



Institutionen för litteratur,
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Non-Violence: a hallmark of Christian moral life

An analysis of Stanley Hauerwas' theological reflection on non-
violence

Icke-våld: ett kännetecken för det kristna moraliska livet

En analys av Stanley Hauerwas teologiska reflektion om icke-våld

Rogério Félix da Silva

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Abstract

This study analyses Stanley Hauerwas' reflections on non-violence. In a society where violence and force are marks of the attempt to promote justice, it is required that the Church and the Christian community develop an understanding of their role in society being witness to the message of the Gospel. It is necessary for the church to act and prove that justice can be promoted without resorting to violence and force. The world and church are not in opposition, although it has contrasting agendas. The options provided by the message of the Christ are alternative ways that individuals are going to understand and shape their common life. A central point in this change of perspective is how the church is going to help individuals to understand the positive and negative aspects of the society, subsequently guiding them to participate in the world in a way that shows the ethics taught by Jesus. The Christian ethics provide individuals with the understanding about what is the nature and basis of the Christian life, being that either descriptive and normative. This ethics is incomprehensible without the community that carry on the story of God, and this community is God's alternative to war, namely the Church. Pacifism is an active option for Christians to sustain in the world. In fact, the responsibility of Christians is to work and engage in the society in a way to make it less prone to use violence as an alternative.

Keywords: Non-violence; Stanley Hauerwas; war; Christian ethics; moral life.

1. Introduction.

An appropriate question to approach the main topic of this dissertation is: How do politics, religion, and violence influence each other? During the first years of the 21st century, the rise of religious disputes brought forth political and military tensions. Religious people have been a protagonist in spreading violence, as for instance, 9/11 in the United States of America or terror attacks in London, France and Germany. Religion can be a catalyst for violence and terrorism, although non-religious beliefs can also be the origin of violent behavior and disagreements. According to the Global Index of Terrorism 2022, “The deadliest form of terrorism in the West over the past decade has been religious terrorism, which has almost exclusively taken the form of radical Islamist terrorism.”¹

The immediate response to that kind of violence is often the perception that religion and violence are the same thing or that one follows another. The effect has been the hostility toward religious groups, related or not to terror attacks or violence. According to critics of religion, there is more or less a consensus that religion is historically and contemporarily a major cause of conflicts in human history. Richard Dawkins in his book *The selfish gene* states that “Religious faith deserves a chapter to itself in the annals of war technology, on an even footing with the longbow, the warhorse, the tank, and the hydrogen bomb.”² Sam Harris is another critic of religion who states that “religion is the most prolific source of violence in our history.”³

In contrast to the opinion of critics of religion, numerous conflicts during the twentieth century lacked a religious element, for example, the two World Wars and the regimes of Stalin and Mao. Ara Norenzayan asserts that “Religion is an important player, but rarely the primary cause of wars and violent conflicts”.⁴ Such a statement is underpinned by two different pieces of research. The first is the *Encyclopedia of War* by Philips & Axelrod that analyzed 1800 conflicts in history. They measured if religion was a factor in the conflict, and to what degree when it happened. Religion was concerned in less than 10% of those investigated conflicts. The second research is an audit of BBC that examined 3500 years of conflicts in history and concluded that

¹ Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2022: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism*, 2022, p. 33.

² Richard Dawkins, *The selfish gene* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 331.

³ Sam Harris, *The end of religion: Religion, terror and the future of reason* (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), p. 27.

⁴ Ara Norenzayan, *Big Gods: How religion transformed cooperation and conflict* (Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 156-157.

religion was a factor in 40% of violent conflicts, despite not a factor in the conflict's motivation.⁵

Such outlooks on religion show that the response to my introductory question is more complex. Conflicts are part of the human interaction, regardless if it is between religious or secular groups. In different periods of the last century, religion has performed distinctive roles in relation to conflicts. Yet, if something can be extracted from these criticisms on religion is that religion has failed in order to sustain a position of resistance of conflicts, despite some compelling exceptions around the world. It is similarly symbolic that several religious actors had paid with their life in opposing oppressive politics as, for instance, Archbishop Oscar Romero (El Salvador), Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Germany), Wang Zhiming (China).

There is a sense of a general incomprehension when terms of violence and terrorism are connected with religion and religious people. God is not dead, as stated Nietzsche, and religion continues being part of the everyday life and having an influential role for people around the world. For Philip Jenkins, we are living in a moment of transformation to the history of religion worldwide. This transformation breaks the Enlightenment assumption that religion is and should be relegated to the private sphere of life, not fitting for and distinct from the public life.⁶

In a world where religion, politics and violence are topics with blurred frontiers, Stanley Hauerwas has developed a distinct and influential approach to these questions. According to William Cavanaugh, Hauerwas' writings "will continue to be read as the church tries to puzzle through what it means to be faithful in a world of violence". In Stanley Hauerwas case, to defend a position of nonviolence regarding, for example, the event of 9/11 in the USA is another side of his beliefs that being Christian and pacifist are deeply connected.⁷ The pacifist position is not an option that Christians will make, but an expression of the reality of being a follower of Jesus Christ. Yet, he says, "I find hard to understand how one can be a Christian without being a pacifist".⁸

⁵ Norenzayan 2013, p. 157.

⁶ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The coming of global Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 1.

⁷ Stanley Hauerwas, *Performing the faith: Bonhoeffer and the practice of nonviolence* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), p. 201.

⁸ Hauerwas 2004, p. 201.

1.1 Aim and Research questions

This dissertation has a twofold aim. The first aim is to examine Stanley Hauerwas' theological reflections on non-violence, how his theological understanding of the Jesus Christ's teachings, life and mission implies in a non-violent attitude toward the world. The second aim is to analyze how Stanley Hauerwas' uses this approach in his criticism of the contemporary Christianity regarding the current context of violence and war. Moreover, it is also the intention to bring a perspective on how religion and politics interconnect with each other, and how Christianity can be an actor toward a more peaceable world.

In order to achieve the purpose of this analysis and to support the investigation of the material of the study, I am going to use some questions to explore and highlight Hauerwas' theological reflections. These research questions are as follows:

- How does Stanley Hauerwas understand non-violence being a distinctive character of Jesus Christ's teachings?
- How does church, individuals and community need to reflect the non-violence of Jesus in their actions?
- What are the implications of Stanley Hauerwas' theological views on his critique of America's involvement in war?

1.2 Relevance

The relevance to study Christianity and its connections to the contemporary world is a way to discover that the statement "to love your neighbor" made by Jesus has a political theology that indicates the knowledge of how Christians are going to live among Christians and non-Christians in a world of emergent violence. Stanley Hauerwas provides an alternative role for political theology, being "a way to articulate how the church has its own politics that may or may not conform to either progressive or conservative political programs."⁹ For Luke Bretherton, the work of Hauerwas, likewise the work of William Cavanaugh and John Millbank, represents an "ecclesial turn" in political theology, taking the role of liturgy in politics.¹⁰ The

⁹ Luke Bretherton, *Christian and the common life: Political theology and the care for democracy* (Grand rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2019), p. 31, 215.

¹⁰ Bretherton 2019, p. 401.

connection between religion and violence is, according to Bretherton, one of those most analyzed aspects of religion and politics, and yet not so fully understood.¹¹

Political theology is one influential movement in church life and in the academic world. According to Arne Rasmusson, political theology emerges from a socio-political milieu, intending to mediate the Christian tradition to the modern world. Politics then became a horizon both for the Church and for theology, and apologetically aiming “to articulate the political meaning and practice of the Christianity as a public practice”.¹²

The contemporary society deals more and more with issues that is the outcome of social arrangements where different ideas, culture and beliefs are set together. However, Christians should not be afraid to engage with the world, but according to Hauerwas they need to do it as followers of Christ. The meaning of discipleship in the world should reflect what is contended in the gospel. To be peaceable is the only way to live in a world of war, at the same time it is the strategy for free the world of war and violence.¹³ Hauerwas, like Bonhoeffer, understands the interconnection between forgiveness, truthfulness and violence, and that the existence of a community of peace cannot rest in lies and injustice.¹⁴

In Stanley Hauerwas’ theology, there is a deep connection between individuals and their communities. In fact, he does not ask Christians to withdraw from social engagement but wants people do it as Christians. Therefore, Christians are going to “work in a way that helps them to reframe their position in a way that offers an imaginative alternative to what they regard as the necessity of violence”.¹⁵ Christianity is, Hauerwas thinks, neither a primitive metaphysics nor an alternative worldview. Christians has confidence in the truthfulness of their beliefs, and they confirm it in their lives. This transformation in perspective is a community transformation, rather than an individual. For both individual and community, the peacemaking orientation becomes a virtue when understood as part of their nature.¹⁶

¹¹ Bretherton 2019, p. 17

¹² Arne Rasmusson, *The church as Polis: From political theology to theological politics as exemplified by Jurgen Moltmann and Stanley Hauerwas* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1994), p. 12.

¹³ Stanley Hauerwas, *Unleashing the Scripture: Freeing the Bible from captivity to America* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1993), p. 122.

¹⁴ Hauerwas 2004, p. 20.

¹⁵ Regent College, Stanley Hauerwas interview: Violence, Non-violence, and Injustice.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_q4ccrMJ2g&t=68s&ab_channel=RegentCollege%28Vancouver%2CIBC%29 – Accessed on 2022-09-25.

¹⁶ John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (ed.), *The Hauerwas readers* (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2001), p. 100.

1.3 Research material and research method

The primary sources for this analysis are books, articles, essays, and sermons by Stanley Hauerwas. The other source of material is the YouTube and homepages where several of his lectures and interviews are available.

The method used in this dissertation is a qualitative content analysis. According to Allan Bryman and Edward Bell, a content analysis means the examinations of documents and texts “seeking to uncover deeper meanings in the materials.”¹⁷ Moreover, they say that “It examines forms of communication to see what they reveal about a society, a culture, or even the relationships between individuals”.¹⁸ Applying content analysis to study Stanley Hauerwas' theological reflections can help to reveal the insights and the importance of his theology for Christians and for the Christian Church in the Western society.

1.4 Previous research and delimitations

The study issue of religion, politics, and violence is a well-studied field in the academic world, and from a variety of disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and theology. The influence of religious traditions, churches, and religious people worldwide is yet to be fully comprehended. The work of Stanley Hauerwas has been scrutinized by scholars and students considering the relevance of his current political theology. He is, moreover, a singular voice in discussing and revitalizing the significance of the ecclesiology in the Protestant context.

According to Berkman, the study of his work is not limited to North America.¹⁹ In the Nordic context, scholars have discussed and analyzed the work of Hauerwas, for instance, Arne Rasmusson in the book *The church as Polis*, Miika Tolonen in the book *Witness is presence*²⁰, and Patrik Hagman in the book *Efter folkkyrkan*.²¹ For Rasmusson, Hauerwas' ecclesiology “entailed both a specific christology and a pacifism that became crucial for his further theological development”.²² Yet, Rasmusson says that for Hauerwas, neither Jesus Christ nor

¹⁷ Alan Bryman and Edward Bell, *Social research methods*, (5th ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 270.

¹⁸ Bryman and Bell 2019, p.272.

¹⁹ Berkman and Cartwright 2001, p. 5.

²⁰ Miika Tolonen, *Witness is presence: Reading Stanley Hauerwas in a Nordic Setting* (Eugene: Resource Publications, 2013).

²¹ Patrick Hagman, *Efter Folkkyrka* (Skellefteå: Artos & Norma bokförlag, 2013).

²² Rasmusson 1994, p. 25.

the Church should be incorporated in a narrative where the state or the Western Civilization is the primary actor. For Hauerwas, Rasmusson explains, the church and the world have different stories. The church tells a story based on an ecclesial interruption of the world's violent story that is based on Jesus Christ.²³

For Miika Tolonen, the changes of perspective regarding religion situation in the contemporary society makes Hauerwas's theology "an attempt to understand Christian witness in our context".²⁴ Tolonen presents three main reasons for that. First, the post-secular development brought the possibility to see religion as a public phenomena. Here, Hauerwas's conception of ethics resonates with the post-secular tendency. Second, Hauerwas, an American theologian, has offered insights on Christianity in a society that has experienced more pluralism than the Nordic context. Third, Hauerwas' theology can be meaningful and contribute to Nordic theology because it "carries a potential to question some cherished assumptions of Nordic theology".²⁵

According to Patrik Hagman, there are some aspects of the Lutheran folk church tradition in the Nordic context that are problematic, and it happens because of theological assumptions. Considering John Howard Yoder and Stanley Hauerwas, Hagman reflects they provide a fruitful way to think about the role of church in society, as well as the way in which the church should act politically in the contemporary situation.²⁶ Hagman argues that in Hauerwas' perspective there are several ways for the church to become more active in the world, as for instance, to develop practices, structures and traditions that require people to be engaged in a community. This community deals and solves its own conflicts in a way that the truth gets a higher status than the search for power, and it results the church giving an alternative to violence as a method to solve conflicts. To set a focus in the intern does not imply in an isolation strategy, but rather it is a way to communicate a picture of the Kingdom of God that is more than an idea, that this kingdom is a concrete reality possible here and now.²⁷

Stanley Hauerwas' essays and books cover a range of fields. Here we will focus on what is relevant for the research questions on violence and non-violence. Violence, according to Hauerwas, can be understood as "our attempt to show the necessity that the way we live is the

²³ Rasmusson 1994, p. 306.

²⁴ Tolonen 2013, p. 1.

²⁵ Tolonen 2013, p. 1–5.

²⁶ Patrik Hagman, "Folkkyrkan som politisk aktör i det postkristna samhället", in *Theofilos* vol. 5 nr. 1 2023, p. 32.

²⁷ Hagman 2023, p. 40–41.

way we must live”.²⁸ This definition of violence in some sense is spread in Hauerwas’ work, for instance, in his works on euthanasia, abortion or suicide. The aim of this study is to analyze his theological understandings of non-violence and war, Christianity and the common life, violence and pacifism, politics and Christian social ethics.

1.5 Contextualisation

The background discussion presented in this dissertation deals with topics that are covered in the work of Hauerwas. Religion in the last decades became a force in global politics that were not predicted or imagined. The sociologist Peter Berger stated in 1968 that “the 21st century, religious believers are likely to be found only in small sects, huddled together to resist a world wild secular culture”.²⁹ Science, historical inquiry and democracy would reveal the truth to humanity and take the supernatural as superstition, liberating humanity from the religious ideas of its origins. Contrary to this thesis, the number of members in religion has increased among the world population, from 50% in 1900 to 64% in 2000.³⁰

In 1998, Peter Berger declared that 21st century is “God’s century” and retracted his early prediction in 1968 saying:

The assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today...is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labelled “secularization theory” is essentially a mistaken.³¹

According to Monica Toft, Daniel Philpott and Samuel Shah, God is not dead, but neither is the secularization thesis. Scholars, journalists, and intellectuals had realized *that* religion matters, and they had also begun to understand *how* religion matters and whether religion lead to violence or peace, division or unity, progress or decline.³² The resurgence of a “neo-atheists” agenda changed the old ideas of secularization thesis and started to assert religion always being “irrational, violent, and repressive”. This view on religion, similar to the secularization thesis,

²⁸ Hauerwas 2004, p. 17.

²⁹ Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, Timothy Samuel Shah. (ed.), *God’s century: Resurgent religion and global politics* (New York & London: W.W. Norton & company, 2011) p. 1.

³⁰ Monica, Philpott and Shah 2011, p. 2–3.

³¹ Peter Berger, cited in Monica, Philpott and Shah 2011, p. 7.

³² Monica, Philpott and Shah 2011, p. 8.

fails to embrace the whole dimension of religion. To say that religion has been violent, repressive and a source of war and terrorism, and engaged with oppression of women and minorities is a matter of fact. Nevertheless, religion has also been engaged as a political actor, in some cases being “a destroyer of dictatorships, an architect of democracies, a facilitator of peace negotiations and reconciliation initiative [...] a partisan in the cause of women, and a warrior against disease and a defender of human rights”.³³ The understandings of these features of religion’s political influence is crucial for the understanding of the contemporary global politics.

The relationship between the church and the world is a topic that matters to Hauerwas. In fact, Rasmusson explains that for Hauerwas, the church and the world are relational concepts, and these two terms do not have a meaning separately. The differences between church and world should not be understood as different realms of reality, such as nature and supernature; rather the difference is “between agents”. The church is not against the world, and the reason is that according to Christian faith the world is God’s creation.³⁴ Here, Hauerwas states that:

Thus the church serves the world by giving the world the means to see itself truthfully. The first question we must ask is not ‘What should we do?’ but ‘What is going on?’ Our task as church is the demanding one of trying to understand rightly the world as world, to face realistically what the world is with its madness and irrationality.³⁵

The calling to the church to be the church in the world is expressed when the church becomes a community witnessing and being faithful to the peaceable kingdom of God. The Gospel is political and the political engagement for Christians is the politics of this kingdom, and an ethic contrasting violence is the core of the Christian Gospel. This politics of the kingdom taken by Hauerwas emphasizes that the world’s politics is lacking, and that this politics lies in falsehood and intimidation. Christians are the people living their own stories and according to their social forms that contrast with the world in which the church and individuals are living in. Such way of living is the alternative to the world. Rasmusson argues that “without such an alternative *polis* or contrast society there cannot exist any *real* options”.³⁶

The second contextualization deals with the emergence of political theology. The emergence of political theology in the 20th century was formulated by the Catholic theologian Johann Baptist

³³ Monica, Philpott and Shah 2011, p. 8.

³⁴ Rasmusson 1994, p. 211.

³⁵ Berkman and Cartwright 2001, p. 377.

³⁶ Rasmusson 1994, p. 217.

Metz, the Protestant theologians Jürgen Moltmann and Dorothee Sölle in the turbulence of the 1960s. Science and technology seemed by the modern society as a source of unlimited possibilities. On the other hand, moral, religious and political traditions were objected to in the name of human autonomy. The social and economic growth showed a discrepancy between the first world and the newly independent third world. Critics developed Marxist thought, being influenced by, for instance, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Jürgen Habermas in developing a critical analysis of unjust reality.³⁷

For Rasmusson, political theology did not intend to politicize theology, but rather to analyze political implications of Christian theology. The criticism raised by the political theologians were against the modern privatization of the Christian faith, changing it into an “individualistic, ahistorical and apolitical existential and transcendental understandings of Christianity”.³⁸ Social and political theory became an instrument for theology, and provided tools for the emergence of mediating theologies, for example Liberation, Black, and Feminist theology. Political theology is an attempt to meet all the challenges originated by the modern world.³⁹

Bretherton understands political theology not only as a generic term that set different pathways sharing a common political and theological reflection. Despite that, politics is often portrayed as corrupt and bad, he takes politics as a moral good necessary for human flourishing. From his perspective, the alternative role of political theology is “to articulate how the church has its own politics that may or may not conform to either progressive or conservative political programs”.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the theological politics of Hauerwas is distinct because in his perspective “the church is the primary locus for its politics”.⁴¹ The church has its own agenda when doing politics and that contrasts to the world’s politics. Hauerwas thinks that both conservative and liberal theological understandings represent nothing less than a Constantinian position, a fusion of church and political society.⁴² What seems to be clear in Hauerwas theology, however, is that being faithful as church within a liberal society requires deep understanding of this same society and the way it places and shapes the Christian community.

The third aspect in this contextualization relates to religion and violence. As we have seen, for some people, and not least in the cases of the Western society, violence and religion are deeply

³⁷ Rasmusson 1994, p. 12–13.

³⁸ Rasmusson 1994, p. 12–13

³⁹ Rasmusson 1994, p. 12–13.

⁴⁰ Bretherton 2019, p. 31.

⁴¹ Rasmusson 1994, p. 331.

⁴² Rasmusson 1994, p. 333.

connected. However, the postulation that religion promotes violence represents what William T. Cavanaugh called the myth of religious violence. He states that such a view is part of the conventional wisdom of the Western society, and it underlies institutions and policies. The myth of religious violence presupposes the idea of religions as a “transhistorical and transcultural feature of human life” that is distinct from other secular features and that is inclined to promote violence. From this perspective, religion must be relegated to the private sphere of individual’s life, and this implies also that the secular nation-state is a carrier of the truth about the danger of religion.⁴³

Cavanaugh claims that there is no such thing as a transhistorical and transcultural essence of religion, and that this essentialist idea is an incoherent attempt to divide religious violence from secular violence. Such attempts show one of the foundational factors used to legitimate myths within the liberal nation-state. The effect is the marginalization of the religious other, understood as inclined to fanaticism, in contrast to the rational person, inclined to peace-making and secular.⁴⁴ Besides, this myth can be used in domestic politics to marginalize groups targeted with the label of religious, and underwriting the power of the state. The argument by Cavanaugh about the myth of religious violence points out that “religion-and-violence argument serve a particular need for their consumers in the West”.⁴⁵

In other words, the liberal nation-state’s criticism of religion has the function of promoting and reinforcing its own agenda. The violence perpetrated by individuals gets different meaning, depending if it is from secular or religious actors, and it serves also to provide the secular social order with a character, the religious fanatic, understood as an enemy. Cavanaugh agrees with Carl Schmitt that this distinction between friend/enemy is essential to the creation of the political in the modern state. He does not claim that religious actors do not promote violence, actually he argues that all kinds of practices and ideologies under specific circumstances can promote violence. Rather, he is critical how what he calls the myth of religious violence tries to establish the categories of secular and religious, as timeless, universal and natural, although these notions are products of the modern society.⁴⁶

The myth of religious violence is, Cavanaugh says, a prevalent myth in Western culture, and it is so influential because of political and social function it has in the Western society. Since the

⁴³ William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of religious violence: Secular ideology and the roots of modern conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 3.

⁴⁴ Cavanaugh 2009, p. 3-4.

⁴⁵ Cavanaugh 2009, p. 4.

⁴⁶ Cavanaugh 2009, p. 5-6.

terror attack in the USA on 9/11 2001, many books and articles have been written in the attempt to explain why religions have a tendency to violence. These articles and books come from different fields of the academy, but Cavanaugh argues all of them share the inability to convincingly argue for the separation they assume between religious and secular violence.

For Cavanaugh, discarding this strict separation of religious and secular violence provides important benefits. First, it helps freeing the empirical work on violence from the secular-religious distinction. Instead of questioning if religion has a tendency to promote violence, the question would be “Under what circumstances do ideologies and practices of all kinds promote violence?”.⁴⁷ The investigations linking religion and violence would turn into how the terms religion and secular have been used in the modern world for support this or that power. Second, to abandon the myth would help us to see that the secularism present in the Western culture is something contingent and local, rather than a universal solution to universal problems of religion. Third, it would help to eliminate from the Western world a significant problem in the understanding of the other. The stereotypical character promoted in the West does not fit the complexity within the Muslim world. Fourth, it would question the justification to the use of military violence against religious actors. Fifth, it would help a better understanding for Americans about the causes of the opposition to American policies abroad. That would help to reply to questions, like that President George W. Bush raised: “Why they hate us?”.⁴⁸

The conclusion that Cavanaugh reaches is that the intention to identify a transhistorical and transcultural essence of religion separated from politics, and essence prone to promote violence in a way that differs from other secular realities, is incoherent. Despite that, the myth of religious violence shows itself as a persistent story in the Western culture. The reason is the usefulness of the argument, being adopted to marginalize discourses and practices that they call religious, specially linked to Christians Churches and Muslim groups.⁴⁹

The discussion made by Cavanaugh about religion and violence is a pertinent attempt to clarify blind spots in the contemporary society to a better understanding of how constructing artificial distinctions between religious and secular violence led to a false view that the violence promoted by the secular nation-state is taken as justifiable. Furthermore, Cavanaugh concludes:

⁴⁷ Cavanaugh 2009, p. 226.

⁴⁸ Cavanaugh 2009, p. 226-229.

⁴⁹ Cavanaugh 2009, p. 225-226.

Violence feeds on the need for enemies, the need to separate us from them. Such binary ways of dividing the world make the world understandable for us, but they also make the world unlivable for many. Doing away with the myth of religious violence is one way of resisting such binaries and, perhaps, turning some enemies into friends.⁵⁰

Stanley Hauerwas in his book *Approaching the end* comments on Cavanaugh's ideas on what society calls religious violence. In his perspective, Cavanaugh shows how the myth of religious violence has its bases in the repetition of the same thing over and over, and that is not based in a reality. The nation-state provides a narrative of salvation, in which the state saves individuals from the violence of religion. The state uses such a story, for example, to "foster the idea, particularly in the United States, that secular social orders are inherently peaceful."⁵¹

2. Stanley Hauerwas.

Stanley Hauerwas is Gilbert T. Rowe Professor Emeritus of Divinity and Law at Duke University in the United States of America. The importance of the church and of narrative for the understanding of the Christian existence and of the significance of virtue for the understanding of the meaning of the Christian life are major themes in his work.⁵² When he discusses theologians and philosophers that has influenced him, he mentions, for example H. Richard and Reinhold Niebuhr, Karl Barth, Paul Ramsey, James Gustafson, John Howard Yoder and Alasdair MacIntyre, as well as classical names such as Aristoteles, Aquinas, Augustine, Wesley and Edwards.⁵³

Hauerwas is Texan, and he is also a Christian. Being Texan means for him more than a place where he was born. Rather, it determines the story of who he is. This account of being from Texas serves as a primary narrative which shapes the lives of those, like him, born in this environment. This narrative, in addition to other narratives that people do not select, encompasses the life of individuals more than those stories that are chosen. He is less sure about his claim of being a Christian. With the claim of being a Christian, he means "I am declaring

⁵⁰ Cavanaugh 2009, p. 230,

⁵¹ Stanley Hauerwas, *Approaching the end: Eschatological reflections on Church, Politics, and Life* (Grand rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2013), p. 132.

⁵² Duke University, Stanley Hauerwas, <https://divinity.duke.edu/faculty/stanley-hauerwas> (Accessed at 2022-11-27).

⁵³ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom: a primer in Christian ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame press, 1983), p. xix.

my allegiance to those people, past, present, and future, who continue to struggle to live faithfully to the God we find revealed in Israel and Jesus Christ".⁵⁴ The story of being a Texan is a concrete story, as well as the story of being a Christian, although the Christian story helps individuals to understand also other particular stories in their lives.

In such perspective, Christian theology is not the display of abstract ideas, rather "a form of discourse that is meant to help us live more faithfully as Christians who are part of that community called church."⁵⁵ The church has to practice non-violence, reconciliation, and give significance to the singleness. If to free theology from the academic captivity means to be "unscholarly", Hauerwas thinks it is a risk taking.

2.1 Charge of sectarianism

In the essay *The sectarian temptation: Reflections on Theology, the Church, and the University*, James Gustafson's criticism is based on Hauerwas' epistemological priority of the church, and that such a view lead to a sectarian retreat, leading individuals to social irresponsibility.⁵⁶ Hauerwas replied to Gustafson that he wanted to develop a "constructive proposal by challenging the dominant philosophical and theological assumptions shared by those who make criticisms such as Gustafson's."⁵⁷

The task of a theologian, according to Hauerwas, is to be faithful, rather than trying to create a new theology. Although he did not intend to create something new, his work has been regarded as new and challenging. His first intention was to understand the Christian life, how it can help individuals live more faithfully, and how Christian convictions can be said to be true or false.⁵⁸

A common criticism of positions, like Hauerwas, is that it leads to a withdrawal from society, and the effect is an ethic unable to manage modern day difficulties adequately. This criticism assumes that the church is socially and culturally isolated from the society and culture. This is, Hauerwas says, a mistaken assumption. For example, Hauerwas states that "Christians are never

⁵⁴ Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence today: Essays on church, World, and living in between* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1988), p. 39.

⁵⁵ Hauerwas 1993, p. 8.

⁵⁶ Hauerwas, Stanley (2001a), "Why the "sectarian temptation" is a misrepresentation: A response to James Gustafsson", in *The Hauerwas readers*, John Berkman & Michael Cartwright (ed.) (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2001), p. 90.

⁵⁷ Hauerwas 1988, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Hauerwas 1988, p. 1.

just members of the church but must rightly live in the world. As long as people have to make a living, there is no way to withdraw.”⁵⁹ The criticism he, for example, has made against the moral limits of liberalism does not imply a sectarian position, and he asks his critics to show how he is wrong about God, Jesus, the limits of the liberalism or the doctrine of the church, rather than calling him a sectarian.⁶⁰

To clarify his position, as well as his theological reflections, Hauerwas analyses the questions raised by Gustafson in three ways. The first is the question about Truth *versus* Fideism. The implications involved in theological convictions involve truth-claims. However, these claims do not end the discussion over a topic. There is a connection between the claim of truthfulness of the religious convictions and the truthfulness of the person who made such claims. Christian convictions require the transformation of the self. Hauerwas explains, “Christians are people who remain convinced that the truthfulness of their beliefs must be demonstrated in their lives”.⁶¹

The second is about Christian social engagement versus irresponsibility. Hauerwas argues that Gustafson assumes that there are two options for Christians: either complete involvement or complete withdrawal from culture. For Hauerwas, the church and Christians must be trained to understand the language of their context. The call to recover the integrity of the church as a central element to the political witness of the church in the world does not imply a withdraw either from economics, culture or the political life. Pacifism is not a work for those who withdraw from society, rather pacifism demands political engagement. In this sense, Christians are called to work selectively, making priorities and finding time and circumstances to take part in different levels of the public life.⁶²

The third is about a theology of creation and redemption versus a theological tribalism. This statement made by Gustafson lies on the assumption that Hauerwas does not have an adequate doctrine of creation. This lack results in not having an adequate theological and moral basis that can address moral and social problems of the contemporary society. Hauerwas contends he does not have a doctrine of creation as the basis for ethics. Creation in Christian theology is an eschatological act, bending nature and history in a teleological order.⁶³

⁵⁹ Hauerwas 1988, p. 6.

⁶⁰ Hauerwas 1988, p. 8

⁶¹ Hauerwas 1988, p. 10.

⁶² Hauerwas 1988, p. 11-15.

⁶³ Hauerwas 1988, p. 16-17.

Yet, the understanding of the meaning of theology that Hauerwas provides is something unique and at the same time is in disagreement with the false sense of completeness of theology. Nicholas M. Healy wrote that for Hauerwas “theology must be incomplete, always evolving and beginning again.”⁶⁴ He explains the reason for Hauerwas understanding is that “the reason lies with us, with our situatedness and the demands of an ever-changing pastoral situation.”⁶⁵ For Hauerwas, theologians cannot display the fullness and meaning of the Christians faith because of the incompleteness and finitude of our lives. Besides, incompleteness and finitude show also the world that the church are going to speaks to its culture. From such a perspective, Hauerwas criticizes that theologians in United States are more concerned about “how to begin and how to do theology”, turning the theological method into an art form.⁶⁶

2.2 Narrative and theology

The appeal of narrative among scholars shows a variety of uses. In common, it shows that narrative has been used to explain, for example, human actions, to provide an understanding of the structure of human consciousness, to clarify the historical development of traditions, and to offer an alternative to foundationalist or scientific epistemologies. According to Hauerwas and Jones, narrative is fundamental to theological and ethical reflections. However, the uncritical use of it, and the lack of conceptual clarity, has caused confusion.⁶⁷ Hauerwas refers to James Gustafson, who identifies narrative as one of four varieties of moral discourse, together with prophetic, ethical and policy. Gustafsson also proposes that the central point of narrative theology and narrative ethics is to sustain a moral identity for a religious or secular community, reinforcing its history and traditional meanings according to internal sources of these communities. Shortly, “Narratives shape and sustain the ethos of the community.”⁶⁸

Hauerwas recognizes that Gustafson’s thoughts on narrative are not wrong, but it does not consider the use of narrative when applied to epistemological issues. The importance of narrative in theology and ethics is not primarily the significance of stories, but the recognition that elements as rationality, methods of argument, and historical explanation have a narrative

⁶⁴ Nicholas M. Healy, *Hauerwas: A (very) critical introduction* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014), p. 33.

⁶⁵ Healy 2014, p. 33.

⁶⁶ Healy 2014, p.33.

⁶⁷ Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (ed.), *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), p.1.

⁶⁸ Hauerwas & Jones 1989, p. 2.

form. The contemporary discussion shows a poor understanding of what narrative is at stake. For Hauerwas and Jones, narrative is a conceptual category to understand issues on epistemology, methods of argument, personal identity, and Christian convictions.

Contemporary scholars have ignored the significance of narrative to ethical reflections. It is, says Hauerwas and Jones, a mistake that results the difficult in seeing how traditions, e.g., Judaism and Christianity, might help individuals to deal with moral issues raised in the modern society. This significance och narrative stated by Hauerwas and Jones emphasizes: a) the character and moral notions gets its meaning in a narrative; b) narrative and explanation are connected, moral disagreements are based on rival histories of explanation; c) the existentialistic ethics requires that all moral judgments must be subjective or arbitrary. To flee from the manipulative aspect of reason it is necessary to free from the irrational. For Hauerwas and David Burrell, narrative can function as a form of rationality. The Christian story has a moral significance, teaching individuals to know and act rightly under certain conditions.⁶⁹

In an attempt to clarify his perspective and to emphasize how important narrative is to social ethics, Hauerwas considers the ideas in the book *Watership Down* by Richard Adams. The structure of the book is useful to exemplify the narrative nature of social ethics. *Watership Down* shows itself as a political novel through an adventure story. This aspect is an important feature that normally is forgotten, the task of politics is to offer the sense of involvement in a common adventure. This is the point of individuals' search, rather than seeking power, security or equality. Good politics help individuals to develop those central virtues for the citizens. The book highlights those various forms of courage and hope necessary to the establishment of a good community.⁷⁰ Hauerwas argues:

Without denying that *Watership Down* is a ready source of standard forms of political reflection, the book has a deeper insight to offer for social ethics. Although each society can be characterized by traditional political opinions and theory, Adams' intention is to show how such discussions are subordinate to the ability of a community to live and tell its stories.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Stanley Hauerwas and David Burrell, "From System to Story: An alternative pattern for rationality in Ethics", in *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative theology*, Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (ed.) (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), p. 158-159.

⁷⁰ Stanley Hauerwas, *A community of character: toward a constructive Christian social ethic*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1981), p. 12-13.

⁷¹ Hauerwas 1981, p. 114.

According to Hauerwas, to have a narrative is a requirement for good and just societies. The functionality of a narrative setting helps individuals to know the truth about their existence and the risk of a self-deception. The mentioned book describes a community of rabbits that, by the inability of some individuals to maintain the traditions, led to the corruption of their community and nature. This story shows Christians their dependence on a narrative as a guidance to their lives according to the story they claim to be part of. Christians must challenge themselves to become the kind of community in accordance to a story sustained for centuries that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel.⁷²

To become a Christian involves the development of individual skills under the narrative of the Christian community. This is a narrative that leads to, for example, a conversion. It is required to transform themselves, in a new way of life in which a reevaluation of their past happens. The conversion of the individuals entails the recognition that they are morally deficient, although the conversion shows the richness of what God has called them to be part of. This conversion set individuals on a path of growth. Yet, to live faithful to the Christian story involves concepts of virtue and character that help them live a moral development. Regarding character, Hauerwas thinks, it functions as a reminder that the self is not a monolithic aspect of their lives, it is rather a subject of growth. This character relates to the narrative that teaches the self how to handle the existence without creating illusion or deception. From this perspective, “growth cannot be antithetical to integrity, but essential to it; our character, like the narrative of a good novel, is forged to give a coherence to our activities by claiming them as our own.”⁷³

There is no moral theory that can close the gap between what individuals should do and what individuals can or have to do. Instead, Hauerwas claims, a moral theory needs to be able to show how individuals’ appropriation to the commitments of a community contributes to the story of that same people. The moral growth connected to a narrative can offer individuals those necessary skills needed to perceive the ambiguity of moral achievements and the process of continuous growth.⁷⁴ Moreover, individuals are connected to multiple communities and narratives. To say that Hauerwas is Texan and Christian is an example of reality that individuals

⁷² Hauerwas 1981, p. 22-34.

⁷³ Hauerwas, Stanley (2001b), “Character, Narrative, and Growth in the Christian Life”, in *The Hauerwas readers*, John Berkman & Michael Cartwright (ed.) (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2001), p. 232.

⁷⁴ Hauerwas 2001b, p. 233.

are not formed only by one story, and how different narratives can be found within individuals, both being in contrast to each other; and living together.⁷⁵

The use of the term narrative theology as a qualifier to Hauerwas' theology does not encompass what the "Hauwersian" theology means. The reason is that he does not like any other qualifier than Christian to his theology. In addition, the term narrative theology can suggest that theology is more concerned with the narrative than with God.⁷⁶ Rasmusson concludes that, although Hauerwas is understood as one of the most influential proponents of narrative in theology, the description of his theology as narrative theology is misleading. It is the biblical narrative and its relation to the history of the church that is central and get the attention of Hauerwas, rather than the narrative category in itself.⁷⁷

For James Logan, the work of Hauerwas "advocates for a recovery of the moral skills (virtues) that enable a proper understanding of social reality and practice from the perspective of the Christian narrative of Israel as Jesus Christ presents it."⁷⁸ The aim for Christians is not primarily related to the transformation of society or of liberalism, rather it is to move back to a peaceable faithfulness that only makes sense if comprehended from within the context of the community of Christians. In such view, the moral ethos of the contemporary American society is confronted by the moral ethos of the alternative narrative of the Christian life.⁷⁹

3. Non-violence: a hallmark of Christian moral life.

There is a general acknowledgment that war is a fact of life. That acceptance implies an understanding that there is no solution for war, and human beings must take it as a fact, like life and death. Nevertheless, Hauerwas does not work to convince Christians that war has been abolished or that they are going to create a world free of war. It is a central point in his understanding and theology that the world is already saved from war and the central question is how Christians are going to live in this world believing that war has been abolished. What is suggested and explicit in his books and texts is that more real than the world determined by war

⁷⁵ Stanley Hauerwas, *Wilderness Wanderings: Probing twentieth-century theology and philosophy* (Oxford: Westview press, 1997), p. 148.

⁷⁶ Hauerwas 2004, p. 136.

⁷⁷ Rasmusson 1994, p. 201–202.

⁷⁸ James Logan, "Liberalism, race, and Stanley Hauerwas", in *CrossCurrents*, WINTER 2006, Vol. 55, No. 4, p. 522.

⁷⁹ Logan 2006, p. 523.

is the world where war has been redeemed by Christ. This world provides an alternative politics to the politics established by war.⁸⁰

To make clear about the situation of Christians and their relation to the world, Hauerwas consider Oliver O'Donovan's claim Christians live in two ages (the doctrine of two) where Christ has triumphed over the rulers of this age, making the rule of God present through the mission of the church. The claim that Christians are called to live nonviolently is not because it is a strategy to live and rid a world of war. There is no other way to live, as a follower of Christ, in a world of war than to live nonviolently. From such perspective, non-violence is a hallmark of the Christian moral life. It is not just another behavior that Christians can draw from the Gospel, rather it is "integral to the shape of Christian convictions"⁸¹.

In an article about the work of Hauerwas, R.R. Reno wrote that "Stanley Hauerwas often changes his topic, but he never changes his tune. Christian witness should be Christian; the Church should be churchly; theology should be theological."⁸² In other words, the range of topics covered by Hauerwas is summarised in three main points of concern, meaning the individual, the church and the theology.

In the path to develop an understanding about non-violence and how that is connected to Christian life, Hauerwas has developed a theology that points to a deep understanding of the meaning of Jesus Christ for both individuals and to the Church. The position of non-violence entails a new understanding of the significance of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and therefore providing a new understanding of God. With the aim of analysing Hauerwas' theology on this matter, this dissertation will examine three key arguments pertaining to non-violence. The first argument concerns the interpretation and significance of Jesus Christ and his message. The second argument delves into the role of the church in society. Last, the third argument explores the relationship between Christian life, ethics, and the commitment to non-violence.

⁸⁰ Stanley Hauerwas, *War and the American difference: Theological reflections on violence and national identity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), p. xi-xii.

⁸¹ Hauerwas 2011, p.xvi-xvii.

⁸²R.R. Reno, *First Things: Taking responsibility*, January 2002.

<https://www.firstthings.com/article/2002/01/003-taking-responsibility> (Accessed on 2023-11-05)

3.1 Jesus and the peaceable Kingdom

In the work of Hauerwas, the moral significance of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ delivers the ultimate qualifier to the kind of ethics his followers are going to live in the world. The knowledge about Jesus comes through the lenses of his disciples. For many, this creates a distance between the Jesus according to disciples and the “real Jesus”. For Hauerwas, the knowledge of the “real” Jesus cannot leave individuals unchanged. He transforms individuals to be members of the community of the new age. The Jesus portrayed in Mark, Matthew and Luke does not set attention to Himself, rather to the coming kingdom. Moreover, the emphasis on the life of Jesus, like had been done in the early church, does not make his understanding an example of low Christology.⁸³

What it showed in Hauerwas understanding is that the ethical significance of Jesus’ life is based on the narrative portrait of his life in the Gospel. The learning process of becoming a Christian mean to follow and be like the man that God has sent as a forerunner of the kingdom. This clarifies why Christian ethics is not primarily concerned with principles, laws, or values, but instead emphasizes the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This forthcoming kingdom, as declared by Jesus, is an existing actuality and is showed in the call of the disciples. Despite the announcement of an end that is “not yet final”, it provides a perspective for individuals continuing to live in the world. Jesus shows the proclamation and the embodiment of a way of life that God has made possible to live here and now. That is a perspective of hope in Hauerwas understanding and that means the world has not been given to the evil because it is God’s world, and God’s power erupts amid oppression and violence of the world. The resurrection of a crucified proves that forgiveness and love are alternatives against the vision of coercion as a necessary thing for the existence of the world.⁸⁴

The notion that every human life is sacred is not specifically tied to Christianity, however, the Gospel emphasizes that Christ sacrificed Himself for His adversaries, motivating Christians to assume accountability and nurture their fellow beings. To be a member and citizen of the kingdom of God means to extend God’s peace through protection of his creation. Therefore, the commitment to protect life implies an eschatological commitment. In Hauerwas words,

⁸³ Hauerwas 1983, p. 72–74.

⁸⁴ Hauerwas 1981, p. 40–44.

“Our concern to protect and enhance life is a sign of our confidence that in fact we live in a new age in which it is possible to see the other as God’s creation”.⁸⁵

The Kingdom of God's significance in Jesus' teachings is often regarded as a moral compass for individuals' social ethics. Here, the scriptures are analyzed to unveil the nature of this Kingdom, embodying love, justice, and righteousness. But for Hauerwas, the story of Jesus does not have or have implications for a social ethics, it is a social ethic. The Gospel and the story of Jesus are not biographies, rather, they are proclamations of Jesus’ life. The understanding of such a statement provides a story that determines the church and individuals are going to be in the world.⁸⁶

In the prayer Our Father, Jesus, teaches Christians are people asking forgiveness of God. In the act of being forgiven, people take the control of the hands of individuals and set again in God’s hands. Through this act, God transforms individuals’ character. Here lies an important aspect of the Christian life in relation to other individuals and society. Forgiveness is the most political act that Christians possess and this “political act” is happening right now amidst Christians. As an illustration, America is a land where the legacy of slavery cannot be expunged from its past, and the matter of race remains pertinent. The fact that African Americans continue to practice Christianity, even after its role in justifying slavery, is a miracle. However, Black and White Americans can be transformed and possess a common story of being Christian.⁸⁷

The nature of God’s Kingdom is perceivable through Jesus’ life and ministry. Furthermore, the interconnection with the other is also a characteristic of this kingdom. The story of what Jesus Christ has done allows individuals to embody God’s peace, leading them to find peace with God, with themselves and with the other. Violence originates with the assumption that individuals are in control, that they can act like creators. This idea leads individuals to live their lives without recognizing their falsehoods. Through the story of the Jesus, individuals learn to be a better version of themselves when transformed by the truthfulness of Jesus’ story. Hauerwas explains that saying “Only by growing into that story do I learn how much violence I have stored in my soul, a violence that is not about to vanish overnight, but that I must continually work to recognize and lay down.”⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Hauerwas 1983, p. 88.

⁸⁶ Hauerwas 1983, p. 82–87.

⁸⁷ William H. Willimon & Stanley Hauerwas, *Lord, teach us: The Lord’s prayer & the Christian life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), p. 82.

⁸⁸ Hauerwas 1983, p. 94.

As analyzed by William Werpehowski, the focus on truthfulness in the moral life according to Hauerwas:

Turns away from the quest to establish some sort of neutral and impartial assessment of “Christian morality”; rather, over time one acquires the skills or excellences—the virtues—that make possible discernment and description of “what is going on” without egocentric distortion or self-deception or (in a later and decisive move for Hauerwas) violence.⁸⁹

In William Werpehowski’s understanding, Hauerwas work has helped to move theological ethics away from those frameworks which set a focus on the analysis of specific moral acts and individualized decisions. This change of perspective highlights the distinctiveness of a Christian ethic rooted in religious and moral notions and related to the world that Christians see and inhabit. Yet, for Lisa Sowle Cahill, the work of Hauerwas calls Christians to “witness faithfully against liberalism in general and war in particular”.⁹⁰

3.1.1 Christian ethics: morality, Christian life and the coming Kingdom.

According to Hauerwas and Wells, the beginning of the Christian ethics starts with Jesus explaining to Peter (John 21:22) the meaning of following him. Jesus identifies that there are mysteries, wonders, problems, and troubles to his followers that cannot be solved using a verbal explanation. There is a way and solution in which the followers of Christ would take, despite the lack of comprehension in how the future would become. This way is represented in to be faithful to the God revealed in Jesus Christ.⁹¹

In contrast to that understanding, Christians exist within a realm of moral fragments, wherein individuals find themselves on the edge of violence without assurance that moral reasoning can reconcile their internal moral dilemmas. Considering Alasdair MacIntyre, Hauerwas says the world possesses a simulacrum of morality, where individuals have lost the practical and theoretical comprehension of morality. In a time where the modern moral and religious situation

⁸⁹ William Werpehowski, “Talking the Walk and Walking the talk: Stanley Hauerwas’s contribution to Theological ethics”, in *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, June 2012, Vol. 40, No. 2, p. 231.

⁹⁰ Lisa Sowle Cahill, “Theological ethics, the churches, and global politics”, in *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Sep., 2007, Vol. 35, No. 3, p. 377.

⁹¹ Stanley Hauerwas & Samuel Wells (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics* (2nd ed.) (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), p. 24.

are dubious and in crisis, the task of the Christian ethic is not to fulfil or create a morality when one is missing. Religious convictions must be committed to be true, rather than to be functional. The implication of living according to ethical reflections does not mean to be free from the fragmentations of the world. In fact, it can expose the moral actor to more difficulties.⁹²

The idea of morality made by Hauerwas explores the meaning of a moral life and an ethical behavior in the world. He identifies two kinds of morality, and they are in contrast to each other. The essence of the old morality, the focus, lies in law and rules, while the new morality set the focus on love. The latter one became central both to the Christian ethic and the Christian life. From this view, individuals should love in a way that neither rules nor teachings can embody. The statement and assumption of love as the centre of the moral life implies that love is the norm tight-making features characteristics of moral action and judgments, and that love in both the general criteria of actions and suffices to guide individuals regarding moral behavior.⁹³

Furthermore, the idea of Christianity as being a religion of love was, when Hauerwas began his academic work, exemplified in the text *Situation ethics* by Joseph Fletcher. To think that love is all you need leads individuals to fail to have a discriminating judgment to know what not to do. Love cannot be separated from its Christological home, and that means cross. To say that you should love is a dangerous recommendation to how individuals are going to live their lives, because they do not know what love is. The ethic centered in love is replacing the cross, and before saying that we love one another, it is important to love rightly.⁹⁴

The emphasis on love as the essence of Christian behavior can strike Christians and give them a sense that it is correct. Hauerwas claims that such emphasis results in a bad theology that led to a bad ethic. He wrote, “This point is important as it indicates that our view of the practical must be constantly tested by our theological convictions and vice versa.”⁹⁵ Here, Christians cannot separate the command to love the neighbor as presented in the Gospel from who commands it. Jesus comes to establish the conditions in which this love would be possible. The message of Jesus in the Gospel prepares individuals to the reality of the story of God working for individuals’ redemption. The Gospel is not about Love, is about Jesus Christ, therefore the

⁹² Hauerwas 1983, p. 5-15.

⁹³ Stanley Hauerwas, “Love’s not all you need”, in *CrossCurrents*, SUMMER-FALL 1972, Vol. 22, No. 3, p. 225-226.

⁹⁴ Hauerwas 1983, p. xxii.

⁹⁵ Hauerwas 1972, p. 226.

ethic of the Gospel is not love but an ethic connected to this man, bounding individuals' life to his life, making individual's story, his story.⁹⁶

It is an aspect of Hauerwas theology that can lead to misunderstanding, but he explains why love cannot be taken as the central message of the Christ. In this new ethic centered in love, Jesus comes to teach how to love each other rather than teaching specific rules. However, Jesus came not preaching love, but came as truth and love that points to himself, rather than to the reality of love. To set love as the primary message of Jesus is a theological mistake that is based on the desire of people to assume that moral life is an effortless task that can be achieved without discipline and training. To be true to the Gospel and to learn how to love, it is necessary to be a follower of Him. When individuals make the Gospel into an ethic of love, the cross change its significance and becomes a symbol of our sacrifices that are associated with individuals' love for others.⁹⁷ To make clear his point about love, Hauerwas considers Iris Murdoch's statement that "Love is the non-violent apprehension of the other as other".⁹⁸

To reiterate his position, Hauerwas affirms the Christian ethic is an ethic of truth, and the "the task of Christian ethics is no to relieve us of the ambiguity but to help us understand rightly what it means to live in the world we do – that is, to live truthfully in a world without certainty".⁹⁹ Yet, Christian ethics help individuals to see how their own convictions are in themselves a morality, meaning that Christian convictions embody the Christian morality, beliefs, and actions. To make the Christian ethics an ethic of love led to the reinforcement of individuals' illusions having an ethic base on interpersonal understanding. An ethical life transcends interpersonal interactions, recognizing that human beings exist within intricate social structures plagued by social problems, wherein the prioritization of justice overcomes that of love.

The sort of theological ethics Hauerwas is engaged in differs from other approaches to ethics, such as utilitarian, Kantianism or Marxism. Theological ethics, according to Hauerwas, have no theory or thinkers who would represent it. Christian theologians do not have a theory of moral rationality, but they have the Bible and a community to which they are accountable.¹⁰⁰ Hauerwas says, "Our religious convictions cannot be relegated to one sphere of our lives and

⁹⁶ Hauerwas 1972, p. 227-228.

⁹⁷ Hauerwas 1972, p. 229.

⁹⁸ The Table - Biola University, Center for Christian thought, Stanley Hauerwas interview, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OF7pgQuSCI&ab_channel=TheTable%7CBiolaCCT – Accessed on 2023-01-16.

⁹⁹ Hauerwas 1983, p. 16.

¹⁰⁰ Hauerwas 1988, p. 67.

our social and political activities to another. Since the faith of Christians is a faith that does justice, there is no way we can avoid political activity”.¹⁰¹

Healy explains that in Hauerwas understanding, within the modern theology has arisen “a false separation between belief and action, and between doctrine and ethics, and, indeed, between mind and body and various other binary oppositions, to counter all of which is one of Hauerwas’s more fundamental aims.”¹⁰² Distinctions, for example, between beliefs and behavior were not a matter for those first Christians and that does not imply they lived without ethical standards, rather their faith meant a certain ethical behaviours.

For Hauerwas, there is a connection between ethical reflections and time and place. Such ethical reflections are changing time to time, and being determined by the structure and nature of the community in which an ethical reflection faces an ethical problem. That does not imply ethics lack identifiable and constant set of questions, as for instance, what is good and right, freedom and how rules and virtues function for a group. Therefore, the reply to such questions shows that communities in which ethical questions arise provide different replies for these same questions, despite bearing different meanings. From this perspective, ethics requires an adjective or qualifier to denote the social and historical character of ethics as a discipline, such as Christian, Jewish, existentialist, utilitarian.¹⁰³

The argument that ethics requires a qualifier seems, for some, an abandonment of responsibility since there are no absolute norms. However, to see ethics as a reasserting way to absolute norms independent of a particular people’s history, and in order to keep a moral character of a human way of life, is a misconceived understanding of ethics. There is no such thing as a universal ethics, according to Hauerwas, and it is an odd statement from the modern ethical theory to seek the foundation of morality with no dependence on a historical contingent community. Contradicting the universalizing tendency, the qualifier “Christian” to ethics acquires an important significance. Here, Christian ethics reflect a particular people’s history that knows their own sinful nature.¹⁰⁴

Hauerwas' reflections emphasize the dependence of a coherent moral life on narrative and tradition. The church serves as the primary community and tradition to which individuals primarily ascribe their identities. In a world where violence delivers challenges to individuals

¹⁰¹ Hauerwas 1988, p. 173.

¹⁰² Healy 2014, p. 34.

¹⁰³ Hauerwas 1983, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ Hauerwas 1983, p. 2-3, 17.

and society, Christian's engagement and actions in the world need to be more than doing what is right or to follow what is subscribed to the law. The moral life for Christians can be represented as a journey through life that is sustained by individuals' fidelity to the cross of Christ.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, Hauerwas argues that the contemporary ethics has not considered character, vision, stories and metaphors as part of the moral experience of individuals. Nonetheless, the Christian moral life cannot be separated from these notions. Metaphors and stories influence the perception of Christians towards themselves and others. Yet, religious metaphors and stories embody the normative commitment that is necessary for individuals to live their lives in a morally appropriate way. Regarding individuals' character, he says that "Our character is constituted by the rules, metaphors, and stories that are combined to give a design or unity to the variety of things we must and must not do in our lives."¹⁰⁶

3.1.2 *Pacifism*

To provide an account on what pacifism means in Hauerwas' perspective, we will consider his analysis of two church documents about the church's position on war, violence, and peace. What is perceived in Hauerwas' understanding is that Christians have shown an ambivalent attitude regarding war and violence. Despite that these documents are claiming for peace in the world, they also maintain an understanding of war as a moral possibility, or even a duty for Christians.

These two documents are the *Pacem in Terris* (1963) by Pope John XXIII and the document *The Challenge of Peace* from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States (1983). Both show the position of the Roman Catholic Church and how it has developed a sophisticated moral analysis of war. The *Pacem in Terris* presents a new understanding and emphasis on peace from a church that has been associated with the just war tradition. The

¹⁰⁵ Stanley Hauerwas (2001c), "A retrospective assessment of an "Ethic of Character": The development of Hauerwas theological project", in *The Hauerwas readers*, John Berkman & Michael Cartwright (ed.) (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2001), p. 85-88.

¹⁰⁶ Stanley Hauerwas (2001d), "Vision, Stories, and Character", in *The Hauerwas readers*, John Berkman & Michael Cartwright (ed.) (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2001), p. 169.

encyclical adopts the stance that society should safeguard the personal rights and duties of individuals, regardless of the potential for individuals to employ violence.¹⁰⁷

Hauerwas finds that to be a point of concern. The *Pacem in Terris* shows a perspective where war means “the result of a failure to give persons their right to pursue their interests”.¹⁰⁸ The underlying principle of Roman Catholic teaching on war asserts that any nation is entitled to self-defense in the face of unjust aggression. However, this shows a contradictory position and does not explain how nation-states are going to defend themselves and how peace should be possible in this world.

Regarding the second document, there are incompatibilities in the view of peace portrayed by *The Challenge of Peace*. The Bishops’ viewpoints provide two different ethical perspectives, one from the Gospel and the other from natural law. War, when they are seen from the Gospel perspective, is a sign of sin and therefore cannot be called a good thing. But from natural law, it can be sometimes good and a moral duty when used to preserve human community. Furthermore, it is not clear for Hauerwas how it is possible to maintain both views at the same time. If the Just War is based on natural law, meaning a law that is in the conscience of every human being, then war must be understood as the outcome of individuals’ moral commitments. To compromise with war means to compromise with the sin. That is the point missing in this perspective, according to Hauerwas, because it does not provide a ground for explaining why Christians are going to participate in war. In addition, it shows a contradictory position not based on the ethic of the Gospel, that suggests Christians are going to avoid cooperating with sin.¹⁰⁹

Considering natural law and ethics, Hauerwas does not imply those advocating this perspective are more prone to violence than the others. However, what is clear is that violence and coercion become intelligible from this standpoint. Currently, natural law is expressed in terms of the language of universal human rights. Using such a language seems to embody the highest human ideals and everyone denying it is stated as morally obtuse. To make a relation between the Christian ethics and a universal human ethic means to not recognizing that all accounts of moral life depend on a narrative. Hauerwas agrees with MacIntyre’s statement that all actions have a historical character. Christians have their lives connected to the communities from which they

¹⁰⁷ Stanley Hauerwas (2001e), “Should war be eliminated? A thought experiment”, in *The Hauerwas readers*, John Berkman & Michael Cartwright (ed.) (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2001), p. 397–399.

¹⁰⁸ Hauerwas 2001e, p. 399.

¹⁰⁹ Hauerwas 2001e, p. 400–403.

derive their identities. Furthermore, Christians have the capacity to recognize themselves as historical beings who must actively partake in ethical reflections within the context of history.¹¹⁰

In our current society, war became a moral institution that helps to understand why Christians are often advocates for peace in the world at the same time as they accept the necessity of war. The Bishops, the peace Jesus brought is an eschatological peace and they accept war as inevitable for the time in between. The Bishops wrote, “The peace that is already ours in Christ is a religious, not a political reality”.¹¹¹ For Hauerwas, that explains why any search of justice or peace that is political may require the use of violence. This position taken by the Bishops is based on Saint Augustine, that gave the view that Christians have to compromise with war even when they are desiring peace. This argument, as well as the Catholic argument for Just War, has been developed within the Catholic theology in a variety of forms, and the Augustinian understanding is a central ground.

The Just war theory gives the idea that self-defense and the defense of the innocent are things that justify the use of violence. Hauerwas counterargument is that the just war theory is a theory often used to explain states’ action, rather than an individual response to attack. Here, the primary actor is not the individual, but the state acting on behalf of society. The idea of just war deals not with the defense of their existence, rather with their interpretation of their existence. War does not require a justification, and because of this, they talk about a justified war.¹¹²

David Hollenbach, according to Hauerwas, has a similar view of the Bishops that understand that justice is “regarded as the precondition of peace in the concrete political order”.¹¹³ In the pursuit of peace and justice, the political power can inflict force and, in some circumstances, it can become the only way to achieve it. For Hauerwas, both the Bishops and Hollenbach agree that the resort of war does not come from Jesus and that tensions between justice and nonviolence are an unsolved issue in history. This tension also appear between the dimension in the already and not yet of the Christian eschatology. However, Hauerwas does not agree with this understanding because it requires Christians to use violence in the cause of justice.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Hauerwas 1983, p. 60-62.

¹¹¹ Hauerwas 2001e, p. 411.

¹¹² Stanley Hauerwas (2001f), “Self-deception and autobiography: Reflections on Speer’s inside the Third Reich, in *The Hauerwas readers*, John Berkman & Michael Cartwright (ed.) (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2001), p. 212.

¹¹³ Hauerwas 2001e, p. 411

¹¹⁴ Hauerwas 2001e, p. 411

Pacifism, as well as Just war theory, is a particular perspective of the Christian hope with a historical-political understanding on how values of justice and peace are related to each other in a particular time. These two ways represent two traditions within Christianity that show the theological necessity to deal with issues of justice, peace, violence, and war. The just war perspective needs the pacifist to remind them that non-violence is central for Christians and cannot be forgotten in the public policy debate. The pacifists need the just war representatives to remind them the centrality of justice cannot be limited to avoiding the evil, requiring a promotion of justice and peace.¹¹⁵

The alternative Hauerwas suggests differs from the Bishops' view developed in the encyclical. It is the peace brought by Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Hauerwas does not agree with the assumption that just war and pacifism are ethical strategies to achieve justice in the world. The debate about these two traditions is a theological issue about how Christians are going to read and interpret history. Christians believe that the true history of their lives is not that carried by nation-states. Christians participate in a community with a unique history in which it is learned how to love the enemy. The church is this alternative and only through the church can Christians learn that they share the same creator and have the same destiny.¹¹⁶

Just war, in summary, is not just the attempt to test if a specific war meets the criteria for justice, but the attempt to control how people are going to describe war. For Carter, Hauerwas' criticism to just war theory means a critic to the mode of public argument. Such an argument arises from a particular lifestyle that is incomprehensible to a "disciplined Christian community" and shows how theology has been manipulated to serve political agendas.¹¹⁷

Rasmusson explains that Hauerwas' position toward pacifism is not just an ethical ideal, rather it is a risk Christians are going to take because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, showing such actions the way God deals with the world and the presence God's kingdom in the world. Consequently, Christian pacifism cannot be considered a broad ethical standpoint abstracted from Christian convictions and behaviors. Christian pacifism refers to a set of beliefs and behaviors exhibited by a specific group of individuals.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Hauerwas 2001e, p. 414.

¹¹⁶ Hauerwas 2001e, p. 420–422.

¹¹⁷ Carter 2012, p. 205.

¹¹⁸ Rasmusson 1994, p. 304.

3.2 Church: God's new language

According to Acts 2:1, the community experienced an event where they were filled with the Holy Spirit and started speaking in foreign languages. For Hauerwas, the Pentecost celebration is the celebration of the birth of the church by the Holy Spirit. The church is the creation of God, and that means a community of people formed by God to the world that knows that all creatures are good creatures of a good creator, formed by God's time. This serves as a reminder of the salvation brought to us from God through Jesus Christ. When the Holy Spirit creates this community, it creates a new nation of people not subjected to the limits of the past. Salvation in these terms means "God's creation of a new society that invites each person to become part of time that the nations cannot provide."¹¹⁹

The foundation for this understanding can be traced back to another biblical narrative, the tower of the Babel. The narrative portrays humans communicating in a unified language and endeavouring to erect a tower that would touch the heavens. God deliberately caused a language barrier, resulting in their inability to comprehend one another and leading to their isolation in different regions. They became incapable of collaborating effectively and achieving renown for their collective accomplishments. Here comes a crucial understanding of Hauerwas' perspective on what is war and the meaning of his theological reflection about the Church. At Babel, war was born. The fear of the other drives groups to be in conflict with one another. They devised a strategy to annihilate the adversary, even at the risk of their own demise. God does not oppose human creativity in enhancing creation. Indeed, God encourages individuals to utilise their imaginative power to uncover and enhance God's creation to support the collective well-being of a society. In the Pentecost, God has undone what they did at Babel. God gave them the resources to the acknowledgment of their situation as creatures. Only from this perspective, it is possible to understand the meaning of Pentecost.¹²⁰

In addition, Hauerwas provides a central understanding about the Church and what it represents in the way to live and interact with the world. He explains that "at Pentecost, God created a new language, but it was a language that is more than words. It is instead a community whose memory of its savior creates the miracle of being a people whose very differences contribute to their unity."¹²¹ This new creation is the church, and the enactment of Baptism and Eucharist

¹¹⁹ Stanley Hauerwas (2001g), "The church as God's new language", in *The Hauerwas readers*, John Berkman & Michael Cartwright (ed.) (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2001), p. 144.

¹²⁰ Hauerwas 2001g, p. 144–145.

¹²¹ Hauerwas 2001g, p. 149.

reminds individuals of their common history. The birth of the church is linked to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in a sense that assumes they are narratively interconnected. The church as a theological witness challenges the conventional understanding of the world, because it is offering nothing less than an alternative to war.¹²²

In relation to the subject of war, the church, and the ethics of war within the United States, Paul Ramsey and Hauerwas authored an essay (and subsequently, a book) expressing their perspective on the matter. That was a response to the United Methodist Bishops' pastoral *In Defense of creation*. Although Ramsey and Hauerwas represent different positions about the morality of war, they agreed that the United Methodists deserved an "articulation of the morality of war that more adequately engaged their tradition".¹²³ Hauerwas considers that comprehending the eschatological nature of peace is essential for a deeper understanding of war. Christian does not possess an alternative of peace that can be offered to the world, because they are the alternative. However, he is not convinced that the church is ready to speak to the world about war because it is necessary first to speak to all members the meaning of being a Christian and the implication of it.¹²⁴

Both Hauerwas and Ramsey agree that the peace advocated in this document relies on a secular hope rather than the eschatological hope that Jesus brings to the world. They point out the failure of the bishops in to see the genuine Christian pacifism, meaning the pacifism determined by the reality of the Christ's cross, and that view does not see that as followers of Jesus, Christians cannot be anything other than peaceful in a world at war.¹²⁵

Furthermore, the criticism of the United Methodists Bishop's document is that it fails to consider that what sustains the Christian pacifism is an eschatological notion. Here, Hauerwas considers John Howard Yoder's reflection on this matter. Instead of thinking that Christ gave all means to achieve a world without war, it is necessary to think that "peace describes the hope, the goal in the light of the which the pacifists acts".¹²⁶ Besides:

The character of his action, the ultimate divine certainty which lets his position make sense; it does not describe the external appearance or the observable results of his

¹²² Hauerwas 2001g, p. 151.

¹²³ Stanley Hauerwas (2001h), "On being a church capable of addressing a world at war: A pacifist response to the United Methodist Bishop's Pastoral In Defense of Creation", in *The Hauerwas readers*, John Berkman & Michael Cartwright (ed.) (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2001), p. 426.

¹²⁴ Hauerwas 2001h, p. 429.

¹²⁵ Hauerwas 2001h, p. 430-431.

¹²⁶ Hauerwas 2001h, p. 436.

behavior. This is what we mean by eschatology: a hope which, defying present frustrations, defines a present position in terms of the yet unseen goal which gives it meaning.¹²⁷

For Hauerwas, the pacifism presented in *The Defense of Creation* is not a new perspective but an updated version of the old liberal assumption that “the church and world can be identified and that peace is imminent”.¹²⁸ What Hauerwas suggests is that the Christian community must discover its true goals, without considering positions, such as just war, an alternative for the world. Taking the pacifist position is to be the people of the new age and even if they are confronted with a possibility of nuclear destruction, even so they believe God has given a time to be a people of peace.¹²⁹

Moreover, the duty of the church is to bear witness and remain faithful to God. The social place and context for the social ethics of the church relates not to people that think they have power, or control over history, rather to the church that has no intention to control history. It can be a political resource, the existence of the church in a situation of marginalization from the society’s central power. That creates a structure of solidarity with those living in the periphery of these social structures of power. Hauerwas' perspective holds ethical and political significance. Non-violence has a central role in this church and it is a way to show that violence and force are not the only form to achieve justice in the world.¹³⁰

Healy understands that theology for Hauerwas “is a matter of thinking within, and guided the church, from which it follows that he also believes in the church. This, of course, was a view not at all uncommon among traditional theologians, yet it did not inhibit many of them from indulging their systematic inclinations.” Such position reveals a normative account about the church, and being more precisely a theological view. The practice of the church is centered on God (theocentric) rather than in ecclesiology (ecclesiocentric). These practices require that individuals reflect upon who is God and how God acts toward individuals. This reflection is the basic task of theology.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Johan Howard Yoder cited in Hauerwas 2001h, p. 436.

¹²⁸ Hauerwas 2001h, p. 437.

¹²⁹ Hauerwas 2001h, p. 458.

¹³⁰ Rasmusson 1994, p. 216-217.

¹³¹ Healy 2014, p. 131.

3.2.1 Church: An alternative to war.

The understanding of what constitutes the Church holds diverse connotations and implications in different Christian traditions. That implies that the understanding of the church as a social ethics as understood by Hauerwas acquires a different meaning. While Roman Catholics adhere to a meaning of the church with a complex hierarchical structure, Hauerwas opts for a simpler structure that prioritizes proximity to its members, and by that he means the local community. For Hauerwas, the church is a theological claim about God who has created a new people.¹³²

Rasmusson explains that for Hauerwas, the Christian church is made by real people that exist in “definitive historical and institutional forms”. There is no universal or mystical church that is more real than the actual existing church composed of people and their history, institutions, and practices. This view on the church, says Rasmusson, gives a role to the local congregation, and that makes Hauerwas’ approach different from many other ecclesiologies. The church is not a stationary institution, it is rather a living tradition seeking the meaning of how to live faithfully to Jesus Christ.¹³³

To say that the church does not have a mission, rather the church is mission has a deep implication to Hauerwas in the way he develops an understanding of this matter. The church is the indicator of a people who learned to be in peace among each other, with the other, and with God. There is no sanctification of an individual without the sanctification of people. The story of God cannot be abstracted from the communities in telling and hearing this story.¹³⁴

Therefore, the Christian ethic presupposes that these sanctified people wanting to live faithful to the story of God. The church and the world have their own goals and agendas. Considering ethics, the church has its own ethics regarding a social ethic, and this church seeking peace and justice set its own agenda, for example in caring for the poor, the widow and the orphan. The world can take such actions as of little consequences to the case of justice, but if the church does not take its time to perform such care, neither the church nor the world would know what justice looks like.¹³⁵

Rasmusson explains that Hauerwas understands the church as an alternative polis that brings an alternative story and practice, and that Hauerwas agrees with Jürgen Moltmann in this view

¹³² Hauerwas 1988, p. 111-115.

¹³³ Rasmusson 1994, p. 190.

¹³⁴ Plough Quarterly, Stanley Hauerwas interview: What is the church’s mission?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opKKCbvUFiE&ab_channel=Plough, Accessed on 2023-04-24.

¹³⁵ Hauerwas 1983, p. 96-100.

of the church as “a contrast society with a contrast story and practice”.¹³⁶ Moreover, the major challenge that the church has nothing to do with bringing the relevance of old texts and a system of beliefs into the context of the modern world. Rather, the challenge is political, to developing a way to live in a community according to the story of Christ in the context that the church finds itself.¹³⁷

For Hauerwas, Christians engaged in the world and in politics must show the politics of the kingdom, and that indicates the insufficiency of the world’s politics. Violence is one of those actions emerged from such a politics. The alternative politics of the kingdom and the handling of social and political questions are contingent upon the church’s transformation into a community capable of communicating the meaning of Christian history. That is the background to the statement that the “Church does not have a social ethic, the church is a social ethic”.¹³⁸

According to Healy, the statement that the church is a social ethic implies the struggle in being a follower of Christ and that “only within the church, for it is only there that Jesus’ earthly life finds embodiment. His narrative is embodied in the church’s practices, which, enacted by its members, make them his Body.”¹³⁹ The church is not a prophetic minority of people concerned only about itself. Rather, it is a truthful alternative to those who already tasted the peace that is lacking in the world. In conclusion, Healy says:

Hauerwas’s account of the church is heavily informed by his social-theoretical view of personal identity and by his stress on the church’s founding narrative, which together constitutes and structure the church’s distinctive identity as an alternative community. The church’s function is to form its members in order that they may embody the narrative of Jesus of Nazareth and thereby witness by their very lives to the salvation achieved in him. The church’s practices embody its defining narrative, and thus constitute the community identity and the social ethics that is the alternative to the world.¹⁴⁰

There is a differentiation between *being* and *doing* a social ethic and, therefore, the social ethic of the church is an “affair of understanding rather than doing”. To be a social ethic rather than to do social ethic requires people to sustain the church as an institution across the time, being the people bearing the virtue that tells the story of a crucified saviour. Considering James

¹³⁶ Rasmusson 1994, p. 210.

¹³⁷ Rasmusson, 1994, p. 210.

¹³⁸ Hauerwas 1983, p. 99.

¹³⁹ Healy 2014, p. 45.

¹⁴⁰ Healy 2014, p. 51.

Gustafson, Hauerwas argues that all human communities demand virtues in order to be sustained. Patience is a required virtue from Christians to live as a peaceable people in a violent world. The church needs to learn through time that its task is not to make the world the kingdom of God, rather to be faithful to the kingdom and to show the world the meaning of being a community of peace.¹⁴¹

For Hauerwas, the church seeks for justice, and that is not based on fear. To seek for justice comes from the conviction of possessing a gift. Christians cannot seek justice using or acting violently using, for example, guns because God does not rule creation using coercion, but through a cross. The church must develop the virtue of patience when confronted with injustice. That argument can be objected, since such a position is not from those who are suffering. However, in Hauerwas' understanding, neither Christians nor the church can legitimize the use of force and violence to overcome injustice. The community of peace and justice is formed by a hope that the God's kingdom will prevail.¹⁴²

As said above, patience and hope are necessary virtues from those who are learning to live "out of control". By that, Hauerwas asserts the eschatological character of the Christian community that base their lives on the knowledge that God has redeemed his creation through the work of Jesus Christ. To live out of control means to assume God uses the faithful community to make his kingdom a reality in this world.¹⁴³

It is also important to say that the church is not an ideal community, but a particular people who find the way to sustain its existence through time. There are some marks that show the church as church. Those do not guarantee its existence, but it shows God has given the means to help the community carry on along the way. For Hauerwas, the church is recognized where "the sacraments are celebrated, the world is preached, and upright lives are encouraged and lived."¹⁴⁴ The meaning of these sacraments is that they prepare the community to tell the story of Jesus and to get its form according to this image. Baptism and Eucharist are not only religious rites. They are essential rituals of Christian politics, in which individuals learn who they are. Baptism is the rite that initiates individuals to become part of Jesus' death and resurrection. Through it, individuals become part of the story. The Eucharist is the eschatological meal in which God's

¹⁴¹ Hauerwas 1983, p. 101-103.

¹⁴² Hauerwas 1983, p. 104-105.

¹⁴³ Hauerwas 1983, p. 105.

¹⁴⁴ Hauerwas 1983, p. 107.

presence shows his leaving reality in the world. These liturgies are not causes for a social work, but they are the effective social work.¹⁴⁵

In the perspective provided by Hauerwas lies also the understanding of salvation in ecclesial terms. Salvation means that “God creates a people as the social manifestation of the new alternative history determined by the kingdom of God that has come in Jesus Christ”.¹⁴⁶ Baptism and Eucharist are rituals telling the story of Christians, at the same time they represent a political ritual. For Rasmusson, the final mark of Christians is the call to be a holy people. With that, he emphasizes the performative aspect of being such people involved with the world and engaged with question regarding charity, hospitality and justice. According to Healy’s, Hauerwas understanding of salvation is associated with his social-ethical understanding of the church. The proper understanding of salvation made by Hauerwas has a political character and it is a political alternative that was suppressed after Constantine. Such an alternative cannot be seen apart from the existence of the people called the church.¹⁴⁷

Hauerwas is against any kind of Constantinianism, and by that he means the presumption that Christians rule and should rule in the society. Berkman and Cartwright explains that Hauerwas criticizes “this nineteenth-century assumption of a spiritual oneness between Christianity and democracy” because it creates a confusion between the progress of nation-states with the providence of God, between effectiveness of the state with faithfulness.¹⁴⁸

A significant aspect of Hauerwas understanding of individuals in the modern society is the idea of freedom related to justice. A central question for Christian is to know what kind of freedom and what to do with this freedom. Yoder says that it is necessary to relate justice to the understanding of Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom. Otherwise, Christians can be prone to use violence to protect a more relative justice. Such understandings impact on how individuals are going to relate the contemporary political society to its politics of violence.¹⁴⁹

For this reason, it is necessary to explore the implication of accepting the democratic society as a goal that must be preserved, using all the means that the state has under its control. To justify the use of violence to secure freedom and equality can lead to a conclusion that it is an acceptable act. According Enda McDonagh “most political orders are established by violence

¹⁴⁵ Hauerwas 1983, p. 107.

¹⁴⁶ Rasmusson 1994, p. 191.

¹⁴⁷ Healy 2014, p. 45.

¹⁴⁸ Berkman and Cartwright 2001, p. 459.

¹⁴⁹ Hauerwas 1983, p. 111-113.

and certainly use violence to maintain themselves”.¹⁵⁰ The state has the hegemony over violence and they root it in the just war rationality, using violence as a way and a necessary means to preserve freedom and justice. When violence is used as a way to achieve justice, freedom or equality, it has transformed itself into a matter of the power of the state over others. Violence cannot be taken as a necessary strategy for justice, because the “true justice never comes through violence, nor can it be based on violence”.¹⁵¹

Peacemaking is not a mere practice among Christians, but rather it embodies the essence of their interconnections, symbolizing the common story they hold. Therefore, peacemaking is a virtue of the nature of the church. The church must confront the world and its false peace built more upon power than truth. That confrontation can be dangerous, but the church cannot be less truthful to itself than what is expected. The church has failed to be a community of peace for individuals and as an institution in the world. Without the reference of a community of peace that the church represents, the world has no alternative to exchange the use of violence in the emergence of disputes.¹⁵²

The meaning of being the church as an alternative to war is clarified by Hauerwas in saying that the community of peace, called church, is the forerunner to show to the world the God’s kingdom of peace brought in Jesus Christ. This community should offer creative alternative methods of response for individuals seeking peace amidst a violent world. It is necessary for such a community of peace to maintain the connection between truthfulness and non-violence. From this view, all individuals in a community of peace should understand themselves as engaged in a moral adventure. Individuals have a role to play in the world, at the same time they must seek to achieve a better understanding of what it means to make God’s story their story.¹⁵³

To understand how the Christian community is interconnected with the world, Hauerwas use terms as for example casuistry. Casuistry is “the reflection made by a community on its experience to test imaginatively the often unnoticed and unacknowledged implications of its narrative commitments”.¹⁵⁴ Hauerwas thinks that the idea of casuistry has as its primary task to help individuals to understand the interconnectedness that exists between individuals. In other

¹⁵⁰ Enda McDonagh cited in Hauerwas 1983, p. 1114.

¹⁵¹ Hauerwas 1983, p. 114.

¹⁵² Hauerwas 1988, p. 96-97.

¹⁵³ Hauerwas 1983, p. 132-134.

¹⁵⁴ Hauerwas 1983, p. 120.

words, the act of an individual can benefit or harm the other, as well as the same action can affect how the other is going to relate themselves to us and to God.¹⁵⁵

Casuistry is not limited to cases of difficult moral dilemmas; it rather requires the community and individuals to have a constant imaginative test of the habits of life against the life and virtuous of others. In the Christian context, casuistry is a necessity, and it is primarily used to bring an understanding about interconnectedness, providing Christians with a view that what they do fits into their story, but also that such actions determine the story of the Christian community.¹⁵⁶ Such perspective suggests that the church has to maintain the connection between truthfulness and nonviolence, because the community called church demands truthfulness between individuals in a way that it reflects the story of God in the community's story. All individuals forming the Church should understand themselves involved in an adventure in which each of them has a role to play. A better understanding of themselves and the implications of living together brings the understanding that “our lives literally enrich one another, as we learn the full power of that story only by seeing it displayed in other’s lives”.¹⁵⁷

3.2.2 Community of peace and the Sermon on the Mount.

To identify the church as a community through time requires the identification of the emergence of such community and how it relates to the world. The emergence of this community is also the emergence of a new way to see how individuals relate to others. For Hauerwas, the Sermon on the mount in the Gospel of Matthew is an example of the dependence that Christians have on all human beings, that we all need each other. This reliance contradicts our modern society's assumption of individual independence and self-sufficiency. Contrarily, the Sermon presupposes a community established by the practice of non-violence, and this message has a deep connection with the messenger. The proper reading of the Sermon of Mount requires that the reader be a pacifist. The social ethics in the Sermon urges Christians to consider the life and death of Jesus, who embraced such practices.¹⁵⁸

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' disciples are instructed to embrace pacifism and cultivate a mutual trust that enhances their way of life. The object of the Sermon is to create a sense of

¹⁵⁵ Hauerwas 1983, p. 130.

¹⁵⁶ Hauerwas 1983, p. 121-130.

¹⁵⁷ Hauerwas 1983, p. 134.

¹⁵⁸ Hauerwas 1993, p. 63-66.

dependence among them, forcing a mutual necessity. That does not imply those who are not formed into the body called the church. Here, to understand the Sermon properly means that it is necessary that individuals are already formed by community habits, contrasting with the contemporary notion that human beings are independent.¹⁵⁹

Hauerwas' perspective represents an alternative approach to the Sermon that differs from other approaches within the Christian tradition. These other approaches suggest, for example, that the Sermon on the Mount is not to be taken literally, or that the Sermon meant that the Christian moral life is about love, rather than showing what Christians are going to do. However, for Hauerwas, Jesus preaching this sermon embodied a social message. He is not providing a short-term ethic, but a new order for the followers.¹⁶⁰

The view of the church as social ethics means for Hauerwas that the church must see itself as such. That represents a change of perspective. Instead of asking itself what to do on different occasions, they are going to ask themselves what is going on in the world. With this changing, the church sees and understands the world as it is. Christians are engaged with the world and in the world's politics. The Gospel telling the story of Jesus is a political Gospel. Christians are going to be engaged with politics, but it is the politics of the coming kingdom. That exposes the inefficiency of politics based on coercion, violence and falsehood, showing that the true source of power is servanthood rather than dominion.¹⁶¹

In Hauerwas' understanding some traditions like Mennonites and Calvinists are often labelled as legalist because they take the message of the Sermon on the Mount as a practical message that should be followed. Mennonites and Calvinist thinks the Sermon describes the virtues of a community that embodies the peace that Christ makes possible between individuals. Moreover, Mennonites assume that the meaning of the Sermon only makes sense when analyzed from the context of the people that are dedicated to the process of reconciliation among people. This community is a community that has been trained to be forgiven. The separation of the Sermon from this ecclesial context leads to understand it as an abstract law, coming from nowhere and applied to anonymous individuals.¹⁶²

The Sermon and the ethics cannot be separated from the eschatological community. The diversity of gifts present in this community does not create envy, but rather cooperation and

¹⁵⁹ Hauerwas 1993, p. 63-64.

¹⁶⁰ Hauerwas 1993, p. 65-66.

¹⁶¹ Hauerwas 1983, p. 101-102.

¹⁶² Hauerwas 1993, p. 67-68.

love. To be Christian and to be pacifist is not an option among others that individuals can pick up and live under. Hauerwas says, “The Christians who remembered the Sermon did not know they were pacifist. Rather, they knew as a community they were part of a new way of resolving disputes – through confrontation, forgiveness and reconciliation.”¹⁶³ Again, peacemaking does not suggest an abstract collection of principle through which Christians are going to adjust their lives, rather it reflects the practice of a community made possible by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. From this perspective, nonviolence is a requirement if they intend to read the Sermon rightly.¹⁶⁴

The primary target of the Sermon on the Mount is not addressed to individuals, because as single individuals, the chance of failing is a reality. However, the membership in a nonviolent community can help violent individuals to become better individuals. The Sermon does not call for heroic individualism, but to act in a community because they live better together than alone.¹⁶⁵ In Hauerwas’ reflections, “the most important political service the church does for any society is to be a community capable of developing people of virtue”.¹⁶⁶

Regarding the Church and the social responsibility in the world, Hauerwas is, as already mentioned, categorical in stating that the church is a social ethic. The first task of the Christian social ethics is to make the church a servant community, rather than make the world more peaceable or just. Church and individuals are called to tell the story of Israel and Jesus, and that requires a particular people to show the truthfulness of this story. The reason for that is that, “The church must never cease from being a community of peace and truth in a world of mendacity and fear, the church does not let the world set its agenda about what constitutes a social ethic, but a church of peace and justice must set its own agenda.”¹⁶⁷

It is common for people to perceive ethics as primarily a matter of rules and, in this view, the Christian is seen to be guided by the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount. Despite these are significant for the Christian ethical thinking, it is incomprehensible if they are treated as only a set of rules justifiable in themselves. What determines the Christian ethics is the confidence that Christian conviction takes the form of a story or a set of stories constituting a

¹⁶³ Hauerwas 1993, p. 71.

¹⁶⁴ Hauerwas 1993, p. 72.

¹⁶⁵ Hauerwas 1989, p. 44.

¹⁶⁶ Hauerwas 1988, p. 13.

¹⁶⁷ Hauerwas 1983, p. 100.

tradition. Christian ethics do not begin with rules, but showing the narrative in which God deals with his creation.¹⁶⁸

Additionally, Hauerwas explains that both the Ten commandments and the Sermon on the Mount are unintelligible when taken out of their respective context. In the context of the Ten Commandments, God demanded obedience and actions, like to no kill, to not commit adultery, that are only made sense when analyzed from the context that this is a story where God is dealing with Israel.¹⁶⁹ In the context of the Sermon, Hauerwas takes, for instance, the analysis of Gene Davenport. Davenport says that Jesus is not bringing an interim ethic rather, He is providing a new order for his followers. Besides, for Davenport in the Gospel, Jesus calls “to suffer rather than to inflict suffering, to accept death rather than to inflict death.”¹⁷⁰ It is not a naïve ethic, rather a way of life that Jesus embodied and the way of life that reflects God’s own life.

In 1981, Hauerwas published an essay proposing ten theses to reform Christian social ethics. The main proposition is that the Christian community is formed by the conviction that “the story of Christ is a truthful account of our existence”, and that suggests that the mission of Christ’s church is to witness the social life for those formed by that story.

The ten theses to reform the Christian Social ethics are:

- 1) “The social significance of the Gospel requires the recognition of the narrative structure of the Christian convictions for the life of the church.
- 2) Every social ethics involves a narrative, whether it is concerned with the formulation of basic principles of social organization and/or with concrete policy alternatives.
- 3) The ability to provide an adequate account of our existence is the primary test of the truthfulness of a social ethic.
- 4) Communities formed by a truthful narrative must provide the skills to transform fate into destiny so that the unexpected, especially as it comes in the form of strangers, can be welcomed as a gift.

¹⁶⁸ Hauerwas 1983, p. 23-25.

¹⁶⁹ Hauerwas 1983, p. 23.

¹⁷⁰ Hauerwas 1993, p. 66.

- 5) The primary social ask of the church is to be itself—that is, a people who have been formed by a story that provides them with the skills for negotiating the danger of this existence, trusting in God’s promise of redemption.
- 6) Christian social ethics can only be done from the perspective of those who do not seek to control national or world history but who are content to live out of control.
- 7) Christian social ethics depends on the development of leadership in the church that can trust and depend on the diversity of gifts in the community.
- 8) For the church to be, rather than to have, a social ethic means we must recapture the social significance of common behavior, such as acts of kindness, friendship, and the formation of families.
- 9) In our attempt to control our society, Christians in America have too readily accepted liberalism as a social strategy appropriate to the Christian story.
- 10) 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.¹⁷¹

What the view of Hauerwas suggests is somehow different, not because of the community in itself, but rather because of the origins of this community and the guidance that it follows. The Christian community’s understanding of violence and the Christian conception of what is considered violent are usually unusual when compared to other communities. In some societies, to execute political opponents is seen as a right practice, in other societies a person raping the spouse is not counted as violent. However, it is difficult to reconcile such views on violence with Christian practices. The Christian community finds itself in tension with any kind of society demanding the acceptance of violence as a necessary requirement for order.¹⁷²

The theme of Christian responsibility in the world is a significant topic of discussion among Christians, which entails recognizing the roles of individuals and communities in fulfilling their calling in this world. Hauerwas reflects that Christian religious convictions cannot be relegated to one sphere of life, while social and political convictions are placed in another sphere. The faith of Christians is a faith that is connected to act in the world, to do justice, therefore there is

¹⁷¹ Hauerwas 1981, p. 9–12.

¹⁷² Stanley Hauerwas and John Berkman, “Violence”, in *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society*, Paul A. B. Clark & Andrew Linzey (Ed.) (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 866-867.

no way for Christians to avoid political activities. The root of any Christian social ethics is that God has formed people to serve him through the story of Israel and the work of Christ.¹⁷³

Hauerwas is a critic of the liberal society and its problematic issues, as well as to the role of liberalism in politics. Stephen L. Carter argues that the work of Hauerwas does not start with liberalism, but rather with Christianity. Here, Christianity is not linked to the sense of Christendom but to the sense of church. For Carter, Hauerwas concerns how the liberal society is creating and nurturing individuals bounded by rights and preferences rather than to duties. Such duties are not owed to others, nor governments and ideologies, but rather they are owed to God. Understanding God as the creator entails that individuals have a primary responsibility towards God.¹⁷⁴

3.3 Individual: Learning to be a follower of Christ

A central aspect of Hauerwas' analysis lies in the acknowledgment of individuals about who they are and what is covered by such knowledge. There is a dimension in such recognition that provides individuals with those necessary skills to be a witness to whom their faith points to and to be faithful to the message of whom they are followers.

For Hauerwas, the first lesson that Christians meet through the narrative character of the Christian convictions is that they are a friend of the crucified, but also the crucifiers. The acknowledgement of the sinful character of the human condition represents an impediment to see truthfully. However, the task of Christian ethics at the individual level is to assert that through learning to be faithful, to lead individuals to see the world as it is, and that means to see it as God's creation.¹⁷⁵

Here lies an important understanding of Hauerwas' concerning how moral agents are going to make ethical judgements. Healy says that "Hauerwas therefore argues that moral agents are persons who, by their previous actions, have developed a certain identity or – character –, in terms of which they will likely act this way rather than that, and thus will at times act differently from other characters."¹⁷⁶ Human beings are not only rational beings, but rather moral agents

¹⁷³ Hauerwas 1988. p. 173.

¹⁷⁴ Stephen L. Carter, "Must liberalism be violent? A reflection on the work of Stanley Hauerwas", in *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 2012, Vol. 75, No. 4, p. 201-202.

¹⁷⁵ Hauerwas 1983, p. 28-30.

¹⁷⁶ Healy 2014, p. 40.

who embody a certain character over the time. This development of a character happens as a narrative. The intention of individuals to do the right thing or to having a moral life reflects in a progressive attempt to see the reality of the world.¹⁷⁷

Taking narrative as central to explain the Christian existence, Hauerwas, recognizes three crucial claims. The first one is that narrative displays human existence as a *contingent being*. Narrative is epistemically necessary for individuals to get knowledge about themselves and God. Second, it is that narrative consider human being as a *historical being*, having their growth connected to a living tradition, to a community. The third claim is that God has revealed himself narratively in the history of Israel and in the life of Jesus Christ. The knowledge of God happens through the initiation into the kingdom. A transformation is required to see the world as it is, rather than how individuals want to see it. The transformation offered by the community is the baptism, giving individuals the possibility to be reborn.¹⁷⁸

The use of narrative is shown to be a fruitful concept for Hauerwas to display and explain particular themes, as for instance, church, individuals, community, and the Christian Life. He did not intend to create or to develop a narrative theology or a theology of narrative. Narrative helps to clarify the interrelation of these themes, portraying the Christian moral life and how it relates to individual actions. However, it is not every narrative that is fitted to Christians, rather only those that give a sense of self, an understanding of the past and that indicates the future, giving a *telos* and direction to individuals. Furthermore, human beings are narrative-determined creatures who must learn how to find their lives in God's life, understanding the fact of their rebellious and infidel attitude against the creator. Christian convictions create a truthful narrative that is required for the transformation of the self. To be Christians is not solely to obey rules and commandments, rather to learn how to grow into the story of Jesus, being disciples.¹⁷⁹

Regarding violence and individuals, Hauerwas says that violence emerges from the sinfulness present in all human beings. He explains that this sinful character gives the sense of individuals are losing control of their lives, and to reconstitute the control of the life is the basis for the violence present in their lives. The sense of control and power of individuals are seeking is not sufficient because it is built on a fragile basis. Using force is an attempt to keep such a control, at the

¹⁷⁷ Healy 2014, p. 41.

¹⁷⁸ Hauerwas 1983, p. 28.

¹⁷⁹ Hauerwas 1983 p. 1-36.

same time creating a necessity of making an enemy. The enterprise of discovering the meaning of being a Christian leads individual to reframe their view on what peace is.¹⁸⁰

The challenge of living peacefully in a violent world shows that Christians have to learn that the story of God is their story. The knowledge of it delivers freedom to do their life as their own. That represents freedom from false promises of the world, contributing to achieve peace among themselves, and with the other in the society. Hauerwas explains:

We say we desire peace, but we have not the souls for it. We fear the boredom peace seems to imply. Even more, we fear the lack of control a commitment to peace would entail. As a result, the more we seek to bring “under control”, the more violent we have to become to protect what we have. And the more violent we allow ourselves to become, the more vulnerable we are to challenges.¹⁸¹

From this perspective, the violence in the world is nothing less than the mirror of the violence experienced in their lives. To be in peace in the world means to participate in an experience called God’s kingdom, bringing the confidence to trust in ourselves and in others.¹⁸² Such a view on violence does not fit those individuals who have already embodied the ability to be peaceable.

According to Hauerwas, peacemaking has often not been treated as a virtue because people take it as a political strategy, rather than as a position of the self. That position also appears among peaceful people that take peacemaking as a good thing, but not a virtue. Hauerwas considers Aristoteles’ arguments that some virtues, such as justice and friendship, cannot exist without that this relation can be evaluated by a community. Peacemaking is that kind of virtue and relates to understanding that peace is an essential characteristic of the church’s nature.¹⁸³

Analyzing the relationship between virtue and politics, Hauerwas thinks that is a mistake from the perspective of an ethics of virtue to set public versus private. The assumption that some distinction can be done between public and private reflects a political theory that sees political realms independent from individual’s virtue. Once again, Hauerwas considers the Aristotelian understanding that a person cannot be virtuous only copying the actions of a virtuous person, but only becoming virtuous by acting in the manner of a virtuous person acts.¹⁸⁴ According to

¹⁸⁰ Hauerwas 1983, p. 46-47.

¹⁸¹ Hauerwas 1983, p. 49.

¹⁸² Hauerwas 1983, p. 45-48.

¹⁸³ Hauerwas 1988, p. 90.

¹⁸⁴ Hauerwas 1988, p. 191-193.

Jennifer Herdt, the virtue-talk of Hauerwas “is not simply a way of making sense of the supererogatory or of turning attention to characteristics of agents rather than of acts. It is a way of capturing something irreducibly theological about how Christians understand what they are doing”.¹⁸⁵

Seen from a macro perspective, Christianity provides and embodies a set of coherent metaphors and stories that can give individuals an understanding of the nature of the world, as well as a life plan. That does not imply the assumption that only Christianity possesses such accounts of the moral life. From Hauerwas’ theological ethics, to be a moral person means to learn to see the world in a way that life has coherence and unity.¹⁸⁶

Since the Enlightenment, there is an attempt to place moral as a univocal concept. Despite the seductive character of “moral development”, it does not give a meaning to what moral is. In addition, to use a language of moral development is not sufficient to provide an understanding about what moral development means and how it takes places. Regarding the moral life and moral development for Christians, Hauerwas argues that Christians have failed to develop conceptual categories in their own language and, because of that, Christians have adopted the language of moral development as their own language.¹⁸⁷

Hauerwas’ understanding is different, and he explains that the development of the moral self for Christians relates to terms, such as spiritual growth, holiness, and perfection. That contrasts which the contemporary account of moral development. Christians consider several factors in the way of developing a moral life, for example, the acknowledgement that life is a gift, having a dimension to live more dependent on each other; that to develop a moral life means to imitate each other; and that the Christian moral life is about conversion rather than a development.¹⁸⁸

When Hauerwas argues that peacemaking is a virtue of the church it also reflects those who form this church. Peacemaking is “the form of our relations in the church as we seek to be in unity with one another, which at least means that we begin to share a common history”. As God’s creatures, human beings are not naturally violent because they were created for peace. Despite the assumption that pacifism is a passive response, peacemaking is an active effort to

¹⁸⁵ Jennifer A. Herdt, “Hauerwas among the virtues”, in *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, June 2012, Vol. 40, No. 2, p. 205.

¹⁸⁶ Hauerwas 2001d, p. 170.

¹⁸⁷ Hauerwas 1981, p. 129-130.

¹⁸⁸ Hauerwas 1981, p. 130.

oppose injustice through a confrontation of the offender, but at the same time, offering a reconciliation.¹⁸⁹

The strategy of confrontation is an aspect of Hauerwas' understanding on how the church and individuals act toward a more peaceful world. He considers, for example, Matthew 18 to clarify what confrontation means. Jesus instructed the disciples to act when a brother or sister has sinned against them. The required action is to confront them. Conflict lies in the heart of a truthful community.¹⁹⁰ From such an account, confrontation and peaceableness are not in opposition, rather, they are allies. Confrontation is the attempt to speak truthfully to one another, intending to take away false assumptions that can lead to violence later on.

4. Stanley Hauerwas' criticisms of violence and war.

Before discussing Hauerwas' critical stance on war and the consequential violence, it is essential to explore a theological question that he has examined and which informs his understanding of violence and war. The question is: should war be eliminated? The general and common answer is yes. However, Hauerwas explores this question further and understands that it is not a question of *should*, rather a question of *can*. The war should be eliminated, but we cannot. To approach the question that war should be eliminated, means to take the discussion in a wrong direction. Yet, it is a false question. Not because the elimination of war is an impossible task, but it is false because war was already eliminated for those who participate in God's history.¹⁹¹

The perspective of Hauerwas can sound contradictory because war is a reality of the contemporary society. However, he argues that Christians continue to live in a history that is determined by nation-states where war does not show any reduction, and the nuclear annihilation is a constant threat. The Christian pacifist tradition shows a commitment to a process of conversation where communities are aware of their true goals. The peace Christians believe is a peace that God offered not only for them, but for all. Despite there is war and violence in the world, the required attitude for Christians is to not a withdraw from the world,

¹⁸⁹ Stanley Hauerwas (2001i), "Peacemaking: The virtue of the church", in *The Hauerwas readers*, John Berkman & Michael Cartwright (ed.) (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2001), p. 326.

¹⁹⁰ The Table - Biola University – CCT, Stanley Hauerwas interview: Confrontation and the Path of peace, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8USuMSshal&t=59s&ab_channel=TheTable%7CBiolaCCT , (Accessed on 2023-02-15)

¹⁹¹ Hauerwas 2001e, p. 392, 424.

but rather to be in the world with an enthusiasm that cannot be defeated. Jesus Christ eliminated the war from this world on the cross, and that is a reality to his followers. That is the reality that Christians need to know.¹⁹²

There is a distinction in Hauerwas' view about violence and war. He says that to speak about war is not the same as speaking about violence. Despite the fact that war involves violence, violence is not another name to war. These two topics of debate differ from each other, because discussing war proposes another moral evaluation that is not seen when discussing violence. In such terms, war is taken as a moral institution that legitimizes murder on a large scale. In defense of war, it is used also the argument that individuals produce heroic acts is used. It is a risk position to take war as a moral institution. The question is not about that in war individuals show moral behavior or that such actions have good results. The position Hauerwas challenges is the assumption that war, with all its terror, destructiveness, and brutality, can be used as an institution serving moral purposes and that is necessary for human being's life.¹⁹³ Yet, he explains "War is a theological challenge to the very intelligibility of Christian practice".¹⁹⁴

The universality of violence is used as an argument for understanding war as a fundamental aspect of human nature. When Hauerwas says that "War is an institution that occurs uniquely between agents of power", he understands that war is not an exaggerated form of violence, but an institution that emerges among people and transforms violence into power. Carter explains that for Hauerwas, violence is "is profoundly associated with fear, and his location of the anti-violent impulse in Christianity is meant also to address the impulse of fear".¹⁹⁵ The solution is that individuals need to have a proper understanding of the life and seeking of the Christian martyrs and Christians need to emulate their struggle to free individuals and society from violence.¹⁹⁶

What is pointed in Hauerwas' understanding of war as an institution is that violence should be avoided by Christians and the call to act non-violently in the world starts with the recognition that the Christians must show what the peace of the coming kingdom means. That begins with Christians not killing each other, setting them in a position of imagining their lives in a world where war has been abolished. It is a challenge that they need to confront themselves, given the way war shapes the way everyone sees the world. That is the point in Hauerwas' idea that the

¹⁹² Hauerwas 2001h, p. 423-424.

¹⁹³ Hauerwas 2001e, p. 392-394.

¹⁹⁴ Hauerwas 2011, p. xvi.

¹⁹⁵ Carter 2012, p. 206.

¹⁹⁶ Carter 2012, p. 206.

church is the alternative community helping individuals to see an alternative world. The commitment to non-violence starts with the recognition that the implications of war include those who are against, those gone to war, and those supporting war.

4.1 War and identity in the United States of America

The American society has a prolific array of topics that Hauerwas criticises and his criticism of war is connected to two fundamental assumptions in the American society. The initial assumption challenges the prevailing belief held by numerous Christians in the United States that the nation is inherently Christian, while the second assumption questions the notion that the United States serves as a model of democracy. The development of a civil religion has helped Americans and immigrants to understand their faith as a factor that contributes to the development of the country and made the country into a single nation. This contrasts to Europe, where religion has acted as a source of division between religious and secular groups. In the American way of being Christians, there is a struggle to connect and to harmonize their faith with what means to be American.¹⁹⁷

To analyse this question further, Hauerwas looks at the work of Charles Taylor. The unrivalled power the United States has in the world created a sense amidst Americans that they possess the role of “world’s policeman”. From this view, war becomes a moral necessity that provides the experience that the one made the many possible, or by the motto *E Pluribus unum* (*Out of many, One*). For Hauerwas, war is “America’s central liturgical act necessary to renew our sense that we are a nation unlike other nations”.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, the experience of war provides the affinities to keep Christianity connected to democracy in America. The Protestant liberalism had its role in this process of transformation, and the consequences are that war is taken as a moral enterprise. Acts of violence, as those prompted after 9/11, are seen as necessary for the moral health of the country.¹⁹⁹

The way to be protestant in America has its own peculiarities, and consequently its inconsistencies. For Hauerwas, Protestantism in the United States differs from the character of Protestantism in other countries. In America, there was no Catholic background to struggle against and the Protestant social imagination lies as base to its self-definition. He follows Mark

¹⁹⁷ Hauerwas 2011, p. 3.

¹⁹⁸ Hauerwas 2011, p. 4.

¹⁹⁹ Hauerwas 2011, p. 6.

Noll's account, that explains this perspective by saying that America has developed a faith connected to the loyalty to a country that ensured the right to believe or not in a God. In Bonhoeffer's understanding, that means a "Protestantism without reformation". However, Hauerwas explains that this stubbornness from Americans reveals the God they are believing, in other words, is the American God. As a result, it is presumed by both sides of the political spectrum that America is analogous to the church.²⁰⁰

The consequence for Hauerwas of such an attitude caused Protestant churches and consequently Christians to lose their capability to maintain disciplines required of those "people capable of being an alternative to the world".²⁰¹ In other terms, they blended their understanding of themselves as Christians and disciples of Christ with their understanding of themselves as a nation. The church is expected to legitimize the idea of freedom that the American society has embodied. America has created "the project of modernity" that is the effort to produce a people believing that they have no other story than the one they have chosen. That has also consequence on their faith, setting their beliefs only as a matter of personal opinion. The American Christianity has not been able to differentiate that this American God is not the same God Christians worship.²⁰²

It is crucial to understand that there is among Americans the understanding of war as a sacrifice. Such a view was forged in the American Civil war and carry-on being part of how Americans morally comprehend war. Just war becomes a realistic reflection of war and contrasted to the unrealistic view of pacifism. This understanding of war as a necessary thing for Americans is shaped by the idea that they must be worthy of the sacrifices made in the wars of the past.²⁰³ The basis for American engagement in war is rooted in the belief that they are freeing the world from war and establishing a more secure foundation for democracy. The perception for Hauerwas is that "war is America's altar" and the attempt to justify war shows only an ideological mystification. For Christians, the war has not forced them toward theological insights against war because war is done by America, their first and foremost church.²⁰⁴

It is a matter of fact that the United States is a country forged by war, and several Americans sacrificed their lives in order to achieve the United States they have today. However, there is a conflict of narratives for Christians, between what would mean to be a Christian and what it

²⁰⁰ Hauerwas 2011, p. 15-16.

²⁰¹ Hauerwas 2011, p. 17.

²⁰² Hauerwas 2011, p. 18-20.

²⁰³ Hauerwas 2011, p. 27.

²⁰⁴ Hauerwas 2011, p. 33.

would mean to be American, and how they relate to these two stories. The moral attitude regarding war influences one's perception and its manifestation in daily life. Hauerwas explains that to take a position against war can start in not possessing a war at home.²⁰⁵

That is a point of concern to the American society, having in mind the number of violence and crimes practiced every year all around the country. On the other hand, the sense of freedom created and shaped by the state says more than the message about being peaceful that Christians should be related to. What is stated in Hauerwas ideas is that Christians in America are confronted with two different views of the world and the view prevailing in the society is the one provided by the American nation. For Victor Anderson, the idea of freedom in Hauerwas' work associated with modern ethics "is interpreted theologically as idolatry, for the modern conception of freedom makes individual preferences and autonomy of actions absolute."²⁰⁶

According to Carolyn Marvin and David W. Ingle, "What is really true in any society is what is worth killing for, and what citizens may be compelled to sacrifice their lives for."²⁰⁷ Contrary to their perspective, Hauerwas states that what defines what a society really thinks is true is what is understood worth dying for, rather than what is worth killing for. The Christian alternative to war is not a more adequate ethic, it is worship. That explains Hauerwas' assertion about the Church being a social ethic, because the church represents also the end of war. Within the church, individuals learn they are not created to kill, but rather to be in communion with one another.²⁰⁸

When asked about the future of American Christianity, Hauerwas says that God is making Christians "leaner and meaner". He explains that the decrease in the number of members and the churches becoming smaller, the hope is that Christians can discover a unity between themselves that has not been experienced for centuries. That reflection leads to a statement that can be understood as controversial. Not that that is a problem to Hauerwas, but is a change of perspective. The claim is that Christianity is coming to the end of reformation, and the recovery

²⁰⁵ Brian Brock and Stanley Hauerwas, *Beginnings: Interrogating Hauerwas*, Kevin Hargaden (ed.) (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 160-161.

²⁰⁶ Victor Anderson, "The narrative turns in Christian ethics: A critical appraisal", in *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy*, September 1998, Vol. 19, No. 3, p. 303.

²⁰⁷ Marvin & Ingle, see Hauerwas 2011, p. 68.

²⁰⁸ Hauerwas 2011, p. 68-69.

of catholicity of the church across denominations shows itself as a challenge for Christians in the future. Unity is the foremost aspect of the Christianity in the future.²⁰⁹

Regarding the struggle against non-violence, Hauerwas identifies different public individuals that have been engaged not only to the discussion of the issue but also providing examples to the American community that non-violence is an alternative to confront war. Martin Luther King Jr. is an important name regarding non-violence in the United States. For Hauerwas, the circumstances of the American society then compelled King to develop an understanding of nonviolence in search of justice. Gandhi and Henry David Thoreau have influenced King in his path. The essay “Civil Disobedience” by Thoreau helped him to see that to accept passively evil implicates one in cooperation with evil. To a righteous man, to be truthful to his conscience and true to God implies not accepting to collaborate with evil.²¹⁰

King published in 1957 an article where he develops five points regarding his understandings of Gandhi’s practice of nonviolent resistance. Later, it turns into six points:

- (1) Nonviolent resistance is not cowardly but is a form of resistance,
- (2) advocates of nonviolence do not want to humiliate those they oppose,
- (3) the battle is against forces of evil not individuals,
- (4) nonviolence requires the willingness to suffer,
- (5) love is central to nonviolence, and finally,
- (6) the universe is on the side of justice.²¹¹

Hauerwas understands that for King Gandhi’s influence helped him to better comprehend the Sermon on the Mount. The sermon was the real inspiration for the Black community of Montgomery to engage with social action. Jesus was the one who inspired them to protest using the weapon of love. The resistance King maintains emphasizes love as a fundamental aspect since nonviolent resistance entails abstaining from both killing and hating the other. The concept of nonviolent resistance is associated with the understanding of the Gospel, which is necessary to love the enemy; thus, the consequence of the nonviolent attitude is not just to act peacefully, but to reconcile the oppressor and oppressed.²¹²

According to Christopher Beem, there are certain points of agreement between the theological understanding of Hauerwas and King. He says that “Hauerwas and King are conspicuously

²⁰⁹ The Table - Biola University, Stanley Hauerwas interview: Unity: The Hopeful Future of American Christianity - Stanley Hauerwas https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGoTehvmHDA&ab_channel=TheTable%7CBiolaCCT (Accessed 2023-03-09).

²¹⁰ Hauerwas 2011, p. 85.

²¹¹ Martin Luther King Jr. cited in Hauerwas 2011, p. 87.

²¹² Hauerwas 2011, p. 88–92.

united in their belief that the commitment to follow Christ demands a commitment to non-violence. For both, this commitment is taken to be the quintessential response to the Gospel message of love".²¹³ The view of both on the meaning of being Christian has led to their criticism of the contemporary church, and the unwillingness of the church in not taken nonviolence as a central message shows the domestication of this church by social and political forces.²¹⁴

Furthermore, another of Hauerwas criticisms relates to American's understanding of the Scripture and the consequences of the attitude formed by the liberal democracy. The approach of Christians in America to the Scripture is dangerous and can have a negative effect on the truthfulness of people in the Church. Liberal democracies depend on wars to keep a moral coherence, at the same time that they ask individuals to die for the state. For the church to be a community that does not need wars it is necessary to give to itself purpose and virtues, stand in the "middle of the battle" without using coercion or violence.²¹⁵

Hauerwas is critical of the consequences of this liberal democracy in how protestants deal with ethical questions of the society. Ethics in the United States carry on being a project of the Protestant liberalism, that has as aim to put the church at the service to make the American society like no other. Here, ethics became a way to achieve this aim. Contrary to this position, Hauerwas argues Christian ethics refers to the practices that are going to form how Christians must live their lives. The task of Christian theologians is not to help Christians to fit into this society.²¹⁶

Such aspect of Hauerwas' concerns is not a new phenomenon, for Cahill the urgency of national and international events has led American Christian theologians to pose the problem of "Christ and Culture" made by H. R. Niebuhr regarding the problems of the contemporary society, as for instance. the condition of the civil society and participatory politics, the Iraq war or economic globalization.²¹⁷ For Logan, Hauerwas views the church "as devoted not to the principles of memoriless liberalism, but, rather, to a particular God and a particular way of life the follows Jesus".²¹⁸

²¹³ Christopher Beem, "American Liberalism and the Christian Church: Stanley Hauerwas vs. Martin Luther King Jr.", in *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Spring, 1995, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 121.

²¹⁴ Beem 1992, p. 121.

²¹⁵ Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident aliens: A provocative Christian assessment of culture and ministry for people who know that something is wrong* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), p. 18, 35.

²¹⁶ Hauerwas 1997, p. 3-4.

²¹⁷ Cahill 2007, p. 378.

²¹⁸ Logan 2006, p. 523.

The strategy of confrontation that Hauerwas develops for individuals comprehends also their communities. Here, Christian communities need to learn the practice of confronting what is being practiced wrongly in the society. The process of peacemaking requires the attitude of confronting each other. Jesus urges his followers to do it and the Christian community needs to follow such an instruction. Hauerwas says that “we will understand peacemaking as a virtue only when we see that such confrontation is at the heart of what it means to be a peacemaker”.²¹⁹ To confront the other implies to act based on love and justice. To be a truthful community means to create a space where such confrontation happens, bringing with it reconciliation.²²⁰

What is clear in Hauerwas perspective on what he calls confrontation is that it is used to give space for a dialog between individuals facing a problem, but that they possess the abilities to see each other not as enemy but as individuals in the path of solving a problem. The intention with confrontation is not to set an end to a discussion, but to provide an alternative to the Church and to Christians a way to think and act in the world. To be the Church confronting the wrongdoings of the society means to be witness to Christ. In such a view, Hauerwas says that the Church does not have a mission, the church is mission. The fundamental being of the church is to be witness to a Christ that is only known through witnesses. That is also a constitutive feature of Christians.²²¹ To confront the assumption that violence is tolerable in a society that experienced violence is to reframe the image and the representation of Christ to the world and to Christians.

4.2 Warfare: Iraq, Afghanistan, and Ukraine

To assume a pacifist position suggests for some people a withdrawal from the discussion about war. For others, to oppose the use of military force set pacifists in a position of not having a legitime voice in the debate about how military force should be used. However, Hauerwas defends a way of doing politics different from those political arrangements that have been delivered in the contemporary society, and that base its politics on death, like the liberal American politics. Considering two influential thinkers in his works, Hauerwas says that he

²¹⁹ Hauerwas 2001e, p. 319.

²²⁰ The Table – Biola University, CCT, Stanley Hauerwas interview: Confrontation and the path of Peace, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8USuMSshal&t=59s&ab_channel=TheTable%7CBiolaCCT ,(Accessed on 2023-01-26).

²²¹ Plough, Stanley Hauerwas interview: What is the church’s mission, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opKKCbvUFiE&ab_channel=Plough , (Accessed on 2023-01-28)

learned from Reinhold Niebuhr that if you desire justice, you must be prepared to kill someone along the way to it. In contrast, John Howard Yoder taught Hauerwas that the Son of God would die on the cross rather than the world be redeemed through violence.²²²

One week after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the President George W. Bush declared in his speech to the congress that America was at war and those who attacked the country were enemies of freedom and made an act of war against the country. The speech ended claiming that “we’ll meet violence with patient justice -- assured of the rightness of our cause, and confident of the victories to come. In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom, and may He watch over the United States of America.”²²³

Hauerwas says that this war started representing for the United States a war against terror. But it functioned in an opposite direction, giving Osama Bin Laden what he wanted, and he turned into a warrior instead of just a murderer. Regarding how the church should engage in a discussion, Hauerwas says that the church should discuss with the members in its congregation about how Christians justify what they were doing in the war. It is, as stated before, a matter of confrontation, and such a confrontation intends to clarify that Christians are called to be pacifist. In addition, Hauerwas’ criticism goes deeper and illustrates the difficulty that Christians in America have in differentiating the Christian “We” from the American “We”.²²⁴

In Hauerwas’ analysis, war generates a collective experience that is based on a specific narrative in numerous societies. The language of sacrifice plays a central role in how a war is going to be understood by the civil society. The World War II and the Iraq war serve as prime examples of this. Days before the second invasion of Iraq, Hauerwas wrote an appeal to abolish war. The text was intended to oppose the theory that war is a “noble human undertaking”. For American and politicians, the war in Iraq represented a justified war because it was against terror. The American notion to advocate in favour of just war is based on the assumption of democratic societies can put a limit on war, different from undemocratic societies. However, that is the point to Hauerwas, societies like the American society are unable to set a limit in wars because

²²² Hauerwas 2004, p. 201–203.

²²³ The White House (2001), Adress to a Joint session of Congress and the American people, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html> (Accessed on 2023-03-15)

²²⁴ National Catholic Reporter (2009), Afghan war flawed from start says ethicist, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/justice/afghan-war-flawed-start-says-ethicist> , (Accessed on 2023-03-15)

they are democratic. War function as a way to sustain a narrative and belief that the sacrifices of the past were worthy.²²⁵

Additionally, he says that the language of sacrifice, when used regarding war, shapes the way in which society takes the idea of war, providing a sense that the people are together in the same task. In the United States, this language is important because war carries on being the most determinative common experience. The American flag exemplifies the embodiment of a moral logic of the sacrifice of war. War requires also a change in individuals' perspective about war, and this sacrifice includes also individuals' unwillingness to kill. For Hauerwas, the language of war supports individuals to deny the real meaning of war, turning it into a more pleasant action.²²⁶

Hauerwas suggests that war's true significance is often overshadowed by the state's narrative, leading individuals to believe that any action is justified in the name of a greater cause, such as a democratic country fighting against undemocratic forces. That is a risky position for individuals and for the society. The engagement of Hauerwas in defense of a more active church in the society function as a reminder to Christians of their task as human beings, and that the other is also good creatures of God. The state of warfare must be confronted, both by individuals and the church.

In February 2022, Russia declared war against Ukraine and once again a religious actor played a role in the war, not having a leading role but supporting and justifying the war. There is a historical perspective on this relationship between the Russian state and the Russian Orthodox church that can be analyzed. However, this engagement deploys the truthfulness of the Church and its theological meaning when facing concrete actions and reveals its own captivity by foreign politics. It is a conundrum where Christians' role is questioned. Not all members of the Russian Orthodox Church agree with that choice. A great number of members are not in agreement with the Church's conclusion and are no longer heeding the decision of their leader.

The criticism Hauerwas does to war in Ukraine is different, not because of the contexts of the war, but rather because of the defense of war made the Orthodox Church took in the person of the Patriarch Kirill. For Hauerwas is clear that Christians and the Church in America have failed to see the theological dimension of the Christian life and how it works in the public life. However, the Orthodox Church supports the war and legitimate war using theological

²²⁵ Hauerwas 2011, p. 26-58.

²²⁶ Hauerwas 2011, p. 58-61.

arguments. For Hauerwas, the first criticism is that “it’s too late to have a non-violent witness in the Ukraine, because orthodoxy didn’t develop a strong non-violent ethic as part of their development as a Christian liturgical witness.”²²⁷

Patriarch Kirill declared that the church does not oppose the idea of this “fratricidal war”, but rather He asks the army to kill as few brothers as possible. His words show not just the defense of the war, but also providing a theological defense of the Russian army against Ukraine. He says:

The Church is aware that if someone, driven by a sense of duty, the need to fulfill an oath, remains true to his calling and dies in the line of military duty, then he undoubtedly commits an act that is tantamount to a sacrifice. He sacrifices himself for others. And, therefore, we believe that this sacrifice washes away all the sins that a person has committed.²²⁸

It is a strange position that The Orthodox Church and the Patriarch took. Using John 3:16 to explain the meaning of this war set the sacrifice of Jesus Christ alongside the sacrifice of the soldiers fighting on the battlefield. Regarding this open defense of war made by the Patriarch, Hauerwas says:

What he has said is extremely disturbing. Namely, that he underwrites and presumption that in fact, the old Soviet Union was a theological development that includes... You’re trying to save Crimea by going to war, by making them part of a holy land. That just strikes me as Constantinianism on a stick in a way that is extraordinarily destructive.²²⁹

According to Hauerwas, although the Russian Orthodox church supports this war, it has also raised some voices within orthodoxy that represent a non-violent alternative to war. The reality of war raised in Ukraine shows for numerous people a reality that is not really known and understood. Hauerwas understands from a more general perspective that the orthodoxy “didn’t develop a strong non-violent ethic as part of their development as a Christian liturgical

²²⁷ The Weight Podcast, Stanley Hauerwas interview: World without war <https://www.theweightpodcast.com/episodes/world-without-war-with-stanley-hauerwas>, (Accessed on 2023-03-16).

²²⁸ Жертвенность - лучшее проявление человеческих качеств, <https://youtu.be/Ak5d5NF6yVA> (Accessed on 2023-03-19)

²²⁹ The Weight Podcast, Stanley Hauerwas interview: World without war, <https://www.theweightpodcast.com/episodes/world-without-war-with-stanley-hauerwas>, (Accessed on 2023-03-16).

witness.”²³⁰ Moreover, It is a difficult position for Hauerwas to speak about the war in Ukraine when the war is ongoing, but Hauerwas would like to see the Orthodox Church to be a witness against the Russian state sponsoring war and violence, but they have failed to do it.

What can be understood of Hauerwas reflections on war is that the criticism of war and to take a non-violent position in the contemporary society is an approach that every Christians should assume. The reasons for that have practical applications, the world needs it. In addition, there is a theological dimension of this choice. That reveals an understanding about the meaning of being faithful to Jesus and to his message on the coming Kingdom of God. To act non-violently is to be trained in a path that is not individual, rather is a path done together with other Christians. It does not imply that Christians will live apart from non-Christians. That means they are going to be a witness of Jesus, who taught the path of leaving peacefully. It is an enterprise that Christians are still learning how to do.

²³⁰ The Weight Podcast, Stanley Hauerwas interview: World without war, <https://www.theweightpodcast.com/episodes/world-without-war-with-stanley-hauerwas>, (Accessed on 2023-03-17).

5. Conclusion.

After analyzing Stanley Hauerwas' ideas on non-violence and considering the research questions employed in this analysis, it can be concluded that Hauerwas not only offers a theological interpretation of Jesus' teachings but also presents an alternative perspective on non-violence that is rooted in these teachings. These theological reflections ultimately inspire the Church, community, and individuals to undertake an enterprise focused on uncovering the truth about their faith and the purpose behind their existence.

Being Christian does not equate to being American or Swedish. The Christian narrative offers a unique perspective on the world, emphasizing a faithful commitment to Jesus Christ's teachings about the coming kingdom. There is a sense of being schooled to become what individuals truly are, but that is not fully understood yet. The narrative of individuals' history and their membership in a community are formative instances of their moral identity. The church is the alternative for the world and its politics. It is a new way of doing politics, a new way of understand the Christians discipleship in relation to the Christian narrative.

As mentioned, the political theology of Hauerwas suggests the church having a major role because the church is the political theology and social ethic to the world. In his words, "Christianity, like peace, is not an idea. Rather, it is a bodily faith that must be seen to be believed."²³¹ Ethic is not only about rules and choices that individuals made during their life and regarding different questionings their lives. There is a connection between the way individuals live their lives with the knowledge of who they are, and as Christians, means to have their lives shaped by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is the point in considering the Narrative theology. It is a way of recounting the Christian narrative that considers its historical roots, acknowledges the current context, and highlights its future-oriented nature. The formation of such individuals starts within their community and the ability to perceive themselves as part of a new way of life that was brought to the world in the person of Jesus Christ.

As the title of this study suggests, the non-violence attitude of Christians is a hallmark of the Christian moral life. The community centered on Jesus and his message values a peacemaking

²³¹ Stanley Hauerwas, "Seeing peace: L'Arche as a peace movement" in *Christianity, Democracy, and the Radical ordinary: Conversations between a radical democrat and a Christian*, Stanley Hauerwas & Romand Coles (Cambridge: The Lutherworth Press, 2008), p. 309-32.

attitude as a virtue. Pacifism is regularly seen as being passive when confronted with the wrong. Because of this perception emerges the idea of pacifism as immoral when individuals do not confront injustice in the world. For Hauerwas, however, there is no passivity in the peacemaking. It is an active way to resist injustice, confronting the offender with the proposition of reconciliation. In order to witness the peaceable Kingdom, it is crucial for individuals, communities, and churches to shift their perspective and actively embrace non-violence in their daily lives. It is a communal commitment to the cause of God's kingdom.

The criticism that Hauerwas does to war and consequently to the American society should not be restricted to the context that He analyses. The question of how Christianity is going to deal with political interest and nation-states is a concern that needs to be handled independently of geographical boundaries. When Christianity is associated with a particular national identity or political part is a bad idea that Christians need to confront. To be trained in the path of non-violence means to develop a political engagement with the world in which violence is not a way to solve the problems. The justice and peace in the world demand time, and that means God's time.

The justifications for engaging in a war illustrate how society has constructed a narrative that portrays something inherently negative as acceptable and morally justified behavior that citizens are expected to do. In summary, What Hauerwas' theology brings is both a theological understanding but also a challenge for those who are following Christ. From individuals, it is required that they set themselves in a path of transformation of the self. The primary task for individuals is the enterprise of not being violent is the recognition of themselves as followers of the Christ. To do Christ's story, their story means to witness the peaceable Kingdom that Jesus preaches. It has also a requirement from the church, that is to form individuals with practices of patience and hope, creating a community that embody these same convictions. Christians are expected to take action and create the circumstances necessary for justice and peace.

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