



**WAR OF THE WORLDS?**

**TRAJECTORIES OF THE INTERSECTION OF  
RELIGION WITH PEACE AND CONFLICT  
STUDIES**

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## Introduction

A visiting scholar was being introduced to students in the facility where I study, and the time soon came for me to introduce myself and my work. As I began to unfold the clumsy working title of my thesis *Politics, Theology and Practice in Twentieth Century Roman Catholic Peacemaking*, I could not help but notice the eyes of this academic widen to saucer-like proportions, and her face losing colour to an almost dazzling shade of white. Once the colour returned, this academic gave a reply studded by the common catchphrases that accompany references to Christianity and conflict, which included the Crusades, the Inquisition and the *Conquistadors*.

This event, and a discussion I had later with a colleague, Dr. Claire Rawnsley, made me wonder not so much about the necessary link between religion and violence, for the answer to that question is as simple as it is predictable. What Dr. Rawnsley prompted me to consider rather related to the exact directions that the study of Religion with Peace and Conflict studies were taking. In an environment of increasing scrutiny of the political phenomenon labelled the resurgence of religion, the reassertion of a sacred order on all forms of human activity, where exactly is this scrutiny leading us to believe.

## Essentialists

The first trajectory is the least surprising. Often, desecularisation has been caricatured as a regressive, fundamentalist backlash against the progressive, emancipatory forces of secular modernity, inevitably causing “intolerance, war, devastation, political upheaval, and even the collapse of international order<sup>2</sup>”. Many argue that this can be evidenced by the growing number of violent intercommunal conflicts that loom large in many parts of the world following the collapse of the Soviet Union<sup>3</sup>, as well as by a RAND corporation director’s

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<sup>2</sup> Scott M. Thomas, "Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously: The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Society," in *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile*, ed. Pavlos Hatzopoulos and Fabio Petito (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 24.

<sup>3</sup> Harvey Cox et al., "World Religions and Conflict Resolution," in *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, ed. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 267, Jonathan Fox, "The Saliency of Religious Issues in Ethnic Conflicts: A Large-N Study," *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict Politics* 3(3) (1997), Oliver McTernan, *Violence in God's Name* (Bath: Darton Longman and Todd, 2003), xii.

observation of an increase in the proportion of religiously inspired terrorist groups from 0.03% of all identifiable terror organizations in 1980 to 46% in 1995<sup>4</sup>. Most recently of course, there is the intensification of this scrutiny of religions for evidence of malevolent intent following the events of Sept 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, which is typified by Sam Harris' contention that

...[a]ll pretensions to theological knowledge should now be seen from the perspective of a man who was just beginning his day on the one hundredth floor of the World Trade Centre on the morning of September 11, 2001...[a]m[a]n of faith...it must finally be acknowledged, is a terrible thing to be<sup>5</sup>

This statement, while polemical is demonstrative of an analytical trend that has been played out in a significant corpus of theoretical work, the most well known being Samuel Huntington's the "Clash of civilisations"<sup>6</sup>, which marked the fault lines between territorially bound cultural and religious groupings, "civilisations" as the potential zones of conflict, which were coupled memorable phrases like "Islam's bloody borders" and the "West versus the rest".

Military analysts in seeking more comprehensive models of intelligence gathering and strategising, argued for the necessity to securitise not just religious actors, but their religious motivations as well, asserting that one cannot

...talk about religion in a geopolitical context even if the first war of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a religious war [sic]...we've got to get used to talking about this

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Ironically, in many instances, the cause of countering such violent religious fundamentalism has been used by government and community leaders to justify measures whose violence often equals that of the fundamentalists they seek to counter. For an excellent analysis of this phenomenon, see Mark Juergensmeyer, "Antifundamentalism," in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, ed. Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 353-66.

<sup>4</sup> ZENIT News Agency, *Religion in an Unstable World: Scholars Pay More Attention to Role of Belief* ([cited 27 June 2005]; available from <http://zenit.org/english/visualizza.phtml?sid=73200>).

<sup>5</sup> Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 67.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998).

because our enemy thinks that way. And we need to know how our enemy thinks and how our enemy is motivated, why he did what he did and what he might be planning in the future<sup>7</sup>

This stems from arguments in the literature that focuses on the content of the religious faiths themselves, and the unique capacity of certain religions, namely the monotheistic Abrahamic faiths, in providing mythological bases for warmaking far more deadly than other forms of religiously motivated violence<sup>8</sup>.

Whilst such analyses may be often done for the purpose of explaining the logic of religiously motivated violence, in the absence of any effective disclaimer or empirical analysis to the contrary when such evidence exists, it has had the effect of implicitly drawing a necessary link between religion per se and the increase in violent conflicts, to the point where “religious actors are usually the first ones to be pointed out as the ‘usual suspects’ after any incident of terrorism even before the true perpetrators are known, or any evidence gathered<sup>9</sup>”.

## **Constructivists, Identity and the Fork in the Road**

But the analysis thus far paints a one-dimensional picture of religion as monolithic and inherently bellicose. Indeed, Johan Galtung asserted that “not all religions...are violent; some are even outspoken in their advocacy of non-violence<sup>10</sup>”. He also critiqued the notion of particular religions being inherently violent. Citing examples of the Abrahamic faiths of Islam and Christianity as having within each both violent and pacific streaks,

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<sup>7</sup> Robert A. Seiple, Charles P. Borchini, and Pauletta Otis, *Religion and Security: The New Nexus in International Relations* (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2004 [cited 13 April 2005]).

<sup>8</sup> Scott Thomas, "Religion and International Conflict," in *Religion and International Relations*, ed. K.R. Dark (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 2. One example of this trend includes Regina M. Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain : The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

<sup>9</sup> J.P. Larsson, *Understanding Religious Violence: Thinking Outside the Box on Terrorism* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 17.

<sup>10</sup> Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 6.

Galtung found it more meaningful to speak of and study violent and pacific (Galtung used the terms “hard” and “soft”) *aspects* of a religion<sup>11</sup>.

This has allowed for a fork in the analytical road concerning religion, peace and conflict, which has been taken up by analysts adopting variants of the constructivist position, where religion is seen to be an important element in the development of an identity which in turn gives meaning to particular political actions.

So on the one hand, you have the focus on conflict scenarios where the stakes get taken up from the material and strategic, which are often negotiable, to the level of existential threat, making negotiation and compromise impossible<sup>12</sup>. This has the effect of increasing either the scale or the intensity of the violence deployed in any conflict scenario. The positive role that religious actors can play in this regard, would be conditional on marginalising the religious faith in favour of more secular discourses encouraging the liberal program of tolerance, democracy and the like<sup>13</sup>.

On the other hand, recent scholarship in the last decade has provided an alternative view, in which faith is kept within the core of actor identity, and still recognise the ability of religious faith in providing the resources for the de-escalation of conflict zones. Such has been the work of Andreas Hasenclever and Volker Rittberger, Bernard Swan, Marc Gopin and R. Scott Appleby<sup>14</sup>. At another level, Luc Reyhler has canvassed the issue of

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>12</sup> Andreas Hasenclever and Volker Rittberger, "Does Religion Make a Difference: Theoretical Approaches to the Impact of Faith on Political Conflict," in *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile*, ed. Pavlos Hatzopoulos and Fabio Petito (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 118-9, Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 161.

<sup>13</sup> R. Scott Appleby, "Religion and Global Affairs: Religious "Militants for Peace"," *SAIS Review* 18(2) (1998): 42.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, Marc Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion Can Bring Peace to the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), Marc Gopin, "Religion, Violence, and Conflict Resolution," *Peace & Change* 22 (1997), Hasenclever and Rittberger, "Does Religion Make a Difference?," Bernard Swan, "Peace Search: From the Secular to the Christic," in *Essays on Peace*, ed. Michael Salla, Walter Tonetto, and Enrique Martinez (Rockhampton: Central Queensland University Press, 1995).

religions providing resources to manage conflict situations which traditional Westphalian methods cannot<sup>15</sup>. Such resources can be normative, such as theological principles underpinning moral endgames to provide goals and guidelines for peace programs, what Elise Boulding conceptualises as “utopias”<sup>16</sup>. Alternatively analyses of religious resources can relate to practical aspects, such as the provision of local institutions to ensure the constant implementation of peacebuilding measures. Empirical work on this score often centres on the role of religious leaders in the de-escalation of intercommunal conflicts, such as in Israel, India, Afghanistan and the Balkans<sup>17</sup>.

Still others have provided useful empirical analyses on the contribution of specific religious groupings in peacebuilding activities at the grassroots level, such as conflict mediation, education, development and advocacy for reform. This is especially true of studies on Quaker contributions to peacebuilding, which experienced explosive growth following the First World War, a welcome trend considering their commitment to promoting peaceful solutions in conflicts as an integral part of their faith<sup>18</sup>, and the applications of this principle in a wide variety of violent conflict situations, Mike Yarrow’s *Experiences in Quaker International Conciliation*<sup>19</sup> being one of the definitive authorities in this regard. Other Christian faiths, in

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<sup>15</sup> Luc Reyckler, "Introduction: Towards a Religion of World Politics?," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 2(1), no. 31 October 2004 (1997).

<sup>16</sup> Elise Boulding, *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> Joseph G. Bock, "The Exercise of Authority to Prevent Communal Conflict," *Peace & Change* 26(2) (2001), Richard Falk, "A Worldwide Religious Resurgence in an Era of Globalisation and Apocalyptic Terrorism," in *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile*, ed. Pavlos Hatzopoulos and Fabio Petito (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), Gopin, "Religion, Violence, and Conflict Resolution.", Eward Luttwak, "The Missing Dimension," in *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, ed. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), Cynthia Sampson, "Religion and Peacebuilding," in *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*, ed. L. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), David Smock, *Building Interreligious Trust in a Climate of Fear: An Abrahamic Dialogue* (United States Institute of Peace, 2003 [cited 10 May 2005 2005]); available from <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr99.html>, David A. Steele, "Christianity in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo: From Ethnic Captive to Reconciling Agent," in *Faith Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*, ed. Douglas Johnston (NY: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> John Pettigrew, "Quaker Mediation," in *Peacemaking in a Troubled World*, ed. Tom Woodhouse (New York: Berg, 1991), 240.

<sup>19</sup> Mike Yarrow, *Quaker Experiences in International Conciliation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

particular the historical Peace Churches, have also gradually had their peacemaking activities subject to scholarly attention. The peacemaking attitudes and activities of the Church of the Brethren have received a considerable degree of scholarly attention, which includes Rufus Bowman's *The Church of the Brethren and War 1708-1941*<sup>20</sup>, while *From the Ground Up*, a recent volume edited by Cynthia Sampson and John Paul Lederach, has been instrumental in providing valuable insights into the peacemaking contributions of Mennonites<sup>21</sup>. Catholic peacemakers have also had its share of peacemaking efforts recognised, in particular the grassroots works of the community of Sant-Egidio in Mozambique and Algeria<sup>22</sup>, as well as the efforts of the papacy and local bishops in Poland, the Holy Land, Latin America and Southeast Asia<sup>23</sup>. Though somewhat lacking in comprehensive detail, a useful and digestible analysis on Catholic peacemaking theory and activity is given by Ronald Musto in *The Catholic Peace Tradition*<sup>24</sup>. The volume of publications however masks the relative youth of this line of inquiry and that means that gaps will still remain in the literature, as shall be demonstrated below.

Useful as the empirical data concerning the contributions of religion qua religion into peacemaking action is, however, it is largely underpinned by an assumption that is, ironically, used by constructivists that argue for the bellicose nature religiously founded identity: that of the religious (more specifically the theological) variable as a sterile,

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<sup>20</sup> Rufus David Bowman, *The Church of the Brethren and War 1708-1941* (Brethren Publishing House, 1944).

<sup>21</sup> Cynthia Sampson and John Paul Lederach, eds., *From the Ground Up: Mennonite Contributions to International Peacebuilding* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>22</sup> Marta Martinelli, *Mediation Activities by Non-State Actors: An Account of Sant'egidio's Initiatives* (Columbia International Affairs Online, [cited 13 April 2005]; available from <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mam01/index.html>).

<sup>23</sup> Drew Christiansen, *Catholic Peacemaking: From Pacem in Terris to Centesimus Annus* (2001 [cited 5 May 2005]; available from <http://www.restorativejustice.org/rj3/chapel/Reconstruction/papers/Catholic%20Peacemaking%20FNL.pdf>), United States Institute of Peace, *Special Report: Catholic Contributions to International Peace* (United States Institute of Peace, 2001 [cited 13 April 2005 2005]); available from <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr69.html>, Robert L. Youngblood, "The Corazon Aquino "Miracle" and the Philippine Churches," *Asian Survey* 27(12) (1987), Michelle Zebich-Knos, "Mexico: Christianity and the Struggle for Collective Identity," in *Religion and Politics in the Developing World: Explosive Interactions*, ed. Rolin G. Mainuddin (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> Ronald G. Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition* (New York: Peace Books, 1986).

hermetically sealed variable and thus unchanging and unresponsive to the ebb and flow of historical dynamics. If one were to take seriously the notion of identity as a result of interaction with social surroundings, a much more dynamic and exciting avenue of constructivist research can be unearthed, to pave the way for and make academically viable research concerning the *transformation* of religious identity in the face of historical developments.

A starting point for this analytical trajectory can be gleaned from *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, in which theologian and sociologist Ernst Troeltsch stated that the churches and Christianity “are at all points *conditioned by their past* [as well as] by the Gospel...and by the dogmas which concern social life (emphasis is mine)<sup>25</sup>”. This point gives scope to consider a healthier, more dynamic relationship between the theological and historical (and thus political) realms. This broad theme of theology being caught up in the drama of history and from that, the drama of cultural transformation, has recently been taken up and engaged conceptually in Graham Ward’s *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*<sup>26</sup>.

Of course the next question to ask is: where to from here? Extending from the notion of the God of theology wrestling with the Jacob of history and politics, there has been a fledgling examination of the impact of interpretive authorities, and their role in generating from texts that advocate violence, pacific nuances in such a way that the actor can simultaneously retain integrity of faith and still shift from a position advocating or tolerating violence, to one that advocates the oft-mentioned, though still ill-defined “Culture of Peace”. Although comprehensive research is far from apparent in this field, an indicative piece of data can be found in Rabbi Marc Gopin’s *Between Eden and Armageddon*, in which he spoke of a case of Orthodox Rabbinical traditions infusing pacific nuances in the readings mandated in the feast

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<sup>25</sup> Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, trans. Olive Wyon, 2 vols., vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 25.

<sup>26</sup> Graham Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

of Purim<sup>27</sup>, a feast during which a reading of a divinely mandated mass slaughter, recorded in the book of Esther, is obligatory<sup>28</sup>. Once completed, it is submitted that the author's current doctoral research into the evolution of Catholic Social Teaching in response to the unfolding of history will similarly make a distinctly Catholic contribution into the field of theological dynamics and peacemaking.

More empirical data can lead to a real blossoming of a very rich body peace research on this score, however, such a trajectory still leaves unbridged a sort of theoretical gap between the ethical ideal and the practiced political reality<sup>29</sup>. In particular, there remains the need for a conceptual leap from cultural religious practice to political practice – from the pulpit to the public square. Religious practice is seen as merely a vehicle for the communication of ethics to the religious believer, with political action as something external to that process. This lacuna is gradually being addressed by a line of work that extends the work of Gopin, and situates religious practice not as a *step towards* political action, but *as itself* political action.

Its is work that extends radically from that of Virgil Michel, who from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century spoke of the intrinsic link between liturgy and justice by speaking about the liturgy as the site that concretely activates, or incarnates the Mystical Body of Christ and the fountain of the Spirit that renews the face of the earthly social order<sup>30</sup>. This Michelian trajectory has been recovered in the last decade in the theological literature, and nowhere is this excavation more apparent, and given a sharper and more radical edge, than in the work of Catherine Pickstock and William T. Cavanaugh. Leading the conceptual charge, Pickstock in "Liturgy, Art and Politics", provides the theoretical basis to consider liturgy as politics by arguing liturgy to collapse the duality of "practice (reality) and representation (ideal) to produce a seamless

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<sup>27</sup> Purim is a Jewish holiday to commemorate God's deliverance of the Jews from annihilation by the Persian Empire, as is recorded in the Book of Esther.

<sup>28</sup> Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence and Peacemaking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 52-3.

<sup>29</sup> Catherine Pickstock, "Liturgy, Art and Politics," *Modern Theology* 16(2) (2000): 172.

<sup>30</sup> Virgil Michel, "With Our Readers," *Orate Fratres* (1930): 431.

whole”<sup>31</sup>. In this way the supposed conceptual barriers between the private and public, as well as culture and politics are removed.

The collapse of this duality paves the way for Cavanaugh’s work, in particular *Torture and Eucharist* and *Theopolitical Imagination*, to place Eucharistic liturgy as the site for a authentic Christian program of “spatio-temporal imagination”<sup>32</sup> that bears concrete political consequences. The Eucharist for Cavanaugh not only communicates religious meaning into the souls of the individual believer, but also simultaneously hearkening the Kingdom of God and enacting the Body of Christ, creating a social reality which is not only mystical but visible to those with and without the eyes of faith. Moreover, this body is not merely yet another political entity that operates within the “public domain” of politics, but a body that also creates its own, completely alternative political space, one that is at once temporal and heavenly, present and eschatological, which gives rise to a truly alternative politique, free from being beholden to any opposing discipline. Cavanaugh then speaks of the Eucharist enacting a *corpus verum*, a true body, not only a publicly visible social entity, but a publicly visible “community of solidarity and resistance”<sup>33</sup>.

But resistance to what? To what politique is liturgy an alternative? And more importantly for our purposes, how does liturgy provide an answer to conflict? This point becomes evident when Cavanaugh provides a comparison of the Eucharistic *polis* with that of the Modern State which, despite speculation of its inevitable demise, continues to dominate international socio-political processes and continues to ooze its own underpinning processes of atomisation into virtually every form of social intercourse. According to Cavanaugh, and the popes from Leo XIII on, this fragmentation into individual bearer of rights to be asserted against everyone else represents the very foundation of the Hobbesian war of all against all, and going even further, the foundation of conflict at the societal and international level<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Pickstock, "Liturgy, Art and Politics," 178.

<sup>32</sup> William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a Political Act in an Age of Global Consumerism* (NY: T & T Clark, 2004).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>34</sup> See for example Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno: Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Reconstruction of the Social Order* (1931 [cited 27 April 2005]; available from

Also, because the state's peace operates on the foundational logic of the inevitability of man's sinful nature externalising itself, it functions as a means of stopping acts of violence by individuals through the threat of even greater violence from the state<sup>35</sup>. The state's peace, understood this way, has to be understood as a false one. Going even further, it can also paradoxically serve to enshrine what we know as liberal human rights (as in the case of the European Union) as well as create the apparatus that can comprehensively trample them underfoot (as in the case of Nazi Germany)<sup>36</sup>.

To resist this state-sacrilised "ontological violence" as John Milbank puts it, Cavanaugh asserts the centrality of the Eucharist in firstly out-narrating the State. The primary weapon for this is a counter-narrative that is rooted in the Gospels: the narrative of Christ eliminating all that separates man and God via the cross, and of the eschatological restoring of man's pre-lapsarian condition of mutual participation in God and each other. Eucharistic liturgy, collapsing into the present both the saving acts of the past and the eschatological restoration of the future<sup>37</sup>, thereby creates the foundations of a counter-society to that of the Westphalian state, which is underpinned by an avoidance of *participation* in each other but rather *dealing* with each other through the medium of the state, further entrenching distrust of each other and viewing each other as a potential foe<sup>38</sup>.

Moreover, the Eucharistic *polis* is a transnational *polis* "whose centre is everywhere and its circumference is nowhere"<sup>39</sup>. With this comes forth a defiant redefinition of the state's answer to the question "who is my neighbour?". With this comes also a calling into question the ethical significance of Westphalian state borders, the protection of which has been in many cases regarded as a paramount political goal, which in turn has been the foundation for

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[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_19310515\\_quadragesimo-anno\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno_en.html).

<sup>35</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 45.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Kreeft, *How to Win the Culture War: A Christian Battle Plan for a Society in Crisis* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2002), 48-52.

<sup>37</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 118.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Alan de Lille, cited in Saint Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, trans. Ewart Cousins (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 100.

much of the violence, whether physical or structural that has occurred since the so-called “Wars of Religion”<sup>40</sup>.

In the liturgy thus lies the means of incarnating the Gospel narrative, and creating in turn a concrete *polis* capable of concrete political action, which in turn bears unlimited potential for carving out concrete programs of peace that do not rely on plugging into the seemingly inescapable matrix of the State, whose very ontology threatens to undermine the efficacy of such programs.

## Conclusion

Does faith engender a war of the worlds? The reflections above seems to indicate that though there is a risk of faith producing programs of violence, a “War *in the World*”, analyses that shut out faith as part of the solution on that basis alone threatens to shut out potentially liberating programs which incorporates faith as an indispensable element. Once the possibility of religious faith being an ingredient for peace rather than war is conceded, the next variable to consider is the reflexivity of its theological deposits to the needs and aspirations that are unfolded in history. Consideration on this score suggests a positive relationship between the chances for peace and the reflexivity of theology, and its ability to incarnate cultures of peace in the world.

When one gets to the very bedrock of the issue however, the answer to this question may ultimately depend on who one regards as saviour and lord which delivers him or her from the spectre of violence. This paper also suggests that in seeking deliverance from violence, everyone’s choices lie in the one of two kinds of *polis*. Does the hope of peace lie in the state, with its narrative of peace being merely a perpetuation of the state of *bellum omnium contra omnes*, stopping the spectre of violence by an even bigger spectre of violence (with the additional hope that this spectre does not eventually come knocking at your door); or does this hope lie in something that situates itself outside the Westphalian *polis*, in a radical alternative which incorporates the narratives and practices of reconciliation and mutual participation within that body’s very essence, and from that body’s inception?

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<sup>40</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 50.

For the religious believer, in particular the Christian, this reality embedded within religious practice itself presents him or her with a real choice, a choice that ends either in a perpetual state of all out war, or in a wedding banquet, where every tear will be wiped away, and where there will be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain<sup>41</sup>. The disturbance of the state-centric status quo by the intrusion of this liturgically enacted counter-world could meet with violent resistance by those who seek to maintain that status quo. In a sense the sustaining of the liturgical polis would necessitate a “War of the Worlds”, but a war in which one fights with the truncheon and the gun, while the other fights with the feast. Just who would win out would be revealed only at the Second Coming.

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<sup>41</sup> Revelations 21:4

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