritance disfigured by its legacy of violence—of displacement, enslavement, and ecological carelessness—which also meant discovering himself implicated and spiritually unstable. Berry takes readers on a heartbreaking tour of his land. Guiding them along his property, he wishes he could walk himself backward in time. He is nostalgic—for what? He has no heritage of his own but violence. Instead he pines for 1491, thinking about "the pristine America that the first white men saw;" he walks "knee-deep in its absence." Going back to Kentucky to connect to his roots rooted him in a heritage of racism and exploitation, except, he suggests, when it rooted him to the *land*. For Berry, the only sure path to a decent future is life and work in close contact with the soil, woods, and rivers, for such toil communes settlers with the only nonviolent subject they have ever known: the land itself. Unable to change the past or disown his predecessors, he turns to the charity of the land and the peace of the woods and finds there another history, a culture of nurture to which he can come to belong.[192]

On the essay's final page, Berry dies at the foot of a tree, goes down into the earth, and is reborn out of the land. The scene reflects not a longing to go back, but a determination to become something new, a part of the land itself, which is to say, a native. Berry foreshadows his death and resurrection a few pages earlier. People must go to the woods, he writes,

> For only there can man encounter the silence and darkness of his own absence.…
> Perhaps then, having heard that silence and seen that darkness, he will grow humble
> before the place and begin to take it in….[T]hen he may come into *its* presence as he

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[190] Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977), 3-4

[191] Berry, "A Native Hill, 610f.

[192] Berry, "A Native Hill," 607, 616, 626ff.

never has before, and he will arrive in his place and will want to remain. His life will grow out of the ground like the other lives of the place, and take its place among them. He will be *with* them…and so at last he will grow to be native-born. That is, he must re-enter the silence and the darkness, and be born again.[193]

This was in 1969. In later writings, he no longer thinks this transformation must happen alone in the woods. In *The Unsettling* of *America*, he writes of a minority who learned commitment to place, tracking a "subordinate tendency of settlement, of domestic permanence," for example "formulated eloquently in some of the letters of Thomas Jefferson" and "written into law in the Homestead Act of 1862."[194] In any case, the idea of becoming native to America was important throughout Berry's career, and it became a refrain for other prophets of stewardship like Wes Jackson and theologians like Wirzba.[195] Berry argued that becoming "truly native to their places" was crucial to settlers becoming "good caretakers of their places," and he urged it as remedy to the fundamental sin of placelessness.[196] On the other hand, becoming native subjected you to a "destiny of victimization," he wrote. "If there is any law that has been consistently operative in American history, it is that the members of any *established* people or group or community sooner or later become 'redskins'—that is, they become the designated victims of an utterly ruthless, officially sanctioned and subsidized exploitation."[197]

If this is to count as solidarity at all, it is a strange, almost upside-down version. Here, settlers are linked to indigenous communities by dint of arriving, settling down, and refusing to leave, becoming native thereby and so sharing in the historical and ongoing plight of displaced and exploited peoples. It seems not so much an ethic of solidarity as a woke theology of replacement. "I think the highest earthly result of imagination is probably local adaptation," writes Berry. "If we could learn to belong fully and truly where we live, then we would all finally be native Americans, and we would have an authentic multiculturalism."[198]

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[193] Berry, "A Native Hill," 634, 627, 629.

[194] Berry, *Unsettling of America*, 13.

[195] Wes Jackson, *Becoming Native to This Place* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1994); Wirzba, *Paradise of God*, 98f.

[196] Wendell Berry, "The Agrarian Standard," in *Citizenship Papers* (Washington, D.C: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2003), 145.

[197] Berry, *Unsettling of America*, 4-5.

[198] Wendell Berry, *Imagination in Place* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2010), 33f.

"I think most white people think the issue of stolen land is a *fait accompli*," writes Woodley. "But for many native Americans the issue of land will continue to be unsettled until justice is finally served.[199] The point seems lost on Berry, and the critique hits him squarely. There are probably a number of ways to read Berry's evocative resurrection scene, but viewed in the light of the #NoDAPL movement, it feels like the desire to die into the land as a settler and emerge reborn as a native is both an evasion of history and a misunderstanding of the land. Berry looks the bull straight in the eyes, and then pirouettes, acknowledging complicity in a legacy of bloodshed while nimbly dodging its sting. Building enduring relations to place while working for shalom within local community is a fine trajectory for Christian ethics, but "becoming native" seems to confer an easy and unaccountable legitimacy to ongoing settler occupation. "It could be read as an invitation to take what little is left," worries the Potawotami scholar Robin Wall Kimmerer.[200] For the Osage theologian George Tinker, "contemporary euro-American occupation of Indian land is an important continuing benefit of conquest that must be accounted for in the euro-American moral and spiritual inventory." For Berry, such accounting takes shape in public introspection and a determination to leave his farmland healthier than he found it. For Tinker, recipients of stolen property are liable as thieves.[201]

This way of becoming native by learning to see oneself as part of the land's extended body or part of its extended community also misses something crucial about the meaning of indigeneity in relation to water and land, at least as articulated in the 2016-17 protests at Standing Rock. Quite simply, it refers to *indigenous people* and their relations to water and land; it is not a metaphor for ecological intimacy. *Mni Wiconi* ("water is life") "forces some to confront their own unbelonging to the land and the river," writes Estes.[202] That is not because the river can only have one "owner," but because a long history of settler colonial policy has exhibited a basic incompatibility with the river's integrity and its integral relations to the Lakota people. Intimacy with *this* land and water, they argued, is inseparable from solidarity with its indigenous relations, and vice versa. It may be presumptuous to infer that similar arguments apply

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[199] Woodley, *Shalom and Community of Creation*, chap. 6.

[200] Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013), 211.

[201] George E. Tinker, *Spirit and Resistance: Political Theology and American Indian Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.), 5.

[202] Estes, *Our History is the Future*, 256.

to most if not all places on this continent, and yet it seems morally perilous to deny it. For Christian stewardship in America, the responsibility to sustain and restore places of shalom within the community of creation must also mean developing forms of solidarity participative in the restoration of land to indigenous people.

In a context of settler colonialism, a Christian ethic of solidarity with decolonial movements may call forth forms of stewardship that go beyond creation care, and beyond political protest and advocacy. Place-based decolonial creation care in settler contexts will be difficult to sustain without something like an ecological theology of reparations. Making peace may be costly, notes Woodley. Practically speaking, to embody shalom, "the benefactors of colonial expansion would surely need to make restitution to those they robbed," he writes.[203] Perhaps Christian stewards could learn to see the church's vocation of earthkeeping in terms of practices that restore the water and soil within processes of restorative justice and land repatriation for indigenous peoples, the ancestors of slaves, and other displaced or deplaced peoples. A stewardship theology of reparations might articulate how land care witnesses to the possession of grace by returning the blessings of creation to the dispossessed. Living such a theology, Christian stewards would reflect Christ's redemptive work, cultivating a community of God's peace, sustaining disciples for the multi-generational toil of uprooting the colonial legacies that still shape lived environments, glimpsing *shalom* by reworking the land for the repair of age-old ecologies of violence.

There has been a pattern to this discussion of how stewardship might develop its engagements with ecologies of violence through solidarity with movements for indigenous rights: two steps forward, one step back. There is no easy or unambiguous path to transformation, much less to reconciliation. "No amount of time or caring changes history or substitutes for soul-deep fusion with the land," writes Kimmerer.[204] "Solidarity is an uneasy, reserved, and unsettled matter that neither reconciles present grievances nor forecloses future conflict" assure Tuck and Yang.[205] But we live in landscapes of conflict anyway, and for that, Christian ethics needs sharpening, and a reckoning. The studies in the next two chapters continue that broad agenda, albeit in a very different key. In both cases, I further the argument that Christian understandings

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[203] Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation*, chap. 1. "The ramifications of restitution are incredible if we consider how much wrong has actually been done in the world by the colonial enterprise," he continues.

[204] Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 211

[205] Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," 3.

of peace and place have been complicit in ecologies of violence, and seek help from movements who relate them differently in effort to widen the tradition's moral imagination, and to hold it accountable.

Chapter 3: Fog of War: Just War Tradition and the Environmental Impacts of War

INTRODUCTION

In southeastern Iraq, the Rumaila "super giant" oilfield sits shallow beneath the soil. Containing an estimated 17 billion barrels of oil, the Rumaila is one of the world's largest petroleum reservoirs, running more than 20 miles south from Basra across the southern border into Kuwait.[1] In 1989, frustrated by crippling debts incurred funding a recent war against Iran, and annoyed with deflated oil prices thanks to the overproduction of neighboring nations, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein accused Kuwait of "slant-drilling" into Iraq's Rumaila oil reserves. Iraq's grievances renewed older animosities, as the state had long argued that the Persian Gulf territories of Kuwait, once part of the Ottoman Empire's province of Basra, had been illegitimately stripped from Iraqi sovereignty in 1922 by the arbitrary writ of colonial Britain.[2] When negotiations over the Rumaila broke down in the summer of 1990, the Baghdad administration announced an invasion, began dropping bombs on the capital Kuwait City, and within a week exercised almost total military governance of the country.

Before the end of August 1990, facing international condemnation, economic sanctions, and threats of counter-invasion by a US- and UK-led coalition, Iraq offered to withdraw, on the condition that the state retain full administration of the transboundary Rumaila oilfield and maintain unfettered access to Kuwait's strategic transport hubs in the Persian Gulf.[3] When the U.S. and her allies refused to negotiate, openly preparing for war in Iraq, Hussein threatened to set fire to the region's oilfields.[4] Almost immediately after the Coalition initiated Operation Desert Storm and began its incredibly intense bombardment of Iraq in January 1991, Hussein made good on his

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[1] In Kuwait, it is known as the Ritqa oilfield.

[2] Joe Stork and Ann M. Lesch, "Background to the Crisis: Why War?" *Middle East Report* 167 (Nov-Dec. 1990), 11-18.

[3] Knut Royce, "Middle East Crisis: Secret offer, Iraq sent pullout deal to U.S.," *Newsday* Washington Bureau, Long Island, NY, 29 August 1990.

[4] "Report from Patrick Cockburn in Baghdad," *The Independent* (London), 24 September 1990.

promise to use oil as a weapon of war. Iraqi forces created enormous oil slicks, attacked oil storage depots, and intentionally leaked millions of barrels of crude oil into the Gulf, creating what is still by far the largest oil spill in history. By the time the Coalition mobilized ground forces in late February, the Iraqi military had already begun systematically destroying Kuwait's oil installations, igniting over 600 wells as they retreated, and leaving 175 more gushing or damaged.[5] In Baghdad and other urban centers, the Coalition bombardment had created a different kind of environmental crisis. The bombers targeted infrastructure, leaving streets overflowing with raw sewage and civilians without access to clean water. The ground campaign of Operation Desert Storm was over within 100 hours. The war's ecological fallout is virtually immeasurable, and will unfold over many generations.[6] It is frequently called one of the worst human-caused environmental disasters of all time.[7]

The Gulf War's environmental impacts were extraordinary, but the fact that warfare led to significant environmental change is typical. As the Gulf War vividly illustrates, armed combat frequently lays waste to warzone ecologies, with natural resources threatened as targets, used as weapons, and endangered as collateral of military objectives. The effects of military land and resource use, modern weaponry, and military-industrial production can be grave for the most basic elements of environmental quality, including soil, air, and water. War is a notable driver of regional and global climate change, a notorious polluter, contributes to both terrestrial and marine biodiversity loss, and imparts enduring hazards to human health. In all these ways, war's brutality streams beyond the boundaries of combat into the living spaces of innocents, extending the violence of warfare deep into the future and wide into the

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[5] Adam Roberts, "Environmental Issues in International Armed Conflict: The Experience of the 1991 Gulf War," in *Protection of the Environment During Armed Conflict*, ed. Richard J. Grunawalt, John E. King and Ronald S. McClain, *International Law Studies* 69 (1996), 248.

[6] Environmental impacts were "virtually immeasurable" both in the sense of being extremely vast and in the sense that there are severe technical, methodological, and epistemological challenges to quantifying environmental damage at such scale and in cultural context. See Michael T. Huguenin et. al., "Assessment and Valuation of Damage to the Environment," in *Gulf War Reparations and the UN Compensation Commission*, ed. Cymie R. Payne and Peter H. Sand (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 80-90; and Asit K. Biswas, "Scientific Assessment of the Long-Term Environmental Consequences of War" in *The Environmental Consequences of War: Legal, Economic, and Scientific Perspectives*, ed. Jay Austin and Carl Bruch (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), 308-315.

[7] Samira A.S. Omar, Ernest Briskey, Raafat Misak, and Adel A.S. O. Asem, "The Gulf War Impact on the Terrestrial Environment of Kuwait: An Overview," in *The Environmental Consequences of War: Legal, Economic, and Scientific Perspectives*, ed. Jay Austin and Carl Bruch (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 317.

world.

This chapter examines the environmental consequences of war as a problem for Christian ethics. War's environmental impacts are issues for Christian ethics wherever inquiries into Christian faith and life raise questions about the ethics of violence or the moral significance of nature. Yet the ecology of war confounds the Christian tradition's well-traversed fields of social, political, and environmental thought. "We are used to counting the dead in war," writes the Brazilian ecofeminist theologian Ivonne Gebara, "but we almost never mention the destruction of the environment, the death of animals, the poisoning of natural springs, and the destruction of the present and future means of survival of those who have not died."[8] For one thing, it is not clear whether these issues are problems for eco-theology and environmental practice, or rather matters of political morality and the applied ethics of war and peace. For Gebara, the disjuncture is a product of "patriarchal epistemologies" with deep roots in the Christian tradition—ways of knowing that bifurcate, essentialize, and rank. A case like the Gulf War indicates the folly of engaging political and environmental ethics in mutual isolation, and the error inherent in a theological imagination that envisions them as separable. Reckoning wisely with the environmental consequences of war will require ethicists to attend to the repertories of moral thought and practice within both fields—to engage environmental and political ethics in mutual exchange. The ecology of war demands not a new field of ethics, but a critical dialogue among its several overlapping domains.

This chapter aims to apprentice the field of Christian ethics to the problem of war's environmental effects by critically examining how practitioners of the Just War Tradition (JWT) made ethical sense of the Gulf War, assessing the tradition's classical and contemporary discourses in light of ecologies of violence generated by the conflict.[9] It then considers how frameworks of environment ethics developed from movements for environmental justice (EJ) could help the JWT refurbish its repertoire for practical ethical guidance amidst the environmental consequences of war.

Religious and secular commentators alike consistently failed to reckon with the Gulf War's environmental impacts. A basic problem was that environmental concerns were assigned little weight in the solemn sphere of geopolitics. Modern just warriors

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[8] Ivonne Gebara, *Longing For Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 28.
[9] Although diversity within the tradition is noted (where relevant) throughout, the chapter focuses on the thought of only a select few classical thinkers, namely Augustine and Aquinas, and treats their approaches to the tradition as seminal and broadly representative.

have inherited an ethical outlook from deep within the JWT tending to make nature morally inconsiderable, and rendering the environment's links to human society and creaturely flourishing conceptually invisible. The framework's limitations were made manifest in its struggles to guide practical moral reasoning in the Gulf War's lead-up and aftermath. Those limitations will only become more significant as the links between armed conflict, military-industrial production, and earth's rapidly changing ecological systems continue to clarify and intensify.

Theologically, at the heart of the JWT's troubles is an increasingly fragmented and dubious account of *peace*—confusion within the tradition's most important concept. The theological muddle in the theory of just war is reflected in an ethical inarticulacy before modern warfare. Inarticulacy is an eminently practical problem for a moral framework that functions chiefly as a shared vocabulary for public debate. Where the framework cannot identify on its own terms what is at stake in contemporary political violence, where it cannot intelligibly apply its inherited tools to interpret or address manifest problems, its tradition is in trouble.

As some scholars have already suggested, just warriors could plausibly expand the criteria of proportionality and discrimination to incorporate environmental factors, and thereby adapt the framework to help limit environment destruction in warfare.[10] But I argue that the tradition will fail to assess and address the ecological dimensions of warfare with acuity and resolve until its nascent environmental consciousness cuts to the root, greening its theological understanding of human beatitude and the common good, grasping how both subsist within just forms of ecosystemic participation. In short, to address its limitations and renew itself for an age of environmental tumult, the tradition will need *to learn the ecological dimensions of peace*, critically engaging war as it relates to the integral goods of emplaced human fellowship and natural flourishing.

Learning from EJ movements would push the JWT in this direction. Environmental justice presents powerful resources to counter political activities that unjustly distribute environmental hazards or that deform human beings' participation in their sustaining ecological relations, and these principled practices bear significant implications for how the JWT is theorized and practiced in the face of contemporary warfare, altering, for example, its ways of exercising authority and judging proportionality. Most basically, taking EJ claims seriously would begin to expand the

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[10] See pp. 149-1s53 below for a review of the existing scholarship on environmental protections within JWT.

JWT's concepts of peace, justice, and human rights to encompass the broader ecological systems within which human social and political life is enmeshed. Environmental justice helps the JWT get nature into politics. Reasoning toward practical responses to ecologies of violence on the shared basis of human rights to life and bodily integrity, and with attention to unequal vulnerabilities to the hazards of war-scourged environments, the dialogue contributes to an enriched, interlinked conception of human dignity and ecological integrity within the *tranquilitas ordinis*—rethinking the justice of war in reference to the peaceable ecology of God.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF WAR

War has always placed natural environment in peril.[11] In the sixth century BCE, Scythians, the first nomadic tribe to appear in written history, deploying scorched earth tactics in their conflict with the Persian King Darius the Great, destroying crops and allegedly poisoning the groundwater drawn by imperial troops.[12] During the Hundred Years War, both English and French forces routinely destroyed agricultural land and decimated livestock. Surveying the aftermath of a raid on his hometown of Venette, a French monk described in vivid detail how the effects of war had rippled out ecologically, encompassing the interrelations of land, animals, and human society:

> The vines of the region, which supply the most pleasant and desirable liquor which maketh glad the heart of man, were not pruned or kept from rotting by the labors of men's hands. The fields were not sown or ploughed. There were no cattle or fowl in the fields. No cock crowed in the depths of the night to tell the hours. No hen called to her chicks. It was of no use for the kite to lie in wait for chickens in March of this year nor for children to hunt for eggs in secret hiding places. No lambs or calves bleated after their mothers in this region. The wolf might seek its prey elsewhere.[13]

During the Napoleonic Wars, in a startling precedent to the Iraqi strategy in Kuwait,

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[11] The field of environmental history began to take on questions of war and ecology beginning in the early 2000s, but focused largely on modern conflicts. See Richard P. Tucker and Edmund Russell, eds. *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally: Toward an Environmental History of Warfare* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2004); Charles E. Closmann, *War and the Environment: Military Destruction in the Modern Age* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2009).

[12] Gerard Chailand, *A Global History of War: From Assyria to the Twenty-First Century*, trans. Michele Mangan Woods and David Woods (Oakland: University of California Press), 116.

[13] Jean de Venette, a Carmelite prior, quoted in John Aberth, *From the Brink of the Apocalypse: Confronting Famine, War, Plague, and Death in the Later Middle Ages* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 84-88.

Russian forces set fire to the countryside as they retreated.[14] Despite profound variation and evolution in the tactics and technologies of warfare, nature has frequently been a target, or else a weapon of war, because combatants have known well their enemies' dependence on local environment. But by all accounts, the ecological reach of war is expanding, as modern weaponry and military-industrial production stretch war's spatial and temporal boundaries, while toxifying and intensifying its payload.

It is often noted that rapid industrialization since the early nineteenth century has had profound, permanent consequences for global environment. But industrialization has also radically reconfigured the nature of war. In *War and Nature,* Edmund Russell argues that Western modernity's quest for technological control of nature was intimately linked to the changing character of weaponry and warfare in the twentieth century. For example, Russell relates how insecticides "coevolved" with chemical weapons in the overlapping realms of industry, military research, technological production, and armed combat.[15] The ecology of war takes on a new moral significance in the industrial age in part because the production and deployment of modern weaponry releases chemical and biological residues capable of causing death and inflicting long-term damage on both human and non-human bodies.[16]

The moral peril of wartime environmental destruction has raised concerns especially since the Vietnam War, when the United States' use of herbicides, high-explosive munitions, land-clearing and dam-bombing, as well as secret efforts at strategic climate modification, prompted international scrutiny. Summarizing the implications of their extensive study of the ecological consequences of the Vietnam War, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) cited Christopher Stone's classic essay on environmental ethics and law "Should Trees Have Standing?" arguing that "living things, and nature as a whole" should be granted a degree of legal immunity to destruction during war. SIPRI pointed out that warfare's disruption of the environment is especially pernicious because "it spills over both the spatial and temporal boundaries of the attack, because of its partially unpredictable ramifications, and because its impact does not discriminate clearly between combatants and

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[14] David D. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon,* vol. 1 (New York: Scribner, 1966), 499.

[15] Edmund Russell, *War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insect with Chemicals from World War I to Silent Spring* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 226ff.

[16] Michael D. Diederich, Jr '"Law of War' and Ecology—A Proposal for a Workable Approach to Protecting the Environment Through the Law of War," *Military Law Review* 136 (1992), 137.

noncombatants."[17] In other words, researchers since the 1970s have drawn moral attention not only to modern weaponry's devastations of earth, but also to how the violence of warfare is mediated through environments in ways that harm civilians and other innocents (e.g. future generations) arbitrarily.

The links between modern war and ecology are profound and difficult to disentangle. The challenge of predicting and assessing the environmental impacts of war is underlined by the wide variety of factors influencing how war affects local, regional, and global ecosystems. A war's environmental consequences will depend on the war's duration and intensity, the types of quantities of weaponry used, war strategies and combat tactics, prewar environmental conditions, and myriad variables of local and regional ecology.[18] "The environmental impacts of wars are often multi-dimensional," affecting land, water, and air, and contributing to resource depletion, noise pollution, and the dispersion or concentration of toxins and other hazardous materials.[19] In contrast to the destruction of buildings and other human-made structures, environmental destruction is characterized by its ecological ripple effects—violence transmitted through ecosystemic relations. The impact of any discrete harm to the environment "will often play out through many iterations," writes Michael Schmitt, spreading from one species or natural element to the next—and thus expanding, evolving, and transforming—through the food chain or through the flows of energy cycles, water course, and other natural processes.[20]

War's consequences are also multi-dimensional in the sense that they intervene in multiple sectors of social life and human livelihood, while also impacting non-human species, transforming landscapes, and altering vital ecological processes. Landmines and defoliants have been major contributors to famine, spoiling capacities for food production by rendering land impassable or infertile.[21] Depleted Uranium—used extensively by U.S.-led coalition forces during the Gulf War—is both radioactive and toxic, often contaminating vast tracts of land around impact sites, while exposing

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[17] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Ecological Consequences of the Second Indochina War*, ed. Arthur H. Westing (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1976). See Christopher Stone, "Should Trees Have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects," S*outhern California Law Review* 45 (1972): 450–87*.*

[18] Biswas, "Scientific Assessment," 303.

[19] Biswas, "Scientific Assessment," 303-308.

[20] Michael Schmitt, "Green War: An Assessment of the Environmental Law of International Conflict," *Yale Journal of International Law* 22, no. 1 (1997), 96.

[21] Adam Roberts, "The Law of War and Environmental Damage" in *The Environmental Consequences of War*, ed. Jay E. Austin and Carl E. Bruch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 75.

civilians to dangerous fumes believed to cause malfunctions of the kidneys, brain, liver and heart, in addition to genetic, reproductive, and neurological problems.[22] The full costs of war's environmental destruction upon human health are "simply unknown and mostly incalculable."[23] Among the many reasons the impacts of war evade full accounting is that ecological change, like toxicity lodged in human bodies, has non-linear and unpredictable effects across a wide range of variables, often spanning several generations.

War's environmental impacts do not begin with the outbreak of violence. Military operations in ordinary time, including war exercises, military-industrial production, and military land use all have significant environmental footprints. "Militaries are privileged environmental vandals," writes Joni Seager. "Their daily operations are typically beyond the reach of civil law, and they are protected from public and governmental scrutiny, even in democracies."[24] According to one study conducted in the early 1990s, military engagements and military-industrial production together account for up to 20 percent of global environmental degradation, making war and war-preparation humanity's single most environmentally destructive enterprise.[25] In 1998, the World Bank reported that between 750,000 and 1,500,000 square km are devoted to military operations globally—a footprint larger than the total surface area of France and the United Kingdom combined—foreclosing alternate land uses in both the short and medium term.[26] Historically, the U.S. military played a pivotal part in opening the North American continent for westward expansion by Euro-Americans

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[22] Elena Craft et al. (2004). "Depleted and Natural Uranium: Chemistry and Toxicological Effects," *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health, Part B* 7, no 4 (July 2004): 297–317.

[23] Biswas, "Scientific Assessment," 305.

[24] Joni Seager, "Patriarchal Vandalism: Militaries and the Environment," in *Dangerous Intersections: Feminist Perspectives on Population, Environment, and Development*, ed. Jael Silliman and Ynestra King (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1999), 163.

[25] Michael Renner, "Assessing the Military's War on the Environment," in State of the World 1991: A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society, ed. Lester R. Brown et al. (Washington, DC: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991). Such estimates are extremely hard to verify, because the data is incomplete and unreliable, and because environmental degradation is not a simple linear process, nor is it easily captured in direct cause-effect relationships. The statistic paraphrased above should be taken as a general indication of the scope of the problem, not as a precise measure of it. Twenty-five years after Renner, the environmental sociologist Kenneth Gould came to the same general conclusion: "militarization is the single most ecologically destructive human endeavor." Kenneth Gould, "The Ecological Costs of Militarization. *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 19 (4), 331.

[26] World Bank, World Development Report 1998-1999, (1998). Cited in Biswas, "Scientific Assessment of Long-Term Environmental Consequences," 304.

through its myriad "Indian Wars," its role in developing the nation's navigational infrastructure including canals, roads, and railroads, and its capacity as broker for the distribution of frontier properties to whites, thereby facilitating "an ecological transformation" of the North American continent.[27] Peacetime energy use among militaries is a significant contributor to both resource depletion and global warming through fossil-fuel emissions. The UNEP reported at the end of the twentieth century that the world's militaries consume petroleum at quantities equal to almost 50 percent of the total consumption of all developing nations combined.[28]

Neither does warfare cease to shape the environment when combat ends. "All three stages of warfare generate ecological consequences"—(1) preparation for war, (2) violent conflict, and (3) postwar activities—summarize the conservation biologists Gary Machlis and Thor Hanson in their 2009 survey of the empirical research on "warfare ecology."[29] A full ethical accounting of war's environmental impacts would require its own monograph, especially if taking stock of the environmental justice issues associated with military activity, policy, and expenditure, or if evaluating war's effects in biocentric or ecocentric perspective. Even the comparatively simple question of war's direct consequences for human health and well-being remains largely under-examined in the scientific literature; it is virtually absent in the fields of environmental ethics, military ethics, or religion and ecology.[30]

How to ethically assess wartime environmental destruction poses challenges for

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[27] J.R. McNeill and David S. Painter, "The Global Environmental Footprint of the U.S. Military, 1789-2003," in *War and the Environment: Military Destruction in the Modern Age*, ed. Charles E. Closmann (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 13-14. McNeill and Painter also partially credit the U.S. military with the development and success of America's metallurgical industries, with corresponding environmental impacts associated with iron ore and coal mining, as well as associated air and water pollution.

[28] Mostafa K. Tolba and Osama A. El-Kholy, *The World Environment 1972-1992: Two Decades of Challenge,* United Nations Environmental Program (New York: Chapman & Hall, 1992). Cf. Andrew K. Jorgenson, Brett Clark, and Jeffrey Kentor, "Militarization and the Environment: A Panel Study of Carbon Dioxide Emissions and the Ecological Footprints of Nations, 1970–2000," *Global Environmental Politics* 10, no. 1 (2010): 7–29. Such estimates indicate that warfare is not only a problem of environmental degradation but a matter of environmental justice.

[29] Gary E. Machlis and Thor Hanson, "Warfare Ecology," *BioScience* 58, no. 8 (Sept, 2008): 729-736.

[30] Biswas, "Scientific Assessment," 308ff. Mark Woods argues that in contrast to the lively discussions in political science and international relations—and one could now add political ecology and security studies—"there is virtually no discussion of military activities and war within the academic field of environmental ethics."—Mark Woods, "The Nature of War and Peace: Just War Thinking, Environmental Ethics, and Environmental Justice," in Rethinking the Just War Tradition, ed. Michael W. Brough, John W. Lango, and Harry van der Linden (Ithaca, SUNY Press, 2007), 20.

both environmental ethics and the ethics of war. The interconnections between ecological and human systems have always complicated environmental thought, but the ecology of war raises special problems because it places the usual contestations—about sources and loci of value, about normative theories and competing principles, and about the relations between ethics, culture, and law—in moral terrain that is both unfamiliar and inherently ambiguous. "War is a zone of radical coercion, in which justice is always under a cloud," writes Michael Walzer.[31] Armed conflict, in other words, has traditionally been treated as an extra-ordinary context, a special moral arena, in which ethical norms apply in circumscribed ways. Actions that are otherwise intolerable, like the intentional killing of human beings, may be judged permissible or even obligatory under certain conditions. Environmental values may look different under the fog of war. They may add to the fog.

Legal Frameworks for Wartime Environmental Protections

Philosophers and legal scholars have attempted to outline moral and legal norms for wartime environmental protections by building upon a small but noteworthy body of international law addressing the ecology of war. Three treaties tackle environmental protections directly. The Environmental Modification Convention (ENMOD), a United Nations treaty ratified in 1977, bans "environmental modification techniques having widespread, long-lasting or severe effects as the means of destruction, damage or injury to any other State Party."[32] Drafted largely in response to U.S. use of herbicides and efforts to weaponize weather modification techniques during the Vietnam War, the treaty does not aim to protect the environment per se, but rather forbids using "the manipulation of natural processes" as a weapon of war. In Vietnam, "intentional anti-environmental actions were a major component of the strategy and tactics" of the U.S. forces, prompting a flurry of international legal attention to the ecological dimensions of modern warfare.[33]

The Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 on the Protection of

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[31] Michael Walzer, *Arguing About War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), x.

[32] Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, Geneva, Switzerland, 18 May 1977. Article I.1. Article II defines "environmental modification techniques" as any technique for changing — through the deliberate manipulation of natural processes — the dynamics, composition or structure of the Earth, including its biota, lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere, or of outer space."

[33] SIPRI, *Ecological Consequences of the Second Indochina War,* ed. Arthur Westing (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1976), 1.

Victims of International Armed Conflicts (commonly known as Protocol I) was ratified the same year. Protocol I goes further than ENMOD, instituting prohibitions against "methods or means of warfare which are intended, or may be expected, to cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment" (Article 35.3), as well as enjoining combatants to "protect the natural environment" against such harms, with special care not to jeopardize "the health or survival of the population" (Article 55).[34] In 1998, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court gave teeth to these principles, decreeing that failure to comply may be prosecuted as a war crime. On the other hand, the Rome Statute introduced for the first time the principle of proportionality to wartime environmental protections, adding that, to be censurable, ecological damage must be not only "widespread, long-term, and severe," but also "clearly excessive in relation to the concrete and direct overall military advantage anticipated."[35]

The three treaties provide some legal scaffolding for restraining war's environmental impacts, but most analysts agree they remain inadequate and ineffective. For one, many of the world's most important military powers do not recognize them. A notable example: the United States voted against the Rome Statute and as of 2020 is not party to the treaty, or to Protocol I. In short, the international statutes are vague—employing diverse and inconsistent paradigms of environmental valuation, and leaving unspecified how to assign moral weight to environmental damages relative to war's goals—and international law enforcement remains notoriously weak.[36] Perhaps for those reasons, the treaties above "have never been invoked to protect the environment before, during, or after a war."[37]

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[34] Article 36 obliges militaries to assure that the development and adoption of new weapons and new war tactics would not violate Article 35 or 55 "in some or all circumstances." Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 on the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, International Committee of the Red Cross, 8 June 1997.

[35] Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, July 17, 1998. [Article 8.2(b)(iv)].

[36] For these and additional critiques, see Michael N. Schmitt, "War and the Environment: Fault Lines in the Prescriptive Landscape," in *The Environmental Consequences of War*, ed. Jay E. Austin and Carl E. Bruch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 87-136; Richard Falk, "The Inadequacy of the Existing Legal Approach to Environmental Protection in Wartime," in *The Environmental Consequences of War*, ed. Jay E. Austin and Carl E. Bruch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 137-156; Diederich, "'Law of War' and Ecology."

[37] Woods, "The Nature of War and Peace," 22. On the other hand, after the Persian Gulf War, the UN Security Council declared the Iraqi government "liable under international law for any direct loss, damage, including environmental damage and the depletion of natural resources" resulting from Iraq's

Perhaps the most significant thing about these treaties is that they signify how the ecology of contemporary warfare has begun to scandalize the modern conscience. As Michael Diederich has argued, war conventions originate as public responses to "warfare fought in violation of society's values."[38] If the law of war has typically developed out of concern to protect individual human rights, the gradual development of legal protections for the environment in warfare since the 1970s suggests a growing recognition of environmental values, or perhaps even a nascent perception that human rights are in some way bound up with environmental quality and ecological integrity.

JUST WAR, GULF WAR, & THE ECOLOGY OF WAR AND PEACE

In the West, the just war tradition is arguably the most prominent way Catholics and Protestants reason about the morality of war. Christians use modern just war theory as a set of criteria by which to judge whether and when going to war is justified (*jus ad bellum*), and criteria to guide and assess conduct within war (*jus in bello*). In most formulations of just war theory, *jus ad bellum* criteria outline the conditions under which a state can (or perhaps should) wage war against an enemy. Jus ad bellum criteria vary among just war thinkers, but typically include just cause, right intention, proper authority, proportionality, probability of success, and (sometimes) last resort. Once war is begun, *jus in bello* criteria—especially discrimination and proportionality—help determine *how* it is permissible to fight, and, most importantly, *whom* and *when* it is permissible to kill.

Both before and after Operation Desert Storm, the just war framework was applied extensively in public deliberations about the war's justifiability and its tactics. "There has rarely been such a sustained (and in many cases impressive) public grappling with the moral criteria and political logic of the just war tradition," opined George Weigel.

> Administration officials, members of Congress, senior military officers, columnists, talk-show hosts, and ordinary citizens debated the goals and instruments of U.S. gulf policy in such classic just war terms as "just cause," "competent authority," "probability of success," "last resort," "proportionality (of ends and means to ends),"

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invasion of Kuwait (see Security Council Resolution 687, 3 Apr. 1991.) For an excellent overview of the process and the principles applied, see Payne and Sand, *Gulf War Reparations.*
[38] Diederich, '"Law of War' and Ecology," 142.

and "discrimination" (between combatants and noncombatants).[39]

A brief tour through some of these arguments offers a useful overview of the major criteria and demonstrates how the JWT functions in contemporary moral and political debate. It also illustrates the inadequate attention to environmental concerns afforded in just war debates.

The probability of severe environmental damage was well known in the months leading up to the war. Iraqi officials repeatedly pledged to ignite oilfields in the event of a war."[40] The bellicose rhetoric of the Hussein regime strengthened international resolve to intervene, but a vocal minority urged world leaders to take these threats seriously, arguing that the potential environmental impacts of a war to liberate Kuwait could be devastating.[41] The polarized debate led to a critical omission in public talk about the ethics of military intervention. It meant that neither side attended to the practical question of how to *protect* the environment *within* war.[42]

Christian leaders and intellectuals made extensive use of the JWT in their deliberations and proclamations about the Persian Gulf War, and occasionally mentioned ecological issues. A few who argued against the war did mention environmental concerns as part of the moral rationale for rejecting a military solution and persisting with the nonviolent methods of negotiation, diplomacy, and economic

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[39] George Weigel, "The Churches and the War in the Gulf," *First Things* (March 1991), 37.

[40] "The land will burn under their feet not only in Iraq" but also in the Middle Eastern nations allied against them," they warned. "Report from Patrick Cockburn in Baghdad, *The Independent* (London), 24 Sep. 1990. Cited in Roberts, "Environmental Issues in International Armed Conflict," 243.

[41] "The international scientific community warned the world of dire ecological consequences - and many predicted nothing less than a doomsday for the Gulf region and possibly the world." Mohammed Sadiq and John C. McCain, *The Gulf War Aftermath: An Environmental Tragedy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1993), xiii. Predicted outcomes included devastation of coastal ecosystems along the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, air quality problems throughout the Arabian peninsula and as far east as India and Bangladesh (and associated acute and chronic human health problems), changes in regional monsoon patterns, and short- and medium-term global climatic changes, including the possibility of a global "nuclear winter." Biswas, "Scientific Assessment of Long-Term Environmental Consequences," 312. Biswas argues that many of the most dire forecasts—acute global climatic changes, or nuclear winter, for example—did not in fact come to pass. But "no one can question" the war's adverse "local and even regional impacts" (313).

[42] Roberts, "Environmental Issues in International Armed Conflict," 244. Given the credible environmental risks, some urged the coalition to refrain from war. "In much of the political debate of the time," observes Roberts, "to be environmentally concerned was to predict global catastrophe, and to be anti-war." On the other side, "those who supported the resort to war said little about the environmental aspects of a possible war."

sanctions. 107 British clergy, theologians, and Christian intellectuals signed "A Christian Declaration" counseling against Operation Desert Storm on the basis of the *jus ad bellum* principles of the JWT. The Declaration included in its reflections on proportionality the potential for a long-lasting and wide-ranging environmental disaster.[43] Jim Wallis, a progressive American Evangelical, argued stridently against the war, warning that military intervention risked "engulfing the region in volatility, bitterness, [and] ecological disaster…in the days ahead—likely even for generations to come."[44] Others seemed to allude to popular projections of environmental cataclysm without mentioning them directly. The six presidents of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (CCBI) penned a public statement warning of "death and destruction on an appalling scale, with consequences for the welfare of the human family far beyond the Middle East, specially for the poorest people of the world." The churchmen expressed doubt that a war in the Gulf region would meet the criteria of last resort or, in particular, proportionality, citing the war's "appallingly destructive possibilities" and its "undoubted horrors."[45] A few more interpreted the crisis in the Gulf at its intersections with a more generalized environmental crisis, tracing connections between the coalition's resort to organized violence in Iraq and the West's dirty and unsustainable fossil fuel economy at home. The National Council of Churches of Christ proclaimed:

> The current crisis also highlights the extent to which the relative affluence of our lifestyle has been dependent on access to inexpensive sources of energy. The ecological crisis and the prospect of conflict over access to oil should encourage us to examine critically and to alter our wasteful and irresponsible stewardship of the gifts of the earth.[46]

But Christian ethical reflection on the whole paid scant attention to the ecological

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[43] Cited in Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Can There Be a Just War to Solve the Gulf Crisis? A Survey of Statements," *Doctrine and Life* 41 (January 1991), 32-37.

[44] Jim Wallis, "This War Cannot Be Justified," in *War in the Twentieth Century: Sources in Theological Ethics*, ed. Richard B. Miller (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 467.

[45] Cited in Cahill, "Can There Be a Just War to Solve the Gulf Crisis?"

[46] National Council of Churches of Christ, Executive Coordinating Committee, "Message and Resolution from the Executive Coordinating Committee of the National Council of Churches" (Sept. 14. 1990) in *Just War and the Gulf War*, ed. James Turner Johnson and George Weigel (Washington DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1991), 97.

dimensions of the Persian Gulf conflict, and neither the war's critics nor its supporters said anything at all about the moral necessities or the practical possibilities of protecting the environment within the war.

The relative absence of environmental considerations in Christian moral reflections on the Gulf War exposes an important set of problems in the JWT as it is now practiced. Most directly, had the war's foreseeable environmental consequences been squarely on the moral agenda within Christian and secular deliberations, the arguments justifying military intervention would have been much more difficult to sustain. Equally, those still committed to the moral and political necessity of war—including the coalition's military and political leaders—would have been compelled to explain (and then demonstrate) how the war could be executed without causing undue damage to the environments of Iraq, Kuwait, and the wider region.

A particularly illuminating example of Just War reasoning about the Gulf War came from James Turner Johnson, who contributed his ethical analysis after the war had begun. Johnson is arguably the most accomplished scholar of the history of Just War thinking, and a specialist in the framework's development and variation within the Christian tradition. He drew on Just War categories to argue in favor of Operation Desert Storm, defending both its justifiability *ad bellum* and its means *in bello*. Attending to his case for war, situated within the wider debates about just war and the Gulf War, will help illustrate the state of contemporary just war thinking, and why the tradition may struggle to guide practical moral reasoning on warfare in an ecological age.

Just Cause

Perhaps the least controversial criterion in the debate over the justice of the Gulf War was the question of *just cause*. "Historically, just-war tradition held that just cause for the use of force exists whenever it is necessary either to repel an unjust attack, to retake something wrongly taken, or to punish evil. International law has justified use of force only in response to aggressive attack," summarized Johnson. "By either standard Iraq's attack against Kuwait was unjust and constitutes just cause for use of force to undo it."[47] He repeated the widely held judgment that there was just cause for war against Iraq given Hussein's aggressive attack on a neighbor's sovereignty, Iraq's wrongful seizure of Kuwaiti resources and territory, and the regime's wanton disregard

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[47] James Turner Johnson, "Just-War Tradition and the War in the Gulf," *War in the Twentieth Century: Sources in Theological Ethics,* ed. Richard B. Miller (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 450.

for human rights in the commission of both. John Langan agreed, arguing that just cause for armed intervention was present from the moment Iraq invaded Kuwait.[48] Iraq's hostile take-over seemed a clear violation of the sovereignty of Kuwait, and early reports from Amnesty International and the international press painted a grim portrait of the occupation, accusing Iraqi forces of torture, civilian executions, rape, and other crimes against humanity.[49] The case for war leaned heavily on these factors, emphasizing the injustices unfolding in the Gulf and the moral and political urgency of effective response.

Counter-arguments on the issue of just cause were rare, but some raised questions about the nature of the conflict and the background conditions of justice and peace in the Gulf region. Was the invasion of Kuwait a clear case of belligerent territorial expansion on the part of Iraq, or was it rather a "border dispute," in which Iraq had re-exerted its perceived rights over territories unjustly excised by colonial powers? If the latter, the justice of the coalition cause is less clear. In addition, some pointed out that Kuwait's own unsatisfactory record on human rights and humanitarian justice cast doubt on the idea that a war to liberate Kuwait was a war to preserve a just social order. "The modern political history of Kuwait is as ethically questionable as the dismemberment of the Ottoman and Arabic empire which gave it birth decades ago," wrote Kenneth Vaux.[50] The war's supporters needed to convince an uncertain public that armed intervention was a response to an unjust attack by a regime presenting legitimate threats to innocents and to overall peace in the region.

A key word for George Bush and his administration's argument for just cause was *aggression:* On August 5, 1990: "This will not stand, this aggression against Kuwait." On August 8, Hussein's invasion of Kuwait was an "outrageous and brutal act of aggression," and "U.S. forces will work…to deter further Iraqi aggression."[51] On January 28, 1991, after war had begun, "the cost of closing our eyes to aggression is

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[48] John Langan, "An Imperfectly Just War," *War in the Twentieth Century: Sources in Theological Ethics,* ed. Richard B. Miller (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 455.

[49] Amnesty International, "Iraq/Occupied Kuwait: Human Rights Violations Since August 2" (London, December 19, 1990).

[50] Kenneth Vaux, *Ethics and the Gulf War: Religion, Rhetoric, and Righteousness* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 3-4. For an alternative view see Brian Orend, *The Morality of War* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2006), 42

[51] George Bush, "In Defense of Saudi Arabia," address from the Oval Office on 8 August 1990, in *The Gulf War Reader*, ed. Michael L. Sifry and Christopher Cerf (New York: Random House, 1991), 197.

beyond mankind's power to imagine."[52] And there are many more examples.

"Aggression is the name we give to the crime of war," wrote Michael Walzer in his essential analysis of modern just war theory *Just and Unjust Wars*. It is defined by a state's forceful violation of the political sovereignty or territorial integrity of another state. In response to aggression, just warriors agree, violence is justified in a war of self-defense or of law enforcement by the victim or by other members of the international society. On Walzer's account, nothing but aggression justifies war. But in response to aggression, people are "always justified in fighting, and in most cases…fighting is the morally preferred response."[53] It seems likely that the Bush administration had just this sort of analysis in mind when they considered how to interpret, engage, and communicate the crisis in the Gulf. But that last remark from Walzer gives the false impression that, within just war theory, just cause is sufficient to justify war. Indeed, some critics accused the Bush administration of ignoring other crucial factors. Although no prominent just war theorist affirms that war can be justified on the basis of just cause alone, just cause—within what Walzer calls "the theory of aggression"—is often presented as the centerpiece of the framework. Below I argue that, for the Christian JWT, just cause is derivative, along with the other criteria, from the more fundamental understanding of *peace* lodged within the principle of *right intention*, and that, on the evidence of the Gulf War debates, that understanding has frayed.

Legitimate Authority

For the classical tradition, the question of *legitimate authority* stood alongside just cause as a central pillar for the morality of war. "A great deal depends on the causes for which men undertake wars, and on the authority they have for doing so," wrote Augustine, "for the natural order, which seeks the peace of mankind, ordains that the monarch should have the power of undertaking war if he thinks it advisable." The imperial power to wage war derived from God and belonged to the sovereign by divine ordination, and so carried significant weight for adjudicating war's righteousness. For Augustine, a soldier was morally obliged to fight the king's war, even if the king was "ungodly" and his command "unrighteous"—that is, even an apparently unjust war could be morally right to wage, for the authority of God, resident in the ruler, overrides

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[52] George Bush, State of the Union, January 29,1991.

[53] Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 51, 62.

the appearance of temporal injustice.[54] "Your feeling of disapproval for the mere human action should be restrained by a regard for the divine sanction," he wrote.[55] These arguments, from Augustine's anti-Manichean polemic *Contra Faustum*, are often interpreted out of context.[56] Augustine wrote these words in a relatively brief period of "horrifying self-assurance" in the Christianizing epoch of emperor Theodosius, even as Augustine was at the same time expanding his appreciation of sin's long reach into the intellective and political capacities of men.[57] But while his confidence in Christian empire eventually crumbled and his belief in the bare possibilities of social justice waned, Augustine's high view of temporal authority and his commitment to the theological significance of state violence remained remarkably stable.[58] The influential logic across Augustine's discussions of war implies that the *political* determinations of the head of state carry genuine *moral* weight in the ethics of war—moral weight sufficient to counter-balance the problem of Christians killing in apparently questionable circumstances. For Christian just war thinking, the question of who authorizes war has always carried considerable weight, for it defines legitimate use of violence in terms of the order-sustaining office of God-sanctioned rulers.

In Reformation Germany, Martin Luther consolidated the theological gravity of

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[54] Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, XXII, §75. "For there is no power but of God, who either orders or permits. Since, therefore, a righteous man, serving it may be under an ungodly king, may do the duty belonging to his position in the state in fighting by the order of his sovereign—for in some cases it is plainly the will of God that he should fight, and in others, where this is not so plain, it may be an unrighteous command on the part of the king, while the soldier is innocent, because his position makes obedience a duty."

[55] Augustine, *Contra Faustum,* XXII, §73.

[56] Augustine advanced these arguments in the context of his defense of the Old Testament as authentic Christian scripture and as genuine revelation of the one God of orthodox Christian faith. In this case, Augustine advanced his argument by defending biblical instances of violence and warfare—bloodshed sometimes perpetrated by subterfuge and against innocents. Augustine's strong appeal to divine authority here was meant first and foremost to uphold the integrity of Christian scripture and the unity of God and God's soteriological project through a theological defense of the conduct attributed to God in the Bible. It served also a related argument about obedience to divine command. Later uses of Augustine on the question of war—medieval and modern alike—have rarely taken this context into account when developing the conception of "war on the authority of God" (Contra Faustum, XXII, §75) and the related criterion of competent authority.

[57] R.A. Markus, "Saint Augustine's Views on the 'Just War,' *Studies in Church History* 20 (1983), 6-9. Markus's influential interpretation of this context is laid out in Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 22-44.

[58] Markus, "Saint Augustine's Views on the 'Just War,' 9-11.

temporal authority.[59] "I have written in such glorification of temporal government as no teacher has done since the days of the apostles, except, perhaps, St. Augustine," he wrote in 1528.[60] In the context of urging what he deemed to be a defensive war against anti-feudalist peasants in the German countryside, Luther argued (interpreting a favorite passage from Romans 13) that rebellion against the prevailing political economy constitutes rebellion against God, because God ordains rulers, in whose authority resides the foundations of earthly peace. The sin of war was precisely the failure to submit to proper authorities, and thus civil insurrection or aggressive war was ultimately a rebellion against God's providence. Worse than murder, rebellion against political order had the dangerous quality of contagion: "it is like a great fire, which attacks and lays waste a whole land." Standing between the divinely instituted social order and the demonic forces of political unrest were the "worldly governors" who possessed the sword by divine right and had been charged with the duty of societal preservation. In Luther's picture, the office of ruler is the wall God builds against the wildfire spread of chaos and disintegration. The ruler, he wrote, "must fulfill [his] office or forfeit [God's] grace."[61] Here again the Christian Just War tradition centralized the question of authority for the moral assessment of violence, linking reasons of state to the providence of God.

Where legitimate authority has such heft, its absence is a decisive problem. In arguments over the Persian Gulf War, some critics, working within a strikingly different

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[59] Although he made clear that Christians should never fight a war known to be unjust, regardless of the command of the prince. Martin Luther, "On Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed (1522)," in *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Gregory Reichberg, et al. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 267–68; and Martin Luther, "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved (1526)," in *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Gregory Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 273.

[60] Martin Luther, "On War Against the Turk" (1528).

[61] Martin Luther, "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants." In illuminating contrast, Luther argued in "On War Against the Turk" (and earlier statements on the Turkish War) that the Christian *church* should not wage war; that war should not be waged in the name of Christ; that there is no such thing as a "Christian army"; and that clergy should "stay at home and mind the duties of their office." The significance of *competent authority* is seen here again within Luther's vision of divine order: Christian *rulers* may well have a religious obligation to make war, while the Christian *Church* is ordained to another office—"it has other enemies than flesh and blood…and cannot mix in the wars of the emperor or prince, for the Scriptures say that there shall be no good fortune where men are disobedient to God." Popes and priests cannot wage war. But the tract ultimately supports war against the Turks, "fought at the emperor's command, under his banner, and in his name. Then everyone can assure his own conscience that he is obeying the ordinance of God, since we know that the emperor is our true overlord and head, and he who obeys him, in such a case, obeys God."

paradigm of the sources and structures of political legitimacy, raised questions about the war on the basis of this classical criterion. In September 1990, the Executive Coordinating Committee of the National Council of Churches of Christ expressed concern about apparent "unilateral US action, " asserting that only the United Nations had proper authority to resort to military force in this case.[62] In contrast, James Turner Johnson argued that the question of competent authority was quite clear: On January 12, 1991 both houses of the United States Congress passed a resolution granting President Bush authority to use armed force against Iraq.[63] Two months earlier, the United Nations Security Council had likewise approved the use of "all means necessary" if Iraq did not withdraw by January 15.[64] Since both the UN Security Council and the United States government had ultimately authorized the resort to armed force, he determined the war had legitimate authority.[65]

But others raised deeper questions about legitimate authority for armed combat in the Gulf. Some suggested that moral and political judgment on the war should be subject to direct democracy. In his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Archbishop John Roach argued that, in this case, legitimate authority should be defined broadly to include the direct consent of citizens.[66] In Britain and Ireland, clergy appealed to a still wider conception of legitimate authority, arguing that the citizens of the Gulf region must have a role in determining the legitimacy of Western military intervention in their homeland, since it would inevitably be "ordinary Arabs" who "pay the price in blood."[67] In a widely cited letter to Secretary of State James A. Baker, Archbishop Roger M. Mahony claimed that, in the US, it was simply *unclear who* had competent authority to authorize military force. He cited widespread

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[62] NCCC, "Message and Resolution," 95. Cf. "Presidential Statement of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland," quoted in Cahill, "Can There Be a Just War to Solve the Gulf Crisis?" 33.
[63] "Authorization for Use of Military Force," in *The Gulf War Reader*, 287-289.
[64] United Nations Security Council Resolution 678, 29 November 1990.
[65] Johnson, "Just-War Tradition and the War in the Gulf," 450. John Langan agreed, but admitted that long before January the Bush administration had proceeded to mobilize the American military in preparation for war, openly operating "on the principle that the war did not need congressional authorization"; Langan, "An Imperfectly Just War," 457. Johnson on the other hand insinuated that even this early militarization had been authorized under the War Powers Act.
[66] John R. Roach, "Testimony of Archbishop Roach Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee," December 6, 1990, in *Just War and the Gulf War,* ed. James Turner Johnson and George Weigel (Washington DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1991), 125.
[67] "A Christian Declaration," *The Tablet* (Dec. 1990), quoted in Cahill, "Can There Be a Just War to Solve the Gulf Crisis?" 36.

uncertainty and contention over authority among the reasons not to resort to war.[68]

The debate over competent authority in the Gulf crisis would have been all but incomprehensible to the criterion's Christian progenitors. The locus of political authority had migrated far and wide with the advent of representative democracy and international governance, and the foundations of political legitimacy had fractured and dispersed across the immanent frame of a secular age. Strangest of all, the significance of competent authority for the ethical interpretation of state violence was everywhere upheld in a public profoundly uncertain which or whether its rulers possessed the moral authority to wage war.[69] Traditionally, the criterion of competent authority set the morally perilous matter of warfare within the transparent sphere of providential order and upon the stable ground of divine ordination—or at least upon a coherent conception of how governing authorities bear responsibility for the common good. In the late twentieth century, absent shared notions of who held authority, on what basis, and to what purpose, use of the criterion cast the ethics of warfare in much hazier light.

An indistinct conception of authority within public Just War debates, I will argue below, intensified the fog obscuring the ethical significance of the war's environmental hazards, and this moral haze stemmed from an ill-defined and un-ecological understanding of *peace*. Because the logic of the JWT depends on tight connections between the sovereign imperative to preserve orders of peace and the collective's intention to keep peace its operative ends, the meaning of peace is vital to just war reasoning, its clarity and competence crucial to sound judgment on the tradition's own terms.

Right Intention

Viewed in theological context, this uncertainty about the seat and source of authority had a direct parallel in the astonishing ambiguity with which the war's political proponents articulated the goals and purposes governing military intervention

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[68] Roger M. Mahony, "Letter From Archbishop Mahony to Secretary of State Baker," in *Just War and the Gulf War*, ed. James Turner Johnson and George Weigel (Washington DC: Ethics & Public Policy Center, 1991), 99-103. Mahony wrote as chairman of the International Policy Committee of the U.S. Catholic Conference.

[69] A recent essay in *Philosophical Forum* argues that it is finally time to do away with "the persistent and essentially medieval doctrine of legitimate authority," because the doctrine undermines the moral agency of soldiers and citizens, demonstrating an "unsafe confidence in the political bureaucracy." Richard Adams, "That Same Old Line: The Doctrine of Legitimate Authority," *Philosophical Forum* 46, no. 1 (March 2015): 71-89.

in the Gulf. Even those who used just war criteria to defend the coalition's resort to arms had to acknowledge that the question of *right intention* was a site of confusion. In early statements, while Bush made clear that U.S. objectives included the punishment of aggression and the restoration of legitimate governance in Kuwait, he also framed the decision to intervene in terms of American's vital economic and geopolitical interests in the Gulf region. "Our country now imports nearly half the oil it consumes and could face a major threat to its economic independence," warned Bush in a speech about the Gulf crisis.[70] Just before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the outgoing Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger counseled: "Whatever the circumstances, we should be prepared to introduce American forces directly into the region should it appear that the security of access to Persian Gulf oil is threatened."[71] Another member of the administration, speaking to *Time* magazine in August 1990, put the matter in layman's terms: "Even a dolt understands the principle. We need the oil."[72]

For many, the war's obvious preoccupation with oil was the height of moral hypocrisy, and reason enough to deem a military campaign unjust on the basis of its intentions. Others claimed that "blood for oil" was not necessarily a bad barter. For Langan, "there was a morally serious reason for being concerned about higher oil prices: their negative effect on the nations of Eastern Europe and the third world."[73] So perhaps the Bush administration had in mind the development rights of the global poor when the coalition dropped bombs on Iraq's civil infrastructure.

While much of the public debate centered on the question of oil, US leaders outlined "a new future for the Middle East," with talk of a new security paradigm, new arms control measures, and new economic structures. The Arab members of the coalition balked at the suggestion of arms control, but agreed on the value of economic and security cooperation, albeit not on whom to include in the collaboration.[74] Other stated objectives of the coalition included the need to demonstrate the will and power to

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[70] George Bush, "In Defense of Saudi Arabia," 198.

[71] Quoted in Joe Stork and Martha Wenger, "The US in the Persian Gulf: From Rapid Deployment to Massive Deployment," *Middle East Report* 168 (Jan-Feb 1991), 24..

[72] Quoted in Michael Kramer, "Read My Ships," *Time Magazine*, 20 August 1990, 21. "It's nice to talk about standing up for freedom," he continued, "but Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are not exactly democracies, and if their principal export were oranges, a mid-level State Department official would have issued a statement and we would have closed Washington down for August."

[73] Langan, "An Imperfectly Just War," 460.

[74] Rosemary Hollis, "The Gulf War and Just War Theory: Right Intention," *New Blackfriars* 73, no. 859 (April 1992), 212.

repel aggression in the post-Cold War world order; the aim to eliminate Iraq's future capacities for military belligerence; regime change in Iraq; regime change in Kuwait; the liberation of all hostages in Iraq; and squashing Hussein's nuclear ambitions. Few if any of these objectives were articulated by all the members of the coalition, and most were openly disputed.

The impression of the coalition's objectives becomes at once more concrete and more complex when we take into account how the war was waged, and how it concluded. As Rosemary Hollis points out in her post-war analysis, it is important to consider not only the coalition's stated objectives but also the "objectives implied by the strategy they adopted." The peace terms they were willing to accept are also key indicators of the actual intentions of the military campaign.[75] "We know an agent's intent through his conduct," explains Brian Orend.[76] Hollis argued that the coalition's conduct within the war testified to an aim to render Iraq vulnerable to outside pressure for the foreseeable future. The conditions of ceasefire made clear that the Bush administration was determined to end the war through a comprehensive military victory rather than through Iraqi accommodation or surrender. "The reasoning meant that the immediate goal of freeing Kuwait became intertwined with the objectives of destroying the power of Saddam Hussein, both literally and psychologically, for the longer-term protection of the region and the international economy."[77]

Before the war, clergy had testified before Congress in the moral diction of the JWT, expressing concern about the long list and wide range of purposes that had been put forward for military intervention.[78] After the war, the list had elongated further, and still debate continued about what the war's intended purposes had been and whether they had been achieved.

The coalition evidently employed what Orend criticizes as the "scatter-shot" approach to justifying war, presenting a wild variety of intents and purposes and so conveying the war's reasons as myriad and urgent, with the hope that maybe one or two would withstand scrutiny. Orend writes: '"The scatter-shot approach' is objectionable because war is such a serious and destructive business. You must know

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[75] Hollis, "Gulf War and Just War Theory," 210.

[76] Orend, *The Morality of War,* 47.

[77] Hollis, "Gulf War and Just War Theory," 214-215.

[78] Roach, "Testimony of Archbishop Roach," 123ff. Roach cast this concern about the "purposes and objectives for U.S. policy" under the heading of "just cause," but on my reading the argument is clearly about right intention.

what you are doing. And the 'scatter-shot' approach, frankly, conveys the impression you do not."[79]

What the just war debate did well was to draw critical attention to the scatter-shot reasoning employed in the coalition's public defense of armed intervention. What just warriors could *not* do well was articulate a common conception of what a right intention would, in actual fact, have been. That is, they could not do what the tradition's Christian cultivators had always assumed could and must be done: account for the state's reasons and actions in terms of the peaceable order of God. Peace was the only proper intention of war—"wars are waged that men may find a more perfect peace," wrote Thomas—and the meaning of peace was specified theologically.[80] Neither could the modern just warriors do what a practical Christian ethic of war must do in this emerging era of ecological violence: envision how God's peace and human justice are bound up with the ecological orders and the environmental conditions imperiled by war. Even less could they believe that such an account would make sense to the authorities, whoever they were, presumed competent to wield the sword in the direction of peace.

The theological connection between uncertainty about authority and ambiguity about intentions is this: within the political theologies undergirding the Christian just war tradition, the fundamental reality of God's ordained order grounds both the imperative of authority and the ideal of peace. The two-part question at the foundation of Just War reasoning is: what does peace on earth entail, and who is supposed to defend and restore it? Confusion about one part of that question links inevitably to mystification about the other, for both deduce from a unified theological account of temporal order in relation to the peace of God. Significantly, the just warrior's way of seeing peace and assigning responsibility to uphold it has always been a root disagreement with Christian pacifism.[81] Peace—traditionally conceived as *tranquilitas*

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[79] Orend, *The Morality of War*, 50.

[80] Thomas Aquinas, *ST* II.2, q.29, a.2, ad.2. At the risk of oversimplifying considerably, Thomas wrote of peace as a harmonious fellowship of love, in which the desires of one and all reciprocate and align, ultimately converging in God.

[81] Eric Gregory argues that competing ways of narrating Christian accounts of peace are definitive of just war and pacifism: "They are nested within alternative descriptions of virtuous fellowship with God and neighbor that find their sources within the Augustinian tradition groaning for peace within the biblical story of God, Israel, and the (gentile) nations." Gregory, "Beyond Critique: Just War as Theological Political Theology," *Modern Theology* early release (Feb. 17, 2020), 2.

ordinis, the tranquility of order—is the framework's central concept.[82] When the tradition's conception of peace drops its meaning or loses credibility, the functional integrity of the framework ruptures and fades.

"It has often been forgotten," writes Gregory Reichberg, "that for Aquinas the concept of just war rests on the more primary notion of peace."[83] The same was true for Augustine before him, and for the tradition of moral reflection on war they both helped establish as mainstream Christian reasoning about the place of violence in human society. It is commonplace among Christian thinkers to trace back to Thomas Aquinas the development of a political philosophy envisioning the world as a "community of nations" and the evolution of what we now call "international law." Nearly all contemporary accounts of just war theory rest on the idea that the global order is a society of nations in which harmony is the norm and war the unfortunate but inescapable exception. But those threads stretch back further to Thomas's distinctive way of ordering the principles of just war as derivatives of "the more fundamental concept of peace."[84] The conditions for just war identified by Thomas all revolve around peace, beginning with the concept of legitimate authority, where Thomas quotes Augustine to sum up his argument: "The *natural order conducive to peace* among mortals demands that the power to declare and counsel war should be in the hands of those who hold…supreme authority."[85] The idea of just cause was also composed on the backdrop of a theological metaphysic of peace, for what makes war unjust is that it violates the natural concord of temporal society, a sin legitimating military response.

All this is made explicit in the *ad bellum* criterion of right intention. As locus for the framework's basic theological premises and its central moral concept, right intention is the very heart of the JWT, at least in its Christian versions.[86] The tradition's judgments

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[82] Augustine, *City of God*, 19.13.1. For Augustine "peace is the harmonious ordering of our love for God and the good things of creation, generated by divine grace. We experience peace insofar as we prioritize love for God, and then live created goods in ordered ways, and with reference to the Creator….Earthly peace is the end result of rightly ordered relationships in civic and political life."—Anna Floerke Scheid, *Just Revolution: A Christian Ethic of Political Resistance and Social Transformation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 14, 18.

[83] Gregory M. Reichberg, *Thomas Aquinas on War and Peace* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 2f.

[84] Reichberg. *Thomas Aquinas on War and Peace,* 8.

[85] Thomas Aquinas, *ST* II.2, q.40, co. My emphasis. The Augustine quote is from *Contra Faustum*, xxii, 75.

[86] Orend and Walzer, non-Christian just warriors, both argue that just cause is the fundamental concern of Just War reasoning. The centrality of right intention for Christian just war tradition by comparison helps

about both state violence and Christian killing spawn in the murky waters of motive and affect, arriving by impulse, plotted by the tremulous compass of subjective intention. "Peace should be the object of your desire," wrote Augustine, setting the trajectory of just war thinking for a multi-millennial journey along the theological contours of tranquil order and with the moral latitudes of desire.[87] In the writings canonized by later just warriors, Augustine counseled Christians to kill with an attitude of love, explained how killing could *be* love, and defined justified warfare as the sovereign's killing for peace. He therefore paid special attention to the subjectivity of Christian soldiers and the inner motives of rulers.[88] He was not much troubled about bloodshed; the body is but flesh, all things perish. What concerned Augustine about war were matters of lust and spirit: sadistic cravings and "the cruel thirst for vengeance."[89] One of the great gifts Christianity could offer the empire, he argued, was to shepherd its wars toward concord with the conquered by injecting political violence with an attitude of paternal patience and "the spirit of a peace-maker."[90]

Martin Luther likewise placed heavy emphasis on the heart of the soldier and the ruler's motives. For Luther, when the sovereign's thoughts remained fixed upon the well-being of his subjects, and when warriors would "sing from [their] hearts" a song of humility before God, then it was "both Christian and an act of love to kill the enemy

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delineate what is (or was) distinctive and "theological" in the Christian ethics of war and peace. For Augustine, right intention was an "obsession," writes Orend, *The Morality of War*, 46ff.

[87] Augustine, *Letters*, *CLXXXIX*, 4.

[88] To cite just one example, Augustine argued that the command to turn the other cheek, for example, was "not a bodily action, but an inward disposition," secured in the "sacred seat of virtue…the heart." *Contra Faustum* xxii, 76. Lisa Sowle Cahill calls Augustine's influential foundation for legitimate violence the "killing-as-love paradox." Cahill, *Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 94.

[89] Thomas quotes Augustine (*Contra Faustum*, xxii, 74) on this point to defend the significance of right intention to just war (*ST* II.2, q.40 a.1, co.).

[90] For example: "These precepts concerning patience ought to be always retained in the habitual discipline of the heart, and the benevolence which prevents the recompensing of evil for evil must be always fully cherished in the disposition. At the same time, many things must be done in correcting with a certain benevolent severity, even against their own wishes, men whose welfare rather than their wishes it is our duty to consult…For in the correction of a son, even with some sternness, there is assuredly no diminution of a father's love; yet, in the correction, that is done which is received with reluctance and pain by one whom it seems necessary to heal by pain. And on this principle, if the commonwealth observe the precepts of the Christian religion, even its wars themselves will not be carried on without the benevolent design that, after the resisting nations have been conquered, provision may be more easily made for enjoying in peace the mutual bond of piety and justice. For the person from whom is taken away the freedom which he abuses in doing wrong is vanquished with benefit to himself." Augustine, *Letters CXXXVIII*, 14. Cf. *Letters, CLXXXIX*, 4.

without hesitation."[91] Again, Luther's theology of war began with an acute sense that the social order ordained by God for the good of humanity was brittle and always under siege. "If the sword were not on guard to preserve peace everything in the world would be ruined because of lack of peace," he warned.[92] Set within the cosmic imperative of political preservation, violence could not be avoided. The difference between Christian violence and satanic mayhem was lodged in the heart, where love of God and neighbor directed the humble Christian's will toward peace.

For Thomas, international peace, social concord, and the tranquility of the soul were interlinked and interdependent as the common "effect" of love.[93] When the human soul plunges inward for God, in the same movement the person reaches out for the other, to whom she is joyfully bound in the ordered communion of divine beatitude. To love God is also to befriend all that which "belongs to" God, which means love extends to all, neighbors and enemies alike—a love that may take the form of participation in war on the neighbor's behalf, in "defense of the whole commonwealth," and in service of global concord.[94]

Yet in this fixation on peace, the significance of right intention extends beyond soldierly affect and sovereign motives. When Thomas wrote that "wars are waged that men may find a more perfect peace," he did so in service of the much deeper claim that "all things desire peace."[95] If *all things* incline toward peace, in what sense, if any, is non-human nature included within the foundational concept of peace that gave the

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[91] He continues, it is also an act of love "to plunder and burn and injure him by every method of war until he is conquered." Martin Luther, "On Temporal Authority", 267-268; Luther, "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved," 271. Luther is talking about defensive war, and in *On Temporal Authority*, he includes something like the attenuating criterion of "last resort."

[92] Luther, "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can be Saved," 270.

[93] Thomas Aquinas, *ST* II.II q. 29. a.3. In Lisa Cahill's synopsis, peace is intimate fellowship, where "man loves God with his whole heart by referring all things to Him, so that his desires tend to one object." Peace flows from charity, where "we love our neighbor as ourselves, the result being that we wish to fulfill our neighbor's will as though it were ours." Yet killing in war was justified for Thomas "as a requirement of natural justice and right order." More than many of his theological predecessors, for Aquinas, the rule of law and the exercises of justice had an integral place in the meaning of peace. These natural virtues did not impugn the perfection of love, even as love surpassed them. Instead the work of justice could by the grace of God be enriched into a communion of love. The virtues of political life, already goods in themselves, could be further transfigured into the gift of tranquil order, peace on earth. Cahill, *Love Your Enemies*, 85, 92-94.

[94] Thomas Aquinas, *ST* II.II q. 23, a.1, ad. 2; ST II.II, q.25, a.1. Cahill, *Love Your Enemies*, 88.

[95] Thomas Aquinas, *ST* II.2, q.29, a.2, ad.2.

Christian JWT its original rationality and its basic rationale?[96] The tradition has never really taken up this inquiry, but it is a crucial question for the capacity of the framework to address the moral dimensions of warfare in an ecological age.

Summing up: The streams of Christian ethics that stem from Thomas and Augustine affirm that war is unjust wherever it imperils the common good; it is a sin as it destroys the concord of those naturally united in their desire for the peace of God. But the foundational insight of the Christian Just War framework was that war *is* justified when it aims to repair the peace of nations; it is *not* a sin when it intends by enlightened violence to restore society to its natural order, re-forging with the sword the common bonds of appetite, reordering souls to their collective longing for God. As Reichberg has correctly seen, this means "the idea of just war can be given content, such that it will function as a genuine ideal capable of guiding action, only on condition that the idea of peace can be adequately specified."[97] If the Christian JWT is to address the environmental consequences of war, it will need an account of right intention that grasps the theological and material entanglements of ecology with the deep nature of peace.

On the evidence of the moral debates about the Persian Gulf War, the tradition has considerable work to do, for the idea of peace no longer seems adequately specified even in the familiar realms of inter-human society and international affairs. Many commentators discerned inconsistent and suspect motives, but said little about what a right intention would actually entail. For his part, James Turner Johnson was confident that the war was guided by the right intentions of "turning back and undoing aggression," as well as "restoring the shattered peace" and securing peace for the future. But, as Hollis points out, one must still ask what "peace" was presumed to mean. "The question to be asked," she wrote, "is how the coalition defined this goal, and on what assumptions about the nature of the international order."[98]

Once, the Christian tradition had clear ideas about all this. Today, "most contemporary just war advocates, even within Christian ethics, no longer embed their accounts within a distinctly theological context." The loss of theological context may have been strategically shed "for the sake of consensus and casuistry,"[99] but the tradition as it is practiced now in relation to actual wars appears disjointed and obscure,

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[96] For more on this, see pp. 151-157 below.

[97] Reichberg, *Thomas Aquinas on War and Peace*, 3, cf. 39.

[98] Hollis, "The Gulf War and Just War Theory: Right Intention," 217.

[99] Gregory, "Beyond Critique," 3, 1.

with unsettling practical consequences. Many will have relished the public unraveling of the self-assured theological systems that knit tightly the orders of creation, the authority of princes, the sanctity of violence, and the ethics of Christian love. But for contemporary Christian just war thinking, this fragmentation is a problem. Or perhaps, rather, an opportunity. Now, as increasingly vivid encounters with the ecological reach of political violence help to highlight the morally concerning incoherence of *peace* at the center of the Christian ethics of war, just warriors have occasion to reflect and rethink. At the theological level, that effort will likely begin at the fulcrum point of right intention.

With that central point in mind, I will move more quickly through a select few of the remaining criteria, attending to how the Just War debates, represented especially by Johnson's analysis, obscured the moral reality of the Gulf War by ignoring the ecological dimensions of peace.

Last Resort

Given that several diplomatic initiatives to resolve the conflict were in process, strict international sanctions had been put into effect, and Iraq had reportedly agreed in several instances to terms of withdrawal which were summarily dismissed by the United States, many argued that, as of January 1991, the war could not be deemed a *last resort.*

Johnson disagreed, supporting the coalition's decision to commence bombardment, stating that "Iraq's intransigence and continued belligerence sadly left no other choice." To support this judgment, Johnson argued that war is morally preferable to economic sanctions. When sanctions are effective, he said, they inevitably inflict harms on innocents, whereas, in war, those innocents would be regarded as noncombatants and thereby afforded protection. Since sanctions negatively impact civilians, while bombs and bullets would only target Iraq's military forces, war would be "a more moral course than…continuing economic sanctions against the Iraqi people."[100]

This is a disquieting argument coming from one of the world's experts on the morality of war, for it seems culpably oblivious to the impacts of warfare on the citizens of warzones. In Iraq, coalition bombers took a wide view of the elements of Iraqi society that could be considered accomplice to the nation's military forces. With exacting

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[100] Johnson, "Just War and War in the Gulf," 451-452

design and devastating force, the Allies systematically demolished the country's civilian infrastructure, intentionally destroying water tanks, water treatment plants, mains and towers, irrigation sites, sewerage works, power stations, oil wells, refineries and pipelines, hospitals, and the basic means of human mobility, including roads, bridges, and more. During the 43 days of war, the coalition dropped approximately 88,000 tons of bombs, including depleted uranium shells, napalm and cluster bombs, on a country with a population of roughly 18 million, "an explosive tonnage judged equivalent to seven Hiroshima-size atomic bombs."[101] In Baghdad, where bombs had targeted water treatment and pumping stations, desperate civilians washed and drank from the Tigris, only to find that the river had been polluted by wastewater and excrement flows caused by attacks on sewage treatment plants and disposal systems.[102] It is estimated that up to 250,000 Iraqis died due to causes associated with the Gulf crisis, less than a half of whom were military personnel.[103] In Kuwait, the war left forty percent of the water supply contaminated, "polluting it so thoroughly that it remains unusable."[104]

While Johnson is right that sanctions harm civilians, his appeal to the principle of noncombatant immunity to cast war as a safe place for innocents (while dodging the question of last resort) bespeaks an unhealthy abstractness within much Just War reasoning—in particular, a dangerous aloofness from how the violence of war reaches

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[101] Geoff Simons, *The Scourging of Iraq: Sanctions, Law, and Natural Justice,* 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 4.

[102] Sadiq and McCain, *Gulf War Aftermath,* 227. "Looking to the future," wrote John Langan in his post-hoc assessment of the war, "I would argue that more care should be taken to protect civilians from the consequences of a catastrophic demolition of the infrastructure that modern societies rely on to sustain life." A sensible judgment, surely. And yet Langan too supported the war, arguing that it was "imperfectly just."—Langan, "An Imperfectly Just War," 464.

[103] Estimates of both military and civilian deaths vary widely. This estimate takes the average of the Saudi and U.S. DOD estimates of Iraqi military casualties, around 100,000. See U.S. News and World Report, *Triumph Without Victory: The Unreported History of the Persian Gulf War* (New York: Random House, 1992). On civilian casualties, I have used the estimate of Ramsey Clark: "Considering all evidence available to the Commission, I estimate 25,000 civilians had died from indirect effects of the bombing, embargo, shattered infrastructure, and damaged safety and health services by March 1,1991. Adding 25,000 indirect deaths, 25,000 bombing deaths, and atleast 100,000 postwar deaths makes total civilian deaths in excess of 150,000." Ramsey Clark, *The Fire This Time* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992), 83-84. Sadiq and McCain, scientists based in Saudi Arabia commissioned to assess the war's environmental consequences, estimate that "as many as a half a million people may have died (including military personnel) due to causes associated with the Gulf War Crisis." Their estimate of military casualties is 100,000—meaning they blame 400,000 civilian deaths on the war; Sadiq and McCain, *Gulf War Aftermath,* 235. Other estimates are significantly lower.

[104] This assessment came in 2009, eighteen years after hostilities ceased. McNeill and Painter, "The Global Environmental Footprint of the U.S. Military," 27.

innocents by degrading their environments, by destroying the ecological relationships in which they live, and on which their lives depend.

Proportionality and Discrimination *in bello*

Johnson's defenses of Operation Desert Storm's *proportionality* and *discrimination in bello* were also curious. He argued that the use of "smart" bombs and guided cruise missiles meant that the means of war employed by the coalition were "inherently both more discriminate and more proportionate" than the means used in prior wars.[105] He argued further that the coalition's conduct in Operation Desert Storm was justified insofar as it was not as indiscriminate as the conduct of Iraqi forces. "There is a vast difference," he wrote, "between the actions thus far of the coalition air forces and the actions of Iraq": Iraq's actions had been indiscriminate, while the coalition's, less so.[106] Of course, the *in bello* principle of proportionality aims to weigh the harms caused by the means of a given war against the ends achieved by that war; it does not weigh the means used in a current war against the means used in prior wars. Likewise, Johnson's use of the category of discrimination to emphasize the relative immorality of the enemy strains the traditional purpose of the principle, which is to impose severe restrictions on military harms to civilians, even within the conduct of a justified war. Although asymmetric adherence to noncombatant immunity may make enforcement more challenging,[107] the issue of Iraq's conduct has precisely no bearing on the question of whether the coalition in fact honored the principle of discrimination.

Perhaps what Johnson intended to communicate was that the coalition's use of highly accurate weaponry led to comparatively little harm to innocents—presumably levels of harm proportionate to the goods achieved by a coalition victory, although he offered no evidence for this presumption. Others called this conclusion into question. For Kenneth Vaux, "the Iraqi occupation and brutalization of the Kuwaiti people was a

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[105] Johnson, "Just War and War in the Gulf," 452-453.

[106] Johnson, "Just War and War in the Gulf," 452.

[107] Johnson, "Enforcing and Strengthening Noncombatant Immunity," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Military Ethics*, ed. James Turner Johnson and Eric D. Patterson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), 307-318. Johnson stresses the difficulties of enforcing the norm of discrimination in contexts where either "cultural differences" or the tactics of asymmetric warfare leave only one party committed to noncombatant immunity. For Johnson, this is among the most significant challenges needing attention if military ethics is to continue the important work of clarifying and strengthening noncombatant immunity. It is intriguing therefore to notice how his 1992 essay on the Gulf War seems to have already acquiesced to the problem.

grave and serious wrong. The devastation of Iraq by the Allies and the residual tragedy of human death, ecological destruction, and refugee trauma may in the end prove to be the far greater evil." Still, Johnson maintained that proportionality was assured by the coalition's "ability to make closely targeted strikes."[108]

What Johnson's reasoning fails to consider, and what the ecology of war helps to make clear, is that the moral measure of combat methods involves much more than the accuracy of military strikes; it must also include the environmental and social effects of the destruction, and so must attend to the question of the ecological and civic significance of the targets, as well as to the intensity and toxicity of the payload. No degree of precision, no spectacular capacity to aim, compensates for the generalized effects of an unlivable environment, or the generations-long impact of contaminated water, air and soil.

Just War, Gulf War, and Environmental Illiteracy

So was the Gulf War a just war? It depends who you ask. For all its highly delineated principles and well-refined schematics, the tradition is not an empirical science but a framework for moral argumentation. We should not be surprised to see its language employed by both the war's advocates and its detractors. Nor is it particularly odd that the war commenced before the argument was resolved, and that debate continued throughout the course of the Allied bombardment, persisting long after the crude oil smoke had cleared and the dust of depleted uranium had settled to live out the remainder of its 4.5 billion year half-life upon Mesopotamian soil.

Given the rigors of the criteria, argues Hollis, it was probably impossible for the coalition to meet the standards of a just war. But "that is not a reason to denigrate or dispense with Just War Theory," she writes.[109] And why should it be? Surely it stands within the basic logic of just war theory that if the coalition's war could not be deemed just, then the problem was with the war, not with the tradition. But Hollis's anxiety about the perceived health of the just war idea is understandable. Having performed a careful study of right intention within the Gulf War debates, perhaps Hollis saw amidst the fragmented and frequently incoherent conversations signs of blight at the tradition's philosophical roots. Still, both sides sustained confidence in the tradition itself, sure it retained the capacity to assess the war.

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[108] Johnson, "Just War and War in the Gulf, 453.
[109] Hollis, "The Gulf War and Just War Theory: Right Intention," 211.

Many saw evidence of the tradition's thriving. Michael Walzer pointed to the Gulf War as proof when, in 2002, he announced the "triumph of just war theory." The Gulf War indicated the theory's triumph even though, in his judgment, the war had been fought unjustly. Walzer saw plainly that to intentionally bomb sources of clean water and energy meant to destroy conditions "necessary to civilian existence," and this fell short of the standard of discrimination. Despite being an unjust war, the JWT triumphed in Operation Desert Storm because now not only critics but also American presidents and generals had begun to speak its language. From Iraq and Kuwait, to Kosovo, through Afghanistan and then back to Iraq, "it is amazing," he wrote, "how readily military spokesmen…used its categories."[110]

Amazing indeed. But, from the perspective of Christian ethics, it is also somewhat disconcerting to witness the militarization of a moral tradition coinciding with the dissolution of its theological foundations, all in the context of a morally dubious and environmentally disastrous war. While the commander-in-chief and his underlings had learned the perks of explaining themselves in the tradition's diction, the framework's traditional keepers presented confused and dissolute moral reasoning, evidently unmoored from the ideas of peaceable order that had made the theory Christian and anchored its pretensions to lucid judgment. Perhaps the tradition's triumph was its availability to military spokesmen, but none of its premodern theological framers would have recognized its usage. This is not in itself a problem; the disconcerting thing about it for Christian ethics is not that morality had gone secular, but that Christian ethicists struggled to muster resources capable of illuminating the war's full moral dimensions—notably its environmental dimensions—conceding the power and legitimacy proffered by its traditional pedigree to the world's mightiest armed actor. Clearer theological foundations almost certainly would not have stopped the war, but, for a tradition that relies on them for public moral reasoning, could perhaps have facilitated less innocuous guidance and censure.

Walzer had argued that the JWT could proceed without foundations. In contemporary, postmodern conditions, he said, it must. With or without foundations, "the moral world of war is shared," claimed Walzer. Those who argue about war's rights and wrongs may disagree in their judgments, but thanks to the JWT, they

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[110] Michael Walzer, "The Triumph of Just War Theory (and the Dangers of Success)," *Social Research* 69, no. 4 (Winter 2002), 931f.

nevertheless share "a common moral vocabulary and thus a common morality."[111] Sharing a tradition of moral argumentation on war, "we acknowledge the same difficulties on the way to our conclusions, face the same problems, talk the same language."[112]

Over time, continues Walzer, the moral arguments hosted by the JWT have in fact helped to shape "the moral reality of war." That is, the tradition has helped maintain war as a sphere of accountable human agency and responsibility even as warfare remains an obscure zone of coercion and duress. The so-called "fog of war" is a moral environment defined as much by the presence of shared norms as by the challenge to see and apply them. The fact that decision-making in the heat of battle is agonizing is a product not only of strategic uncertainty but especially of shared morality—under the most trying of circumstances, generals and soldiers work hard to stay accountable to common understandings of justice and humanity. The JWT has played a key role forming and sustaining war's common moral world.[113]

Sharing a moral world of war has definite advantages. If we all think and speak about ethics in a compatible manner, then we can all hold each other accountable to (roughly) the same rules, and thereby effectively limit what we all agree are the worst excesses of violence and destruction.[114] But there are disadvantages as well. When a common ethical framework has such wide latitude to shape practical reasoning, it can effectively obscure other moral realities. As Martha Nussbaum demonstrated in *Women and Human Development* and *Frontiers of Justice*, key issues—like justice across borders, or for women, the disabled, or nonhuman species—have been "culpably ignored" in regnant ethical theories. Beginning to take those issues seriously is not always straightforward, as the new issues may present distinctive questions, outstripping the moral vocabularies and basic presumptions of our shared frameworks. Often the problem "cannot be handled by merely applying the old theoretical structure to the new

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[111] Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 4th ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1977), xxii-xxiii.

[112] Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, xxii-xxiii.

[113] Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 15-16.

[114] Here I leave the first-person plural "we all" purposefully ambiguous. Maximally, the whole world has a common morality of war—Walzer seems to imply this at times—and so war conventions function across enemy lines. Minimally, a single political community, or at least its politically engaged members, share a moral world, and so can hold its own warriors and politicians accountable to its own values. For the purposes of this chapter, I do not weigh in on whether there is in fact a common morality of war and/or how widely it is shared, but rather defer to the logic of the JWT, which takes at least some degree of common morality for granted. My criticisms of the tradition will attempt to work within that logic.

case" because the problem is "built into the theoretical structure itself." In such cases, argued Nussbaum, engaging new problems seems to require building new theories.[115]

The point for now is that a common morality may perpetuate moral blind spots; it may frame moral life or moral acts in ways that render certain issues ethically opaque, or it may treat certain entities or relationships as morally inconsiderable. In the context of war, where the stakes are high, the consequences of such blind spots can be severe, and, in the case of the JWT, nothing reveals the risks as vividly as the environmental consequences of warfare.

For most of its history, the JWT has had a blind spot for the environment. Ecology is not within the moral scope of the tradition. This is a basic reason the common tongue of JWT struggled to orient even a highly engaged public to the moral stakes of war in the Gulf. The shared vocabulary of Just War lacks language for an argument over nature's value or environmental politics. In turn, this lexical lacuna has shaped the moral reality of war, where widespread and far-reaching environmental impacts persist without a means to interpret their moral significance.

From this perspective, we can see that Walzer's supposedly shared "moral world of war" is in fact rather narrow. So was the Christian moral world of Augustine and Thomas. It concerned the moral agency of soldiers, politicians, and military decision-makers vis-à-vis the rights of individual human beings (for Walzer) and/or the peace-seeking ordinance of God (for Christianity). Where versions of just war specify the basic terms of that moral terrain with concepts like "neighbor" or "common good," they still frame warfare as a simple transaction among states, political actors, combatants, and human "innocents." For that reason, the relatively late and comparatively weak legal statutes protecting the environment from wanton destruction in wartime sit awkwardly within the moral vocabulary of just war, where the terms of debate have never been calibrated to the rights of non-human creatures, to the value of nature, to the embeddedness of human flourishing within ecological systems, or to the interlinks among political order and environmental conditions.

If this extended engagement with James Turner Johnson and the wider Gulf War debates does not produce a conclusive judgment about whether or not the war was just, it should at least make clear how inadequate attention to the ecology of armed conflict

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[115] Martha Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 1-8. Martha Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

contorts moral reflection on contemporary warfare. The evident clumsiness of the just war reasoning in this case was conditioned in large part by its immersion within a moral framework unequipped to conceive violence in ecological context—a limitation that no amount of historical inquiry or interpretive savvy within the tradition could overcome.

The ecological outcomes of the Gulf War suggest how the environmental illiteracy of the JWT undermines the moral acuity and practical efficacy of contemporary political ethics. Even where "environmental disaster" was counted among the dangers of war, the tradition provided no conceptual tools, no analytic or juridical precedent, to help elaborate how and why ecology was a genuine or binding moral concern—much less to develop a functioning ethical strategy to assess environmental risks and implement environmental protections.

Looking back at the Gulf War discussions, it is clear that the tradition can no longer take for granted the moral cosmos it once assumed, and so the moral logic of just war arguments has become strained, the terms of debate equivocal, and the practical moral guidance suspect. What is peace and who is competent and responsible to uphold it? We no longer know. Who has authority and what is its relation to peace? What are the goods worth fighting for, what are the evils of violence, and how to weigh them side by side? Answering these questions today requires an environmental literacy the Christian political imagination in general and the JWT in particular has thus far failed to cultivate. The persistence of illiteracy in an age of tremendous ecological precarity relates to the framework's concepts of peace and order, which relate equally to the tradition's public inarticulacy before modern war.

Perhaps future ethicists will look back upon the "triumph of Just War" as upon the golden age of sophistry: a vapid epoch besotted with the conventions of argument. But perhaps not. Perhaps the tradition will evolve an environmental politics, and in that evolution refresh its underlying conceptions of peace, order, and the common good. As Willis Jenkins has argued, moral uncertainty and conceptual incompetence can drive ethical innovation.[116] If a bedrock conception of peace has crumbled, and as attempts at moral guidance fashioned from the rubble prove inept before the political ecologies of the contemporary world, the tradition may be presented with an opportunity for meaningful change.

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[116] Willis Jenkins, *The Future of Ethics*, 19-23.

JUST WAR AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

In the recent past, perceived incompetence before the shifting realities of warfare have indeed sparked innovation in the tradition. The distinctive moral challenges of nuclear war, guerrilla war, preemptive war, drone war, and perpetual war have all placed significant strains on traditional thinking, and all have sparked interesting practical and conceptual innovations within just war thinking. Most prominently, the ever-growing attention to the ethical requirements of post-war justice (*jus post bellum*) suggests how profound this adaptive change can be.[117] But the environmental consequences of war cut even deeper. *Jus post bellum* could be developed without ever questioning the tradition's foundational concepts: its root understandings of peace and divine order, its axiomatic accounts of political community, or its decisively anthropocentric boundaries of moral considerability.

A number of scholars have developed initial arguments for incorporating environmental protections into Just War criteria. Each has understood that this requires introducing the tradition to some account of nature's moral significance, some form of environmental ethics. The way the JWT comes to incorporate wartime environmental protections will depend in no small part on how its ethicists and practitioners conceive the moral significance of the environment.[118] Practical questions of whether, how, where, and when combatants must protect the environment will hinge at least partly on the philosophical questions: *why* protect the environment, and *which* parts? The field of environmental ethics is diverse; its variant streams may have importantly different implications for the ethics of war. Which stream of environmental ethics will inform just warriors?

In one of the earliest essays on the issue, Merritt Drucker offered two kinds of reasons to protect the environment in war: instrumentalist anthropocentric reasons (he called them utilitarian) and intrinsic non-anthropocentric reasons (he called them Kantian). He argued for classifying the environment as a noncombatant, extending to

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[117] E.g. Mark Allman and Tobias Winright, *After the Smoke Clears: The Just War Tradition and Post War Justice* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2010); Carsten Stahn, Jennifer S. Easterday, and Jens Iverson, eds., *Jus Post Bellum: Mapping the Normative Foundations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Brian Orend, "Jus Post Bellum," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 117-137. In *After the Smoke Clears*, Allman and Winright discuss environmental cleanup as one of the requirements of post-war justice (pp. 165-172).

[118] Cf. Woods, "The Nature of War and Peace," 22ff.

nonhuman nature the same protections afforded to civilians, military chaplains, and medical personnel.[119] Gregory Reichberg and Henrik Syse develop a Thomistic ethic of environmental stewardship—presented as a middle way between eco-centric holism and instrumentalist anthropocentrism—centered on human responsibilities toward nature, integrating concerns for ecological diversity and the common good of humanity. They then trace this ethic's implications across the JWT criteria. If "natural resources" and natural kinds are understood as part of the common good of all (including future generations), and if human beings have custodial responsibilities for the sustenance of these goods, then just war thinkers should recognize "a moral prohibition against large-scale devastation of territory."[120] Mark Woods interprets their approach to environmental ethics as a type of "value agnosticism," adopting a similar approach. More important than explaining nature's value is to identify *what* in nature should be protected from undue harm in war. Woods argues that protections should focus on place-based species populations and ecosystemic processes because places and processes are the key conditions for sustaining "non-human nature and human dependency on it."[121] Matthew Shadle argues that contemporary Catholic versions of Just War are most suited to adopt an ethic of "moderate intrinsic value" which affirms nature's inherent worth but assigns higher dignity to human beings, so that the environment is due a degree of protection but "could be damaged or destroyed if there is sufficient reason," thereby centralizing the criterion of *proportionality*.[122] Laurie

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[119] Merrit Drucker, "The Military Commander's Responsibility for the Environment," *Environmental Ethics* 11 (1989): 135-152.

[120] Gregory Reichberg and Henrik Syse, "Protecting the Natural Environment in Wartime: Ethical Considerations from the Just War Tradition," *Journal of Peace Research* 37 (2000): 449-68.

[121] Woods, "The Nature of War and Peace," 24ff. Woods places special emphasis on environmental considerations *ad bellum*, introducing the idea of *jus potentia ad bellum*, which applies JWT criteria to war preparations as well. Studied estimates of a war's potential environmental impact should be part of the ethical decision-making about whether or not to go to war in the first place. If a war cannot be fought by just means (as stipulated by *jus in bello* criteria), then the war should not be fought. If justice in war now involves protecting the environment, then it is unjust to enter the war knowing that the environment will be indisriminately and/or disproportionately damaged. In the absence of reliable pre-war calculations of probably environmental harms, Woods makes the case for incorporating an ecologically-inflected *precautionary principle* into the *jus ad bellum* criterion of *proportionality*. "Most twentieth century wars have had detrimental environmental consequences for people and for nonhuman nature," he reminds, so "preventing environmental damage demands heightened caution." On *jus potentia ad bellum*, see p.29.

[122] Matthew Shadle, "No Peace on Earth: War and the Environment," in *Green Discipleship: Catholic Theological Ethics and the Environment*, ed. Tobias Winright (Winona: Anselm Academic, 2011), 417. Most notably, Shadle adds important insights into how environmental considerations could be incorporated into the principles of *jus post bellum* (p. 419-21).

Johnston also focuses on proportionality, and follows Reichberg and Syse in adopting an ethic of human "responsibility for the common good of all creation." But she further raises the question of *virtue* in Just War reasoning: "How can we become people who accurately perceive the costs of war…as they affect the environment?" She highlights humility and solidarity as environmental virtues necessary for moral perception of environmental value and fitting response to the ecological risks of war.[123]

By imagining how the JWT could begin to recognize natural values and incorporate environmental protections, these thinkers have made important contributions to the future of the JWT. Yet most still underestimate how profound the tradition's blind spot for the environment really is, and so miscalculate the depth to which the integration of ecological ideas must extend. As Mark Woods admits, arguments for environmental protections in war, no matter how philosophically sound, will almost always lose out to arguments of military necessity in the heat of battle.[124] This is both a pragmatic recognition and a perceptive insight into the anthropocentrism that extends much deeper into the tradition than any extrinsic account of natural value could plumb.[125]

It would be plausible to turn to Thomas, as Reichberg and Syse do, in search of an environmental ethic that might be considered intrinsic to the JWT, aiming to relocate the (Christian) JWT within a wider theological cosmology where concern for the common good of humanity integrates with moral regard for the ecological diversity of nature. For Thomas, the good of creation is grounded in God's self-communication—

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[123] Laurie Johnston, "Just War and Environmental Destruction," in *Can War Be Just in the 21ˢᵗ Century? Ethicists Engage the Tradition*, ed. Tobias Winright and Laurie Johnson (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2015), 96-111. Johnston thereby connects important conversations on virtue that remain mostly on the fringes of the JWT and contemporary environmental ethics. See e.g., Daniel Bell, *Just War as Christian Discipleship: Recentering the Tradition in the Church rather than the State* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009); Ronald Sandler and Philip Cafaro, eds., *Environmental Virtue Ethics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

[124] Woods, 25. Cf. Reichberg and Syse, 450.

[125] Marcus Hedahl, Scott Clark, and Michael Beggins seem to have grasped this point. They argue that war's environmental impacts generate "an urgent need to reconsider the foundations of just war theory itself." It is not clear from their essay, however, what those foundational changes might be—or indeed, whether the changes they seek should be deemed "foundational" at all. Their most frequent refrain is that the ecology of war offers a "reminder that the moral default— even within war—is against the use of violence." They argue that ecological restoration should be incorporated into *jus post bellum* frameworks. Like Mark Woods before them, they argue for attention to war preparation and military-industrial production (*jus para bellum*, they call it). Marcus Hedahl, Scott Clark, and Michael Beggins, "The Changing Nature of the Just War Tradition: How Our Changing Environment Ought to Change the Foundations of the Just War Theory," *Public Integrity* 19, no. 5 (2017): 429-443.

"for [God] brought things into being in order that [God's] goodness might be communicated to creatures, be represented by them"[126]—and the ordinary existence and unique activities of all created things express their natural desire for God, so that creaturely goods draw creation into the character of God. The dignity of creation as a whole is grounded theocentrically, and nature's integrity consists precisely in its diverse forms of natural orientation to God, embodied in earth's myriad forms of life and ecological activity. Nature's operations bespeak a yearning for God, and movement toward the natural good of creatures molds life in the likeness of God.[127] For human beings, pursuing knowledge is how we seek the good, our distinctive way of desiring God. The end of human beings is perfect knowledge of God, knowledge fulfilled in an essential union with the One who is known. This end is natural to humans yet exceeds their natural capacities; it comes as grace, as a gift from God. This gift—of Godself, to human knowers—is conveyed through created things, received as humans grasp the goodness in the diversity of creation. "God communicates divine goodness to humans through our ecological relations to other creatures."[128] In these themes scholars have found seeds for a range of Thomist environmental ethics, centered variously on human stewardship of nature's common goods, respect for creation's integrity as an instrument of the sanctifying grace of God, preservation of biodiversity as medium of the sacramental presence of God, and more.[129]

Each of these Thomist environmentalisms establishes a kind of value for the natural world, making possible a certain regard for nature within Christian Just War vernacular. But none successfully locates creation's ecological orders in relation to the political cosmology that grounds the tradition. For that reason, efforts to consider the environment strain the logic of the framework, and often grind into incoherence.

A quick look at a few of the tradition's key criteria indicates the problems that arise when an environmental vision overlays the tradition without feeding its roots. For

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[126] Thomas, *ST,* I, q.47, a.1, co.

[127] Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 119ff. Jenkins draws on Olivia Blanchette, *The Perfection of the Universe according to Aquinas: A Teleological Cosmology* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1992). So do Reichberg and Syse in their efforts to construct a Thomist environmental ethic applicable to Just War reasoning. Whereas Jenkins interprets Aquinas as an eco-justice thinker, Reichberg and Syse elicit an ethic of stewardship; Reichberg and Syse, "Protecting the Natural Environment," 457. My interpretation here draws most heavily on Jenkins.

[128] Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 127-28.

[129] Respectively, Reichberg and Syse, "Protecting the Natural Environment;" Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*; and Kevin O'Brien, *An Ethics of Biodiversity: Christianity, Ecology, and the Variety of Life* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 41-75.

example, the question of legitimate or competent authority—which, as we saw above, is fundamental to the Christian JWT's way of understanding how war fits rightly within a cosmopolis ordered by God—becomes impenetrable when environmental concerns are merely tacked on to the moral considerations of war. "Which leaders—political or military—have the competent authority to command actions that will do grave harm to the natural environment?" ask Reichberg and Syse, who seem to grasp that the answer is *neither*.[130] Answering that question within the logic of the Christian JWT requires knowing how the political order relates to the natural order, and how both relate to the peace of God. Traditionally, war was the prerogative of rulers because God had ordained them to preserve and repair an order conducive to peace. No political theology associated with the JWT ever imagined that the sovereign was charged with authoritative responsibility over what we now understand as ecosystemic processes. In the tradition's imagination, there is a profound disjuncture between political authority and the powers that keep ecological processes in place, linked to a longstanding denial that peaceable fellowship has environmental dimensions, or that human concord is co-dependent with the flourishing of creation. Responsibility for order has no linkage with responsibility to nature, so introducing environmental concerns into the JWT presses the tradition's understanding of authority beyond its competency. An environmentally adept theory of just war needs an account of politics that understands ecological relations as political relations, and conceives human sociality in ecological scope.

Proportionality is the most obvious and most frequently cited aspect of the JWT relevant to environmental protections, because the principle focuses attention on combat's concrete *consequences*. Once environmental consequences are acknowledged as morally consequential, it would seem, the criterion of proportionality easily incorporates these concerns into just war debates. But the idea of proportionality presumes a certain commensurability among the goods and bads of war. Its functionality depends on the capacity to weigh a war's good intentions against its bad effects. That capacity, in turn, depends upon a clear conception of the war's intended good—a substantive hope for both the moral and political character of the post-war world. "The purpose of the criterion is to have the use of violence governed by the rightly intended moral ends," explains Nigel Biggar, "partly to limit the damage caused, and partly to provide a way of measuring the sincerity of intention." War can be justified only if competent authorities determine its evils "seem to be made

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[130] Reichberg and Syse, "Protecting the Natural Environment," 462.

worthwhile…by the just peace intended."[131] For the Christian JWT, then, proportionality requires a theologically and practically articulated vision of peace. Without this vision, the moral currency of war is unknown, and "there is no ready way to establish an independent or stable view of the values against which the destruction of war is measured."[132]

I have already indicated that such a vision is absent within contemporary just war discourses. But even more concerning from the perspective of environmental ethics is the prospect of rehabilitating an earlier understanding of peace which belies the connections between ecological systems and human (and divine) fellowship. Even if the tradition has learned to value the environment, its underlying political theology affords no way to appraise environmental destruction against the ends of peace, because the two have no moral relation. They are incommensurable goods, existing in different moral worlds.

Admittedly, the problem of commensurability burdens all discussions of proportionality in war. "How can we pretend to measure, on the same scale of value, the benefits of defeating aggression against the body count needed to achieve it?" asks Orend.[133] Such cost-benefit calculations in war seem to entail the crass presumption that all values reduce to a common, quantifiable currency.[134] But at least the usual problems associated with proportionality can locate competing values in the common moral world of inter-human political relations. War's various goods and bads may not reduce to a single currency, but they at least share a common relation to the end goal of peace. Plural political values can be considered together in light of how they orient toward the tradition's chief end and its temporal approximations. If the natural environment has value, but no relation to these essential ends, its place in Christian just war considerations is a surd—a distraction, without bearing.

Creation will only receive the moral consideration it is due when the natural environment is understood as an integral part of political life, a key aspect of the end toward which politics strives: the *tranquilitas ordinis*, the fellowship of peace in which the good of all creatures harmonizes in their common attunement to God. This will require a much deeper transformation: a re-assessment of the foundational theo-political vision upon which the tradition is based. If the JWT is to offer guidance for the

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[131] Nigel Biggar, *In Defense of War* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 113.
[132] Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 129.
[133] Orend, *Morality of War*, 59f.
[134] Cf. Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 5th edition, xv-xvii.

ecology of war, it will need a theological reformation around ecological dimensions of God's peace.

Why not turn back to Thomas in search of pathways toward such a reformation? There are seeds in his thought that could make this strategy appear promising. Recall Thomas's claim that *all things* desire peace.[135] Here, he seems to link the theology of war and the metaphysics of *tranquilitas ordinis* to the entirety of the created order. Thomas was clear: plants, animals, and all the "non-rational" things of earth are also naturally inclined to peace, longing toward the good-of-their-kind—and so to the good of the well-ordered and inter-connected whole—for which they were created.[136] Plants, animals, and inanimate bodies are "inclined to good by their natural inclination," wrote Thomas. He calls this "natural appetite."[137] Later in the *Summa* Thomas refers to nature's natural appetite as natural "love"—a type of love distinctive to each created thing's particular nature, each with a tendency toward its own good, and thus toward God. For Thomas, peace is pursued in a menagerie of earthly loves, each styled "according to its mode" and with its own integral role in God's ordering of creation for the common good of all.[138]

It would seem, then, that the flourishing of non-human nature—what we now call "natural environment"—was once part of the theological conception of peace underlying the JWT. But on closer inspection the picture is more ambiguous. Thomas explicitly denied that non-human creatures and "inanimate" nature belonged within the fellowship of peace pursued in human affairs, since human relationships are "regulated by reason." "The friendship of charity extends only to such things as have a natural capacity for everlasting life," he wrote. Thomas founded his conceptions of virtue and human sociality upon a more ultimate reality, upon the divine *communicatio* of final beatitude, the natural human's graced participation in the Goodness of God, "to which the irrational creature cannot attain." For Thomas, it would seem, the rest of the created order does not have a share in salvation, and so does not merit love, or enjoy the fellowship of earthly peace.

As the JWT advanced over the centuries, theorists and practitioners built on

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[135] Thomas Aquinas, *ST* II.2, q.29, a.2, ad.2.

[136] I borrow the useful language of "good-of-their-kind" from Holmes Rolston III, "Value in Nature and the Nature of Value," in *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology,* ed. Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston III (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 145.

[137] Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I. q.59, a.1, co.

[138] Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I. q.60, a.1, co.

Thomas's thought in new contexts in ways that solidified the distinction and widened the ontological gap between humanity and the rest of creation. The Christian JWT "played a significant role in shaping modernity," argues Mark Douglas, for it normalized through moral and political argument—in contexts where Christian discourse was intimately entwined with the expanding powers of European civilization—the hallmark thought-patterns of instrumentalism, autonomy, universality, and immanence.[139] In particular, he claims, the ways Vitoria adapted Thomist ideas in the early age of Spanish colonialism contributed to a conception of international order built on the construction of "others" into abstract and interchangeable resources. While ostensibly undercutting popular arguments for unmitigated violence against indigenous peoples, Vitoria helped set the terms of colonial engagement, making conquest of the New World more likely and more intelligible within the emerging structures of modernity. In the same movements, he shepherded the JWT, and the systems of international law that grew out of it, toward a logic that would instrumentalize both people and earth, severing in the process any concept of the integral relations of humanity and nature.[140]

Douglas argues that Vitoria's ways of developing Christian just war thinking in the "axial period" of European colonial conquest helped shape how modern Europe "linked otherness to commodification." Commissioned by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V to provide a moral analysis of Spanish violence in light of an anthropological assessment of native inhabitants in the New World, Vitoria affirmed indigenous humanity within a universalist vision that paradoxically confined native peoples to another moral world, outside the theo-political fellowship of Christendom. "The means through which Vitoria recognized the full humanity of those indigenous persons in order to answer just war questions helped to initiate a modern form of abstracting the other," in which the peoples of the New World could be "alienated from the world" and so also "removed from it by reducing them to commodities, becoming one more collection of fungible goods." The modernization of the just war theory helped fund a worldview "in which the other must stay other and, as other, can be exchanged with anything else that is also other," claims Douglas.[141]

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[139] Mark Douglas, "Modernity, the Environment, and the Christian Just War Tradition" (unpublished manuscript.)

[140] See Ch. 1, "Engaging the Other: Francisco de Vitoria and the Age of Conquest," in Douglas, "Modernity, the Environment, and the Christian JWT."

[141] Douglas, "Engaging the Other," 45, 62, 69-71.

That worldview reinforced the colonial imagination of the new world as a storehouse of resources for control and transport, he continues. "Even as people can be alienated from the world, the non-human parts of the world can be thought of as inert collections of goods to be acquired and traded because they need not be included among the list of qualities that make humans human."[142] This way of thinking—abstracting human others and colonized lands from the European moral world in order to fashion people and nature alike into commodities—profoundly shaped the politics of modernity, including how human societies engaged their environments. If Douglas is correct, the development of the JWT is more deeply entwined with patterns of ecological violence—and the Christian tradition's difficulties acknowledging and engaging them—than I have suggested so far in this chapter. It means that, as the Christian JWT developed in concert with the nature-denial of empire-building, it ultimately "shaped the environmental crises of the Anthropocene,"[143] and bears some responsibility for the political ecologies of human exploitation and resource control that made "blood for oil" an imaginable trade in the politics of late modernity.

The central reason for the tradition's failure to address war's environmental impacts is not that contemporary just war practitioners inherit a political theology pre-dating ecological theory. The tradition's problem is not the absence of an ecological consciousness, but the deeply-rooted presence of an environmental imaginary that makes an other of the earth within a culturally imperialist way of universalizing humanity.

The costs of this logic in the Persian Gulf region reveal once again the high stakes of the colonial Christian legacy that removed ecological relations from both theological and political imagination. Having effectively agreed to commoditize natural resources within a theological defense of political order, the tradition persists in abstracting nature in ways that normalize exploitative or destructive environmental politics, all while continuing to obscure the significance of ecology in the common life of peoples. It is noteworthy that even after the war, most assessments of Operation Desert Storm failed to make moral sense of what was already acknowledged as unprecedented ecological calamity. The rifts between Just War reasoning and the competencies necessary for an ethical politics of nature are deep. Increasingly, they undermine the presumption of Christian moralists to assist with practical moral reasoning about

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[142] Douglas, "Modernity, Environment, JWT," 69-71.
[143] Douglas, "Modernity, Environment, JWT," 19.

contemporary warfare

Those still committed to the JWT will be better served looking for insight outside the tradition, rather than aiming to rehabilitate or reconstruct just war theory and practice by drawing on resources solely from within. Efforts to acknowledge and transform this heritage ought to turn toward traditions and movements that have been reliably attentive to such ecologies of violence—to the links between ecological degradation and human domination, and to the ways accounts of natural order may carry dehumanizing ecological imaginations and environmental politics. "Do we have any reason to believe that the culture most responsible for the ecological crisis will also provide the moral and intellectual resources for the earth's liberation?" asks James Cone.[144] Cone is not here talking directly about the JWT, but more broadly about the main streams of Euro-American Christianity, within which the JWT developed and still makes its home. But the question resounds. Just warriors could learn much from dialogue with a tradition accustomed to doing politics with nature, well-practiced in the challenges of engaging the environmental dimensions of political violence, including the ways nature bears the imprint of culturally and racially supremacist imaginaries.

Toward that end, I turn in the final section of this chapter to movements for Environmental Justice (EJ). The present section began by arguing that the JWT will need input from some stream of environmental ethics in order to make moral sense of the environmental consequences of war and to responsibly incorporate environmental protections into its discourse. It ends by suggesting that the JWT needs help from a body of thought and practice that offers more than an account of nature's value; it needs the intervention of a movement equipped to diagnose and uproot regnant and intertwined logics of human and ecological domination for which the JWT is at least partially culpable. In what follows, I explore what EJ's theorists and practitioners could teach the JWT about these challenges, and, ultimately, about the ecological dimensions of peace.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

In the United States, the idea of environmental justice developed beginning in the late 1970s, catalyzed initially by local, grassroots movements organizing in opposition to public and corporate land use practices that disproportionately exposed

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[144] James Cone, "Whose Earth Is It Anyway?," in *Earth Habitat: Eco-Injustice and the Church's Response* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 30.

working class minority communities to harmful toxins.[145] As activists connected and studies proliferated to confirm their empirical claims, environmental justice grew into a national movement and developed a distinctive ethical discourse connecting environmental issues with concerns about racial and social justice, civil and human rights, land use, housing policy, and public health.[146] Building on tactics, arguments, and organizational networks cultivated in the civil rights struggles of the previous decades, environmental justice movements in the United States pitched protests and legal battles as human rights campaigns, insisting that environmental conditions such as clean air, water, soil, and food constitute basic goods of a human life. In so doing they called moral attention to unjust political ecologies, with the claim that human dependence on and participation in ecological systems should sustain environmental quality, equal opportunity and bodily and cultural integrity.

Outside the U.S., "the environmentalism of the poor" spawns from "social conflicts over access to and control over natural resources." Responses to environmental degradation or resource extraction take shape as adversarial campaigns for collective rights to subsistence and identity.[147] In a global context, EJ movements draw attention to dynamics of "ecologically unequal exchange" and biopiracy, in which economic relations across severe imbalances of power (often between the "global North" and "global South") gradually drive poorer nations toward ecological ruin.[148] In short, environmental justice discourses highlight human communities' connections to the goods and hazards flowing through environmental systems, and frame these local and global relations as matters of political justice.

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[145] For a very brief early history, see Robert D. Bullard, "Environmental Justice in the Twenty-First Century," in *The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution*, ed. Robert Bullard (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2005), 18-42.

[146] Key early studies included U.S. General Accounting Office, "Siting of Hazardous Landfills and Their Correlation with Racial and Economic Status of Surrounding Communities" (Washington DC, 1983); and United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, "Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States: A National Report on the Racial and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Communities with Hazardous Waste Sites" (New York, 1987). For a list of early studies, see Taylor, "Women of Color, Environmental Justice, and Ecofeminism, 45-46 (table 2).

[147] Ramachandra Guha and Joan Martinez-Alier, *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South* (New York: Earthscan, 1997). Martinez-Alier offers further reasons to consider the environmentalism of the poor as part of the same current as North American environmental justice in Juan Martinez-Alier, *The Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2002).

[148] Martinez-Alier, "The Ecological Debt," *Kurswechsel* 4 (2002): 5-17.

Following conventions widely employed in the field of environmental ethics, environmental justice is sometimes defined in terms of its value theory. On this view, it is distinguished as an individualist and anthropocentric form of environmental ethics, defined by its moral roots in individual human rights, as opposed to the intrinsic value of nature.[149] But environmental justice movements are not unified in opposition to eco-centrism, and so should not be defined in terms of anthropocentrism. Dorceta Taylor has shown that the environmental justice paradigm often draws on principles affirming ecological interdependence and even the sacredness of Mother Earth, urging practitioners to "live in harmony with nature, value it, recognize nature's intrinsic worth, and stop destroying it." "We take seriously the concept of the web of life…and believe humans are a part of that web," she writes.[150]

Interpreting environmental justice in terms of its value theory distracts from the distinctive ends environmental justice movements seek, and underplays the characteristic practices they develop to pursue them. A more apt way to explain what is distinctive about environmental justice is to foreground how it conceives and cultivates good human life within ecological relations. The practices of environmental justice are oriented toward *full participation in the life-sustaining ecological relations proper to human dignity*. The mode of participation in "natural" processes is political, and its ideal is framed in terms of justice.[151]

Central to this form of environmental ethics is the claim that human dignity has both social and ecological dimensions, and that the two are mutually entwined. In the U.S., this is an insight born of the environmental experiences of communities of color, whose perspectives on the relation of nature and culture developed through long-term citizenship within political ecologies that channel society's toxic byproducts into the air,

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[149] For example, Kristen Schrader-Frechette contrasts the "fascism" (i.e. holism) and "misanthropy" (i.e. non-anthropocentrism) of eco-centric holism to environmental justice's focus on the "democratic birthrights" (i.e. individual entitlements) of human beings (i.e. anthropocentrism).—Kristen Schrader-Frechette, *Environmental Justice: Creating Equality, Reclaiming Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5.

[150] Dorceta Taylor, "The Rise of the Environmental Justice Paradigm: Injustice Framing and the Social Construction of Environmental Discourse," *American Behavioral* Scientist 43, no. 4 (Jan. 2000), 544-45, 558. Also see the Appendix ("The Principles of Environmental Justice") starting on pg. 566.

[151] Justice in EJ movements is most often interpreted as equal access to goods and protections from harms, but also in terms of procedural fairness, substantial freedoms, capabilities, recognition, or cooperation with the common good. For a discussion of the varieties of justice frameworks employed within environmental justice movements, see David Schlosberg, *Defining Environmental Justice: Theories, Movements, and Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

water, soil, and food of its least valued communities.[152] Environmental justice movements organized with claims that the harms associated with systemic and recurrent environmental deprivations and exposures violate not only basic principles of political justice but also basic human rights.

In their claims that human rights are at stake in the ecological currents flowing in and across human bodies and communities, argues Jenkins, environmental justice projects "begin to interpret personhood in terms of ecological relations."[153] Bodies and polities participate in the shaping of those relations, are vulnerable to them, and live, move, and breathe within them. Environmental justice seeks to reform individual and collective capacities for full and equal participation in the political ecologies that give shape and sustenance to human life.

Environmental justice politicizes the practices of human ecological participation because their ecological relations are already political. They "mirror the power arrangements of the dominant society," argues Bullard.[154] For the people of color who developed this tradition in the U.S., that has often meant inhabiting landscapes forged by white power, and cultivating practices of resistance to racist orchestrations of natural and built environments. Taylor writes that "the history of the environmental activism of people of color is one of trying to redefine how they relate to the environment."[155] Seeking freedom from disproportionate environmental hazards, rights to self-determination and equal opportunity, environmental justice practitioners build possibilities for fair participation in their own ecologies deploying the practical lexicon of social justice and the movement strategy of civil rights. Practices of protest, civil disobedience, petition, information gathering, awareness raising, and litigation carry moral claims about undelivered environmental rights and the unjust state of current political ecologies.

EJ has strong resources to interpret and critique the environmental consequences of warfare, and has tools to guide moral response. In cases across the world EJ movements have successfully intervened to highlight, obstruct, and reform political activities that would unjustly distribute environmental hazards and impugn human participation in their sustaining ecological relations. Drawn into the task of protecting

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[152] See Robert D. Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990).
[153] Jenkins, *Future of Ethics*, 205.
[154] Bullard, "Environmental Justice in the Twenty-First Century," 32.
[155] Taylor, "Rise of the Environmental Justice Paradigm," 533.

and redressing war's ecological impacts, environmental justice would offer a framework calibrated to critique conditions of environmental harm visited upon innocents, with a vocabulary (and a growing body of legal precedent) effectively interpreting these harms as violations of human rights, along with strategies to democratize war-time environmental assessments and decision-making with special concern for structurally vulnerable groups. In Colombia, for example, where years of civil conflict have wreaked havoc on local ecosystems, contributing to the displacement of 7 million people (and thus further environmental stresses in the relocation zones), and where the post-conflict power vacuum has cleared the way for massive deforestation and resource extraction campaigns by outside interests, environmental justice groups have effectively used the judiciary system in tandem with community organizing tactics to strengthen local communities' say in the socioenvironmental politics of their regions.[156]

The Colombian example highlights another key contribution EJ could make to Just War reasoning about the environmental consequences of war. Not only do the political repertoires of EJ movements present practices to strengthen moral and legal pressures to reduce the environmental impacts of war. They also insist upon democratic participation in the deliberations and negotiations about actions that substantially impact the lived environments of human communities, with particular emphasis on the input of the people most directly affected by the decisions (i.e. those who live within the impacted environments), and especially of those whose voices have been historically under-represented or discouraged, or whose place in society leaves them distinctly vulnerable to environmental change. In the U.S., "realizing that people of color are largely absent from the environmental policy-making process," the EJ paradigm "calls for their participation as equal partners in the policy arena," explains Taylor.[157] EJ's interpretation of procedural justice in terms of the participation and recognition of all stakeholders and especially traditionally excluded and/or oppressed groups would have major implications for Just War deliberations about war's environmental effects— and for the JWT broadly.

Consider, for example, the debates among Christian Just War thinkers over proportionality in the build-up to the Persian Gulf War. The Council of Churches for

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[156] María Cecilia Roa-García, "Environmental Democratization and Water Justice in Extractive Frontiers of Colombia," *Geoforum* 85 (2017): 58-71.

[157] Taylor, "Rise of the Environmental Justice Paradigm," 542.

Britain and Ireland (CCBI) convened a group of diplomats and experts on war, peace, and the Middle East to give council on the justice of the war. The CCBI's summary report highlighted disagreement and ambivalence about the case for proportionality, despite what they saw as the war's "appallingly destructive possibilities" and its "undoubted horrors."[158] Bishop Brendan Comiskey (of Ireland) worried about the war's potential body count, as well as "incalculable economic damage throughout the world" through its impacts on oil and gas prices.[159] Those who supported the war were not so preoccupied with its calamitous potential. Instead, they enumerated the evils the war in the Gulf would defeat. James Turner Johnson cited Iraq's human rights violations, immense suffering in Kuwait, and significant loss of life and resources as a result of Iraq's invasion and occupation. He pointed out that the regime had developed chemical and biological weapons, and referred to Hussein's eventual attacks on Kuwait's oil infrastructure as evidence of Iraq's tendency toward "great evil," proof that military intervention was, on balance, a good thing.[160] John Langan agreed, but he focused less on the Hussein regime's evils, and more upon the noble intentions of the coalition.[161] The Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales urged prayer for those making the "terrible and difficult" judgments about the war's justice, in solemn recognition that proportionality must be very hard to determine.[162]

Despite their disagreements, the various discussions of proportionality shared a key commonality: "experts" opined on the cost-benefit calculus of waging war in the Gulf, or else referred those judgments to Western political and/or military authorities. This procedure was as normal: The JWT generally trusts armchair analyses of war's pros and cons, or, at best, relies on what the EJ scholar Kristen Schrader-Frechette calls the "old expert-dominated risk paradigm, in which the public has little or no voice."[163]

Schrader-Frechette points out that early EJ struggles in places like Chester, Pennsylvania alerted the scientific and policy communities to major gaps in the traditional risk assessment models—which, like the JWT's model of proportionality, centers on technocratic and purportedly neutral and detached analyses. The Chester

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[158] Quoted in Cahill "Can There Be a Just War to Solve the Gulf Crisis?" 33.

[159] Quoted in Cahill, "Can There Be a Just War to Solve the Gulf Crisis?" 35f.

[160] Johnson, "Just-War Tradition and the War in the Gulf," 451.

[161] Langan, "An Imperfectly Just War," 458-459.

[162] Quoted in Cahill, ""Can There Be a Just War to Solve the Gulf Crisis?" 35.

[163] Kristen Schrader-Frechette, "Analyzing Public Participation in Risk Analysis: How the Wolves of Environmental Injustice Hide in the Sheep's Clothing of Science," *Environmental Justice* 3, no. 4 (2000), 119.

case, and others like it, inspired the National Academy of Sciences to publish a report outlining new criteria and procedures for risk assessment, mandating that "risk assessment, characterization, and management must be 'procedurally acceptable to the interested and affected parties," and that analyses and deliberations should not be 'blind to the inequitable distribution of risk among subpopulations.'"[164] EJ movements asserted community rights to participate in the political processes that would re-shape their own lived ecosystems, supplying empirical evidence that prevailing procedures chronically mischaracterize and miscalculate the environmental hazards born by politically and socially marginalized communities. In the process, EJ helped to change how societies think about the politics of risk, showing in particular how the entanglements of politics and ecology make "environmental values" and "environmental hazards" impossible to assess apart from the experiential judgments of an ecosystem's citizens.

How might these considerations have altered the moral and strategic deliberations about the Gulf War? Much more than merely introducing environmental values and disvalues into the equation, EJ's input would have demanded the participation of Gulf inhabitants in both *ad bellum* and *in bello* assessments of the war's ecological risks. For the U.S., it would have meant adopting a model of proportionality attuned to America's past and present roles in the political ecology of the Middle East and thereby in the shape of Iraqi and Kuwaiti citizen vulnerabilities to acute environmental degradation.[165] EJ reforms the practice of proportionality partly by

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[164] In Chester in the early 1990s, a low-income majority-black community, residents intervened in the EPA's plans to site a soil-decontamination plant there, showing how the EPA's scientific and economic analyses of the risks ignored key justice-related data: Chester was already home to far more than its share of the region's industrial polluters and toxic waste facilities, and the community had many of the worst health indicators in the state. Schrader-Frechette, "Analyzing Public Participation in Risk Analysis," 119-120. The EJ-inspired risk paradigm quoted above is published as National Research Council, *Understanding Risk* (National Academy Press, 1996).

[165] EJ adds an ecological dimension to a critique of just war thinking articulated in different ways by John Kelsay and John Howard Yoder. Kelsay argued that just war deliberations about the Gulf War lacked "historical thickness," in the sense that they failed to consider questions about the justice of Western military intervention in light of the wider historical context of post-caliphate Middle Eastern politics; see David R. Smock "How to Refine and Improve Just War Criteria," in *Religious Perspectives on War: Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Attitudes toward Force after the Gulf War* (Washington, DC: US Institute for Peace Press, 1992), 27. Yoder criticized the "punctualism" of just war reasoning, where rights and wrongs are adjudicated "based upon the facts of the case at just that instant." In the case of the Gulf War, Yoder noted in March 1991 that American public discourse had "consistently described the case as if the history of Mesopotamia began in August." Yoder, "Just War Tradition: Is It Credible?" *Christian Century* 108, no.

changing who is deemed legitimate or competent to assess the moral reality of combat, and partly by recalibrating our view of the background conditions against which the aims and costs of war may be judged. Both points have wider implications for the JWT, and both are worth unpacking further.

Entwined with this reimagining of proportionality is a substantially different understanding of *legitimate authority.* EJ elicits a profound democratization of the JWT, relocating its operations from the sovereign state to the human inhabitants of violent ecologies. By emphasizing the unique competence and the basic rights of affected citizens to interpret the costs of violence within their lived environments, EJ offers an answer to the question raised above: Who on earth has the authority to judge and defend the peace of human ecologies? For most of the JWT's history, the question itself was unthinkable, because human fellowship was abstracted from its relations to nature. But EJ recovers an understanding of human society enmeshed in ecosystems, politically and naturally co-constituted. Its version of authority challenges the JWT to function as part of the political agency of ecological citizens.

EJ calls for reformed concepts of proportionality and authority because its lived politics demonstrate an alternative understanding of peaceable order. The "Principles of Environmental Justice" adopted by the Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit (Oct. 24-27, 1991, Washington DC), begin by affirming "the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction." In this early effort to distill the commitments guiding the nascent movement, EJ leaders repeatedly link human rights claims to affirmations of ecological integrity, interpreting the entailments of human dignity in light of humanity's relations to the natural world. In the Anchorage Declaration, a statement delivered to the 2009 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the collective rights of indigenous communities in the face of climate change, indigenous representatives claimed that their communities, as groups, have a right to continue their particular lifeways in relation to their natural environments. Their collective dignity, they suggest, is carried in distinctive forms of intimacy with particular environments. Climate change, and certain political responses to climate change, imperil those intimacies, and so degrade their united humanity. These examples indicate how the principles of EJ "explode the boundaries of moral

9 (13 March 1991), 296-297. Cf. Mark J. Allman and Tobias Winright, "Growing Edges of Just War Theory: *Jus ante bellum, jus post bellum,* and Imperfect Justice," *JSCE* 32, no. 2 (2012), 174-175.

belonging in most Christian and modern secular ethics" by reimagining human society as embedded within biological and ecological communities, and by showing how social and ecological flourishing mutually depend upon resistance to and repair of relationships of domination.[166]

I have argued throughout this chapter that the Christian JWT will need to take an ecological turn of some real theological depth in order to make moral sense of war's ecological scope and so to incorporate environmental protections into just war deliberations. The tradition's guiding light, I have claimed, is a theological understanding of peace linking the human thirst for God with the pursuit of the common good and the repair of international concord. A truly transformational dialogue with environmental discourses will have to illumine the ecological scope of humanity as human beings relate to their ultimate good through their proximate environments, offering the JWT a way to see the sustenance of ecological integrity as vital to collective flourishing and intrinsic to a just and harmonious politics within and across communities. As a tradition of environmental ethics marked by political action to cultivate human participation in ecologies of justice, EJ could offer key moral resources for Christian reflection on war and peace.

While "peace" is not a common concept in the EJ lexicon, and practitioners rarely indulge in metaphysical speculation, their movements of practical resistance to inhumane environments have a gift for enlivening moral cosmology.[167] EJ does not supply a ready-made theology of peace for appropriation by just warriors, but it does press the broad ecological entailments of basic human rights, widening the JWT's conception of the common good to "incorporate the social and ecological memberships that sustain a person."[168] Importantly, it does that through claims for specific environmental protections, holding politics accountable to the everyday ecologies of the most vulnerable. Precisely by suggesting practices to strengthen moral and legal pressures to reduce the environmental impacts of war on the basis of human rights to life and bodily integrity, EJ could help restore the ecological dimensions of political life within the Christian imagination, with attunement to the dynamics of power within political ecologies. "By bringing nature within the ecological body of humanity," writes

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[166] Larry Rasmussen, "Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice: Moral Theory in the Making?" *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 24, no. 1 (2004), 20-21. Cf. James Cone "Whose Earth is It, Anyway?" 23-32.

[167] See Jenkins, *Future of Ethics*, 190-224.

[168] Jenkins, *Future of Ethics*, 221.

Jenkins, "[EJ] disrupts the logic of domination that depends on strong, hierarchical boundaries between subject and other by interpreting human subjectivity in terms of multiple ecological intimacies."[169] It thereby apprentices the JWT to a notion of peace less prone to the abstraction and instrumentalization of both human and non-human others.

The Persian Gulf War indicates how warfare imperils natural environments, disrupting ecosystems and endangering innocents while extending violence and strife into humanity's sustaining relations. The Just War debates that proliferated around the conflict largely failed to take these problems into account, reflecting a profound error in the tradition's moral vision—an instrumentalist conception of natural environment that fails to see how collective human life shares in the integrity and the sufferings of earth. Dialogue with environmental justice movements, with special attention to the practices they muster to protect politically vulnerable communities from undue environmental harm, could sharpen the just war tradition's understanding of how the good of humanity consists (or degrades) within corporate ways of participating in ecological systems. The practice of just war reasoning chastened and transformed by concerns for environmental justice would involve profound shifts, notably a significantly recalibrated conception of proportionality and a radically democratized view of legitimate or competent authority. In order to integrate and nurture those reforms, the tradition should let EJ's insights spark theological reflection and innovation on the tradition's foundational account of *peace*—its most powerful way of linking faith in God's sustaining grace to responsibility for the common good.

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[169] Jenkins, *Future of Ethics*, 221.

Chapter 4: Arteries of the Nation: Water, Resource Conflict, and Just Peacemaking

INTRODUCTION

The Jordan River shores up a sacred geography. Beginning at the foot of Mount Hermon on the border between Syria and Lebanon, the Jordan (*Nahr Al-Urdun* in Arabic; *Ha-Yarden* in Hebrew) flows south to the Dead Sea, bounding the Golan Heights to the east through the Sea of Galilee, and dividing Israel and the occupied territories of the West Bank from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. All along the way it serves as a fraught symbolic and political boundary, a contested component of identity and economy, and a precarious site of religious and ecological import. The river's significance in the region is difficult to overestimate. Along with its tributaries and underlying aquifers it provides crucial water supply for multiple nations. Its banks are a global tourist destination, including a UNESCO World Heritage site. In 1994, the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty established the river as the international boundary between Israel and Jordan, and outlined commitments to water cooperation along with mutual agreements on borders, security, and defense. It has been the subject of global negotiation and served as an international cease-fire line. It has represented security, prospects for sovereignty, and hopes for cultural and spiritual renewal. Efforts to harness its ecological and symbolic power have spearheaded economies, empowered and devastated nations, and, according to some, sparked wars.

The political and ideological disputes between Israelis, Palestinians, Syrians and Jordanians over access to and control of the Jordan River have in turn come to symbolize the growing significance of environmental conflict and environmental security in an era of pervasive ecological change. Conflict over scarce supplies of fresh water in the Middle East are often interpreted as a canary in the coal mine, auguring a future of extreme political turmoil as climate change and population growth worsen environmental scarcities and fracture already strained ecological and social relations. On the other hand, the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty encapsulates a persistent hope for the prospects of global cooperative environmental management to serve as a catalyst for international peace.

This chapter engages environmental conflict as a problem for Christian ethics, focusing on conflict and cooperation over water, taking the Jordan River as a case example. How do challenges of environmental change and resource scarcity bear upon Christian responses to warfare, violence, and peacemaking? How might Christian environmental theology reckon with the earthly entanglements of ecology and violence? How might Christian environmental and political thought help each other gain greater purchase on this crucial set of contemporary problems? In order to explore those questions, I examine the Just Peacemaking Perspective (JPP) in critical dialogue with an emerging framework of Christian environmental theology and ethics called Watershed Discipleship about the challenges of environmental conflict and environmental peacebuilding.

In addition to acquainting two schools of Christian ethical thought—one on warfare, the other on ecology—with the moral complexities of violent ecologies, the chapter explores how religious nationalisms entwine with contested conceptions of the natural environment in contexts of resource conflict. In the process, it furthers several of the broader arguments of this dissertation as a whole: that environmental change is frequently entangled with violence; that when human communities participate in or encounter these entanglements, the experience shapes perceptions of the Other and conceptions of the natural world, forming people groups wounded through and thus often defined by their ecological relations; and that the moral and religious meanings ascribed to this web are crucial data for understanding—and, potentially, for transforming—the present and future landscape of violence and ecological distress.

In February 1994, just months before the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty fueled a short-lived period of eco-political optimism, Robert Kaplan argued in *The Atlantic* that the environment would be "the national security issue of the early twenty-first century."[1] Kaplan's article, titled "The Coming Anarchy" was provocative, alarmist, and referenced widely. He drew on what meager research existed at the time to concoct grim predictions of tribalist warfare throughout the developing world, "aggravated, or in many cases, caused by environmental scarcity." Public statements like Kaplan's and ambitious charters like the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty threw fuel on the fire of an

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[1] Robert Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," Feb. 1994, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1994/02/the-coming-anarchy/304670/.

already contentious debate in conflict studies, political science, and security studies: What impact, if any, does environmental change have on the outbreak, the intensity, or the character of violent conflict? What forms of politics can address the common problem of ecological degradation in a deeply divided world? What roles can environmental management play in mitigating conflict and building peace?

In short, the importance of environmental issues to matters of political violence has been gaining attention. By the mid-1990s, the end of the Cold War had opened inquiry into new issues and prompted a search for new analytic and strategic frameworks, notably on the political consequences of environmental degradation.[2] Correlated with the emergence of *human security* as a paradigm prioritizing key indicators of human well-being in international governance,[3] scholars began to speak of *environmental security* as a central benchmark, concerned with "peacefully reducing human vulnerability to human-induced environmental degradation."[4] Environmental security discourse aimed to reconceive national security in ways that encompass threats to natural resources and the environmental conditions of human flourishing.[5]

In a distinct but related development, research groups formed to study *environmental conflict,* aiming to discern material connections or even "causal pathways" between natural resource scarcity and violent conflict.[6] The most influential of these—

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[2] Wenche Hauge and Tanja Ellingsen, "Causal Pathways to Conflict," in *Environmental Conflict,* ed. Paul F. Diehl and Nils Petter Gleditsch (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 37. See e.g. John Bulloch and Adel Darwish, *Water Wars: Coming Conflicts in the Middle East* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1992); Nils Petter Gleditsch, ed., *Conflict and the Environment* (Dordrecht and Boston: Springer, 1997); Günther Bächler, "Why Environmental Transformation Causes Violence: A Synthesis," in *Environmental Change and Security Project Report*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1998), 24–44.

[3] United Nations Development Program, ed., *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[4] Jon Barnett, *The Meaning of Environmental Security: Ecological Politics and Policy in the New Security Era* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2001), 129. Cf. Kent H. Butts, "Environmental Security: A DoD Partnership for Peace." (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, April 25, 1994).

[5] Seminal papers include: Arthur Westing, "Global Resources and International Conflict: An Overview," in *Global Resources and Environmental Factors in Strategic Policy and Action*, ed. A. Westing (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Jessica Tuchman Mathews, "Redefining Security," *Foreign Affairs* vol. 68, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 169-71; Michael Renner, "National Security: The Economic and Environmental Dimensions," Worldwatch Paper Number 89, (May 1989): 9-427; Norman Myers, "Environmental Security," *Foreign Policy* 74 (1989): 23-31.

[6] Wenche Hauge and Tanja Ellingsen, "Causal Pathways to Conflict." For a useful introduction to main lines of emphasis, debate, and interconnection between the discourses of environmental security and

the Project on Environment, Population and Security at the University of Toronto, led by Thomas Homer-Dixon—gave shape to the field by arguing that three distinct types of natural resource scarcity coalesce in ways that make violence more likely: *supply*-induced scarcity (resource depletion or degradation), *demand*-induced scarcity (caused by population growth or changes in consumptive behavior), and *structural* scarcity (disproportionate resource distributions, often "deeply rooted in institutions" and structured along lines of race, class, religion, gender, and ethnicity). Homer-Dixon argued that these scarcities "interact and reinforce each other in extraordinarily pernicious ways."[7] The Toronto Group predicted that the most significant increases in scarcity-induced conflict would take shape in small or medium scale intra-national clashes, particularly across existing social and ethnic cleavages, exacerbated especially by the stresses of population migration. Their most general and influential conclusion was simply that "scarcities of critical environmental resources—especially of cropland, freshwater, and forests—contribute to violence in many parts of the world."[8]

The Toronto Group's conclusions helped spark a cottage industry of empirical, quantitative research to test and elaborate these findings.[9] Debates have raged over the particulars, including the relative significance of environmental factors, how to conceptualize the causal mechanisms linking environment and violent conflict, and especially about methodologies of quantitative and predictive analysis.[10] But the fact

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environmental conflict, see Nicole Detraz, *Environmental Security and Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 25-44.

[7] Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 14-16. Homer-Dixon drew special attention to how the three forms of scarcity converge in dynamics of *resource capture* (in which powerful groups respond to perceived scarcity and/or opportunity by using their social and political leverage to gain greater resource access, thus imposing critical structural scarcities on the less powerful) and *ecological marginalization* (in which structural scarcities drive resource-poor people into ecologically vulnerable landscapes, which in turn degrade under the pressure of intensified resource demand, often driving further ecological disruption and human migration; Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases," *International Security* 19, no. 1 (Summer 1994): 5-40.

[8] Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence,* 5, 13.

[9] But whereas the Toronto Group pioneered and defended a case method approach, the field has increasingly moved toward large-N, multi-variate quantitative studies. See the methodological debate between Nils Petter Gleditsch, "Armed Conflict and the Environment" in *Environmental Conflict,* ed. Paul F. Diehl and Nils Petter Gleditsch (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), and Schwartz, Deligiannis, and Homer-Dixon, "The Environment and Violent Conflict" in *Environmental Conflict,* ed. Paul F. Diehl and Nils Petter Gleditsch (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001)

[10] Nils Petter Gleditsch was an early critic and has been especially influential, both in shaping and reporting on the field's orienting debates. See Gleditsch, "Armed Conflict and The Environment: A

that the environment and ecological change are linked to violent conflict is no longer controversial, only the questions of how, why, under what conditions, and how to frame the interconnections. More recently, heightened attention to climate change has only increased the urgency of these questions, so that at least one facet of Kaplan's prophecy seems prescient: environmental change is arguably "the hottest issue in security studies."[11]

Indeed, Hans Günther Brauch argues that national security and defense have gradually become the primary public rationales for taking climate change seriously, at least in the global North. The IPCC and other global climate policy arenas have increasingly framed Anthropocene challenges in terms of existential threats and national security concerns. Re-framing climate change as a national security risk (rather than an environmental problem or a justice issue) has been instrumental in mobilizing the climate change mitigation and adaptation regimes of North Atlantic countries, he claims.[12] This is just one facet of what is now commonly called the *securitization* of global environmental change.

While this rapidly growing and increasingly sophisticated attention to environment is a remarkable development within security and conflict studies, the widespread linkage of environmental issues with conflict and violence is equally significant for environmental policy and (potentially) for environmental ethics. As the material links between ecology and violence become more firmly established, the moral and political meanings of environment are increasingly bound up in the paradigm of national security and the specter of political violence.

By the late 1990s a wide range of scholars were already arguing for the *desecuritization* of environmental politics. Some worried that the linkage misconstrues the nature of environmental problems, malforms environmental thought and practice within a military or emergency mold, or risks reducing responsibility and agency on

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Critique of the Literature," *Journal of Peace Research* 35, no. 3 (1993): 381-400; Paul F. Diehl and Nils Petter Gleditsch, "Controversies and Questions," in *Environmental Conflict*, ed. Paul F. Diehl and Nils Petter Gleditsch (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001); Gleditsch, "Whither the Weather? Climate Change and Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 49, no. 1 (Jan 2012): 3–9.

[11] Rymn J Parsons, "Climate Change: The Hottest Issue in Security Studies?" *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 2010): 87–116.

[12] Hans Günter Brauch, "Securitizing Global Environmental Change," in *Facing Environmental Change: Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts,* ed. Hans Günter Brauch et al. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2009), 65- 102.

environmental issues to state actors.[13] Daniel Deudney acknowledges that treating ecology as a national security concern has potent power to mobilize state institutions and exercise national identities, but he worries that it also injects into environmental politics "the conflictual, parochial, and zero-sum assumptions, norms, practices, and institutions that currently predominate in the domain of national security."[14] Mark Zeitoun suggests that securitization has led to the deprioritization of justice issues in global environmental discourse, as questions of fairness, equity, and human rights are displaced by geopolitical variables in both academic and diplomatic discussions.[15] Timothy Dyle and Sanjay Chatuvedi point to the recent "securitization and often militarization" of the Global North's responses to human migration as a key reason to be cautious about embedding climate politics within a security framework. The dominant state-centric and security-focused paradigms, they worry, convey the ordeal of climate displacement in terms of "the fear and cartographic anxieties of the affluent," situating the climate refugee as a helpless, thirsty, possibly radicalized, border-invading threat.[16]

Notably absent from these conversations has been any input from or influence upon Christian political or environmental ethics. The field of Christian ethics so far has precious little to say about how to understand and respond to the links between environmental conditions and violence, between the politics of conflict and ecologies of scarcity, or between national, environmental, and religious imaginaries. Nor does the field offer insight into the possible dangers of securitizing environmental discourse. Perhaps because Christian ethics, particularly in its dominant strands and especially in the Global North, has fastidiously sustained the intellectual and disciplinary divisions

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[13] Daniel Deudney, "The Case against Linking Environmental Degradation and National Security," *Millenium: Journal of International* Studies 19, no. 3 (1990) 461-476. Nina Graeger, "Environmental Security?" *Journal of Peace Research* 33, no 1, 1996. Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998). Jon Barnett and Stephen Dovers, "Environmental Security, Sustainability, and Policy," *Pacifica Review* 13 no. 2 (2001).

[14] Daniel H. Deudney, "Environmental Security: A Critique," in *Contested Grounds: Security and Conflict in the New Environmental Politics*, ed. Daniel Deudney and Richard A. Matthew (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 187-219.

[15] Mark Zeitoun, "Global Environmental Justice and International Transboundary Waters: An Initial Exploration," *The Geographical Journal* 179, no. 2 (2013): 141.

[16] Timothy Doyle and Sanhay Chatuvedi, "Climate Refugees and Security: Conceptualizations, Categories, and Contestations," in *Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

of the modern university—e.g. between ecological and political thought, between natural and social sciences, between environmental conditions and social life—the field has struggled to make any moral or theological meaning of these entanglements. Despite theological potential, including a long history of invoking theologies of creation within Christian political thought and ethical reflection on conflict and violence, the tradition has developed largely non-overlapping tools and frameworks for environmental and political ethics. The prevalence of Christian reflection on violence, ecology, and climate change (as distinct issues) makes the absence of Christian attention to environmental conflict even more conspicuous.

This absence is embarrassing from the standpoint of Christian ethics because Christian ethicists have both theological reasons and professional pretensions to be productive interlocutors on issues of violence and environment. At the same time, the absence is unfortunate for the fields of environmental ethics, political ecology, and environmental peacebuilding because, as this chapter argues, attention to the religious dimensions of these problems is necessary and lacking, and because the creativity and depth of religious responses can in fact produce meaningful interventions and useful interlocutors.

This chapter engages the Christian Just Peacemaking paradigm, raising questions about its capacity to shed light on the distinct challenges of environmental conflict. The JPP outlines a battery of practices, each commended as "a realistic force in the actual world we inhabit" and believed to support the prevention and transformation of violent conflict.[17] Some of these practices do contain insights into the environmental "drivers" of war and indicate how pursuing "sustainability" and just resource politics can play a part in the mitigation of violence. Further engagement with the emerging field of "environmental peacebuilding" could help refine these raw materials for the challenges of working for peace in an age of increasingly profound ecological stress. As we will see in this chapter, the case of water conflict in the Jordan River basin highlights some of the possibilities of incorporating sustainability initiatives and shared resource management into peacebuilding efforts, but also lays bare the limitations and potential counter-productivity of peacemaking paradigms—even "environmental" peacebuilding—that ignore the ways conflicted communities read local landscape into

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[17] Pamela Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic for Peace and War," in *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm for the Ethics of War and Peace,* third edition, ed. Glen H. Stassen (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2008), 11.

collective myths, experiencing an ailing or disintegrated environment as a wound to the heart of the nation. Where opposed groups engage shared ecosystems as nature's testament to the justice of their own cause, "rational" or "cooperative" resource politics may miss the point, for they miss the ways environmental changes undermine the integrity of a people. In such cases, the meaning of peace surely resides within common yet disputed socio-ecological relations, just as the conditions of violence likewise flow through these cycles. The practices of peace, then, must entail refreshed ways of relating peoplehood to place, especially if they also seek to incorporate effective ways to negotiate competing claims to scarce resources. For the same reason, a theological ethic of peacemaking is unlikely to take root far from the multiple eco-religious imaginaries that interpret environment, identity, and justice for each community. This chapter calls the JPP to reckon with the geographically and culturally contextual dimensions of peacemaking in cases of environmental conflict.

The turn to Christian ethics in this chapter may seem counter-intuitive at one level, since the Jordan River case involves primarily Jewish and Muslim constituencies, as well as several national, global, and ostensibly secular political actors. Would it not be more useful to examine Jewish and/or Muslim ethics of environmental conflict, or perhaps inter-faith or non-religious avenues for environmental peacebuilding? This chapter proceeds from a special concern for how problems like water conflict challenge Christianity's ways of orienting and evaluating political and ecological relations, especially in response to violence and environmental stress. This concern remains relevant to the case at hand in part because Christian peoples and Christian theologies bear a fair degree of historical responsibility for and contemporary complicity in the political and ecological dynamics precipitating conflict in the modern Middle East. Christian powers in the United States and Europe, in the Vatican, and in a wide variety of global Christian networks and NGOs still exercise considerable influence and express significant interest in the conflict between Israel and Palestine. This chapter does not aim at a "Christian solution" to the thorny issues it raises. It is not a work of apologetics. It does however intend to sharpen Christian capacities for useful dialogue, participation, and partnership around problems of environmental conflict. It proposes to take those problems seriously as challenges to Christian thought and practice, in order to spur the types of reflection that may make Christians less dangerous, more competent and creative collaborators.

The JPP's framers also take a critical line on the ways Christianity has historically engaged global politics, and strive to create a more inclusive and collaborative ethic. They present their own theological approach to peacemaking in explicit opposition to the dominant "Christ-centered theology of a universalizing empire" that has so profoundly shaped "how the Christian church has related to those of other faiths" with "deadly results for Jews, pagans, indigenous people and cultures."[18] As we will see below, the JPP aims to redirect the tradition in part by working from alternative understandings of Jesus Christ and God's grace, and partly by anchoring the paradigm's moral communication in "pragmatic" and "empirical" claims rather than theological convictions.

At the same time, the scholars who developed the Just Peacemaking paradigm insist that the paradigm is intelligible, functional, and potentially normative outside of Christian faith and across cultural contexts. "We purposely fashioned the wording of the ten practices of just peacemaking so they could be adopted by persons of many faiths or no official faith," they write.[19] That investment in non-sectarian diction has extended into interfaith initiatives, as JPP advocates endeavor to build broad consensus on the practices of peace. For example, in 2007, some of the JPP's founders met with Muslim and Jewish "scholar-leaders" for a workshop organized by the United States Institute of Peace on "Alternatives to War," where participants concluded that "Just Peacemaking is the best option to resolve human conflict and actively work towards the elimination of the conditions that lead to violence," and agreed "to mine our own religious traditions to further develop the Just Peacemaking practices."[20]

By its own lights, the framework is directly relevant to the case, given that the JPP claims universal applicability and aspires toward international and inter-religious consensus. Yet the case analysis in this chapter suggests that such claims to universality—even if diversely rooted within particular religious and/or moral traditions—are among the framework's biggest liabilities in the face of environmental conflicts like the ones in the Jordan River basin. Such conflicts steep religious cosmology and collective identity within place-based cultures and embattled

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[18] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic," 19-20; quoting Larry Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 142.

[19] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic," 17.

[20] Susan Thistlethwaite and Glen Stassen, *Abrahamic Alternatives to War: Jewish Christian, and Muslim Perspectives on Just Peacemaking*, United States Institute of Peace Special Report (Washington DC: USIP, 2008), 16.

environmental experiences, making the meaning and conditions of peace highly contextual, dependent in part on emplaced environmental imaginaries, and on local landscapes themselves. In contrast, the JPP's interest in interfaith consensus and pluralist moral foundations only widens the embrace of a uniform set of principled practices, with insufficient attention to either global political ecology or the natural and cultural environments of conflicted locales.

Without such attention, the ethic of just peacemaking risks peddling what Roger Mac Ginty has called "peace from IKEA: a flat-pack peace made of standard components."[21] Mac Ginty's worry is a common one: that universalized accounts of peace iron over context, counter-productively disconnecting peacemaking processes from the social and cultural worlds of local populations. That problem becomes even more concerning when the environmental dimensions of violent conflict are taken seriously. The importance of context for the theology and practices of peace is particularly important in modern water conflict, this chapter argues, because water conflicts link global dynamics to parochial politics in ways that are exceedingly complex and profoundly shaped by particular *places*—by the peculiar co-evolution of ecological and social systems within contested landscapes and along value-drenched waterways. Supplementing the JPP with standard practices of "environmental peacemaking" like integrated resource management and cooperative environmental governance would not sufficiently address this deeper challenge.[22]

Sharpening the JPP's capacity to build peace amidst environmental conflict will require inquiring into the dynamics of violence and the meanings and practices of peacemaking *in place*—attentive to the entwined environmental, political, and cultural forces that structure life, shape identity, and engage religious imagination within particular ecologies of violence. Doing that intelligibly within the paradigm's broad orientation to Christian ethics entails re-thinking what it means to participate in God's work to draw creation toward shalom, locating God's initiatives of grace in ecological context, enlarging and emplacing the work of Christ-led community-building.

The final sections of this chapter develop this argument in greater detail, and explore how recent experiments with bioregionalist forms of Christian ecological ethics

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[21] Roger Mac Ginty, "Indigenous Peace-making versus the Liberal Peace," *Cooperation and Conflict* 43, no. 2 (2008), 148.

[22] Ken Conca and Geoffrey D. Dabelko, *Environmental Peacemaking* (Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2002).

known as "watershed discipleship" could coax just peacebuilding in this direction. The next section introduces the JPP, focusing on its ten definitive practices.

THE JUST PEACEMAKING PERPSECTIVE (JPP)

The Just Peacemaking Perspective formally emerged in 1998 with the publication of *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War*.[23] That book, edited by the Baptist ethicist Glenn Stassen, was the culmination of a five-year research and consultation process by twenty-three scholars, mostly from the fields of Christian ethics and international relations.[24] The group had convened to study the available evidence about the primary drivers of violent conflict, and especially to identify practical precedents for preventing war, mitigating violence, and transforming conflict into peace. "What practices of war prevention and peacemaking should we be supporting?" they asked.[25]

The book presented ten such practices, organized under three broad categories: *Peacemaking Initiatives*, *Justice*, and *Love & Community*. JPP's advocates emphasized the practical, actionable orientation of the framework, claiming to have taken a "decisively realist turn" by defining the paradigm in terms of concrete practices as opposed to moral principles or theological ideals.[26] They explained both the urgency and efficacy of these practices in terms of a range of late-twentieth century developments which, in the words of the U.S Catholic Bishops in their 1983 pastoral letter *The Challenge of Peace*—an influential and oft-quoted text for the JPP's early self-descriptions—intensified "the Church's responsibility to join with others in the work of peace."[27] That responsibility was explained theologically as well. To move Christian ethics toward reflective participation in real peace work, and to develop the substance and style of Christian peacemaking, the JPP's framers presented a theology of peace centered on Christian

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[23] Glen Stassen, ed. *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998). All future citations will be from the revised edition, retitled *Just Peacemaking, The New Paradigm for the Ethics of Peace and War* (Cleveland, Pilgrim, Press, 2008).

[24] Stassen was arguably the central figure in the movement toward *just peacemaking* as a new paradigm for the Christian ethics of war and peace. His book *Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives for Justice and Peace* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992) set precedents that clearly influenced the way the larger research initiative framed its contributions to Christian ethics and the practice of peacemaking. This chapter draws most heavily on his thought for presenting (and criticizing) the paradigm.

[25] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic," 9.

[26] Glen H. Stassen, "The Unity, Realism, and Obligatoriness of Just Peacemaking Theory," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 23, no. 1 (2003):

[27] National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1983), §23.

cooperation with God's shalom-making initiatives of grace. Critical engagement with the JPP, then, requires understanding how its theorists and practitioners describe each of these elements: the *practices* of peacemaking; the paradigm's relation to Christian and political *realism;* its account of the *context* of its emergence and efficacy; and its basis in Christian *theology.*

I discuss the JPP's ten definitive practices in the next sub-section. I engage the JPP's approach to realism in a later section (pp. 198-202) in order to consider how the account of realism fits the data on water conflict and water crisis. I engage the JPP's interpretations of context (pp. 214-218) and theology (pp. 218-223) in detail at the end of the chapter, where critical analysis is focused by prior examination of the JRV case study.

The Practices of Just Peacemaking

The JPP's framers spent a great deal of energy in their early publications tracing the relations and distinctions between their new paradigm and the classical Christian frameworks of war and peace: pacifism and the JWT. Most basically, while pacifism and the JWT centralize the theoretical question of whether (or under what conditions) war is morally justified, the JPP "answers a different question." It is concerned not with the justification of violence, but with its prevention, aiming to re-center the Christian ethical conversation around the problem of how to stop wars from happening, or how to end them as quickly and justly as possible.[28] "We need a paradigm that can focus debate about preventive practices," argued Stassen.[29] Since peacemakers are "most concerned about practical results in immediate situations where loss of life is imminent or ongoing," they trade in "historically embedded practices, as opposed to historical ideals."[30]

The framers argued strenuously that the JPP should be judged on empirical grounds, on the basis of the preventive and transformative efficacy of the practices they

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[28] Duane Friesen argued there was a "convergence" of JWT and pacifism happening in the field of Christian ethics, pushing toward the shared concern to prevent war and build peace.— Duane K. Friesen, "The Convergence of Pacifism and Just War," in *War and Christian Ethics* (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2005).

[29] Stassen, "Unity, Realism, and Obligatoriness," 171-72, 175.

[30] Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Blessed are the Peacemakers: Pacifism, Just War, and Peacebuilding* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019), 1; Stassen, "Unity, Realism, and Obligatoriness," 174.

identified. Those ten practices were divided into three categories: peacemaking initiatives, instruments of justice, and practices of love and community.[31]

Four practices fall under the category of *peacemaking initiatives*. The first, "support nonviolent direct action," draws on the history and theory of tactical nonviolence, stressing its capacity to address existing violence, injustice, and other political grievances without resort to war—a way to "wage conflict without violence."[32] The JPP urges material, philosophical, and symbolic support for "a menu of interventions and defensive strategies," familiar to many Christians through the nonviolent campaigns for home rule in India led by Mahatma Gandhi, and for civil rights and black liberation in the U.S. led by Martin Luther King Jr., the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (among others).[33] The menu includes tactics of noncooperation (e.g. boycotts), protest and persuasion (e.g. marches), and intervention (e.g. strikes, sit-ins, accompaniment, and the creation of sanctuaries or safe spaces).

The second practice, "take independent initiatives to reduce threat," was championed by Stassen even before the formal emergence of the JPP, and was likewise affirmed in a number of Christian denominational statements on war and peace in the 1980s.[34] Independent initiatives describe the unilateral efforts of one side in a conflict to reduce tension and deescalate. "In a relationship of distrust and heightened threat perception," summarizes Stassen, independent initiatives such as troop withdrawal, arms reductions, or prisoner releases can "decrease the other side's distrust or threat perception, in order to induce them to take similar initiatives or to negotiate seriously to remove threats."[35]

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[31] It is worth noting, however, that the practices are organized according to perennial Christian ideals of peace, justice, love and community. I discuss the significance of this way of relating practices to ideals below, on pp. 218ff.

[32] Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action,* vol. 1 *Power and Struggle* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973). Texts on the theory and history of nonviolence have proliferated since the 1970s. With the obvious exception of MLK Jr.'s own writings, the three volumes of Sharp's *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* remain the touchstone texts for English-language scholarship on nonviolent direct action.

[33] John Cartwright and Susan Thistlethwaite, "Support Nonviolent Direct Action," in *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm*, 42-56.

[34] E.g., Stassen, *Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives*, 98-102; NCCB, "The Challenge of Peace," §205.

[35] Glen Stassen, "Take Independent Initiatives to Reduce Threat," in *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm,* 57-70.

The third peacemaking initiative is "cooperative conflict resolution" (CCR), centered on practices of dialogue, mutual recognition and acknowledgment.[36] CCR processes are designed to open new possibilities for peaceful resolution of conflict by transforming adversaries into co-workers or "quarreling partners" on shared problems and toward mutual interests.[37] These "noncoercive conflict resolution strategies" are typically facilitated by third parties trained in the principles and practices of mediation and negotiation, and may take place in multiple spheres, including state, civil society, and grassroots levels. (As we will see in later sections, one of the most important contemporary movements to address environmental conflict—and water conflict in particular—revolves around this tactic, aiming to mitigate violence by involving adversaries in the negotiation of cooperative resource management schemes.)

The fourth practice stresses the role of "acknowledging responsibility for conflict and injustice," including acts of apology, repentance, and the pursuit of forgiveness. Even at the level of international relations, peacemaking requires "capacities for self-transcendence," argue Alan Geyer and Donald Shriver, so peace processes should elicit qualities of empathy, forbearance, and moral judgment.[38] Here we see most overtly how "the JPP draws heavily on the Christian concept of reconciliation and conversion."[39] The framework links peacemaking (in part) to processes of spiritual *metanoia* among state representatives and within nations themselves, and interprets peace as a state of restored relationship between enemies through cycles of repentance and forgiveness, spurred by hope. Concretely, this involves leaders making public statements acknowledging wrongdoing, expressing remorse, offering sincere apology, committing to continued memorialization of wrongs, and making tangible efforts to change patterns of injustice or aggression.

Practices five and six fall under the category of *justice*. The fifth follows the conventional wisdom of liberal peace theory, arguing that peace proceeds by the

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[36] Steven Brion-Meisels et al., "Use Cooperative Conflict Resolution," in *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm*, 71-97.

[37] Brion-Meisels et al., "Cooperative Conflict Resolution," 71, quoting theologian Jürgen Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope* (London: SCM, 1975), 175.

[38] Alan Geyer and Donald W. Shriver, "Acknowledge Responsibility for Conflict and Injustice and Seek Repentance and Forgiveness," in *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm*, 98-113.

[39] Mark J. Allman, *Who Would Jesus Kill: War Peace, and the Christian Tradition* (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2008), 243.

advancement of democracy, human rights, religious liberty, and interdependence.[40] Democracies may have a long history of purveying violence across the globe, but "democracies rarely fight one another," reminds Bruce Russett.[41] And while the road to political and economic liberalization is often rocky, it remains "the fundamental challenge of world political development in this era," he continues.[42]

The sixth practice is to "foster just and sustainable economic development." For the JPP's framers, sustainable development means the cultivation of material conditions that can sustain the "growth and flourishing" of human persons and communities. The practice aims to build economic capacity while protecting natural environment and local culture.[43] "Preventing economic activity from irrevocably sullying the environment is…a necessary part of living in peace, in harmony with the world of nature, and is part of the biblical mandate to 'tend and dress' the land we have been given."[44] Since just peace entails human fellowship and flourishing plus "natural beauty," material privation and ecological degradation threaten peace not only by sowing resentments and creating scarcities, thereby fostering conditions ripe for violence—they also disfigure the paradigm's theological notion of peace on their own. Sustainable development, then, is more than a practice to prevent war; it is regarded as an integral process in building shalom, an act of stewardship, obedient to biblical mandates of justice, participative in the peace of God. In practice, they acknowledge, development projects frequently fall short or even contradict this lofty ideal, thanks especially to a dominant neoliberal paradigm that undervalues human relationships and circumvents the agency of the poor. "Well intended development schemes have often worked out badly, frequently by failing to heed local insights and needs."[45] To

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[40] Bruce Russett, "Advance Democracy, Human Rights, and Interdependence," in *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm*, 116-131.

[41] Russett, "Advance Democracy," 119. Russett appeals largely to his own previous research on "the Democratic Peace," e.g. in Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); and Bruce Russett and John R. Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001). See also Charles Lipson, *Reliable Partners: How Democracies Have Made a Separate Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[42] Russett, "Advance Democracy," 124.

[43] David Bronkema, David Lumsdaine, Rodger A. Payne, "Foster Just and Sustainable Economic Development," in *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm,* 132-152. Sustainable development means "preserving nature and helping the needy—in relationship and community—to preserve their rights and attain a fruitful life," they summarize (p. 136).

[44] Bronkema et al., "Foster Just and Sustainable Economic Development," 134.

[45] Bronkema et al., "Foster Just and Sustainable Economic Development," 138-140, 132.

address this liability, the JPP outlines a set of principles of sustainable development, including a focus on the "dignity and productivity" of the poor, commitment to lasting relationship between developers and poor communities, long-term environmental sustainability, and humility.[46]

The last four are termed practices of *love and community.* Along with practices five and six above, practices seven and eight show the JPP's square alignment with the theory of liberal peace, "the globally dominant concept of justice in the age of peacebuilding."[47] "The aims of the liberal peace are simple and familiar," writes Daniel Philpott: "to end armed violence and to establish human rights, democracy, and market economies," with a "central role for international institutions and state governments in building peace."[48] Practice seven, presented by the historian Paul W. Schroeder, is "work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system." Schroeder argues that the international system has moved markedly toward complex interdependence and "community," beginning with the Concert of Europe in 1813-1854 and accelerated in the late twentieth century with the "success of organizations like NATO, the European Union, the United Nations, and many others."[49] Schroeder's interpretation of the present international order as trending toward cooperation and interdependence alongside the declining utility of war is perhaps the most important non-theological premise of the JPP, for, as we will see below, it underlies the paradigm's account of the relevant context and the realism of its practices.[50] He argues for "conceiving the task of just peacemaking as one of encouraging and promoting these positive trends and institutions."[51] The eighth practice redoubles this emphasis, urging efforts to "strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights."[52]

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[46] Bronkema et al., "Foster Just and Sustainable Economic Development," 142-148.

[47] Daniel Philpott, *Just and Unjust Peace: An Ethic of Political Reconciliation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 70.

[48] Daniel Philpott, "Introduction: Searching for Strategy in an Age of Peacebuilding," in *Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World,* ed. Daniel Philpott and Gerard F. Powers (New York: Oxford, 2010), 4-8.

[49] Paul W. Schroeder, "Work with Emerging Cooperative Forces in the International System," in *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm*, 161.

[50] Stassen voices particular enthusiasm for Schroeder's analysis in subsequent publications developing the JPP; see eg. Stassen, "Unity, Realism, and Obligatoriness," 175, 178-180, 187-190.

[51] Schroeder, "Work with Emerging Cooperative Forces," 158.

[52] Michael Joseph Smith, "Strengthen the United Nations and International Efforts for Cooperation and Human Rights," in *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm*, 166-176.

Practice nine is "reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade." The JPP counsels citizen support for concrete measures of disarmament, especially nuclear and landmine reductions, non-proliferation treaties, monitoring programs, and strict trade regulations. Reducing the production, testing, stockpiling, and sale of weapons is a way to reduce both the probability and the destructiveness of wars, argue Barbara Green and Glen Stassen.[53]

The tenth practice stresses the importance of "grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations" to the implementation of the previous nine. "Just peace requires peacemakers," notes Duane Friesen. Each of the initiatives for peace and justice outlined above depends upon people working together to pursue them, upon "groups of citizens who take peacemaking initiatives themselves and who encourage governments to support them."[54] Morally grounded peacemaking groups are especially effective when they coalesce within transnational networks, he argues. The formation and sustenance of such groups and networks, argues Friesen, is a practical challenge with a *moral* core: "We must find ways to identify common norms," working toward what Elise Boulding has called a "global civic culture." That, in turn, requires efforts to "nurture moral communities that can form people of character," which means especially working with religious communities adept at "keep[ing] alive the memory of their paradigmatic stories."[55] The final practice, then, is not a capstone but a foundation. It anchors all ten practices to the global engagement of local groups prepared for the challenges of building peace by participation in story-formed religious communities.

The ecclesial context of just peacemaking is one of several notable features that come into view in this synopsis of JPP's ten practices. Others include its affinity with the liberal peace, an emphasis on cooperative institutions as catalysts of peace, its incorporation of sustainability and stewardship within its theology of peace, and its interpretation of the historical and cultural context for contemporary peacemaking in terms of the "UN Revolution" and other trends toward internationalism. These

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[53] Barbara Green and Glen Stassen, "Reduce Offensive Weapons and Weapons Trade," in *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm*, 177-200.

[54] Duane K. Friesen, "Encourage Grassroots Peacemaking Groups and Voluntary Associations," in *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm*, 201. Friesen borrows the phrase "just peace requires peacemaking" from a United Church of Christ statement: Susan Thistlethwaite, ed., *A Just Peace Church* (New York: United Church Press, 1986), 60.

[55] Friesen, "Encourage Grassroots Peacemaking," 202-208. See Elise Boulding, *Building a Global Civic Culture: Education for an Interdependent World* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1988). Friesen cites Robert Bellah, Robert Wuthnow, and Robert Putnam for support.

elements will be taken up later in this chapter as they resurface in discussions of another emergent peacemaking paradigm—environmental peacebuilding—and as they interface with the literature on contemporary water conflict and the case of the Jordan River basin.

For now, it is worth reiterating the distinctiveness of JPP's practice-based approach to the ethics of war and peace. By building an ethic around activities and structures alleged to make a real difference to the prevention and transformation of violent conflict, the paradigm invites assessment not primarily on its moral vision but on the efficacy of its practices. Even its obvious theological character becomes subject to pragmatic judgment about how its account of God's peace prepares practitioners for the work of peace. The JPP stands or falls based on its understanding of the factors that lead to conflict and its grasp of the practices or circumstances that mitigate them.

How then does the paradigm reckon with the complex relations between environment and conflict? We will be in a better position to answer that question after exploring those relations in more detail below.

WATER CONFLICT AND WATER CRISIS

Exploring tensions over the Jordan River as a case example, this chapter gives special attention to *water* conflict to illustrate what is stake in the broader issues of environmental conflict and environmental peacebuilding. Debates about "water wars" and "water cooperation" have arguably been the most significant and visible subjects in this domain, and so they indicate the ideological and methodological divisions in the field, and help to demonstrate the complexity and indeterminacy of environmental issues in violent conflict. Attention to struggles over water also helps to make clear the interconnections among ecology, economy, and identity at all levels of politics. As the World Council of Churches has pointed out, "human community is dependent on water, not just physically, but socially and culturally," and thus water is "one of the most potent bearers of cultural and religious meanings."[56] And yet while water conflict has been widely discussed, the subject is rarely broached in the fields of religious studies,

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[56] World Council of Churches, "Water as Gift and Right," Statement of the Ecumenical Team to the 12th Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD12), New York, April 19-30, 2004.

Christian thought, or environmental ethics.[57] It therefore serves as a useful case study for how deeper attention to religious and moral discourses can offer meaningful contributions to both public and academic conversations about the connections between environmental issues and political violence.

Water Conflict

A variety of factors lead to the widespread concern about water conflict. For one, freshwater plays crucial, unsubstitutable roles in human well-being and survival. It is a "universal baseline requirement" and an "anthropological constant," "integral to all ecological and societal activities."[58] "Indeed, water is *the* essential primary natural resource upon which nearly all social and economic activities and ecosystem functions depend."[59] Since water is a scarce but necessary resource across all sectors of society, including households, agriculture, aquaculture, energy production, industry, sanitation, recreation, and religion, the challenge of water management always entails balancing divergent objectives, weighing diverse values, and negotiating competing interests. Since "all water management is multi-objective and based on navigating competing interests," argues Aaron Wolf, "water management, by definition, is conflict management."[60]

And yet water is still more than a vital natural resource. "It is a critical dimension to the social production of space," argues Matthew Grandy. Water connects creaturely bodies to their natural environments through a conjoined matrix of biophysical and socio-economic systems, "but water is at the same time a brutal delineator of social power." Its course through uneven social terrain may foster greater cohesion, deepen existing cleavages, or generate new forms of conflict.[61]

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[57] A notable exception is Christiana Z. Peppard, *Just Water: Theology, Ethics, and the Global Water Crisis*, 1st ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014). A revised addition is now available under the name Christiana Zenner (Orbis, 2018).

[58] Peppard, *Just Water,* 17. Peter H. Gleick, "Water and Conflict: Fresh Water Resources and International Security," *International Security* 18, no. 1 (Summer 1993): 79.

[59] United Nations World Water Assessment Programme, *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2015: Water for a Sustainable World* (Paris, UNESCO, 2015), vii.

[60] Aaron T. Wolf, "Healing The Enlightenment Rift: Rationality, Spirituality and Shared Waters," *Journal of International Affairs* 61, no. 2 (Sp./Summer 2008): 51.

[61] Matthew Gandy, "Rethinking Urban Metabolism: Water, Space, and the Modern City," *City* 8, no. 2 (Dec. 2004), 373.

Furthermore, "water does not respect political borders."[62] There are over 260 watersheds that cross international political boundaries, and 145 nations claim territory within these international watersheds.[63] Transnational surface basins "cover 45.3 percent of the land surface of the Earth, affect about 40 percent of the world's population, and account for approximately 60 percent of global river flow."[64] Aquifers and other subterranean water sources are less easily mapped, but are likely just as transgressive of sovereign territories.[65] For this reason, the politics of freshwater access, use, and distribution involve not only intra-state competition between sectors and groups, but also inter-state conflicts over water rights and allocations. It is remarkably common for nations and people-groups divided by law, culture, history, race, religion, and more, to be connected by a common watercourse. Much attention has therefore been given to the geopolitics of "upstream-downstream" relations, where the potential for conflict is rife because the water uses of upstream riparians impacts the quality and quantity of the fresh water available downstream.[66] Although the international community has grown steadily more articulate with principles and guidelines for the politics of freshwater, most local and regional water disputes still take place without

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[62] Clive Lipchin and Tamee Albrecht, "A Watershed-Based Approach to Mitigating Transboundary Wastewater Conflict Between Israel and the Palestinian Authority: The Besor-Hebron-Be'er Sheva Watershed," in *Water Security in the Middle East: Essays in Scientific and Social Cooperation,* ed. Jean Axelrad Cahan (London: Anthem Press, 2017), 93.

[63] Aaron T. Wolf et al., "International River Basins of the World," *International Journal of Water Resources Development* 15, no. 4 (December 1, 1999): 387–427.

[64] Jerome Delli Priscoli and Aaron T. Wolf, *Managing and Transforming Water Conflicts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5, 1.

[65] A 2013-2016 study by the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) aiming to offer a comprehensive assessment of transboundary water systems covered "756 international water systems consisting of 199 transboundary aquifers and 42 non-transboundary aquifers in small island developing states, 204 transboundary lakes and reservoirs, 286 transboundary river basins, 66 large marine ecosystems (and the Western Pacific Warm Pool), and the open ocean. The assessed waters cover over 70% of the planet's oceans and landmass, and about 16% of the planet's landmass that is also underlain by transboundary aquifers." UNEP, *Transboundary Water Systems - Status and Trends: Crosscutting Analysis* (Nairobi: United Nations Environmental Program, 2016), 3.

[66] N. Brochman and Nils Petter Gleditsch, "Shared Rivers and Conflict—A Reconsideration," *Political Geography* 32 (2012), 518. H. Munia et al., "Water Stress in Global Transboundary River Basins: Significance of Upstream Water Use on Downstream Stress," *Environmental Research Letters* 11, no. 1 (2016): 1-13.

clear legal frameworks or infrastructure to promote and enforce fair water cooperation.[67]

Where international water disputes occur, multiple incompatible doctrines of riparian responsibilities coexist, making adjudication difficult. Upstream states sometimes claim *absolute territorial sovereignty*, insisting upon the right to use water resources within their political boundaries however they please. Downstreamers reply with a doctrine of *absolute territorial integrity*, arguing that national water policies must be prohibited from negatively affecting the water quality and quantity of their riparian neighbors. Efforts to mediate this impasse have produced the concept of *limited territorial sovereignty*, which introduces a principle of "equitable use by all parties," balancing national water rights with responsibilities not to infringe on the rights of other states sharing the watershed. In contrast, advocates of environmental peacebuilding have joined forces with United Nations agencies and other institutions of global governance to propose a *community of riparian states* framework, which promotes cooperative, integrated, international management of multi-state river basins.[68] Although movements toward principles of equitable use and structures of cooperative management have gained considerable momentum in recent years, water disputes still take place without strong political mechanisms to ensure just and peaceable outcomes, and upstream states still hold most of the cards in negotiations around equitable use and management strategies.

Fair and equal cooperation is also challenging because the status quo of freshwater distribution is already geographically and politically stratified. Global distribution of freshwater is riven with inequalities and relative scarcities even before

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[67] See e.g., "Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development," International Conference on Water and the Environment, 31 January 1992. Peppard argues this statement is a major culprit in the commodification and privatization of water, implicated in water conflicts in the Global South, notably the Cochabamba Water War (1999-2000).—Peppard, *Just Water,* chap. 3. See also: UN Convention on the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, 21 May 1997. "Despite including sections on cooperation and joint management, the convention is often vague and offers few specifics on water allocations and water rights, which are often key issues in tensions over water."— Steve C. Lonergan, "Water and Conflict: Rhetoric and Reality," in *Environmental Conflict*, ed. Paul F. Diehl and Nils Petter Gleditsch (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 116; Cf. Aaron T Wolf, "'Water Wars' and Water Reality: Conflict and Cooperation Along International Waterways," in *Environmental Change, Adaptation, and Human Security*, ed. Steve C. Lonergan (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), 251–65. The UN WWAP reports that "158 of the world's 263 transboundary water basins lack any type of cooperative management framework," and they highlight an ongoing lack of mulitateral water agreements among riparian states; UN WWAP, *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2015*, 12.
[68] Lonergan, "Water and Conflict, 116-117.

water access is politically allocated on such contentious and problematic bases as nationality, gender, race, and class. "Two-thirds of the world's population live in regions that receive less than one-quarter of the world's annual rainfall. On a per capita basis, North America has four times the rainfall of Asia."[69] Disparities in global freshwater access are projected to widen further; just how much depends in large part upon the severity of climate change, and so upon how nations divided by history and interest work together to redress current and future greenhouse gas emission levels.[70] Struggles over water take place within wider political ecologies already fraught with inequalities and competing justice claims. In the meantime, regional scarcities compound the pressures on local water distributions, raising the stakes on the fractious politics of a life-sustaining resource.

Water Crisis

Coming to terms with contemporary water conflict is made even more urgent by the fact that "water is likely to be the most pressing environmental concern of this century."[71] As of 2015, almost a third of the world's population lacked access to safe, readily available drinking water, and 2.3 billion people lived without basic sanitation services.[72] Water is furthermore a preeminent and precarious element in the human experience of environmental change. The impacts of climate change on humans and other life forms will be most transparent in water.[73] The effects of climate change on the global hydrologic cycle are likely to be severe, heightening the probability of regional drought or flooding, depleting water supplies and degrading water quality (e.g. through salination, or by erosion and run-off in the case of flooding). The impacts on human well-being will be significant and multi-faceted, flowing across sectors of

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[69] Lonergan, "Water and Conflict," 115. Cf. Gleick 1993a.

[70] UN WWAP, *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2015,* 4, 65-69.

[71] Priscoli and Wolf, *Managing and Transforming Water Conflicts*, 1.

[72] WHO and UNICEF, *Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene: 2017 Update and SDG Baselines* (Geneva: WHO and UNICEF, 2017).

[73] And, according to a 2007 study by the World Bank, "climate change will require a more severe adjustment of water resource management in MENA [Middle East and North Africa] than any other region." World Bank, *Regional Business Strategies to Address Climate Change,* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2007). For a more recent and more nuanced study of the significance of climate change to water in the region, see Annarita Mariotti, Yutong Pan, Ning Zeng and Andrea Alessandri, "Long-term Climate Change in the Mediterranean Region in the Midst of Decadal Variability," *Climate Dynamics* 44, no. 5–6 (2015): 1437–1456. Mariotti et al. show, in brief, that the region is likely to get progressively drier.

common life, including food production, public health, human dwelling, and resource governance.[74]

According to one United Nations projection, "almost half the world's population will be living in areas of high water stress by 2030," and water scarcity is likely "to displace between 24 million and 700 million people."[75] The incredibly wide range in the UN's population displacement prediction—from 24 to 700 million—is noteworthy. The range suggests more than scientific uncertainty about the hydrological consequences of climate change. It indicates massive unknowns about when and how human beings will respond to climate change and fresh water challenges at local, regional, national, and global levels, conveying something of what is at stake in the intersectional politics of water and carbon: the subsistence of 676 million people.

The stakes are high because, as the Christian ethicist Christiana Zenner has emphasized, fresh water is *sui generis*, a "nonsubstitutable" condition for human flourishing and a *"sine qua non* of human existence."[76] Pope Francis, echoing decades of statements by the Roman Catholic magisterium, insists that "access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right," and a "condition for the exercise of other human rights." Francis stresses links between the anthropogenic forces of ecological degradation and the political realities of unequal access to safe water, highlighting the quality of water available to the poor as an especially urgent concern.[77] The United Nations' World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) confirms these

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[74] See Peppard, *Just Water*, 129ff.

[75] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Decade for Action 'Water for Life' 2005-2015, http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/scarcity.shtml, accessed 02/05/18. As employed in the projections cited above, the terms *water stress* and *water scarcity* are technical terms: "An area is experiencing water stress when annual water supplies drop below 1,700 m3 per person. When annual water supplies drop below 1,000 m3 per person, the population faces water scarcity, and below 500 cubic metres "absolute scarcity." In 2012 UNESCO reported that "by 2025, 1.8 billion people are expected to be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world population could be under water stress conditions." UN WWAP, *The United Nations World Water Development Report 4: Managing Water Under Uncertainty and Risk* (Paris: UNESCO, 2012).

[76] Peppard, *Just Water*, 17.

[77] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, §27-31. For an overview of Catholic social teaching related to water, see Peppard, *Just Water*, 52-67. Francis' statement is remarkably similar to language adopted by the United Nations a decade earlier. In 2002, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted General Comment No. 15, which states that "the human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights"—UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, "General Comment No. 15: The Right to Water," November 2002. In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly formally recognized access to clean fresh water as a human right.—United Nations General Assembly, A/RES/64/292, New York, July 2010.

interconnections, reporting that "frequently, the environment, as well as marginalized and vulnerable people, are the biggest losers in competition for water."[78]

It is tempting to interpret the situation as a simple result of population growth and the steep rise of global water demand. "The clearest thing about the history of water is that people use a lot more now than they used to," writes the environmental historian J.R. McNeil. By his estimates, total annual fresh water use increased by about 40 times from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the end of the twentieth. Global per capita water use has doubled in the last 100 years. Yet reliable access to safe drinking water has not spread evenly across the world or even within societies. Clean water access constitutes "one of the great divides among humankind that has arisen since 1850." McNeill cites clean water access as a case of "increasing returns," meaning a situation in which "the more you have the more you get." Twentieth century water disparities, he argues, "helped to create, and widen, the cleavages in wealth and health that characterize the world today."[79] Water disparities persist in the twenty-first century, and global water demand is expected to increase another 55% percent before the century is halfway over.[80]

Whereas McNeill highlights the importance of uneven investments in water treatment infrastructures, both Pope Francis and the WWAP argue that the issues stem from "fundamental disconnects" in common ways of engaging "the water-food-energy nexus." For the UN, the root problems are "out-dated models of natural resource use and governance," in which management and distribution practices "continue to follow narrow objectives along sector-specific mandates."[81] For Pope Francis, the disconnects arise as a symptom of a deeper cultural crisis, rooted in a warped, "one-dimensional" conception of human life as it relates to the rest of creation.[82] With devastating and interlocking effects for the poor and for "Sister, Mother Earth," moderns fail to appreciate the integral inter-dependencies between the social, cultural, and ecological dimensions of creaturely flourishing. This continual failure is all but assured, even in the most well-intentioned environmental policies, thanks to an anthropocentric,

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[78] UN WWAP, *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2015*, 11.

[79] J. R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth Century World* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 120-128.

[80] UN WWAP, *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2015*, 2.

[81] UN WWAP, *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2015*, 12.

[82] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si,* §53, 106.

"Promethean vision of mastery over the world."[83] Francis calls this the "dominant technocratic paradigm"—the conception of creation as an external object susceptible to rational human control, and an associated approach to social and environmental problems that locates all hope and all power in the managerial and technological capacities of a political and economic elite.[84]

Both Francis and the UN conclude that failing to treat water, food, and energy as interconnected tends to undermine the ecological systems that entwine and sustain them. "This situation has already led to negative impacts for the most vulnerable and marginalized peoples; accelerated ecosystem degradation; depleted natural resources; and slowed progress towards development goals, poverty reduction and conflict mitigation."[85] In short, a close look at the contemporary water crisis demonstrates the error inherent in the bureaucratization of modern ethics and contemporary politics. The common conceptual and institutional partitions within both fields obscure far-reaching entanglements between systems of ecology, poverty, violence, and security.

Engaging Water Crisis and Water Conflict: Environmental Peacebuilding and Religious Ethics

Although Pope Francis and the United Nations agree on much, their respective views on how to address water crisis and water conflict represent two contrasting approaches to engaging ecologies of violence explored in this chapter. The UN has typically championed a liberal technocratic approach, diagnosing water strife as a function of "poor management structures" and a lack of "cooperative management frameworks" and multilateral agreements among riparian states for the world's transboundary water basins.[86] They emphasize the promise of cooperative, transnational resource management, guided by the hydrological and political expertise of third-party analysts, as a peacemaking remedy for irrational and inefficient handling of scarce resources. Pope Francis, by contrast, inveighs against a technocratic response to violent ecologies, arguing instead for a more profound cultural transformation, sensitive to the deep moral and religious value of the natural world, centered around

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[83] Ibid., §1, 116.
[84] Ibid., §101, 106.
[85] UN WWAP, *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2015,* 12.
[86] Ibid., 11.

justice for the poor and vulnerable, and facilitated by broad and participatory dialogues across disciplines, social sectors, and worldviews.

Just peacemaking holds together aspects of the technocratic and religious-ethical approaches without fitting squarely in either one. Understanding them helps clarify how the JPP relates to prominent ways of engaging water crisis and water conflict, and opens pathways of critique and expansion for just peacemaking in response to environmental conflict.

The technocratic approach to water issues begins with a scientific-analytic method for understanding the role of water within violent conflict. In such analyses, water—or more often, water scarcity—is disaggregated as a discrete causal factor in the onset and resolution of violent conflict. Analysts quantify the effects of water scarcity on political behavior in order to demonstrate its relevance to conflict. They then commend rational management of water resources as a logical instrument of peace.

Yet that very method has produced ambivalent results for the prophets of resource conflict. Many studies fail to show a convincing historical correlation between water issues and warfare, leading some analysts to question the significance of water to violent conflict. One influential study at the end of the twentieth century argued that "there has never been a single war over water."[87] But that sweeping judgment seems based on the rather narrow assumption that wars over water must be *only* about water. Resource conflicts, like all conflicts, rarely if ever admit one direct and singular cause. Working with updated data and a more sophisticated analytic model, Brochman and Gleditsch argue that measuring the relative significance of transboundary waterways to the outbreak of conflict is methodologically problematic, because it is "impossible to disentangle the effect of sharing a river from the effect of being neighbors." Since nearly all international neighbors share waterways, they argue, it is tough to know whether water really matters, despite significant statistical correlations between water and conflict.[88] They mean that there are methodological limitations making it difficult to say with certainty whether competition over water resources, as an independent variable, really increases the likelihood of violent conflict.[89]

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[87] Wolf, "'Water Wars' and Water Reality."

[88] Brochman and Gleditsch, "Shared Rivers and Conflict," 518, 523.

[89] It is important to note that Gleditsch and Brochman are not denying the significance of water to conflict, but rather pointing out the problems with trying to prove or to quantify it. "On the other hand," they write, "shared water resources may be a mechanism behind the robust association between contiguity

Their argument seems to have a deeper implication. If it is impossible to disentangle the effect of sharing a river from the effect of being neighbors, then it is likewise impossible to disentangle the significance of being neighbors from the significance of sharing an ecosystem. What Brochman and Gleditsch unwittingly imply is that social and political relations always also entail ecological relations. Being a neighbor means sharing an environment. The blessings and travails of life in proximity to others are inseparable from the challenges of sharing space, co-inhabiting landscape, and co-participating in the resource systems and biochemical processes within which human societies co-evolved and upon which human flourishing co-depends.

This insight—the fundamental interdependence and interconnection among social, political, and ecological systems—may be a methodological surd for data wonks like Gleditsch. It suggests the impossibility, perhaps even the incoherence, of accomplishing what quantitative conflict analysis is designed to do: to disaggregate and isolate causes, to identify and quantify their discrete effects, and to thereby inform political debates with actionable intelligence about what heightens or reduces the probability of violence.

I do not want to overstate this argument. Gleditsch and his ilk are careful and sophisticated analysts whose research can provide important tools for understanding when, where, and why violent conflict occurs. At minimum, the statistical rigor and icy skepticism that leads them to conclude that one cannot disentangle environmental factors from other variables when trying to understand socio-political relationships ought to help overcome the analytical reductionism of so much literature on environmental conflict. A great deal of research on environmental conflict seems to proceed on the basis of a rigid either/or: either environmental factors like resource scarcity directly cause conflict, or, conversely, political conflict causes tensions over environmental issues. Such analyses seek to determine which pre-existent factor has causal primacy. Do people come to blows because they each want access to scarce resources, or do they rather squabble over resources because they are already divided over other concerns? A case like the Jordan River illustrates in living color what Gleditsch and Brochman imply through their methodological miserliness: that the relationships between politics, ecology, identity and conflict are far more complex,

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and war." They note that upstream/downstream relations do in fact seem to increase risks of conflict. See Brochman and Gleditsch, "Shared Rivers and Conflict," 523ff.

reflexive, and intertwined than the standard forms of conflict study are equipped to reveal.

This point is important because, in practice, the reductionism of data-driven environmental conflict analysis reinforces a technocratic approach to water conflict resolution. This approach is reflected within the emerging field of environmental peacebuilding more broadly. The dominant approach to addressing water conflict today is *transboundary water management*, often referred to as Integrated Water-Resource Management (IWRM), which is typically marked by "a presumption that competing claims on limited resources can be resolved through analysis, that is, a process of optimization." The assumption is that number crunching can determine the "most efficient" and therefore "best" use of limited water resources, and so the response to resource conflict is centered on "technical analysis by experts."[90] Riparian states in conflict are encouraged to accept the rational allocation and conservation strategies of these specialists as alternatives to warring over scarce and fragile hydro-systems. Enthusiasm for technocratic resource management often blends with liberal optimism about functionalist international governance as a peacebuilding strategy, as IWRM sets into motion just the sort of prudential transnational systems and institutions considered necessary for a harmonious world order.

IWRM represents a widespread approach to environmental peacebuilding that is clearly compatible with the JPP and its orientation toward international cooperation and institutional interdependence as central pathways to peace. At this level of analysis, it would seem plausible simply to add an eleventh practice to the JPP: "Use cooperative environmental management to fairly and sustainably allocate scarce natural resources," with environmental peacebuilding practices like IWRM as exemplars.[91]

Although it is clear that developing measures for cooperative and sustainable resource use is a crucial part of any holistic strategy to engage water crises and water conflicts, the trouble with focusing on technically efficient resource management is that neither the procedures nor the outcomes are sufficient to guarantee trust, legitimacy, or justice. Environmental conflict is often imaged as a riverside brawl, with opponents

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[90] Lawrence E. Susskind, "The Political and Cultural Dimensions of Water Diplomacy in the Middle East," in *Water Security in the Middle East: Essays in Scientific and Social Cooperation,* ed. Jean Axelrad Cahan (London: Anthem Press, 2017), 190.

[91] Although cooperative resource management shares certain priorities with the practice six, "foster just and sustainable development," it warrants its own practice, since the methods and priorities of development are distinct from the science and politics of environmental management.

fighting for the right to dip their buckets and drink. But frequently the question of who can access scarce environmental goods is already settled, with resources flowing reliably into the reservoirs of the strong, the dominant, or the fortunate. "Clean water flows towards power."[92] As we will see below, the disenfranchisement of Palestinians in Area C illustrates a general trend in water politics, in which "comparatively powerless groups tend to be shut out of access to water, as well as processes whereby allocation decisions are made."[93] In these ecologies of structural scarcity, the most basic necessities of human life are easily weaponized, used "as a means of leverage and a way of projecting power."[94] Even touchstone methods of procedural justice, such as "deliberative processes," become less than just when supposed techniques of fairness obscure underlying inequalities of material and discursive sway. As Adrian Martin makes clear, technically just procedures may be problematic in cases where it is "impossible to rise above prevailing power asymmetries."[95] In such cases, "weak riparians are often coerced to agree to water-sharing policies that adversely affect them."[96] Power asymmetries within environmental politics are major obstacles to just and peaceable forms of water cooperation, potentially undermining the legitimacy of multilateral agreements while arguably recapitulating the systemic and structural forms of inequality and violence that precipitate conflict.[97]

At the same time, "there is no technical basis for specifying which user group's needs ought to be given priority." As Lawrence Susskind has convincingly argued, water allocation decisions crucially depend on "political and cultural considerations, not technical analysis."[98] These include judgments about human rights to water (do they

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[92] Peppard, *Just Water,* 184.

[93] UN WWAP, *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2015,"* 21.

[94] Bulloch and Darwish, *Water Wars,* 198.

[95] Adrian Martin, "Global Environmental In/justice, In Practice: Introduction," *The Geographical Journal* 179, no. 2 (2013), 98.

[96] Jenny Kehl, "Water Security in Transboundary Systems: Cooperation in Intractable Conflicts and the Nile System," in *Water Security in the Middle East: Essays in Scientific and Social Cooperation,* ed. Jean Axelrad Cahan (London: Anthem Press, 2017), 40.

[97] See Jan Selby, "Dressing Up Domination as 'Cooperation': The Case of Israeli-Palestinian Water Relations," *Review of International Studies* 29, no. 1 (2003). Cf. Kehl, "Water Security in Transboundary Systems," 39-66. On the role of structural/symbolic injustices in violent conflict, and the problems with peacebuilding strategies that ignore them, see Atalia Omer, *When Peace is Not Enough: How the Israeli Peace Camp Thinks about Religion, Nationalism, and Justice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[98] Susskind, "The Political and Cultural Dimensions of Water Diplomacy, 190. For a more comprehensive critique of IWRM and an argument for "Water Diplomacy" as an alternative, see Shafiqul Islam and

exist? are they individual or collective? to what quantity and/or quality of water are human beings entitled? who bears duties to ensure water rights?); the religious significance of water or particular water sources (including its role in religious cosmology, sacred history, and ritual uses); cultural attitudes toward science, technology, and third-party resource management; and ethical perspectives on justice, fairness, and governmental responsibility.[99] In situations of protracted conflict—in Israel-Palestine, for example—such considerations are especially salient and extremely challenging, because they are often imbued with the gravity of cultural survival, cast within histories of trauma and strife, fired in part by tenuous relations to land and water. Efficient water allocation and rational management strategies only scratch the surface of what is at stake, not least because water acquires profound religious and ethical overtones in conflict (as the case of the Jordan River makes clear).

Although not dealing specifically with resource conflict, Pope Francis's work in *Laudato Si* represents an approach centered more squarely on religious ethics. Because of the complexity of ecological problems and the moral depth of environmental issues, Francis insists that adequate responses must draw from "the cultural riches of different peoples," with attention to their fundamental ways of "interpreting and transforming reality" (§63). Francis condemns mere "technical solutions" to problems like water conflict, warning that they "separate what in reality is connected and…mask the true and deepest problems of the global system" (§111).

For Francis, those problems are indeed systemic and structural, with social, political, and ecological facets intertwined—but they are rooted at the level of theological anthropology. Technocratic forms of natural resource management do not represent adequate solutions because they reinforce the underlying problem: the distorted human impulse to "turn reality into an object simply to be used and controlled" (§11). "There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself," insists Francis. "There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology." It is upon this conviction that Francis calls for dialogue toward new socio-ecological paradigms as a basis for effective engagement with the entangled problems of human society and natural environment.

Lawrence E. Susskind, *Water Diplomacy: A Negotiated Approach to Managing Complex Water Networks* (New York: RFF Press, 2012).

[99] Susskind, "The Political and Cultural Dimensions of Water Diplomacy," 199f.

The kinds of transformation Francis seeks would reframe not only the value and purpose of human life, but also the status of non-human creation within the divine economy, and the priority of the poor and vulnerable within ecological politics. He deftly situates this cosmically-scaled paradigm-shift within a pragmatic call for multiple context-based political strategies, and for inclusive dialogue attentive to diverse religious and cultural worldviews and lifeways. The particulars of Francis's theo-ethical vision are not crucial for my purposes, but his work represents a dimension of response to violent ecologies explored in this chapter—a response centered on critical dialogue around religious ethics and environmental imaginations, including issues of religious anthropology, the theo-ethical status of nature, and human responsibilities at their fraught intersections.

At one level, the JPP shows how technocratic management can be compatible with approaches centered on religious ethics. As I will discuss in more detail in later sections, the JPP situates its hope for liberal structures of cooperative economic and ecological governance within an account of God's boundary-bridging initiatives of grace. But in many cases of environmental conflict, I argue, this is likely an undesirable—or, at least, inadequate—synthesis. The section below, on the JPP's understanding of *realism*, begins to explain why a theology of international cooperation fails to confront some of the most important challenges of ecological violence. Engaging these challenges will require attention to other practices of peace, and may call forth a new imagination of the Christian ethics of peace, especially as it relates to human (and ecclesial) relations to ecological systems. For that, I will turn, eventually, to an emergent form of Christian bioregionalism called "watershed discipleship." These arguments are developed further after the case study of the Jordan River helps focus analysis of the challenges of environmental conflict.

Just Peacemaking, Realism, and Ecologies of Violence

An early line of criticism against the JPP charged it with utopianism, or, at least, irresponsible levels of optimism about the prospects of reducing violent conflict. Ronald Stone questioned the realism of the paradigm, expressing "reservations about what seems to be a mixture of optimism and Kantian idealism about the future peacefulness of a capitalist world, and the illusion that war will disappear from the world."[100] Some

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[100] Ronald H. Stone, "Realist Criticism of Justpeacemaking Theory," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 23, no. 1 (2003), 255.

of that criticism could have been mitigated if the publishers of the first *Just Peacemaking* text had not insisted, against the better judgment of the JPP working group, on sub-titling the book *Ten Practices to Abolish War*. "Nowhere does the book suggest peacemaking will abolish war," Stassen noted defensively.[101] Still, Stassen and other JPP advocates felt compelled to cast the JPP as a whole in a realist light, demonstrating a conviction that its practices identified actual, evidence-based opportunities in the present international order for making marginal improvements toward a less violence-prone world. The paradigm was proffered as "realistic in the sense that it focuses on what in fact works," judged by "realistic, empirical evidence."[102]

In addition to presenting such evidence by reference to cases in which each practice successfully reduced violence, the JPP's defenders sought to establish their attunement with Christian realism by claiming a direct lineage to Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr's influence was stated explicitly, saying that, like him, the JPP began by inquiring into the "empirical power realities and interests" at play, and by rejecting the construction of ethics based on "ideals outside of empirical history."[103] They defended the paradigm's compatibility with political realism by situating their appreciation for the positive possibilities of global cooperation within late twentieth century debates about realism's adaptation to the post-WWII international order. "Realism is evolving in our time because of the strength of alliances, trade relationships, international networks, and the spread of human rights and democracy," they argued.[104] Stassen traced a transition in realist theory through the work of Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye, and Robert Jervis, where, on his reading, the insights of realism are blended with and reconciled to analyses of complex interdependence and institutionalism in contemporary international relations.[105]

In short, the JPP reads realism as anti-utopian but adaptive to and hopeful about a cooperative and so less violent political and economic order. "Niebuhr said that

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[101] Stassen, "Unity, Realism, and Obligatoriness," 180.

[102] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic," 12; Stassen, "Unity, Realism, Obligatoriness," 171.

[103] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic," 11. For critique of JPP's appropriation of Niebuhr, see Stone, "Realist Criticism," 259-261.

[104] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic," 13.

[105] Stassen, "Unity, Realism, Obligatoriness," 181-186. See Robert Jervis, "Realism in the Study of World Politics," *International Organization* 53, no. 4 (Autumn 1998): 971-991; Jervis "Realism, Neoliberalism, and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate," *International Security* 24, no. 1 (Summer 1999): 42-63. And Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Independence* (New York: HarperCollins, 1989), among others.

utopian hopes are not helpful, but day-by-day practices can build changed relationships and structures that change reality and make peace."[106] Still, the JPP hazards a great deal more optimism about the liberal peace than Niebuhr would have been able to stomach. Niebuhr did indeed believe in the possibility of historical change toward more or less just and peaceable moments, but he would likely have balked at the claim that the new era of international cooperation amounts to a context uniquely possible for peace. For Niebuhr, collective existence has an ironic and tragic structure, where every apparent advancement in the direction of just peace comes at the price of certain coercive and unjust realities, and contains within it new seeds of injustice and conflict. "Society is perennially harassed," wrote Niebuhr, by the tendency to "create injustice in the process of establishing peace," and for such tenuous peace to "aggravate intergroup conflict."[107]

It does not take a Niebuhrian to point out that the cooperative elements of the post-WWII international system carry their own distinctive forms of injustice and violence. Climate change is an especially potent one. An unprecedented era of global cooperation bears a great deal of responsibility for climate change and other forms of ecological stress and environmental injustice that now create profound challenges to peace. The cultivation of liberal institutionalism and complex interdependence at a global scale has done much to hasten fossil fuel development and now makes divestment from high-carbon political economy extremely unlikely. The economic cooperation of developed economies, so extolled for keeping liberal democracies out of war, have collaborated in forms of "slow violence," including the exacerbation of water disparities within a context of increasingly dire scarcities spurred by heightened resource demands and anthropogenic climate change—conditions that now threaten to catalyze more overt forms of political conflict. That same cooperation has made addressing these forms of violence at the international level virtually impossible.[108]

Meanwhile, water-security analysts like Mark Zeitoun and Jan Selby have pointed out how, in cases like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, talk of "water cooperation" may serve as a "discursive mask," concealing deep economic and political inequalities between the riparian parties, and thereby reproducing rather than transforming many

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[106] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic," 12.

[107] Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001). 16.

[108] J. Timmons Roberts and Bradley Parks, *A Climate of Injustice: Global Inequality, North-South Politics, and Climate Policy* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2006).

of the conflict's root issues.[109] For Zeitoun, twenty-first century negotiations around the Jordan River are exemplary of how "inequitable outcomes can be entrenched by apparently fair processes."[110] In this context, argues Selby, *cooperation* "is above all an internationally pleasing and acceptable signifier which obscures rather than elucidates the nature of Israeli-Palestinian relations."[111]

In short, optimism about the liberal peace has pressed disregard for other dimensions of injustice and violence—what this dissertation calls ecologies of violence—and may be deepening complicity with them. The JPP's strongest counter-argument against the charge of undue optimism about the liberal peace is to emphasize the central point that the ten practices have in fact worked in specific cases, and so warrant broad support and wider use. But attention to the global context (and particular cases) of water crisis and water conflict suggests that the JPP practices' capacity to build a certain kind of peace masks violent ecological relationships purveyed within the same historical trends. The relative success of the liberal peace has carried with it forms of structural violence and environmental exploitation. In the case of climate change, this baggage imperils its own values, endangering possibilities for development, exacerbating relative deprivation, deepening global inequalities and injustices, and threatening not only the international order but also human civilization itself. These are ironies Niebuhr would have relished.

They are not, however, ironies that would have stopped him from supporting available means—however ambiguous—to steer the Anthropocene ship toward as much just peace as possible. Pointing out the complicities of liberal internationalism in the unjust violence of climate change does not imply a blanket critique of cooperation as a peacemaking practice, but it does begin to suggest what is missing from a Christian or political realist approach to peacemaking that has not yet reckoned seriously with ecologies of violence.[112] What is missing is a practical understanding of how all ten

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[109] Jean Axelrad Cahan, "Water Security in the Middle East: A Role for The Social Sciences and Humanities," in *Water Security in the Middle East: Essays in Scientific and Social Cooperation,* ed. Jean Axelrad Cahan (London: Anthem Press, 2017), 10. See Mark Zeitoun and Jereon Warner, "Hydro-hegemony: A Framework for Analysis of Transboundary Water Conflicts," *Water Policy* 8, no. 5 (2006): 435-460.

[110] Mark Zeitoun, "Global Environmental Justice," 141.

[111] Selby, "Dressing Up Domination as 'Cooperation,'" 138.

[112] Bronkema et al. do devote a couple pages to some important literature and cases of environmental conflict. They take the evidence as support for their call for sustainable economic development.— Bronkema et al., "Foster Just and Sustainable Development," 140-142.

practices intersect with and are complicated by local and global ecological relationships, how political ecology shapes the possibilities of just peace and how collective environmental experience inflects its meaning. A general account of water conflict and crisis begins to bring this into view, but a deeper reckoning will require the JPP to engage in place-based case studies attuned to the environmental dimensions of conflict and peace. To that end, this chapter explores how water issues are rendered in the highly charged riparian relations of the Jordan River basin.

CASE STUDY: THE JORDAN RIVER

The connections between water crisis and water conflict are particularly salient in the Middle East, where "current political and military problems are intertwined with dangerously low water tables."[113] With average rainfall less than 200mm per year on both sides of the Jordan River, the riparians depend heavily on irrigation water for agricultural development, and access to fresh water is a crucial challenge for human well being in the region. By the end of the twentieth century, there was already "an overwhelming consensus that water shortages in the Middle East have reached a critical dimension," especially in the Jordan-Yarmuk basin.[114] Some claim that "water in the Middle East has become a commodity as important as oil."[115]

Early Zionist leaders immediately grasped the significance of fresh water to their dream of a thriving Jewish state in semi-arid Palestine. Even before the modern state of Israel was founded in 1948, "unrestricted access to water resources was perceived as a nonnegotiable prerequisite for the survival of a Jewish national home."[116] The importance of water to the Zionist vision had to do with more than mere sustenance and sanitation. It signified the survival of an endangered race, the succor of a remnant people, the renewal of national destiny. "*Water is life itself*," explained Moshe Sharret, former prime minister of Israel, in 1953. "Without irrigation we will not create an agriculture worthy of the name…and without agriculture we will not be a nation rooted in its land, sure of its survival, stable in its character, controlling all opportunities of

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[113] Cahan, "Water Security in the Middle East," 4.

[114] Offra Seliktar, "Water in the Arab-Israeli Struggle: Conflict or Cooperation?" in *Critical Essays on Israeli Society, Religion, and Government,* ed. Kevin Avruch and Walter P. Zenner (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 15.

[115] Bulloch and Darwish, *Water Wars*, 198.

[116] Miriam Lowi, "Transboundary Resource Disputes and their Resolution," in *Contested Grounds: Security and Conflict in the New Environmental Politics*, ed. Daniel Deudney and Richard A. Matthew (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 231.

production with material and spiritual resource."[117] Leaders of the early *kibbutz* movements likewise entwined political, economic, and spiritual arguments for restoring the Jewish people to their agrarian foundations, fashioning a return to the Promised Land as a "return to the soil."[118] In language evocative of deutero-Isaiah, Moses Hess, philosopher and galvanizer of the Labor Zionist movement, linked the modern Jewish return from exile with communal salvation from the traumas of political oppression and collective shame, and associated the prophetic promise of restoration with processes of agrarian renewal:

> You will come to the land of your fathers crowned with the crown of age-long martyrdom, and there, finally, you will be completely healed from all your ills! Your capital will again bring the wide stretches of barren land under cultivation; your labor and industry will once more turn the ancient soil into fruitful valleys, reclaim the flat lands from the encroaching sands of the desert, and the world will again pay its homage to the oldest of peoples.[119]

All of this depended on the abundance of fresh water in a parched land. As former Prime Minister Levi Eshkol (1963-69) put it, water was to be "the blood flowing through the arteries of the nation."[120]

　　　After the establishment of the state of Israel, the preoccupation with water and irrigation quickly expanded from national renewal and collective identity to encompass national security and defense. Although several interested international parties sketched a variety of detailed plans for regional water management, hopes for "cooperative utilization" of the Jordan-Yarmuk's water resources quickly fell apart. In Offra Seliktar's matter-of-fact summary, "the intense state of hostility between Israel

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[117] Quoted in Lowi, "Transboundary Resource Disputes," 232; from *Divrei Ha-Knesset*, vol. 15, pp. 270–71, November 30, 1953. My emphasis.

[118] Jonathan Frankel, "The Roots of 'Jewish Socialism' (1881-1892): From 'Populism' to 'Cosmopolitanism'?" in *Essential Papers on Jews and the Left*, ed. Ezra Mendelsohn (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 66. The injunction to "return to the soil" was Leon Pinsker's, given at a seminal Zionist conference in Kattowitz in 1884; quoted in Walter Lacquer, *A History of Zionism: From the French Revolution to the Establishment of the State of Israel* (New York: Schocken Books, 2003).

[119] Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Last National Question*, trans. Meyer Waxman (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1918), 158.

[120] Quoted in Itzhak Galnoor, "Water Planning: Who Gets the Last Drop?" in *Can Planning Replace Politics: The Israeli Experience,* ed. R. Biliski (The Hague: M. Nyhoff, 1980), 159. See also Awyn R. Rouyer, "Zionism and Water: Influences on Israel's Future Water Policy during the Pre-State Period," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 18, no. 4 (Fall 1996), 25-47.

and her Arab neighbors precluded any joint efforts."[121] According to many analysts, it is not merely that political hostilities have made environmental cooperation difficult; water itself has been a significant driver of conflict.[122]

"The political conflict in the region has been intertwined, since its inception, with a dispute over access to the water resources of the Jordan basin," argues Miriam Lowi.[123] While the successful implementation of the National Water Carrier project (beginning in 1964) eased age-old anxieties about water supply in the Promised Land, it also wedded the sustenance of the nation to the transboundary flows of the upper Jordan River basin. "This was deemed a sufficiently critical strategic interest that in 1966, when the Syrian army began to divert certain tributaries to the Jordan within its jurisdiction, Israel perceived the act as an attack on a vital interest." Israel promptly sent bombers to destroy the Syrian water project.[124] A number of analysts view water conflict as a major catalyst for the Six-Day War of 1967.[125] Some claim that the invasions of Lebanon in 1979 and 1982 were motivated by Israel's own river diversion scheme.[126]

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[121] Seliktar, "Water in the Arab-Israeli Struggle," 11.

[122] But for a counter-argument—"water-related disputes are a consequence of, rather than a catalyst for, deteriorating relations between states" (pg. 173)—see Natasha Beschorner, *Water and Instability in the Middle East* (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1992). See also Nurit Kliot, *Water Resources and Conflict in the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 1994), who argues that regional water policies and management schemes should be interpreted primarily as strategic responses to political (not environmental) conflict, rather than to actual resource needs.

[123] Lowi, "Transboundary Resource Disputes and their Resolution," 225. For Lowi's full defense of this claim, see Miriam R. Lowi, *Water and Power: The Politics of a Scarce Resource in the Jordan River Basin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[124] Alon Tal, "The Evolution of Israeli Water Management: The Elusive Search for Environmental Security," in *Water Security in the Middle East: Essays in Scientific and Social Cooperation*, ed. Jean Axelrad Cahan (London: Anthem Press, 2017), 128.

[125] "Israel started the 1967 war in part because the Arabs were planning to divert the waters of the Jordan River system," claims Norman Myers, in *Ultimate Security: The Environmental Basis of Political Stability* (New York: Norton, 1993). See also John Cooley, "The War Over Water," *Foreign Policy* 54 (Spring 1984): 3-26; Bulloch and Darwish, *Water Wars*; Diane Raines Ward, *Water Wars: Drought, Flood, Folly, and the Politics of Thirst* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2002), 188; and Ofira Seliktar, "Turning Water into Fire: The Jordan River as the Hidden Factor in the Six-Day War," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 9, no. 2 (June 2005): 57-71. Steve Lonergan dissents, claiming "there is little evidence—other than hearsay—that water played a role in the 1967 war." Lonergan, "Water and Conflict: Rhetoric and Reality," 119.

[126] Hussein Amery "The Litani River of Lebanon," *The Geographical Review* 83 no. 3 (July 1993): 229-237. Amery interprets the Jordan invasion as part of a scheme to divert the Litani River into the Israeli-controlled Jordan River system. Seliktar refers to these suspicions as expressions of the "hydrological imperative theory," a variant of the "dependency paradigm" in international relations, which argues that resource poor countries tend to "reach beyond their borders" in efforts to secure needed natural resources. Seliktar, "Water in the Arab-Israeli Struggle," 16. Cf. Uri Davis, Antonia Maks, and John Richardson,

Many argue that the occupation of the West Bank is at least partly driven by Israeli reliance on the aquifers that lie beneath it. As Miriam Lowi points out, occupation of the West Bank was seen as crucial to overcoming Israel's geographic, economic, and military vulnerability, not least because the natural frontier of the Jordan river was easier to defend than the Green Line, and because it ensured Israeli control of the region's most important subterranean water supplies.[127] Steve Lonergan notes that the occupations of Gaza, the West Bank and the Golan Heights increased Israel's freshwater access by nearly 50 percent at a time when the country was consuming almost 100 percent of its available supply, giving Israel "almost total control over the headwaters of the Jordan River and its tributaries," including its underground recharge sources. "Control of water resources in the West Bank…is now integrated into Israel's economy, and, accordingly, is essential to its future," he writes.[128] Some conservative Israeli commentators have made that point explicitly, arguing for perpetual occupation of the West Bank on the basis that Israel's position downstream of the Mountain Aquifer would otherwise make the nation's most important water source helplessly vulnerable to potential Palestinian over-extraction or pollution.[129]

Environmental historians have argued that the young state of Israel represents a textbook case of the "frontier" approach to natural resource development. "The initial phases of the country's water-management strategy were largely informed by an obsessive effort to expand water supply with no compelling sense that they were dealing with a finite resource," writes Alon Tal.[130] But if the "frontier approach" is defined as a mentality naïve about scarcity and with no sense of limits, then the term fails to capture the crucial dynamics of resource competition and resource capture in Israel's environmental history, and, indeed, in the history of most frontier settlements.[131]

"Israel's Water Policies," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 9 (1980): 3-12; and Leslie Schmida, *Keys to Control: Israel's Pursuit of Arab Water Resources*, American Education Trust, 1983.

[127] Lowi, "Transboundary Resource Disputes and their Resolution," 232.

[128] Lonergan, "Water and Conflict: Rhetoric and Reality," 121.

[129] Martin Sherman, "Water as an Impossible Impasse in the Israeli-Arab Conflict," Policy Paper No. 7, *Native* 6, no. 4 (1993): 3-11. Cited in Seliktar, "Water in the Arab-Israeli Struggle," 16.

[130] Tal, "The Evolution of Israeli Water Management," 132-133.

[131] For an explanation of the "frontier approach," Tal cites Murray Patterson and Bruce Glavovic, "From Frontier Economics to an Ecological Economics of the Oceans and Coasts," *Sustainability Science* 8, no. 1 (2013): 11–24. Patterson and Glavovic call the frontier a place "where biophysical limits are assumed not to exist, or are, at least, not important" (p. 16). The alternative account of frontier settlement's relationship to scarcity and limits I offer here bears more resemblance to Patricia Nelson Limerick's study of the

While the idea of limitless potential and unlimited bio-resources may seem to explain some of the economic development practices of frontier societies, it sits awkwardly in relation to another key practice of frontier settlement: systematic and typically violent campaigns to seize access to and sustain control over natural resources. Such practices exhibit a rather vivid sense of scarcity, expressed in high-stakes struggles not merely to obtain a portion, but further to command the landscape's vulnerable sources of renewal and recharge—e.g. her waterways and aquifers—and thereby to secure a future in a tenuous and contested environment. In the case of Israel, continuous endeavors to expand the country's access to fresh water, and so to assure a future for an endangered race, entailed significant political and military machinations to wrest control and to protect scarce resources from the nation's distrusted neighbors (Lebanon, Syria and Jordan) and the land's outsider inhabitants (Palestinian Arabs).

A keen sense of scarcity has surely underwritten the politics of water distribution in Israel's occupied territories of the West Bank, where the average daily water allocation is just 79 liters per capita for Palestinians—well below the World Health Organization's recommended 100 liters per day—making room for an average daily consumption more than 6 times greater (487 liters per capita) among Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley.[132] Because the vast majority of the Palestinian population of the Jordan Valley has been excluded or cut off from the nation's water network, and because Israel denies Palestinians permits to dig wells as a matter of policy, while routinely destroying or seizing existing cisterns, many Palestinian families are forced to buy water from private companies at extortionate rates, meaning that some of the region's most precarious populations spend nearly half their annual income on fresh water.[133] A 2009 study by the World Bank reported that Palestinians draw just 20 percent of the underlying aquifer's sustainable reserves, while Israel draws the

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American experience in *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988).

[132] UNOCHA, "Humanitarian Facts and Figures," United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, East Jerusalem, December 2017. The consumption statistics for Israeli settlements is from an earlier (2011) UNOCHA report, titled "Displacement and Insecurity in Area C of the West Bank." Both reports are available at https://www.ochaopt.org. In Gaza, the current figure is just 66 liters; and in some isolated areas of Area C, water allocations have subsisted at emergency levels—20 liters per day—for more than a decade.

[133] World Bank, "West Bank and Gaza: Restrictions on Palestinian Water Sector Development," The World Bank, Washington DC, April 2009, p. 22.

remaining 80 percent "and overdraws its agreed quantum by more than 50%."[134] Since that time Israel has diversified its fresh water sources (notably through heavy investment in desalinization infrastructure) and recently agreed to reactivate the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Water Committee, but the situation is still radically inequitable, and remains dire for many Palestinians in the Jordan Valley.

This kind of long-term resource struggle not only alters the landscape, it forms peoples, forging collective identities within caustic social and environmental relationships—that is to say, within ecologies of violence. Regina Schwartz argues that perceptions of scarcity, and attendant contests over resources, power, and prosperity, are intimately related to processes of identity construction and collective boundary maintenance. Under conditions of real or perceived scarcity, argues Schwartz, groups tend to coalesce in mutually antagonizing struggles over whatever is in short supply, "imagining identity as an act of distinguishing and separating from others, of boundary making and line drawing."[135] This kind of identity formation in turn manufactures new forms of scarcity, creating contests over belonging, recognition, favor, and prestige. For Schwartz, these dynamics have deep biblical roots. She turns to the sibling rivalry stories of Cain and Abel and Jacob and Esau to explain how the biblical narratives construct a logic of divine scarcity, which in turn galvanizes "a conception of identity as something that is won in a competition…an identity born in the rivalry and violence that unravel from scarcity."[136] From these biblical roots, she claims, stem the savage passions of modern nationalism and identity conflict, where "demands of exclusive allegiance" invite the "violence of exclusion."[137] To be clear, the immense cultural influence of these allegedly problematic scriptural paradigms implies no special culpability or susceptibility to violence for modern Israel. For Schwartz, we are all "descendants of Cain" to the extent that we succumb to the zero-sum logic of "us" and "them," and wherever we forge bordered alliances to assure access to the world's limited stores of sustenance and power. But Schwartz's basic argument helps illumine dynamics in the Jordan river valley that are obscured in the usual analyses of environmental conflict, making visible how water competition shapes and sharpens religious and national loyalties, and how in turn exclusionary identities are embodied

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[134] World Bank, "West Bank and Gaza," 9.

[135] Regina M. Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 5.

[136] Ibid., 82.

[137] Ibid., xi.

within militant environmental politics.

Even in the best of times, "the meanings of water are constructed not just by hydrological reality but also in light of nationalist narratives, religious symbolism, and historical experience."[138] In the myth-soaked basin of the Jordan-Yarmuk, where water is life, yet scarce, and accessory to violence, the contested watercourse divides nations and faiths both literally and ideologically. The Jordan River is "an identity-generating border," writes Zenner,[139] and its intertwined religious and political significations "facilitate the construction of essentialized self-conceptions and definitive opposition."[140] The case exemplifies the political salience of environmental imaginaries forged under the pressures of ecological stress and intercommunal conflict.

Environmental imaginaries refer to how peoples conceive their natural environments, including how ideas about nature or local landscape interact with social, cultural, and political processes. Carried by narratives, discursive practices, land policies, and so on, environmental imaginaries encompass the significance of a group's ecological thought and practice to their constructions of identity and meaning.[141] The idea is genealogically related to Benedict Anderson's (1983) famous formulation of nations as "imagined communities," but in the case of the Jordan-Yarmuk River Valley, the connection to nationalism runs deeper, and merges also with religious conceptions of peoplehood and livelihood within the material and symbolic compass of local ecology.

For many Palestinians, perceptions of the Jordan's ecological degradation are linked materially and figuratively to experiences of displacement, armed occupation, and resource capture at the hands of Israelis. Some refer to it as part of the *Nakba* (Arabic for *catastrophe*), which is the term Palestinians use for the "1948 Palestinian exodus," when roughly 700,000 Palestinian Arabs were uprooted from their homes during the war by which Israel established its statehood and gained control of large swaths of formerly Arab-controlled territories, including parts of the West Bank. "It is in the context of this process of colonisation and ethnic cleansing that environmental

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[138] Peppard, *Just Water,* 100.

[139] Ibid., 105f.

[140] Rachel Havrelock, *River Jordan: The Mythology of a Dividing Line* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 220.

[141] See Jedidiah Purdy, *After Nature: A Politics for the Anthropocene* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 6-7. Willis Jenkins uses the term "ecological imaginary" to mean much the same thing, in *The Future of Ethics*, 203.

destruction in Palestine may be understood," argues Al Butmah.[142] The Palestinian term *environmental Nakba* captures how environmental change may be perceived as an element of armed aggression, or construed as a living monument to national defeat.

Interpreting problems of water quality, scarcity, and access as the ecological dimensions of Israeli political violence, Palestinians and solidarity groups enfold the Jordan-Yarmuk watershed within the wounded body of the nation. The pains of dismemberment have coalesced a people united in opposition to a what they see as an interloping oppressor, and have inflamed nationalist discourses within Islam across the region. They have also produced images of the Jordan-Yarmuk river basin as a paradise lost.[143] "Thus a Palestinian 'Eden' was created and lost as a process of memory," writes Shaul Cohen, as Palestinian identity came to mean identifying with "the loss of a prelapsarian relationship" between the people and their once verdant land.[144] Forged under conditions of exile, diaspora, and "water apartheid" in occupied territories, the environmental imaginaries of contemporary Palestine link ecological integrity with self-sovereignty, and associate both with national salvation.[145]

Environmental Peacebuilding in the Jordan River Basin

For a brief period around the turn of the century, an influential cadre of global and regional leaders concurred that transforming Israel and Palestine's water politics could help alleviate broader tensions and establish more peaceable relations. In the Oslo Accords (1995), Israel acknowledged in writing that Palestinians have rights to West Bank water resources, and agreed to establish a Joint Water Committee to oversee water distribution and management among the two peoples. The Accords sparked enthusiasm in the region for the possibility of multi-national projects that would facilitate habits of cooperation and mutual benefit. Environmental projects—including aquifer management, sewage processing, wildlife management, resource sharing, and pollution reduction—were high on the agenda. Commentators described an "emergent

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[142] A. Al Butmah et al., *Environmental Nakba: Environmental Injustice and Violations of the Israeli Occupation of Palestine* (Amsterdam: Friends of the Earth International, 2013), 6

[143] Barbara McKean Parmenter, *Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994). See also Hannah Boast, "'A River without Water': Hydropolitics and the River Jordan in Palestinian Literature," *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 51, no. 2 (2016), 275–286.

[144] Shaul Cohen, "Environmentalism Deferred: Nationalisms and Israeli/Palestinian Imaginaries," in *Environmental Imaginaries of the Middle East and North Africa,* ed. Diana K. Davis and Edmund Burke III, pp. 246-254 (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011), 252.

[145] The term "water apartheid" is from Al Butmah et al., *Environmental Nakba,* 7.

regional environmentalism," forged self-consciously in hopes that ecological cooperation would help coalesce a divided cluster of nations and peoples.[146] "Indeed, the environment was seen as a passive object that could be tended to by both sides (and the adjacent Arab states as well) as a confidence-building measure that would provide momentum for dealing with the 'more difficult' subjects that needed to be addressed."[147] In other words, environmental cooperation between Jewish and Muslim communities in the Jordan-Yarmuk watershed was envisioned as a tool for building peace in the region.

Belief in the peacemaking potential of cooperative water administration in the Jordan-Yarmuk grew out of a wider movement for transboundary water management as a form of environmental peacebuilding. Experts were beginning to agree that, while environmental problems could spur conflict, they "also create incentives for cooperation and collective action," so that "ecological interdependence could be seized upon as a catalyst for promoting peaceful cooperation and collective human security."[148] Jean Cahan notes a prevailing consensus that "what is most needed are institutions that are responsible for basin-wide areas and that can sustain their activities during times of political or economic crisis."[149] The ideal, agrees the Middle East water expert Miriam Lowi, would be "unitary basinwide development of water resources under supranational authority."[150]

Peace efforts following the Oslo accords proceeded from this emerging sense of the political utility of multi-lateral resource management. Common commitments to the "rational utilization" of the region's water basins would diminish the salience of "arbitrary political divisions." Post-Oslo peace efforts channeled considerable energy toward joint environmental management schemes, believing these could increase efficiency while also bringing a spirit of collaboration and a measure of reason to Middle East politics.[151]

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[146] Stuart Schoenfeld, Introduction to *Palestinian and Israeli Environmental Narratives,* ed. Stuart Schoenfeld (Toronto: Centre for International and Security Studies, York University, 2005), 1.

[147] Cohen, "Environmentalism Deferred," 256.

[148] Ken Conca, "Environmental Cooperation and International Peace," in *Environmental Conflict,* ed. Paul F. Diehl and Nils Petter Gleditsch (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 225, 221.

[149] Cahan, "Water Security in the Middle East," 5. On the consensus, see also Bruce Lankford et al., eds., *Water Security: Principles, Perspectives and Practices* (London: Routledge, 2013).

[150] Lowi, "Transboundary Resource Disputes and Their Resolution," 239.

[151] Seliktar, "Water in the Arab-Israeli Struggle," 10.

Ken Conca explains the liberal, functionalist, and technocratic paradigm upon which such hopes were built. International environmental cooperation was seen as a pathway to "strengthening post-Westphalian governance," using multi-state and non-state environmental initiatives to "affect the institutionalization of new norms of cooperation, alter state and societal institutions, or create or affect trans-societal linkages." Sharing responsibilities for the construction and administration of regional water distribution infrastructure, for example, could help "soften rigidly exclusionary and narrowly territorial notions of sovereignty." An intergovernmental dam project could create novel structures of interdependence, with the long-term effect of "softening sovereignty, transnationalizing identity, and democratizing government."[152]

Yet by the end of the 1990s, analysts had already judged efforts at hydro-cooperation in the Jordan-Yarmuk as failures.[153] The Second Intifada—a period of Palestinian uprising and Israeli response beginning in September 2000— signaled the naiveté of those expectations, and with the demise of the peace process came diminished hopes for a collaborative approach to environmental stewardship in the region. For Miriam Lowi and Shaul Cohen, the failure of environmental cooperation in the Jordan-Yarmuk basin offers reasons to be skeptical about the prospects of environmental peacebuilding generally. Both argue that prevailing political hostilities make collaborative environmental initiatives virtually impossible—peace is pre-requisite to even the most bureaucratic forms of ecological solidarity.[154] In Israel-Palestine, argues Cohen, "neither community has attained the degree of security

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[152] Conca, "Environmental Cooperation and International Peace," 238. Conca also offers a realist argument for the peacemaking benefits of environmental cooperation, arguing that it can "alter the processes of strategic bargaining between governments, change the perceived costs and benefits that shape this bargaining, enhance confidence in the benefits of cooperation, or lesson prevailing barriers to collective action" (p. 227).

[153] Ilan Berman and Paul Michael Wihbey, "The New Water Politics Of The Middle East" *Strategic Review* 27 (Summer 1999): 45-52. My account of environmental peacebuilding in this chapter focuses on state-level efforts, and so does not engage the widely regarded, ongoing work of Friends of the Earth Middle East / EcoPeace, an international NGO with a bottom-up approach to environmental peacebuilding in the form of religiously literate transboundary/intercommunal water management projects. Admittedly, this is a major omission. Given the longevity of their work and the global profile of the organization, a full account and assessment of environmental peacebuilding in the region would need extended engagement with FoEME/EcoPeace, but unfortunately that is beyond the scope of this project in its present form. (This is in part because a planned research trip to the Jordan River Valley involving interviews with the region's chief water officer was postponed until 2021 due to Covid-19 travel restrictions.)

[154] Lowi, "Transboundary Resource Disputes and Their Resolution," 239-40; Cohen, "Environmentalism Deferred," 247, 259.

necessary for there to be a *meaningful* environmentalism, that is, a movement that engages environmental challenges without defaulting to security or identity concerns along parochial lines."[155]

Some Lessons for Peace and Conflict Studies

The idea that groups fight over natural resources is nothing new—it is in fact "conventional wisdom."[156] But the case of water conflict in the Jordan River valley shows that environmental conflict is about much more than the independent variable of resource scarcity. For Palestinians, "the Jordan symbolizes both collective exile and national aspiration," while the same riparian system remains "an integral part of the national identity" of Israel.[157] For both parties, amidst the tumult of territorial insecurity and contested, fluid borders, the river nurses national myths of popular solidarity and beleaguered national resilience. It is "a site of beginnings…where pioneers, refugees, and freedom fighters articulate the very character of the nation."[158] At minimum, this indicates the need to study "local water values and meanings together with hydrological data."[159]

The significance of water to the Arab-Israeli conflict reveals the impossibility of distinguishing clearly between "interests" and "interpretations" in conflict analysis, and so also upsets the boundaries between instrumentalist and constructivist theories of conflict. Violent conflict is often theorized as having two distinct aspects: On the one hand, conflicts take shape as zero-sum contests over scarce material resources, and are driven by instrumental rationality in pursuit of competing interests. On the other hand, conflicts take shape in discursive struggles over such intangibles as power, legitimacy, rights and wrongs, histories and futures; they are driven by "mutual perceptions and misperceptions, or social constructions of reality," and entail factors such as group values, collective memory, affect, and trust.[160] But here we must confront material

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[155] Cohen, "Environmentalism Deferred," 259.

[156] Diehl and Gleditsch 2001, Ch. 1, pg. 2.

[157] Havrelock, *River Jordan,* 219. Alon Tal, *Pollution in a Promised Land: An Environmental History of Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 199.

[158] Havrelock, *River Jordan,* 220.

[159] Cahan, "Water Security in the Middle East," 3.

[160] Kevin Avruch and Walter P. Zenner, eds., *Critical Essays on Israeli Society, Religion, and Government* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 7. These are shorthand sketches, for the purpose of an easy heuristic. For a much more nuanced engagement with the range of modern and contemporary conflict theory, see Earl

scarcity and collective identity as interconnected, and must be equipped to consider how physical environment carries memories and values, and to interrogate the ways political ecology is rendered within competing environmental imaginaries.

Conflict analyses and peacemaking practices in the emerging era of intensified ecological stress and accelerating environmental change—or analyses and practices that would be capable of engaging a case like this one—require an expanded toolbox, with particular capacities to interpret how communities in conflict negotiate their ecological relationships as moral and political relationships. This in turn indicates the importance of religious ethics to the problem of engaging environmental conflict. Efforts to interpret and to transform this kind of violence need access to the values, commitments, stories, practices, and convictions through which the tumult of earthly existence is made meaningful within common life. The issues make especially urgent the expansion of place-based studies of environmental thought and practice, notably along religio-nationalist borders.

JUST PEACEMAKING AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT

We are now in a position to offer a more detailed assessment of the JPP's resources to engage environmental conflict. In previous sections I have argued that the JPP shares a number of core affinities with the increasingly prominent practices of environmental peacebuilding, but that both paradigms are limited by a truncated account of how groups relate to their environments, particularly in situations of conflict, and so by an insufficient appreciation of how environmental change, resource scarcity, and political ecology matter within conditions of violence, shaping possibilities for peace. These affinities and their limitations stem largely from a common emphasis on the distinct peacemaking possibilities opened by the liberal peace, especially the broad historical trend toward interdependence and cooperation within the present international system. To develop this point further, the next sub-section discusses the JPP's understanding of how *context matters* to the work of building peace. I also indicated above how the JPP's theological orientation buttresses an understanding of peacemaking that may struggle to adapt to the distinct challenges of violent conflict's ecological dimensions, undermining the potential strengths of a peacemaking paradigm

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Conteh-Morgan, *Collective Political Violence: An Introduction to the Theories and Cases of Violent Conflicts* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004).

attendant to religious ethics. I develop that argument further in a following sub-section examining more fully the theology of just peacemaking.

JPP Context: The Mushroom Cloud, the Turning, and the Liberal Peace

Simply put, one of the most significant generalizable takeaways from the Jordan River case is the importance of peace practices that fit the context. It should be clear by now that that truism is in fact an oversimplification—that the work of peace within ecologies of violence demands dimensions of case analysis rarely employed in standard approaches to peacebuilding. How does the JPP interpret the significance of context to the challenge of peacemaking?

When Stassen explained the virtues of beginning with "historically embedded practices, as opposed to historical ideals," he drew a link to the responsibility ethics of H. Richard Niebuhr. In H.R. Niebuhr's ethics, "action is guided by interpretation of what is going on." Moral discernment asks first "what is going on?" and then "what is the fitting response to what is happening?"[161] Stassen summarized the significance of Niebuhr's insight for the Christian ethics of war and peace: "peacemaking efforts must fit the context."[162]

Stassen and the JPP working group had a fairly specific context in mind when they identified the fittingness of their ten practices for the work of peace. Understanding how the JPP interprets the context of peacemaking is crucial to understanding the paradigm and its practices, including its capacities to engage contexts of ecological violence.

"I am rooted in the twentieth century experience of the threat of the mushroom cloud," wrote Stassen in his pre-JPP work on just peacemaking. Once war carried risks of human extinction, "we had to learn new ways to think and new ways to deal with conflict." The advent of nuclear weapons intensified global efforts to prevent war, so that by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, Stassen could recognize a "turning" in the world order and was ready to "sing its song with hope and gratitude."[163] "The Turning" was the first context in which the JPP could emerge as a viable pathway to peace. "We need a new understanding of just peacemaking for our new reality after the Cold War," Stassen wrote. The new reality meant that "economic

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[161] H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 55-68. (First published in 1963.)
[162] Stassen, "Unity, Realism, Obligatoriness," 174.
[163] Stassen, *Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives*, 14-15.

forces, ecological forces, ethnic forces, and even ethical, cultural, religious, and media forces have become more important." The world order was transitioning to a multipolar system at the same time as the relative significance of military forces was declining. "Security will require cooperation," he predicted, because the most potent forces in the new world order "transcend national boundaries and cannot be controlled by a single nation."[164]

When the JPP formally emerged with the publication of *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices*, its framers built on Stassen's reading of the relevant context, adding particular emphasis to the theme of international cooperation. I have already described in detail how the JPP draws on accounts of global trends toward complex interdependence, institutional and intergovernmental cooperation, and data supporting the idea of a "democratic peace." But it is worth reiterating that the JPP presents these trends as the most significant context for the emergence and efficacy of the ten practices. *Each one* "fits the shift in the nature of the international system toward interdependence and community."[165]

Despite clear compatibilities with the environmental peacebuilding paradigm's emphasis on collaborative natural resource management, attending to the environmental dimensions of violent conflict in places like the Jordan River basin raises questions about the JPP's account of the relevant context for discerning and evaluating peacemaking practices. On this view, making peacebuilding "fit the context" is a fairly standardized affair. It means to "encourage, support, and use… the [international] system and its institutions."[166]

Read against the demands of environmental conflict, this account of context is at once unhelpfully broad and exceedingly narrow. It is too broad in that its aperture is calibrated to world-historical trends, and so blurs the significance of individual conflicts' more immediate contexts, their particular histories and local experiences. This is a common weakness in peacemaking approaches tethered to liberal peace norms "such as peaceful conflict resolution, protection of human rights, equality, political representation, good governance and rule of law," argues Annika Björkdahl. One reason international peace processes so rarely succeed is that "this liberal notion of peace rarely reflects local understandings of peace, and the voices of citizens are hardly

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[164] Stassen, *Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives*, 27-31.
[165] Stassen, "Unity, Realism, Obligatoriness," 187.
[166] Schroeder, "Work with Emerging Cooperative Forces," 155.

ever heard in politics shaping the peace and the post-accord environment." Björkdahl and others insist on the importance of "processes of localization and deliberation," to facilitate "a peace that is locality-sensitive and connects with the everyday."[167]

John Paul Lederach, a preemenint peacebuilding scholar-practitioner, makes a similar argument, noting that prevailing conflict resolution models tend to value the generalized understandings of peace and conflict carried by "experts," while neglecting the key insights and interpretations held by locals on the ground in sites of conflict. To correct this tendency, Lederach promotes an "elicitive" method of peacebuilding which "builds from the cultural context" to design participatory processes and uncover situation-specific peacemaking practices.[168] An elicitive model of peacemaking—or some model that proceeds from the particulars of local environment—becomes especially important in cases of environmental conflict, where the character of conflict and conditions of justice and peace are inseparable from local ecology itself, including its unique political, religious, and cultural significations. Mark Gopin has argued that cases of religious conflict would benefit from elicitive peacemakers with a "deep awareness of multiple identities" who "understand Otherness in a deep existential way."[169] A recurring argument of this dissertation is that identity and otherness have profound ecological dimensions. Cases of environmental conflict may call for locality-sensitive peacemakers with a deep understanding of *place-based* identities. In its present form, the JPP shows little promise of cultivating this kind of peacemaking.[170]

I have already begun to suggest how the JPP's account of context is excessively narrow in that it focuses contextual analysis on international institutions and global networks, admitting far too little attention to other factors. Again, a major challenge for environmental peacebuilding is to engage the ways issues of security and identity are intimately entwined with local ecology. One of the complicating factors in

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[167] Annika Björkdahl, "Deliberating and Localizing Just Peace," in *Rethinking Peacebuilding: The Quest for Justice and Peacebuilding in the Middle East and the Western Balkans*, ed. Karin Aggestam and Annika Björkdahl (New York: Routledge, 2013), 78-79

[168] John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 68.

[169] Mark Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 149.

[170] The JPP is not totally aloof from the local contexts of conflict. The practices of cooperative conflict resolution and sustainable development, in particular, state the importance of allowing the details of individual cases to influence action strategies. But, on my reading, the overall emphasis on a universal approach to peacemaking, and the consistent claims to know what works based on interpretations of wide global trends overwhelm the appeals to elicit from context.

transboundary water management, for example, is that water conflicts often involve "sources of freshwater that are shared among multiple user groups with diverse values and different needs associated with water use." Transboundary water management is complicated precisely because it requires a complex understanding of the "political, cultural, and social aspects of water," and these are almost entirely dependent on local context.[171] Cahan argues that the technocratic managerial approach to environmental peacebuilding is likely to prove insufficient insofar as it fails to take account of the deeper ecological perspectives and customary environmental practices of the parties on the ground, since implementation of even the most rational management regimes will require "political will and ideological conviction" to support and sustain it. Environmental peacebuilding demands "a rich understanding of diverse ways of life" and of the "linkages of water with other social, political, and broadly philosophical issues."[172] Where resource scarcity and group identity intertwine, or where ecosystems recycle collective memories, shared values, and/or perceived injustices, the relevant context of peacemaking is much more complex—but also much more specific—than the interdependent international system.

On the other hand, the JPP intends to include much more than international cooperation in its peacebuilding repertoire. Nuclear proliferation, the end of the Cold War, and the trend toward cooperation were understood as contexts in which the practices of peace could diversify and expand. "We believe we live in a moment of *kairos* (historical breakthrough given by the grace of God) when it can serve useful purposes to name these practices, to call attention to them, to support them ethically."[173] In this new context, "peacemaking must be understood holistically," to include "economic justice, human rights, [and] defense of the eco-structure." In other words, "peacemaking after the Turning must be *shalom*-making."[174]

These comments turn our attention toward the *theological* milieu in which the JPP defines peace, interprets "what's going on," and discerns fitting responses. By now it must be clear that I see the theological dimensions of the JPP as crucial to the framework's practical orientation to peacemaking, and that I am skeptical about its capacity to interpret cases of environmental conflict and cultivate responsible engagements with them. I noted above that Pope Francis turned to theological ethics in

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[171] Lipchin and Albrecht, "A Watershed-Based Approach," 94.
[172] Cahan, "Water Security in the Middle East," 5.
[173] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic," 14.
[174] Stassen, *Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives*, 28-29.

Laudato Si as a way to involve the "cultural riches of different peoples" in the diagnosis and transformation of ecologies of violence. Francis saw that the liberal peace and the prevailing technocratic paradigms of environmental peacebuilding tend to reinforce attitudes and politics that fail to do justice either to peoples' integral connections to their environments or to their ecological relations to one another, perpetuating flows of injustice and nourishing seeds of violence in cases of environmental conflict. The JPP's theological orientation, I argue below, continues to acculturate would-be Christian peacemakers to these ways of pursuing justice and peace, placing inordinate hope in transnational cooperative governance and economic collaboration as a one-size-fits all context for peacebuilding, and linking these hopes to the earthly activity of God.

In order to envision practices and equip practitioners for the challenges of working for peace amidst ecologies of violence, the JPP needs an understanding of peace that can take root within the distinct historical, geographical, and cultural contexts of environmental conflict. Theologically, it could benefit from dialogue with a movement of Christian discipleship attuned to how God reaches out to human beings in the specificity of their local ecological relations, emplacing the divine initiatives of grace, along with the possibilities of shalom, within communities' lived environments. To that end, in this final section, I engage the theology of the JPP in critical dialogue with a new movement in Christian ecological ethics called *watershed discipleship*,

THEOLOGY, PLACE, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT

The role of Christian theology within the JPP may be difficult to parse because the paradigm claims to eschew "ideals" and presents itself as normative on "pragmatic grounds," on the basis of the proven efficacy of its practices. "Each person can base these practices on his or her own faith," or embrace them without one, wrote Brubaker et al. This seems to suggest that the paradigm bears no essential relation to Christian theological convictions.[175] But these statements should not be misconstrued as ambivalence about the theological basis of the JPP, which is in fact essential, shaping the framework from start to finish. These are not statements of theological indifference; instead, they reflect the belief that the JPP has identified an approach to peace that is inclusively intelligible and universally applicable because it reflects the structure of reality and the direction of history at a *kairos* moment of revelatory clarity about the nature of conflict and the meaning of peace. The emergence of the JPP was a matter of

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[175] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic," 17.

unveiling truths made visible in our time as a gift of grace. "We are trying to describe what we see God doing in our history so that people can join in," they wrote.[176]

While the paradigm is defined in terms of its practices, the practices are organized according to the ideals they uphold. "Initiative" is a theological category for Stassen, while justice, love, and community are commonly considered the Christian tradition's core moral concepts. When the JPP's framers claim that these peacemaking initiatives, acts of justice, and pursuits of loving community are justified by their verified track record of preventing war, the implication is that empirical evidence supports the peacemaking efficacy of applied Christian ideals. The things that make for peace in our time map seamlessly onto Christianity's timeless moral landscape. "At some key points, our argument comes close to the concreteness of specific normative New Testament practices expressed as political practices in pluralistic society," notes Stassen.[177]

For Stassen, that was especially true of the paradigm's peacemaking initiatives. Stassen's enthusiasm for *independent initiatives* took root after reading the work of social psychologist Charles Osgood, who coined the phrase in his book *An Alternative to War or Surrender,* at a time when Stassen was developing an ethical exegesis of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:12-7:12) centered around Jesus' presentation of "transforming initiatives" against various forms of material and spiritual bondage.[178] "Somewhat like the brilliant flash of light that the Apostle Paul saw on the road to Damascus," he recalls, Stassen suddenly intuited profound links between Osgood's political strategy and the teachings of Jesus. The connection was "uncanny."[179] Stassen's revelation, reflected in his pre-JPP work *Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives,* had a powerful influence on the way the JPP would eventually articulate the theological character of peacemaking practices, presenting them as paradigmatic forms of participation in the world-transformative grace of God.

The ten practices are not *based* on such a theology. They are themselves substantive components of what the JPP's framers call "a positive theology of peace,"

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[176] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic, 33.

[177] Stassen, "Unity, Realism, Obligatoriness," 192. "We see secular organizations such as the United Nations, international communication and treaties, and a hundred kinds of community-building processes as secular analogies to community-building love, which encourages nations, economic organizations, and people to build increasingly strong community with one another, often including those who are enemies or potential enemies," add Brubaker at al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic, 32.

[178] Charles Osgood, *An Alternative to War or Surrender* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1962).

[179] Stassen, "Take Independent Initiatives," 57f.

presented as a proactive complement to the ethics of war's restraint supplied by Christian pacifism and the just war tradition.[180] At the core of the JPP's understanding of peace is "the influence of a common biblical theology of shalom."[181] In Christian thought on war and peace, shalom often describes the primordial value of Christian ethics, representing God's overall will for creation, often summarized as a holistic state of peace marked by the absence of violence, the presence of justice, and inter-relational flourishing of humans, other creatures, and earth itself. Shalom is a "gift from God, inclusive of all creation, grounded in salvation and covenant fidelity, inextricably bound up with justice," explain the US Bishops in *The Challenge of Peace*.[182] "Positively, peace embraces as well as depends on a wholesome and ecologically aware economic order that allows human flourishing and good working relationships."[183] Theologically, "it is because peace and justice are united in the Reign of God that they are united in the church's work in the world."[184]

The case of water conflict in the Jordan River basin indicates the practical limitations of a vision of shalom that understands justice and peace in abstraction from the particularities of *places*. It is increasingly commonplace for theological ideas of peace to include conditions of "environmental sustainability or "earth's flourishing," but rarely do these ingredients attend to the depth and complexity of human communities' fraught relations to local environments evident in contexts of inter-communal conflict over stressed resources. Where fragile ecosystems convey conditions of strife and host relations of violence, and so also figure in religious and/or national myths, memories, and hopes, any ideas of peace or justice uprooted from this *terroir* are likely to appear hopelessly thin. A practical conception of peace needs a real connection to a particular place and the complex relations and imaginations hosted therein.

Watershed discipleship, a form of Christian bioregionalism, offers clues to how Christian ethics of war and peace could move in this direction. Watershed discipleship argues that "Christians ought to recenter our citizen-identity in the topography of creation rather than in the political geography of dominant cultural ideation, in order to

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[180] Responding to the call for one from the NCCB's *The Challenge of Peace.*

[181] Friesen, "The Convergence of Pacifism and Just War," 365.

[182] NCCB, *The Challenge of Peace*, §39.

[183] Bronkema et al., "Foster Just and Sustainable Economic Development," 136.

[184] Friesen, "The Convergence of Pacifism and Just War," 365.

ground our discipleship practices in the watershed where we embody our faith."[185] A watershed is a drainage basin—an area of land, "a bounded hydrologic systemic, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course."[186] Recentering Christian- and citizen-identity within one's watershed means taking the ecological relationships created by this common water course as the decisive context for self- and communal-understanding, for civic activity, moral agency, and theological reflection. Watershed discipleship conveys an understanding of personhood and community as fully *placed*, constituted in large part by membership in a particular "basin of relations."[187] It stresses "the fundamentally located nature of human existence," explains Laura Schmidt Roberts. "We are born and live and take a stand in some *place*."[188]

Our basin of relations ought to be the primary locus for Christian peacemaking, argues the movement's chief protagonist, Ched Myers. The work of peacemaking and the character of peace are radically contextualized, growing out of the particulars of the watershed.[189] Discipleship is a way of inhabiting a place. "The core narrative of the Hebrew Bible concerns a people who covenant with God…with each other, and with *a specific geography*," writes Myers.[190] Accordingly, watershed discipleship localizes Christian ethics: the core of moral life is to become a disciple *in* and *of* one's watershed. Becoming disciples *of* watersheds involves letting local ecology form communal lifeways.[191] "Disciples *of* the watershed must learn to see what's really going on in their basins of relation," explains Schmidt-Roberts, in another nod to H.R. Niebuhr's responsibility ethics.[192] A place-based paradigm of Christian discipleship could begin to

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[185] Ched Myers, "A Critical, Contextual, and Constructive Approach to Ecological Theology and Practice," in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice,* ed. Ched Myers (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2016), 15.

[186] This definition comes from John Wesley Powell, who introduced the concept in the 1890s; quoted in Myers, "A Critical, Contextual, Constructive Approach," 11.

[187] Ched Myers, "Toward Watershed Ecclesiology: Theological, Hermeneutic, and Practical Reflections," in *Watershed Discipleship,* 212.

[188] Laura Schmidt Roberts, "The Theological Place of Land: Watershed Discipleship as Re-*placed* Cultural Vision," in *Rooted and Grounded: Essays on Land and Christian Discipleship*, ed. Ryan D. Harker and Janeen Bertsche Johnson (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 128.

[189] Ched Myers, "Toward Watershed Ecclesiology," 212.

[190] Myers, "Toward Watershed Ecclesiology," 205.

[191] "The natural landscapes…shape our symbolic life, social engagements, and material habits." Ched Myers, "From Creation Care to Watershed Discipleship: Re-placing Ecological Theology and Practice," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 32 (Fall 2014), 272.

[192] Schmidt-Roberts, "The Theological Place of Land," 132.

prepare peacemakers to elicit opportunities and understand challenges to peace lodged within conflicted ecologies, for it would train disciples to see how peoplehood forms within precarious ecological relations, and how environmental experience and imagination informs perceptions of others and circumscribes possibilities of justice.

Compare this account of discipleship with the JPP's. On the surface, watershed discipleship would find little to reject. For the JPP, "discipleship is based on an embodied or incarnational Christology, a view of Christ as representing a specific and concrete alternative way of life meant to be followed." To explain what they mean by an embodied Christology marked by concrete practices, they turn to the "locus classicus of Christian peacemaking, the Sermon on the Mount."[193] The authors interpret the sayings within a triadic structure, in which each teaching begins by challenging traditional piety, and then culminates in a "practical and doable" initiative that transforms some "mechanism of bondage."[194] For the purposes of Just Peacemaking theory, the most important thing about the Sermon on the Mount is not the details of Jesus' teachings, but their general call to "proactive" engagement with structures and cycles of hostility and injustice. The emphasis is on action. "Peace, like war, must be waged."[195] The challenge of practical peacemaking is rendered part of the fundamental Christian vocation of discipleship.

The JPP further interprets discipleship as a form of practical participation in God's own "dramatic initiatives" to liberate and transform. "When we do peacemaking deeds as Jesus commands, we are participating in the great drama of God's redemption of the world through the Lamb," write Brubaker et al.[196] The central model for peacemaking is God's proactivity in the reconciliation of the world and the historical inbreaking of God's reign of peace. The coming of God's reign in Jesus Christ is also the condition of the possibility for Christians to achieve social transformations toward peace in history.[197] This is the purpose of Christian community: to "participate in the liberating power of God's reign in the world," as "God's body in the world."[198]

I have repeatedly argued, however, that capacities to build peace in contexts of environmental conflict would be significantly strengthened by experiential and

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[193] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic," 19-20.
[194] This interpretation was first laid out by Stassen in *Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives,* 33-52.
[195] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic," 20-21.
[196] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic," 33.
[197] Lisa Cahill, *Blessed are the Peacemakers,* 1.
[198] Brubaker et al., "Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic," 22-25.

theological appreciation of the importance of *place* to the dynamics of conflict and violence. One way to build those capacities would be to locate God's initiatives of grace more clearly in their ecological contexts, so that participation in God's work to draw creation toward shalom sends peacemakers into integral relationship with places anguished by environmental stress and wounded by violence.

Watershed discipleship movements model this kind of incarnational approach to ecclesial mission. Since God became flesh in Jesus Christ, and because "flesh requires geography," watershed disciples look for encounters with God's liberating grace "in the watershed."[199] While God's presence cannot be said to be *limited* to any particular landscape, watershed disciples suggest that the fundamental emplacedness of creaturely existence means that God can only be known and encountered in relation to particular places, and further, that the incarnation entails a kind of divine immersion in local environment. Christians might come to see Jesus' baptism as an act of being "en-spirited from 'below,' through deep submersion *into* his beloved homeland, grounding him in the storied Jordan watershed of his ancestors through which the Creator still speaks," writes Myers. Christian baptism, then—in tandem with its multi-layered symbolism of conversion, commitment, and reception of God's free gift of grace— would entail "a protest of placelessness, inviting disciples to immerse ourselves, as did Jesus, into our watersheds."[200] If God's grace is conveyed in relation to one's watershed, then grasping the meaning and possibilities for peace likely requires just such an immersion.

If the dynamics in the Jordan River basin are any indication, constructively engaging environmental conflicts is likely to require peacemakers that understand identities rooted in place—practitioners skilled at discerning the multiple dimensions of ecological relations under coupled environmental and political stress. Participative engagements with watershed discipleship movements could help the just peacemakers develop these skills, or discern practices *in place* appropriate to these needs. At the very least, the influence of watershed discipleship could help centralize place-based, ecologically-attuned case analysis in the ongoing processes of developing, evaluating, and implementing peacemaking practices. Without some such intervention, the JPP still risks propogating "peace from IKEA," while ignoring or obscuring key dimensions of ecological violence and major factors in contemporary conflicts.

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[199] Myers, "Toward Watershed Ecclesiology," 205.
[200] Myers, "Toward Watershed Ecclesiology," 206-207.

Conclusion

Sometime in the final month I spent writing this dissertation, a pair of cardinals built a nest in the holly outside my office window. The bright red male guarded the spot for two weeks beforehand, relieved for a spell by his brownish mate a few times each day. I didn't understand it, until one morning the nest was just there. They say cardinals take up to nine days weaving their little bowls out of twigs, grass, and animal hair, but somehow I never saw this. It must have been some form of ancient stealth, or else a type of blindness for which I have no word. Historically the Northern Cardinal nests from Central America to the Eastern United States, but their range has been expanding for decades, north into New England and eastern Canada, likely due to climate change, but perhaps also because of the dissolution of forest habitats, or, some suspect, thanks to the rising popularity of hobbyist birdfeeders and nest-friendly shrubs like the one in my front yard. What brought this particular couple to my window in central Virginia is a question no science could ever hope to answer, and yet here they were. Once built, the female sat there night and day, and when she left for a moment I had to stand on my desk to see the egg. When it hatched the mother perched on the rim of the nest and took food into her beak from her scarlet partner, then bobbed her head in and out of the bowl. After two days of this I could finally see the baby bird's mouth open and trembling to receive. The next morning they were gone, and I haven't seen them since. I didn't check if they had left anything behind, and didn't read up on the normal incubation period for newly hatched nestlings. If some violence had occurred under cover of darkness, I didn't want to know.

Gradually I forgot about the nest, until recently a rat snake made its way up the holly to look inside, and now I find myself hunting for a way to name that peculiar form of blindness that looks with fascination but only sees fragments. There are many ways we do not see, only some of them remediable. There is far more going on in the cases of violent conflict explored in this dissertation than I have been able to perceive, much more than I have been able to relate, and perhaps more still that is basically imperceptible. Looking to them for examples of how ecology is involved in human

conflict, what I have mostly been able to see is how various human patterns of relating to earth—physically and imaginatively—affect changes in lived environments in ways that do violence to other people or shape conditions for political strife. On my reading, the history of conflict at Malheur relates to the ways groups of Americans have embodied competing ideas about land, race, property, and providence, so that changes to the physical environment of the Harney basin repeatedly set the stage for religiously charged conflict. I present the Gulf War as a travesty of moral oversight, as politicians, military leaders, and Christian intellectuals argued over the war's ends and means without due care for the environment and therefore without anything like a full understanding of how the war's violence would linger and spread indiscriminately through ecological systems. In the Jordan River basin, I describe how local and global forces combine to intensify water scarcity on hotly contested territory, and how water in that context takes on existential significance, bounding nations geographically and symbolically, so that important dimensions of the conflict are about water, but also, water is about conflict. Seeing any of this requires devising new disciplines of looking— habits of inquiry and perception for which training in the field of Christian ethics does not adequately prepare. It is difficult to close a study like this without fear and trembling for all that remains unseen, for what pivotal works of nature and grace have been overlooked, what violence left concealed.

Theologies of peace frame Christian ways of looking at the world. One of the key pursuits of this project has been to describe the view from these vantage points, especially to allow critical assessment of their limits. The three major theologies of peace engaged in this dissertation refract moral vision by explaining humanity's field of action in relation to God's purposes for creation, revealing a world designed to be kept in harmonious order by graced actors. Each interprets God's creative and redemptive intent in a way that shapes what peacemakers see when they survey the travails of people and nature. Diverse versions of Christian stewardship in America converge around the belief that God made the earth to flourish under the orderly care of an ordained race of landowners, who continuously see on the horizon the unholy trespass of ravenous, slovenly tribes. The JWT's seminal notion of peace as tranquil order centers on the sovereign's imperative to sustain political conditions where people can coalesce over their common longing for God. "We are speaking here of no other peace than that of men," wrote Thomas Aquinas, stating what has been obvious and axiomatic for

nearly all readers since the twelfth century.[1] The political conditions for peace, and especially peace itself, have been understood as forms of fellowship restricted to "such things as have a natural capacity for everlasting life," and this helped to ensure that when rulers (and, eventually, the ethicists presuming to inform them) assessed the challenges of a broken peace, they saw only the bodies and souls of men. The JPP finds God active in the world to draw all creation into cooperative and equitable interdependence, and so looks upon the rise of a liberal international order as the springtime of grace, directing peacemakers to tend the emerging global structures of justice. I call these *critical* assessments because, in my judgment, these ways of seeing all, in their own ways, occlude key factors in ecologies of violence crucial to the challenges of justice and peace today. The preceding chapters also suggest how these theologies of peace shed important light on their chosen problems of environmental and political discord, but the aim of this dissertation has been to illumine blind spots in order to open spaces where new practices of peace and justice may take root.

The log in the eye of my own analysis, as it appears to me, remains a persistently anthropocentric understanding of violence. Even as this dissertation presses its interlocutors for deeper appreciation of the reciprocity between and even integration of political and ecological forces, it risks reinforcing a dominant North Atlantic imagination of the moral character of those relationships—i.e. that they are to be judged according to their compatibility with human flourishing, while the suffering and diminishment of non-human creation matters only derivatively. This would have been a very different study if it had been actively attentive to the (persuasive, I think,) claims that some human ecological activities constitute violence against animals, and that Christians have distinct reasons to care. My critical and transformative agenda would have been even more disruptive if it had consistently reckoned with prominent forms of environmental politics as violence *against earth*. The vital insights of ecofeminists and others—e.g. that environmental degradation and white supremacist patriarchy have material, ideological, and discursive connections as interlinked forms of violent domination—do not radically alter the approach taken here. So while the dissertation goads the tradition toward ways of seeing and doing peace that do justice to the intimate bonds of politics and ecology, "man" remains, for the most part, the measure of all things.

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[1] Thomas Aquinas, *ST* II.2, q.29, a.2, ad.2.

I am not entirely comfortable with that orientation, to put it mildly, but it is partly the result of a deliberate effort to avoid the inevitable question: what is violence? Ecologies of violence raise that question distinctively because they channel violence to and through environmental systems in ways that do not map neatly onto common concepts of direct, structural/systemic, or cultural/symbolic violence.[2] The added distinction is not only between violence as "spectacular event" versus "slow violence," as Rob Nixon memorably put it, but also between violence that diminishes human life and violence that harms other beings or degrades ecological relationships.[3] That latter form of violence is different enough from most of our colloquial and common sense notions to demand detailed analytic investigation. From the perspective of environmental ethics, there are reasons to be cautious about importing categories from social ethics to describe rights and wrongs or goods and bads in non-human ecosystemic relations.[4] Eventually, following the trajectory plotted in this dissertation makes such investigations unavoidable, but I was keen to evade them here in order to focus squarely on the prior task of examining how prominent streams of Christian ethics may confront ecologies of violence on their own terms.

But accepting the anthropocentric terms of my interlocutors was not always deliberate, and I take this as yet another testimony to the power of ideas about peace and conflict to affect moral vision. Another reason for my reluctance to define violence or to parse its meaning within non-human systems is that I do not fully trust my own eyes. This is not modesty, but a combination of learned skepticism about the lenses I have inherited and basic respect for the irreducibility and untranslatability of concrete experiences of violence. Together, the cases examined here suggest that the dynamics of violence and the conditions of peace are far more complex than we have typically imagined. Perhaps before a "positive theology of peace," we need something like a negative theology of violence, a way to let our profound unknowing seed new forms of perception.

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[2] For Johann Galtung's highly influential typology of violence, see Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167–91; and Galtung, "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (1990): 291–305.

[3] Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[4] For one forceful argument along that line, with attention to how Christian thinkers make this mistake precisely in efforts to develop ecocentric theological ethics, see Lisa Sideris, *Environmental Ethics, Ecological Theology, and Natural Selection: Suffering and Responsibility* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

Yet there are other ways of seeing the ecological dimensions of peace and violence, born of experience and carried in practices of resistance and repair. The main constructive method of this dissertation has been to point Christian ethics toward collaboration with these movements as ways to widen moral imagination and hone new analytic and reparative tools. Movements for indigenous rights and environmental justice both exemplify how campaigns to overcome concrete instances of ecological violence can illuminate the "inextricable relationship between the degradation of people and their ecosystems,"[5] and so also mobilize reparative practices implying ends of peace linking shared well-being to the health of a place. I take them as exemplary not only because they demonstrate these theoretical possibilities to conceptually deficient traditions, but more importantly because they have identified strategies to actively challenge pervasive forms of ecological violence, i.e. settler colonialism and environmental racism. Watershed discipleship is a newer and less experienced movement, but it represents possibilities for Christian ethics to integrate the fruits of collaborative solidarity with such campaigns into the theological confessions, ecclesiological structures, and political activities of grassroots Christian communities.

In terms of Christian ethics, then, the constructive contribution of the dissertation is mostly suggestive. It suggests relationships within which Christian ethics could grow—advancing its theological and practical tools by putting them to work and refashioning them in receptive solidarity with living movements to confront ecologies of violence. Where Christian stewardship's perspectives on land and land conflict bear marks of its settler colonialist history in America, becoming accomplice to movements for indigenous rights could uncover earthkeeping practices resistant to the entwined dynamics of genocide and ecocide, learning to bear witness to God's peace within place-based solidarity, collective action to unsettle white supremacist ecologies, and ecclesial environmental politics that strive to repair legacies of colonial displacement. Apprenticeship within movements for environmental justice could prepare practitioners of the JWT to address the environmental impacts of war, as just warriors come to see peace—its theological meaning, material reality, and contextual interpretation—dependent upon the political ecologies of the vulnerable. The watershed discipleship movement could direct Just Peacemaking to the central importance of local ecology for seeing and making peace in cases of environmental

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[5] David N. Pellow, *Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 67.

conflict, re-plotting the peacemaker's participation in God's grace according to their ways of joining bonds of intimacy and justice in conflicted watersheds.

These proposals do not add up to a unified theological ethic of peace, for each is tailored to its interlocutors' particular ways of seeing peace in relation to a case's distinct ethical challenges. The efforts of stewards, just warriors, and just peacemakers to enliven their traditions in collaboration with others in lived resistance to ecological violence will be much more important than any systematic recommendations I could offer. The purpose here has been to lay groundwork for productive and articulate exchange, to channel energy into emergent ecologies of peace within Christian ethics.

A major part of that groundwork has been to sketch the landscape of contemporary conflict-environment connections, assembling interdisciplinary resources for invigorated inquiry into ecologies of violence. Each chapter adds texture to that map through a case study raising vital questions for Christian ethics, and sustains an argument—across several distinctive ways of reasoning about environmental and political ethics—for the collaborative development of peace practices calibrated to the unique problems of ecological violence. The project exhibits how these problems exercise the thick theological contexts in which Christians parse conceptions of justice and peace, land and community, liberation and reconciliation, creation's integrity and human dignity. Whether in scenes of violence or visions of peace, the study aims to sharpen moral perception, arguing at every turn for an account of Christian life more attentive to the ethically fraught entanglement of our ecological and sociopolitical worlds.

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