

Editorial note concerning Thomas Merton's *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, Chapter 15

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From the evidence of the manuscript of *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, the chapter titled "Christian Perspectives in World Crisis" was the last piece of the puzzle inserted just as the work was being typed on mimeograph stencils. In the manuscript, this chapter was constructed by inserting part of the essay "Christian Action in World Crisis" after the chapter "Red or Dead—the Anatomy of a Cliché." The last page of that chapter had been hand-numbered by Merton as page 82 of the manuscript. The insert was given page numbers 82a through 82q. Merton divided the section into two chapters, the first of which is presented here as "Christian Perspectives in World Crisis," representing pages 82a through 82i of the manuscript, 109 to 119 of the mimeograph.

In editing the chapter, Merton amended words and phrases in the text, struck out some passages, and added inserts, hand-written in blue ink, on the blank back of the pages of the carbon copy. Textual analysis of the chapter shows that almost 70% of the text does not overlap with the original essay, "Christian Action in World Crisis," but is new, with parts of the original essay now embedded throughout the new chapter.

Merton cites scripture and Papal pronouncements to support his argument. The manuscript was written before the publication of Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. Merton and other Catholic writers about peace had to comb through Christmas Messages and other speeches to try to ascertain the papal position on war in the nuclear age.

This chapter is central to Merton's message: that all Christians must take responsibility for bringing about peace, since love, peace and nonviolence were the original Christian message. It speaks of his original concern that Christians were allowing moral apathy to overcome them. Peace must be integral to Christian life, a concept not just spoken but lived, as the monastic life is lived: social action begins with prayer and arises from it.

The full text of Merton's book, *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, will be published by Orbis Books in the fall of 2004, with a Foreword by Jim Forest and an Introduction by Patricia A. Burton.