

The background of the slide features a stylized American flag with stars and stripes. In the center, there is a dark silhouette of a city skyline. The text is overlaid on this background.

# How to Change the World:

Living as a Disciple  
in America

Pastor Mark Koschmann

Bible Class Fall 2016

Woodbury Lutheran Church

# How to Change the World: Living as a Disciple in America

Sep. 11: Living as a Disciple in America

Sep. 18: American Politics

**Sep. 25: War & Peace**

Oct. 2: Immigrants and Refugees

Oct. 9: Black Lives Matter

Oct. 16: The Messiness of Social Justice & the Beauty of the Gospel



# Bumper Video

# WLC Class Objectives:

The purpose of the study is to accomplish three objectives:

- 1) Apply our Christian faith to the most pressing of issues today.
- 2) Equip ourselves for mission and ministry, especially in urban, suburban, and multicultural settings.
- 3) Grow as disciples of Jesus by placing a greater trust in Christ as our Lord and Savior and, by the Spirit's power, love and serve others.



# How should Christians respond to the ethical dilemmas of war and military force?

**You shall not murder (Exodus 20:13).**

*What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need (Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*).



# How should Christians respond to the ethical dilemmas of war and military force?

"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword (Matthew 26:52).

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone (Romans 12:17-18).

"But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer" (Romans 13).



How to Change  
the World:

# How should Christians respond to the ethical dilemmas of war and military force?

Then Jesus said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (Matthew 22:21).

"Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings!" (Acts 5:29).

"But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).



How to Change  
the World:

# How should Christians respond to the ethical dilemmas of war and military force?

Jesus said,

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3-10).



How to Change  
the World:



## **Discuss:**

How should Christians respond to the ethical dilemmas of war and military force?

Can Christians engage in warfare? Why or why not?



# How have Christians responded to the ethical dilemmas of war and military force?

- **Christ against Culture**

  - Christian Pacifism

- **Christ of Culture**

  - Christian support for military force (e.g. “Just War”)

- **Christ and Culture in Paradox**

  - Theology of Two Kingdoms

- **Christ Transforming Culture**

  - From a culture of war to a culture of peace



# Christ against Culture: Christian Pacifism

“The church does not exist to provide an ethos for democracy or any other form of social organization, but stands as a political alternative to every nation, witnessing to the kind of social life possible for those that have been formed by the story of Christ.”

“As long as it is assumed that war is always an available option, we will not be forced to imagine any alternative to war.”

— **Stanley Hauerwas**



# Christ of Culture: Christian Support for Use of Military Force

“There are historic situations in which refusal to defend the inheritance of a civilization, however imperfect, against tyranny and aggression may result in consequences even worse than war.”

“We take, and must continue to take, morally hazardous actions to preserve our civilization. We must exercise our power. But we ought neither to believe that a nation is capable of perfect disinterestedness in its exercise, nor become complacent about a particular degree of interest and passion which corrupt the justice by which the exercise of power is legitimized.”

- Reinhold Niebuhr



How to Change  
the World:

# Christ of Culture: Christian Support for Use of Military Force

## St. Augustine's Criteria for Just War

1. **Just Authority:** Is the decision to go to war based on a legitimate political and legal process?
2. **Just Cause:** Has a wrong been committed to which war is the appropriate response?
3. **Right Intention:** Is the response proportional to the cause (i.e. is the war action limited to righting the wrong, and no further).
4. **Last Resort:** Has every other means of righting the wrong been attempted



# Christ and Culture in Paradox: Theology of Two Kingdoms

“Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.”

“Being a Christian is less about cautiously avoiding sin than about courageously and actively doing God's will.”

- **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**



# Christ and Culture in Paradox: Theology of Two Kingdoms

“There is no way to peace along the way of safety. For peace must be dared, it is itself the great venture and can never be safe. Peace is the opposite of security. To demand guarantees is to want to protect oneself. Peace means giving oneself completely to God’s commandment, wanting no security, but in faith and obedience laying the destiny of the nations in the hand of Almighty God, not trying to direct it for selfish purposes. Battles are won, not with weapons, but with God. They are won when the way leads to the cross.”

- **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**



# Christ Transforming Culture: From War to Peace

“We pray that people may move away from hatred to Love; and by so doing they move away from senseless violence and war to True Peace with GOD.”

— Errol Anthony Smythe





# Theology of the Two Kingdoms

## Left hand kingdom

God governs civil affairs in the left hand realm through the law.

## Right hand kingdom

God governs believers and the Church (gathering of believers) through the gospel.

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“Left hand  
of God”

- Spiritual arena
- Temporal arena
- Finite elements of the human condition
- People’s relationship with neighbors
- Human person’s life of faith and relationship with God
- Civil Use of Law (curb)
- Theological Use of Law (mirror)
- Laws, customs, and institutions that order human life
- Law makes us aware of sin and need for forgiveness
- God’s promise of forgiveness and acceptance through the work of Jesus Christ
- Establishes and maintains peace necessary for human community
- Elevates importance of everyday tasks of the household, marketplace, and town hall
- Frees the Christian to work for the good of family, neighbor, community, and world
- Orients the Christian to life in this world



“Right  
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“Left hand  
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## **Positive Outcomes:**

- God governs both realms: temporal and spiritual
- Frees the Christian to work for the good of family, neighbor, community, and world
- Elevates the importance of everyday tasks of the household, marketplace, and town hall
- Orients the Christian to life in this world, and particularly to the needs of one's neighbors

## **Negative Outcomes:**

- Hard to keep the distinction between the two "hands" of God straight
- Ambiguous aspect of God's work in this arena because it's all operated by sinful people: No government is fully just! Corruption is inevitable.
- Difficult to see God at work in this arena when violent enforcement of law & order is needed

# Theology of the Two Kingdoms

## Left hand kingdom

Military force  
Just war  
Negotiations for peace  
Self-sacrifice  
Pacifism

## Right hand kingdom

Forgiveness and love  
Prayer for enemies  
Sinner and Saint



Lambert WILSON

Michael LONSDALE

# OF GODS AND MEN

Inspired by a True Story



**WINNER**  
2010 Best Foreign

**WINNER**  
2010 Grand Prize

“The Church really does not know what [peace and justice] mean apart from the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. After all, Pilate permitted the killing of Jesus in order to secure both peace and justice (Roman style) in Judea.”

— Stanley Hauerwas, *Resident Aliens*

Jesus said, “I have told you these things, so that **in me you may have peace**. In this world you will have trouble. **But take heart! I have overcome the world.**”

- John 16:33

“The Colosseum: Christ Reigns”  
Photograph by Mike Rollefson



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