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Ecclesial Communion, God's Publicity and Global Citizenship

Gary M. Simpson

Ah, you who are wise in your own eyes, and shrewd in your own sight!
(Isa 5:21)

Rise up, O God, judge the earth; for all the nations belong to you! (Ps 82:8)

He looked straight into my eyes that night and said it. "America is a nation with a mission, and that mission comes from our most basic beliefs. We have no desire to dominate, no ambitions of empire."¹ That President Bush had to tender this assurance eyeball to eyeball to the nation and to the world surely indicates that real "empire" merits investigation.

The world remembers the entanglement of Christianity and empire throughout the ages. In our time, that entanglement is located especially in the USA, which is why Christians in the US bear the vocation to look this entanglement in the face. Four burdens present themselves. It is incumbent on us to expose which Christian teachings and practices, whether true or false, fund this entanglement; to exhume aspects of the US national heritage that contribute to the present entanglement; to encourage and accompany the US in national repentance for this entanglement; and to explore a better way to restrain the American temptation toward empire and engage in peace building.

¹The President's 2004 *State of the Union Address*, at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/01/print20040120-7.html (accessed 5 August 2007). Four days after this, Vice President Cheney, in Davos, Switzerland, again disavowed any US ambition to empire and used a territorial definition of empire. See www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/01/print/20040124-1.html (accessed 5 August 2007). The President first stated this disavowal in his now-famous West Point graduation speech on 1 June 2002, at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html (accessed August 5, 2007). He again denied empire on 11 November 2002, in a speech at a White House reception for veterans. "We have no territorial ambitions, we don't seek an empire. Our nation is committed to freedom for ourselves and for others," see www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/11/print/20021111-2.html (accessed 5 August 2007). The West Point speech has become famous, first, as the start of "the Bush Doctrine." Second, four quotations from this speech appear as official epigrams, in *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, which officially contains much of the Bush Doctrine. See www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html (accessed 5 August 2007).

First, I will review the state of the question regarding America as empire. Second, I will explore Lutheran contributions to communion ecclesiology that can prompt US citizens toward a repentant patriotism in the face of American empire. Third, I will examine the recent neoconservative aspirations for American empire in light of the global practice of publicity. Finally, I will propose that the "Responsibility to Protect," the newly emerging protocol within international humanitarian law, is a prototypical foray in global citizenship.

American empire?

There are many ways in which empire is being discussed today. Michael Walzer notes, "In fact, there hasn't been anywhere near enough of a debate" about whether or not there is an American empire.² Is there an American empire? On the popular level, Walzer says, "Of course!" However, he worries that "empire"—like "imperial"—is more "a term of denunciation" than "of enlightenment." He prefers "hegemon" because "empire" "needs extensive qualification if it is to describe anything like what exists, or what is possible, in the world today."³ Indeed, I use empire precisely to strive for a clear note of denunciation within a wider melody of description, definition and normative direction.

Jean Bethke Elshtain notes that "some will argue that the kinds of interventions I call for ... amount to imperialism."⁴ Still, she reprimands people for "invoking the rather unhelpful imperialist tag." Rather, she thinks that "we should reflect on the nature of interventions" and "simply get past the almost inevitable initial negative reaction to views that call on the United States to exercise robust powers of intervention." "The doctrine that I will defend here," she continues, "differs quite significantly from past imperialisms since it involves neither colonization nor the imposition of any permanent structure of proconsuls (as was the practice of the Roman Empire)." She seeks to develop the just war tradition's criterion of "just cause" under the norm of "equal regard." However,

² Michael Walzer, "Is There an American Empire?" in *Dissent* (Fall 2003), p. 27.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴ Jean Bethke Elshtain, "International Justice as Equal Regard and the Use of Force," in Wes Avram (ed.), *Anxious about Empire: Theological Essays on the New Global Realities* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2004), p. 130.

she completely neglects the just war tradition's criterion of "legitimate authority." This neglect permits someone to drive an empire through the gaping hole that she provides in the just war tradition. Regrettably, her argument retains more than a whiff of permissiveness toward war.

The Canadian Michael Ignatieff has coined the term "empire lite" to describe America.⁵

America's empire is not like empires of times past, built on colonies, conquests and the white man's burden. . . . The old European imperialism justified itself as a mission to civilize, to prepare tribes and so-called lesser breeds in the habits of self-discipline necessary for the exercise of self-rule. Self-rule did not necessarily have to happen soon—the imperial administrators hoped to enjoy the sunset as long as possible—but it was held out as a distant incentive, and the incentive was crucial in co-opting local élites and preventing them from passing into open rebellion.⁶

"The twenty-first-century imperialism is a new invention in the annals of political science, an empire lite, a global hegemony whose grace notes are free markets, human rights and democracy, enforced by the most awesome military power the world has ever known."⁷ Because of the grace notes of "an empire lite" "the moral evaluation of empire gets complicated," Ignatieff argues.⁸

So, Elshtain seeks to convince that new expansive interventionism of the US, though "different-from-past-imperialisms," is moral according to the just war tradition. Ignatieff seeks to contain imperial lite overreach and excess. And Walzer seeks not only to contain overreach and excess but also to curb hegemonic abuses with a nod to the community of nations. None of these three, however, supply much more than cosmetic makeovers for the embarrassments of empire. I suggest a different approach, one that seeks to convict and correct America's neoconservative empire by offering a civilizing confidence in a hopeful future for America among the nations. Toward this end the question is how churches of a global Lutheran communion might exercise a public vocation in the face of US empire.

⁵ Michael Ignatieff, "American Empire: The Burden," in *New York Times Magazine* (5 January 2003), p. 24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 53.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Ecclesial communion in the face of empire

Since the 1990s, the Lutheran World Federation has explored the ecumenical nature and significance of the church as communion. Here we take up and innovate five Lutheran insights—justification by faith alone, cruciform Christology, God as Triune, churchly life as communion and vocation as public church—that underlie and express the church as communion in an age of empire.⁹

God justifies the ungodly by faith alone. Lutherans confess this truth claim because sinners and sufferers finally have no hope under God's reign of law, that most salutary doctrine of life, as Luther called it. Only by mercy does God redeem because God's "law always accuses," as the Lutheran confessors unceasingly noted. In this way, Lutherans characteristically are scrupulous in distinguishing between law and gospel. Of course, while God's accusing spiritual or theological use of law is what drives people into the arms of God's mercy in Christ, God also uses law civilly or politically to prevent sin, evil, mayhem and wickedness and to promote an earthly just peace.¹⁰ Therefore, God's civil use of law remains crucial when considering the significance of ecclesial communion in the face of empire.

Justification is by faith alone, noted the confessors, because to understand the gospel of God's redeeming mercy is to proclaim Jesus Christ "based upon the nature of a promise."¹¹ The Holy Spirit creates the fiduciary relationship between God's promise of redemption in Christ and human reality by creating faith on earth. Through this, we receive already now a foretaste of God's eschatological future of righteousness,

⁹ See Heinrich Holze (ed.), *The Church as Communion. LWF Documentation 42/1997* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1997). Especially helpful are Michael Root's exploration of the ecumenical context of "a shared minimal 'communion ecclesiology,'" p. 32, and Christoph Schwöbel's setting forth both the changed situation of churches in society and the changed theological framework in light of recent Trinitarian theology, pp. 228-247. Schwöbel also notes the doctrine of justification but does not explore its implications for relational ontology, which should be done. Also see the significant contributions in Karen Bloomquist (ed.), *Communion, Responsibility, Accountability: Responding as a Lutheran Communion to Neoliberal Globalization. LWF Documentation 50/2004* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2004).

¹⁰ See the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's social statement, *For Peace in God's World*, at <http://elca.org/socialstatements/peace/> (accessed 5 August 2007).

¹¹ See *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, Article IV, 40-58, in Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert (eds.), *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 54. For a fuller examination of the integration of justification, christology, and Trinity, see Gary M. Simpson, "A Reformation Is a Terrible Thing to Waste: Promising Theology for an Emerging Missional Church," in Craig Van Gelder (ed.), *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

life and salvation. Gospel understood through the hermeneutic of promise is a characteristically Lutheran way of considering what is a fiduciary relational ontology. When Lutherans neglect the promise-based gospel, alien ontologies of classical and modern sovereignty creep in and distort the relationality of the Holy Spirit, Christ, God, church and world.

Gospel based upon the nature of a promise frames how Lutherans characteristically confess Jesus Christ. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, for instance, confessed Christ precisely according to the Reformation's fiduciary ontology of relationship. He probed the sociality of Christ, leading him to the provocative and fruitful claim that "God is a God who bears."¹² Jesus Christ is God who faithfully, incarnationally and cruciformly bears human beings in their suffering and sin. In the resurrection, ascension and the coming of the promised Spirit the inheritance of Jesus the Son is bequeathed to them. Bonhoeffer drew heavily upon the radical relational and fiduciary Christology of his Lutheran heritage and its scriptural basis in what Luther called "the joyous exchange." For Bonhoeffer, and others like him, this sociality of Christ—which Bonhoeffer calls Jesus' "place-sharing"—also forms the nature of churchly communion. In this time of empire, the Christological implications for communion ecclesiology are best explored in tandem with the recent ecumenical retrieval of Trinitarian theology.

Three aspects of Trinitarian theology are significant: sending, relationality and the scope of God's action. In the face of Western modernism, early to mid twentieth-century theology returned to the doctrine of the Trinity, which much of the modern Western church thought it could do without. This turn at first focused on the sending nature of the Triune, missionary God: God the Father sends Jesus the Son who sends the Holy Spirit who sends the church to the world.

More recently, Trinitarian theology has raised up the relational nature of the Triune God. Emphasizing the sending Trinity alone became too easily indentured to modern Western sovereignty and colonialism, with the world and its different cultures and societies the targets of that sending. The ancient Greek term *perichoresis* has emerged to express the rich, free sharing among the divine persons of the Trinity. *Perichoresis* stipulates the kind of relationality that is the Triune God. *Perichoresis* had its original everyday setting in the mutual sharing of burdens and joys within flourishing neighborhoods of the ancient world. Trinitarian *perichoresis*

¹² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Discipleship," in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, vol. 4 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), p. 90. Also see Gary M. Simpson, "'God is a God who Bears': Bonhoeffer for a Flat World," in *Word & World* 26 (Fall 2006), pp. 419-428.

is the true correlate of the bearing and bequeathing sociality of Christ and the kind of promising theology by which Bonhoeffer lived.

The sending God is none other than the perichoretic God. This unity of *perichoresis* and sending alters the understanding of God's missionary nature and liberates mission from its colonialist captivity. We can now combine Triune sending and *perichoresis* with the third aspect of God's Triune character, the traditionally differentiated scope of God's action in creating, redeeming and consummating. Lutherans characteristically distinguish between God's left-hand ruling of the world as God's work of creation on the one hand, and God's right-hand work of redemption and consummation, on the other. The scope of God's Triune agency must take center stage whenever we consider the vocation of churchly communion as public church in this time of empire.

The church is the creature of the Word, Luther reminds us.¹³ By creature of the Word, Luther was usually stressing that the church is created by God's Word of law and promise rather than the church being authoritative over God's Word, as was common in late medieval Christianity. Luther also notes a second way that the church is a creature of the Word. Through the Word the Holy Spirit creates the church by communicating to the church the very form of life that is God's Word. And this form of life finds its earthly root in the fiduciary and cruciform sociality of the bearing and bequeathing Jesus, who exists perichoretically with the Father and the Holy Spirit. God's Word communicates this perichoretic communion as churchly communion.

Bonhoeffer therefore stressed that "bearing" is central to being a Christian:

So Christians become bearers of sin and guilt for other people. Christians would be broken by the weight if they were not themselves carried by him who bore all sins. Instead, by the power of Christ's suffering they can overcome the sins they must bear by forgiving them. A Christian becomes a burden-bearer—bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). As Christ bears our burdens, so we are to bear the burden of our sisters and brothers. [...] The burden of a sister

¹³ Among the numerous places that Luther makes this point see, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" (1520), Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 36 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 107; "The Misuse of the Mass" (1521), in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 36 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), pp. 144-145; "On the Councils and the Church" (1539), in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 41, p. 150.

or brother, which I have to bear, is not only his or her external fate, manner, and temperament; rather, it is in the deepest sense his or her sin. I cannot bear it except by forgiving it, by the power of Christ's cross, which I have come to share. In this way Jesus' call to bear the cross places all who follow him in the community of forgiveness of sins. Forgiving sins is the Christ-suffering required of his disciples. It is required of all Christians.¹¹

Less than a year before his imprisonment by the Nazis, Bonhoeffer wrote, "This spirit of fellowship and Christian brotherhood will carry me through the darkest hours."¹² He practiced churchly communion as the alternative both to the individualistic bourgeois Protestant church that he knew, in which there was no mutual bearing, and to the Roman Catholic Church of his day, whose hierarchy was far too overbearing, though he did admire its more communal features.

Bonhoeffer took cues for life together as church from how Luther had woven together practical reflections on Christ, sacraments and church:

Christ with all saints, by his love, takes upon himself our form [Phil 2:7], fights with us against sin, death, and all evil. This enkindles in us such love that we take on his form, rely upon his righteousness, life, and blessedness. And through the interchange of his blessings and our misfortunes, we become one loaf, one bread, one body, one drink, and have all things in common. O this is a great sacrament, says St. Paul, that Christ and the church are one flesh and bone. Again through this same love, we are to be changed and to make the infirmities of all other Christians our own; we are to take upon ourselves their form and their necessity, and all the good that is within our power we are to make theirs, that they may profit from it. That is real fellowship, and that is the true significance of this sacrament.¹³

For Bonhoeffer ecclesial communion is a core reality for the vocation of public church. "[T]he church-community itself knows now that the world's

¹¹ Bonhoeffer, *op. cit.* (note 12), pp. 91, 88. Also see Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, vol. 5 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), pp. 27-47.

¹² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Letter to Bishop George Bell on June 1, 1942," in *Conspiracy and Imprisonment 1940-1945: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, vol. 16 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), p. 311.

¹³ Martin Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, and the Brotherhoods" (1519), in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 35 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), p. 58.

suffering seeks a bearer. So in following Christ, this suffering falls upon it, and it bears the suffering while being borne by Christ.”¹⁷ This means first of all, as Bonhoeffer notes, bearing the guilt of the nation by leading it both in repentance and in bold public action elicited by repentance.¹⁸

In this time of US empire, being church as communion implies bearing the letters of lament and critique from wherever the “empire writes back.”¹⁹ Indeed, being church as communion entails bearing both the suffering that is incurred throughout the empire and the sin and guilt that is perpetrated by the empire. It is important then that the church as communion face the implications of US empire in our time

Repentance and the failed patriotism of the neoconservative empire

Definitions of empire were attached to territory when that was the prime way to expand a nation’s economic wealth and political power. Now, however, access to economic resources, markets and cultural capital is the path to wealth, power and prestige. The neoconservative movement, which has deeply influenced the current Bush’s administration, seeks an ever-expanding unipolar world, marked by growing American primacy and full spectrum dominance.²⁰

The neoconservative movement promotes both a vision of international order as empire and a set of practices of statecraft as empire. This vision aims to shape the future by controlling the international order and the form of US internationalism. Paul Wolfowitz notes, “In a world

¹⁷ Bonhoeffer, *op. cit.* (note 12), p. 90.

¹⁸ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, vol. 6 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), pp. 275-297.

¹⁹ The phrase is Salman Rushdie’s. See Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination & Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), pp. 125ff.

²⁰ For prominent neoconservative thinking, see Robert Kagan and William Kristol (eds), *Present Dangers: Crisis and Opportunity in American Foreign and Defense Policy* (San Francisco: Encounter, 2000); *Statement of Principles* (3 June 1997), Project for the New American Century, at www.newamericancentury.org/ (accessed August 5, 2007); Thomas Donnelly, “Brave New World: An Enduring Pax Americana,” *National Security Outlook*, American Enterprise Institute, 1 April 2003, at www.aei.org/publications/pubID.16710/pub_detail.asp (accessed 5 August 2007). I offer a fuller analysis of the neoconservative empire, of the development and dogma of “the Bush Doctrine,” and of the Iraq War, in Gary M. Simpson, “God against Empire: Implicit Imperialism, Deliberative Democracy and Global Civil Society,” in *Consensus: A Canadian Lutheran Journal of Theology*, vol. 29.2 (2004), pp. 9-60.

where American primacy seems so overwhelming ... [t]he ultimate test of foreign policy is how successfully it shapes the future."²¹ During the last quarter century "the world [has] indeed been transformed in America's image," they assert (5). Neoconservatives seek both to strengthen and to extend this transformation. This will happen by "above all, preserving and reinforcing America's benevolent global hegemony" (6). Under self-discipline, they never use the word "empire" in public, which is what makes them even more successful sponsors of it.

The neoconservative vision denounces "a return to normal times" and deplores the notion that America would ever again be "a normal nation" (9-12). They do not envision America being a mere "savior of last resort" for world peace or a "reluctant sheriff" enforcing justice (15-16), which would signify an America far too weak and wimpy. Instead, they compare American power and prestige to that exercised when "Rome dominated the Mediterranean world" (6). Their America obeys a new calling with a preferred future. The "United States would instead conceive of itself as at once a European power, an Asian power, a Middle Eastern power and, of course, a Western hemisphere power" (15-16). Above all, the neoconservative movement pursues a "unipolar era" (6). "A multipolar world ... would be far more dangerous" than the unipolar world of American "benevolent global hegemony."²² "Benevolent global hegemony" means "full spectrum dominance."

Neoconservative statecraft is deeply rooted in an aristocratic mode of life centered in four integrated practices: first, displaying unshakeable confidence in the aristocrat's own superior virtue; second, maximizing the aristocrat's own will by minimizing the rule of law; third, observing "linguistic discipline" to accomplish its ends; and fourth, exercising "resolve" in all things.

²¹ Paul Wolfowitz, "Statesmanship in the New Century," in Kagan and Kristol, *ibid.*, pp. 312, 314. Page numbers in the text that follows are from Kagan and Kristol. *Present Dangers* may be the best single collection of pre 9/11 neoconservative internationalist thinking. G. John Ikenberry has concisely articulated seven elements that form their "new grand strategy." See G. John Ikenberry, "America's Imperial Ambition," in *Foreign Affairs* 81.5 (Sept-Oct, 2002), pp. 44ff.

²² Kagan and Kristol, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 24. In international political philosophy William Wohlforth developed the warrants for a unipolar world, see "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security*, 24.1 (Summer 1999), pp. 5-41. Kagan and Kristol cite him favorably (p. 22). Thomas Donnelly calls Wohlforth's hegemonic theory "groundbreaking," see Thomas Donnelly, "Brave New World: An Enduring Pax Americana," *National Security Outlook*, American Enterprise Institute, 1 April 2003, at www.aei.org/publications/pubID.16710/pub_detail.asp (accessed 5 August 2007). For Francis Fukuyama's own account of the neoconservative vision, which he has now belatedly abandoned, see Francis Fukuyama, *After the Neocons: America at the Crossroads* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

Neoconservative “statesmanship” betrays an aristocratic ethos. It deems America the most virtuous nation on the earth. William Bennett puts it simply. “Today, America sits at the summit. [We] elicit awe and admiration from every nation” (304). Aristocracy has always practiced a culture of exceptionalism and assumption based in benevolence (289-290). Here rests the soul of aristocracy.²³

“Who, then, will rule the ruler?” is the classic Western question. Aristocrats respond, “‘law’ is embodied in the person of the ruler.”²⁴ Neoconservatives respond, America has demonstrated and deserves to be “the man” of the world. We live autonomously; we set the agenda; we declare as “doctrine” “you are either for us or against us.” Paul Wolfowitz says it bluntly. “Thus, foreign policy decisions cannot be subject to the kind of ‘rule of law’ that we want for our domestic political process” (334). “Rule of law domestically, but not internationally. Neoconservatives desire an America that follows international rule of law only when it is expedient. But contrary to this, America’s founders set its statecraft on a different footing from aristocracy—to become a nation “of laws and not of men.”²⁵

Linguistic discipline is crucial to neoconservative “statesmanship” (41). This was learned in 1992, when Paul Wolfowitz wrote in the Pentagon draft of the neoconservative grand strategy that America seeks “primacy and predominance,” and will “maintain mechanisms for deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global scale.”²⁶ Now, neoconservatives claim that America conducts itself by seamlessly blending its national interest with universal moral principles such as: liberty, democracy and free-market capitalism. The rhetoric is mesmerizing and difficult to criticize because of how abstractly and speciously these principles are continuously repeated.

²³ For an authoritative account of the entwinement of aristocracy and benevolence and of the persistency of aristocracy in the founding of the US, see Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

²⁴ See Plutarch, “To an Uneducated Ruler,” in *Moralia*, vol. 10, trans. H. Fowler, in *Loeb Classic Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), par. 780ff.

²⁵ John Adams inscribed this crucial anti-aristocratic criterion in the opening clause of the original draft of the Massachusetts’ Constitution (1779), which became a national model. It now stands as the culminating clause of Part One, see www.mass.gov/legis/const.htm (accessed 5 August 2007). For the complex relation of America’s founders to aristocracy, see Gordon S. Wood’s critical theory of aristocracy, in Gordon S. Wood, *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), pp. 10-28, 245-274.

²⁶ Max Boot, “Doctrine of the ‘Big Enchilada,’” in *The Washington Post*, 14 October 2004, at www.newamericancentury.org/iraq-101402.htm (accessed 5 August 2007).

The neoconservative movement turned what exploded on 9/11 as a national security crisis into a national identity crisis—at least since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The security crisis is not over, of course. Even worse, the national identity crisis will not abate soon. The neoconservative movement above all desired the Iraq War to demonstrate the power and prestige of American empire and to bring in a new era of Pax Americana.

An American patriotism of empire is not new. It comes from an identity that longs for empire as the way to achieve security. The British invasion that started the War of 1812 led John Quincy Adams, the Secretary of State under President James Monroe, to develop the “Monroe Doctrine.” Adams’ principle was to achieve security through expansion. Adams built his grand strategy for implementing this expansionist principle around three foreign policy practices: preemption-prevention, unilateralism and hegemony-empire.²⁷ President Andrew Jackson executed Adams’ expansionist empire by the preemptive-preventive practice of “dispossessing” Native American Indians. Subsequent US presidents would all, to varying degrees, execute Adams’ expansionist grand strategy of empire through preemptive-preventive, unilateralist, hegemonic practices.

John Lewis Gaddis draws three conclusions. First, Adams’ expansionist strategy of empire is “surprisingly relevant.” Second, overall President Bush “whether intentionally or not, has been drawing upon a set of traditions that go back” to Adams; the Bush Doctrine therefore “reflects a return to an old position, not the emergence of a new one.” This is what makes the Bush Doctrine neoconservative. It conserves this old expansionist tradition of empire. It is neo because it is now unapologetically both fully global and fully full spectrum dominance, and it does so by politically and militarily dominating access to economic markets. Third, Adams’ three expansionist practices of empire are and should remain America’s

²⁷ John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 37-38. Gaddis draws a distinction between preemption and prevention—preemption means “military action undertaken to forestall an imminent attack from a hostile state;” prevention means “starting a war to keep such a state from building the capability to attack,” p. 123. However, he notes that in the nineteenth century this distinction seems “to blur.” He uses “preemption” to cover the blur. Michael Walzer gives the modern classic account of the distinction between preemption and prevention and why just war tradition judges “preventive wars” to be unjust. See Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1977, 2000), pp. 74-85. Gaddis also argues that the Monroe Doctrine does not so much inaugurate a practice of isolationism, “a misnomer,” but rather a practice of unilateralism, p. 24. While he uses “hegemony” in most of his account, toward the end he himself argues for an expanding “empire of liberty,” pp. 106-113. Gaddis notes how “surprisingly relevant” Adams’ expansionist grand strategy is, p. 16.

“default [practices]: when in doubt, fall back on these.”²⁸ Soon after 9/11, the President fell back precisely on this expansionism and he did so again on 20 January 2005. “The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.”²⁹

Yet, Adams’ expansionist tradition is but one American tradition. Most Americans would turn instead to George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, or Franklin Delano Roosevelt, among others. What exploded at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 as a national security crisis became ironically a hopeful opportunity for FDR. He repelled the tradition and practices of an expansionist American empire as failed patriotism. Instead, he led America in a more civic internationalist direction.³⁰

Hope in the face of war always begins and ends with repentance; so does hope in the face of empire, especially with the empire writing back its poetic lament and prophetic critique. “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ‘Repent,’ he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.” When this first of the “Ninety-five Theses” exploded off Martin Luther’s pen, few recognized how piercing and pervasive repentance is. Luther argued that its scope went beyond the private lives of individuals, families and friendships and encompassed ecclesial, socioeconomic and political life as well. When he considered the question of war against the Turks using the just war tradition, he noted that Christians, even when there are only a few, should lead the way in continual national repentance and repentant prayer. Whether the war is just or unjust, whether it is won or lost, repentance is necessary. Accountability to God is paramount. Without repentance, a nation can lose its soul, so to speak. Of course, the specifics of repentance will vary and this is where global churchly communion comes in. Because the church is part of a global communion Christians have ready access to the empire writing back. Pastors have an obligation to preach, teach and exhort such public lament and repentant prayer, notes Luther.³¹ When

²⁸ Gaddis, *ibid.*, pp. 16, 31, 26, 31. See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050118-4.html> (accessed 5 August 2007).

²⁹ See www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/print/20050120-1.html (accessed 5 August 2007); See www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050118-4.html (accessed 5 August 2007).

³⁰ For the FDR story, see Gaddis, *op. cit.* (note 27), pp. 35-67.

³¹ For Luther’s understanding of how political accountability to God gets mediated through this-worldly media, see Gary M. Simpson, “Toward a Lutheran ‘Delight in the Law of the Lord’:

the church as communion reads the empire writing back, it begins to bear the empire's afflictions along a journey of repentance.

In American history, President Abraham Lincoln picked up on the same biblical theme of repentance in the face of war. Already as a member of the US Congress, Lincoln implored "good citizens and patriots" to undergo "genuine repentance" and "to confess their [political] sins and transgressions" as a national practice of truth.³² This was on 12 January 1848, twenty months after President James Polk had declared war on Mexico. Shortly after Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, he issued a "Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day":

And whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon ...³³

Only through national repentance could America begin "to bind up the nation's wounds;" "to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations;" and to do so "with malice toward none; with charity for all."³⁴

International publicity, global citizenship and the "Responsibility to Protect"

Reinhold Niebuhr claimed that the structure of nations and empires is built on two pillars: power and prestige. That nations and empires need power, no matter what the international order, is self-evident. Less self-evident, noted Niebuhr, is the necessity of prestige.³⁵ Prestige or "soft

Church and State in the Context of Civil Society," in John Stumme & Robert Tuttle (eds), *Church and State: Lutheran Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), pp. 37-44.

³² Abraham Lincoln, "Speech in United States House of Representatives: The War with Mexico," in *Collected Works*, vol. 1 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953, 1990), pp. 432, 433, 431.

³³ Abraham Lincoln, "Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day," in *Collected Works*, vol. 6 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955, 1990), p. 155.

³⁴ President Lincoln's memorable Second Inaugural Address of 4 March 1865, less than six weeks before he was assassinated, see www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=38&page=transcript (accessed 5 August 2007).

³⁵ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Structure of Nations and Empires* (New York: Charles Scribner's,

power,” as its known today, “is not just a matter of ephemeral popularity; it is a means of obtaining outcomes.”³⁶ There is no doubt that both power and prestige are necessary for nations to be effective states. Tragically, however, with this two-pillar approach, Niebuhr was not able critically to distinguish a nation from an empire, or to offer a critique of empire beyond his exhortation that it be humble rather than arrogant.

A critical theory of empire comes about only when a third basic pillar is added to the international order of nations. That pillar is publicity—not in the sense of public relations within the economic market place but rather in the strong sense of transparency, accessibility and accountability to wider publics, to other nations and to the rapidly emerging publics of global civil society.³⁷

The principles, practices and processes of publicity, both within nations and within an international order, comport most closely with repentant patriotism. The vigilance of nations, of international institutions and especially of global civil society contribute to the effectiveness of international publicity. It is publicity that makes for national and international truth and reconciliation processes, for instance.

Without international publicity, the power of strong nations remains unfettered and prone toward empire. Without international publicity, the prestige or soft power of nations too easily becomes a mere tool for the ethos of beneficent aristocracy and the power of empire. Without international publicity, even diplomacy can be used as merely a kinder, gentler form of “real” military power. When publicity becomes the coin of the international order, powerful nations become civic internationalists; this opens the way for a global citizenship saturated with just peace-building practices.³⁸ Civic international nations abide by the international rule of

1959), pp. 8-32, 66-88. See especially Joseph Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Cambridge: Foreign Affairs, 2004).

³⁶ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “The Decline of America’s Soft Power,” in *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2004).

³⁷ The term “publicity” or “international publicity” is an emerging state-of-the-art term within the field of international relations and international conflict resolution. For the historical emergence of the principle and practices of publicity, including Luther’s theological analysis, see Gary M. Simpson, *War, Peace, and God: Rethinking the Just War Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007). For the notion of civil society, see Gary M. Simpson, *Critical Social Theory: Prophetic Reason, Civil Society, and Christian Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002). For a political philosophical account of publicity, see “publicity,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/publicity/> (accessed 5 August 2007).

³⁸ See especially Glen Stassen (ed.), *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998). I add three additional practices—prayer, public repentance and international publicity—to Stassen’s ten.

law and thereby expand its scope and effectiveness. Civic international nations strengthen international institutions by mending them, not weakening or ending them. Under the vigilance of international publicity, nations proliferate international treaties and agreements that move beyond emergency benevolence by establishing stakeholder systems of economic life, which empower emerging nations, peoples and environments. Under international publicity, stakeholder systems also of course meet the more proximate interests of powerful nations.

One example of how this international publicity can be enacted is through the Responsibility to Protect (2001, International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty).³⁹ Its basic theme is that sovereign states have a responsibility to protect those within its borders from avoidable catastrophes, but that when they are unwilling or unable to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of states. It recognizes a moral basis inherent in the very concept of national sovereignty; at a minimum, sovereignty means protecting one's own population from harm. Failing to do so violates the moral ground of sovereignty. Second, this embodies the principle and practices of international publicity and implements them as a kind of international republic in these kinds of "conscience-shocking situations crying out for action."⁴⁰ Third, it identified three core responsibilities: to protect, to react and to rebuild. To prevent means addressing both the root causes and the precipitating causes that put populations at risk. To react means responding to situations of compelling human need with appropriate measures, which may include coercive measures like sanctions and international prosecution and, in extreme cases, military intervention. To rebuild applies particularly after military intervention by providing full assistance with recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation and to address the causes of the harm that the intervention was designed to halt or avert.

³⁹ Also see, The World Council of Churches, "Vulnerable populations at risk. Statement on the Responsibility to Protect," The Ninth Assembly, Porto Alegre, Brazil, 14-23 February 2006, at www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/porto-alegre-2006/1-statements-documents-adopted/international-affairs/report-from-the-public-issues-committee/responsibility-to-protect.html (accessed 20 September 2007).

⁴⁰ See the "Synopsis," in The International Commission of Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect* (December 2001), at www.iciss.ca/report-en.asp (accessed 5 August 2007); United Nations, *2005 World Summit Outcome: Fact Sheet*, High Level Plenary Meeting, 14-16 September 2005, at www.un.org/summit2005/presskit/fact_sheet.pdf (accessed 5 August 2007).

All three responsibilities fill out the classic natural law obligation, “Do no harm” with the positive obligation, “Do good.” These responsibilities flow out of the just war tradition especially when it is self-consciously placed within the wider arc of just peacemaking. Prevention is the single most important dimension of the Responsibility to Protect. For this reason two of its core principles are that military force protection cannot become the principal objective and that maximum coordination with humanitarian organizations is paramount. When dealing with protection, the Responsibility to Protect specifically cites just war tradition criteria of just cause, right intention, legitimate authority, last resort, probability of success and proportionality of means. The overriding goal is peace with justice.

Conclusion

After discussing many things during a January 2005 interview, First Lady Laura Bush concluded, “But I also have this sense of our country, the big ship America, that might veer a little bit one way or the other way, but is very stable.” While this response is in many ways quite sensible, it does not capture the historic American conflict between an expansionist empire and the hope for the US as a global citizen among the nations. The church as communion might very well write back, “Dear Mrs. Bush, hope resides in repentant patriotism, in God-pleasing international publicity and in patriotic peace building. Indeed, we hope the ship veers more than a little.” Would that God might grant such hope to the church as communion.

“Blessed are the peacemakers.”