

From the “Political Dance of Death” to the “General Dance”: The Cold War Letters of Thomas Merton

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Introduction

In *The Sign of Jonas*, Thomas Merton has an entry dated February 10, 1950 in which he describes a beautiful day, “Today it was wonderful. Clouds, sky overcast, but tall streamers of sunlight coming down in a fan over the bare hills.” Then Merton describes a pasture full of starlings that have been become frightened along with the crows by a descending eagle. Not far away were buzzards circling awaiting the final outcome. The eagle is unsuccessful in its attempt to strike the starlings as they flew away to safer ground. Merton writes, “[The starlings] were there moving about and singing for about five minutes. Then, like lightening, it happened [A] hawk came down like a bullet, and shot straight into the middle of the starlings just as they were getting off the ground. They rose into the air and there was a slight scuffle on the ground as the hawk got his talons into the one bird he had nailed.” Merton laments, “It was a terrible and yet beautiful thing, that lightening flight, straight as an arrow, that killed the slowest starling.” In the passage, Merton describes the “guttural cursing” of the crows and the circling of the vultures, “lovers of dead things.” The hawk remained in the field devouring its lone prey and “nothing else came near him. He took his time.” As Merton meditated on the hawking practices of the lords of the Middle Ages he mused, “and I also understood the terrible fact that some men love war.”¹

And so it was that a decade later, Thomas Merton gave full flight to a series of 111 letters designated as the “Cold War Letters.” These letters began in October, 1961 and extended to October, 1962. The term “Cold War,” of course, refers to the power struggle between the United States and Russia following the Second World War.

It is the purpose of this article to give the reader a flavor and a sampling of Merton's thoughts about the threat of nuclear war and related problems because the same issues resonate with us today albeit in a different context. Many people would agree that our chances of being devastated by a dirty bomb, a nuclear bomb or through chemical/biological warfare are greater today than in the 1960s. Merton is quite candid about various war issues with his correspondents and the writer frankly at times finds the letters more instructive than his essays on war.² Having combed through the 111 letters, the writer has identified for purposes of this essay three themes: The Threat of Nuclear War; The Silence of American Catholics Including the Church Hierarchy and the Moral Theologians; Thomas Merton's Views about Peace Movements and Pacifism. The themes are representative of the disunity and strife that Merton so clearly articulated both in the Cold War Letters and his numerous essays. Although the paper will focus on the "Cold War Letters," linkages will be made to his essays for contextual purposes when necessary. Reference to the Merton essays on war can be found in the fine bibliography prepared by Patricia A. Burton.³

During 1961-1962, Merton had a problem with the censors and he was informed by his abbot, Dom James Fox, on April 26, 1962 "that he was no longer to publish books or articles on the issues of war and peace." Although Merton followed the dictates of the Order by not publishing articles on war, he privately circulated unpublished letters in mimeographed form to his friends.⁴

William Shannon observes:

"The Year of the Cold War Letters" needs to be singled out as a unique year in the life of Thomas Merton. Articles on war and peace are interwoven with Cold War Letters to form a literary fabric out of which emerges a fairly clear image of Thomas Merton the peacemaker.⁵

Before beginning with the letters it is instructive to summarize "The Cold War Letters: Preface" in which Merton states his purpose as well as some disclaimers. Merton asserts that the letters intended for his friends are in raw form without any careful corrections. He goes on to say that the letters "form part of no plot" or "incite to no riot" and "they suggest no disloyalty to government." Further the letters were written in haste and sometimes "often distorted by indignation" because he has a "frank hatred of

power politics" and a "contempt for those who use power to distort the truth or to silence it altogether." In a compelling statement Merton also declares:

.... [D]uring the Cold War, if not during World War II, this country has become frankly a warfare state built on affluence, a power structure in which the interests of big business, the obsessions of the military, and the phobias of political extremists both dominate and dictate our national policy.⁶

Merton further states that the people of this country have been lulled into passivity and ignorance and "blindly follow any line that is unraveled for them by the mass media." He refers to a possible lost civilization through nuclear war but, moreover, he rails against the "suicidal moral evil and a total lack of ethics and rationality with which international policies tend to be conducted."⁷ He mentions the so-called "well-adjusted" men who promote the insanity and one could conjecture that this is a reference to Adolph Eichmann who also was well-adjusted and "well-balanced."⁸ There is no lack of moralists, Merton claims, and by taking his stand against theologians and even bishops, he is not turning against the Church or Christ. Rather, he is in line with the popes, "particularly Pius XII and John XXIII, who have repeatedly pleaded for rational and peaceful ways of settling disputes." Merton concludes his Preface proclaiming that "[t]he burden of protest in these letters is simply that such a state of affairs is pure madness" and "that to accept it without question as right and reasonable is criminally insane."⁹

William Shannon reminds us that Catholic clergy speaking out against war in the 1960's was a rare phenomenon. Shannon goes on to say that, indeed, Merton felt that he was "called to be a prophet" but he had no illusions about how "poorly equipped" he was for the role.¹⁰ Abraham J. Heschel has this to say about the role of a prophet:

The prophet was an individual who said No to his society, condemning its habits and assumptions, its complacency, waywardness, and syncretism. He was often compelled to proclaim the very opposite of what his heart expected. His fundamental objective was to reconcile man and God.¹¹

Prophet or not, Thomas Merton certainly was a lone voice for his generation regarding the ominous threat of nuclear war. Through the themes presented in this article it will be evident that man not only has a propensity for self-destruction, the political dance of death, but indulges himself in an embarrassed silence about the possibilities of this self-destruction. The silence is occasionally broken by feeble attempts of protest led by people without clear mission and without spiritual direction. The only hope for mankind is a "flight from disunity and separation, to unity and peace in the love of other men."¹² The promise of unity and harmony is the focus of the concluding section of this article—"The General Dance"—Merton's attempt in Abraham Heschel's words "to reconcile man with God."

The Political Dance of Death: The Threat of Nuclear War

The title of this article refers to the "Political Dance of Death" and the writer will attempt to take the reader from the stains and disunity of this war dance to the joys of the "General Dance" which may be interpreted as harmony and unity guided by the Holy Spirit. More about this "General Dance" later but for now let us examine Merton's reference to "The Political Dance of Death" in his essay entitled, "Peace: A Religious Responsibility" which is found in the book, *Breakthrough to Peace*. This book is a compilation of essays from contemporary writers about the threat of nuclear war. Merton states:

No one seriously doubts that it is now possible for man and his society to be completely destroyed in a nuclear war. . . . Indeed, this awful threat is the chief psychological weapon of the cold war. America and Russia are playing the paranoid game of nuclear deterrence, each one desperately hoping to preserve peace by threatening the other with bigger bombs and total annihilation. Every step in this political dance of death brings us inexorably closer to hot war.¹³

Merton's examination provides an apt context for the series of Cold War Letters that have been selected to demonstrate Merton's abhorrence of war, primarily nuclear war, as well as his occasional references to chemical-biological war. To one of his many correspondents, Elsa Englander from Austria, Merton writes:

There is no question that we live in an age of revolutionary change, perhaps even of cataclysm. . . . If by miscalculation or accident, or even by the pride and fury of men, war breaks out again, then there is every danger that nothing at all will be left of what was valuable and great in Europe. And all the wonderful possibilities of North America will be destroyed. It is a shame that we have such great capabilities and so little wisdom.¹⁴

Merton reflects on the more cosmic aspects of war in a letter to John Whitman Sears thanking him for his recent paper titled, "The Arms Race as a Chain Reaction." He remarks, "I think you have hit the nail on the head, as also Fromm and others have. It is a question of insanity." He goes on to say:

Yet looking at it [the arms race] on another level as a spiritual problem, it really becomes apocalyptic. I know men are seriously asking themselves now whether this sort of thing has happened somewhere before, and whether on other planets somewhere there have been races which have reached a point of development where they ended by destroying themselves.¹⁵

Man's separation from God through the hatred and violence of war is graphically explained to Rabbi Steven Schwarzchild in a sad commentary by Merton in which he cites God's loneliness, not his wrath:

[I]t is not [God's] wrath, exactly, it is His loneliness. His lostness among us. That He waits among us unknown and silent, patiently, for the moment when we will finally destroy Him utterly in His image . . . And leave Him alone again in the empty cosmos.¹⁶

In a gentler note stressing the possibility of moving along the continuum from insanity to sanity, Merton pens a letter to the Mayor of Hiroshima on or about the anniversary date of the dropping of the bomb:

In a solemn and grave hour for humanity I address this letter to you and to your people. I thank you for the sincerity and courage with which you are, at this time, giving witness for peace and sanity . . . Man should use political instruments in behalf of truth, sanity, and international Order. Unfortunately

the blindness and madness of a society that is shaken to its very roots by the storms of passion and greed for power make the fully effective use of political negotiation impossible.¹⁷

Merton demonstrates his concerns about the tremendous financial burden caused by military buildups in a letter to George Dunne: "I am . . . much concerned about the economy of our own country: not that I know much about it. But one doesn't have to know the first thing about economics to know that this present war economy spells ruin I am speaking primarily of the economic collapse of a totally wasteful and destructive system."¹⁸

An Embarrassed Silence

An "[e]mbarrassed silence, despondent passivity, or crusading belligerence seem to be the most widespread 'Christian' response to the H-bomb," according to Thomas Merton.¹⁹ The next series of letters will focus primarily on the silence of American Catholics including the Church hierarchy and the moral theologians. To highlight the plight of the Church, and its silence the following letter to Erich Fromm is illustrative:

All these questions [of evil] float about in my mind, but my personal conviction is that when everyone else in my Church (except the Popes who have after all spoken quite clearly condemning nuclear annihilation bombing) seems to want to stay silent and perplexed, or worse still encourages nuclear war as the "lesser evil," it has become my clear duty to speak out against this crime and to denounce the steps taken to perpetuate it, while refusing all cooperation and trying to get others to do the same.²⁰

Merton continues his criticism of the silence of Catholics and the Church hierarchy in a letter to Monsignor John Tracy Ellis denouncing the passive attitude of so many American Catholics concerning nuclear war. He states: "They make no distinction between out-and-out pacifism which refuses to serve even in a 'just war' and the Christian obligation, pointed out by the recent Popes, to avoid the criminal tragedy of nuclear annihilation of civilian centers, even for the best of causes." Merton makes the point that there has been the usual we are good and they are evil paradigm by stating "much popular thought in this country simply goes along with the immoral and secularist attitude that since communism is

evil, we can do anything we like to wipe it out and thus prevent it from gaining ground and overwhelming us.”²¹

The misperception of American Catholics as the good people fighting the forces of evil in the world was an interesting note in Merton’s letters. In writing to Ethel Kennedy, he declares: “The great illusion is to assume that we are perfectly innocent, peace-loving and right while the communists are devils incarnate. I admit they are no angels and they have been guilty of some frightful crimes against humanity.” He criticizes “the ‘good’ people, the right-thinking people, who stick to principle all right except where it conflicts with the chance to make a fast buck.”²² In the same letter, Merton voices his concern about the Church not being articulate in its position relative to nuclear war even though Pius XII issued clear principles about it. Merton states, “If as Christians we were more certain of our duty, it might put us in a very tight spot politically but it would also merit for us special graces from God, and these we need badly.”²³

In a letter to Jesuit theologian John Ford, Merton speaks of the division of the theologians and the silence of the bishops:

Sure, the theologians are divided, and the bishops rely on the theologians. But can’t the theologians and the bishops say something? . . . Father, my heart is very sick with the feeling that we don’t give the impression of caring at all what happens to man, the image of God . . . But of one thing I am convinced: the vital importance of a forceful and articulate Catholic position, in this country, in favor of peace, rather than the permissive and silent attitude that seems to prevail at the moment.²⁴

At this point in my analysis, perhaps, it would be instructive to note commentaries about John Ford, S. J. from John T. McGreevy, eminent Catholic historian, in his book, *Catholicism and American Freedom*. He cites Ford’s condemnation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings as “the greatest and most extensive single atrocity of all this period Twenty years later Ford would regret wartime Catholic ‘complacency and conformity’ in the face of a ‘moral issue that was staring us in the face.’” It is interesting to note that John Courtney Murray, according to McGreevy, congratulated Ford on his position and another priest. Father Francis Connell, agreed with Ford, stating, “there is apt to be too much rationalizing even among priests in defense of governmental activities, and theolo-

gians should make a stand on principles without respect of persons.”²⁵

According to McGreevy, Father John Ford applied his natural law arguments regarding the defense of human life to military tactics. McGreevy writes:

In 1944, at the height of the war, Ford published a powerfully reasoned forty-nine page attack on the American and British practice of bombing civilian targets, an essay that became a landmark in the literature of military ethics. So-called ‘obliteration bombing,’ . . . violated the ‘Catholic view that to take the life of an innocent person is always intrinsically wrong, that is, forbidden absolutely by natural law.’²⁶

Regarding a preemptive nuclear attack, Merton notes in another letter to Monsignor Ellis that in the journal, *Theological Studies*, American theologians have been trying “to squeeze around the traditional limitations of the ‘just’ war, in order to show that by Catholic standards a preemptive nuclear attack is really only defense.” Merton cites the immorality of the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima even though it was considered morally acceptable by many. He goes on to say that our political leaders and some theologians argue that a limited war is legitimate and if it leads to an all out war then that too can be justified because of the circumstances.²⁷ In further correspondence with Ellis, Merton affirms that the moral theologians should be advising President Kennedy against a preemptive first strike against Russia and its “frightful consequences” and its immorality.²⁸

The moral theologian, John Courtney Murray, is described by Merton in a letter to W. H. Ferry as a learned theologian who can make very fine distinctions in his arguments about the plausibility of a limited war which is “a reasonable war, a nice kind of war, in which the limits set down by Catholic moral theology and Pius XII are respected by the Pentagon.”²⁹

Merton underscores the moral passivity and silence of American Catholics and especially the clergy in his essay “Theologians and Defense,” asserting that there is an “all too general . . . apathy and passivity among the clergy and the faithful. Perhaps it is exact to say that they are afflicted with a kind of moral paralysis.”³⁰

Peace Movements and Pacifism

Thomas Merton abhorred war, spoke against it, and reproached the church hierarchy about their "moral paralysis."³¹ Excerpts from the following letters focus on Merton's views and reservations about the peace movements and their inherent weaknesses. Also this group of letters has been selected to reveal Merton's views of pacifism and where he stood with the issue.

Merton was generally supportive of the Quakers and Mennonites in regards to their peace efforts. In a correspondence to Allan Forbes, Jr., Merton praises Quaker and Mennonite peace activity. He states, "It seems to me that the long-standing Quaker position on peace is one of the most reliable and stabilizing forces we have at the moment."³² He goes on to say that the peace positions have spiritual as well as political importance. He adds that the "unilateral disarmament" position of the peace movements is unrealistic but serious negotiations should begin by the United States and the Soviet Union in regard to disarmament and both parties should cast away the propaganda machines in regards to the issue. In Merton's view the importance of this political process may prevent a future nuclear holocaust. However, he declares that the spiritual dimension articulated by the Quakers as a matter of conscience about the evils of war may "start a chain reaction in the moral order."³³

Merton regarded the Mennonite tradition with the same enthusiasm as he had for the Quakers. In a letter to Maynard Shelly, editor of *The Mennonite*, Merton expresses his respect for "Mennonite tradition of peaceful action and non-violence." He further states, "Though not a total pacifist in theory myself, I certainly believe that every Christian should try to practice non-violence rather than violence and that some should bind themselves to follow only the way of peace as an example to the others."³⁴

In regards to the question of pacifism, Merton made a distinction between absolute pacifism and nuclear pacifism in an essay titled "Religion and the Bomb" originally published in *Jubilee* in May, 1962. While not subscribing to the notion of absolute pacifism, which is an unqualified objection to war for any reason including a defensive war, as exemplified by the United States declaration of war following the Pearl Harbor attack by the Japanese, Merton encouraged his correspondents and friends to be nuclear pacifists, that is, opposed to the first-strike mentality prevalent at

the time. In the same essay, he makes the point that pacifist movements "tend to attract a certain number of professional oddballs." Also there is the chance of exploitation by the communists but that should not deter one from favoring a policy of nuclear disarmament "without being a Red, a beatnik or a 'pacifist.'"³⁵

Further testimony of Merton's position on pacifism can be examined in a letter to Dorothy Day: "It is true that I am not theoretically a pacifist. That only means that I do not hold that a Christian *may not* fight, and that a war *cannot* be just." However, Merton is quick to explain to Day that his statements are more in the realm of theory and "that in practice all the wars that are going around...are shot through and through with evil."³⁶

In a series of cold war letters to James Forest, Merton is clear about peace movements. Forest was very active in various peace movements, and was one of the founders of the Catholic Peace Fellowship, an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.³⁷ In his criticism of peace movements, Merton mentions to Forest that "hidden aggressions and provocations" are prevalent in the movements caused by elements of non-religious people or persons who are not developed spiritually. The danger, of course, is that the opposition may harden their views when confronted with people tainted with these hidden aggressions who themselves are supposedly opposing aggression.³⁸ In another letter to Forest, Merton speaks of the superficiality of peace movements although they have potential. He is quick to say, however, that he may lack perspective and that "everything is superficial now."³⁹ In further correspondence with Forest, Merton states that:

[t]he "peace movement needs more than zeal. It certainly needs to be organized on a very clear basis It is not going to do any good for a lot of excited people to mill around without purpose and without definite means of making their protest clear and intelligible. Especially if a lot of them are not too clear themselves what they are protesting about."⁴⁰

Further criticism of peace movements by Merton to Forest underscores activism: "The trouble with movements is that they sweep you off your feet and carry you away with the tide of activism and then you become another kind of mass man."⁴¹

However, Thomas Merton held out hope for the viability of peace movements. In his essay, "Preamble: Peace—A Religious

Responsibility," Merton emphasizes that opposition to war is imperative and religious protest is "badly needed."⁴² In another essay, "Moral Passivity and Demonic Activism," Merton clearly states the "need for strong peace movements, both as a protest and a 'brake' to slow down the accelerated rush toward war."⁴³

One can conclude, therefore, that Merton had little regard for peace movements as they were rendered impotent through the lack of spiritual direction and purpose. However, he articulated the potential of peace movements and protests if they had clarity of purpose led by people who were developed spiritually.

Conclusion: The General Dance

Thomas Merton's "prophetic" voice articulated through the Cold War Letters signaled man's alienation, division, and disunity. According to Merton it was original sin "which alienated each man from God, from other men and from himself."⁴⁴ Further, Merton contends that the "moral evil in the world is due to man's alienation from the deepest truth, from the springs of spiritual life within himself, to his alienation from God."⁴⁵ "[M]an was created as a contemplative" and the fall from Paradise was a fall from the unity of his contemplative vision to alienation, division, and disunity.⁴⁶

William Shannon conjectures that it was Merton's "deep contemplative vision" that led him to write about social issues. This contemplative vision empowered Merton to call for unity and "to see the oneness we share with all God's people—indeed with the whole of God's creation."⁴⁷ Merton calls upon us to see the Holy Spirit in our enemy and stranger. "We must find [the Holy Spirit] in our enemy, or we may lose him even in our friend. We must find him in the pagan or we will lose him in our own selves."⁴⁸ The Holy Spirit as a pathfinder to unity is exemplified in his letter to Maynard Shelly, when Merton states:

There must be a total love of all, even of the most distant, even of the most hostile. Without the gift of the Holy Spirit this is mere idealism, mere dreaming. But the Spirit who knows all things and can do all things, He can be in us the power of love that heals, unites, and redeems, for thus the Blood of Jesus Christ reaches all men through us.⁴⁹

In a prophetic call to unity, Thomas Merton warns that "time is rapidly running out" and that "every possible effort must be made

for the abolition of war.”⁵⁰ Further, he asserts that Christians are obliged to seek information, sacrifice, work, and cooperate to bring about a peaceful world because “[w]e cannot expect a peaceful world society to emerge all by itself.”⁵¹ Throughout Merton’s Cold War Letters and his essays there is a sense of urgency to persist with the negotiation process through “intelligent political action”⁵² as the rising tide of military power will certainly, in the end, leave God “alone again in the empty cosmos.”⁵³

The spirit of negotiation can only take place by recognizing that fear is the root of war. In the essay, “The Root of War is Fear,” Merton asserts, “For only love—which means humility—can exorcise the fear which is at the root of all war.”⁵⁴ Later in this essay he states:

So instead of loving what you think is peace, love other men and love God above all. And instead of hating the people you think are warmakers, hate the appetites and the disorder in your own soul, which are the causes of war. If you love peace, then hate injustice, hate tyranny, hate greed—but hate these things *in yourself*, not in another.⁵⁵

Merton’s call for unity through the intercession of the Holy Spirit is to enter in harmony with the cosmos. Victor A. Kramer interpreting Merton’s last chapter titled, “The General Dance,” in *New Seeds of Contemplation* states that harmony is a way for all of us to get closer to God and “if we truly believe in the Incarnation, we must be prepared to see the mystery and presence of Christ in *all* persons.”⁵⁶ Lawrence Cunningham comments that in this chapter, one senses “the goodness of creation, the gift of Christ’s incarnation, and a general sense of the human person as part of the great gift of God which is creation and re-creation.”⁵⁷

Merton urges, “if we could let go of our own obsession with what we think is the meaning of it all, we might be able to hear His call and follow Him in His mysterious, cosmic dance.”⁵⁸ Further, Merton wants us to understand the “phenomena of life” and states that “no despair of ours can alter the reality of things, or stain the joy of the cosmic dance which is always there.” Hopefully, there is still time for mankind to turn from the war hawks and their Political Dance of Death to Merton’s plea for unity and harmony through the General Dance. He concludes in *New Seeds of Contemplation*: “Yet the fact remains that we are invited to forget

ourselves on purpose, cast our awful solemnity to the winds and join in the general dance.”⁵⁹

Notes

1. Thomas Merton, *The Sign of Jonas* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1953), pp. 274-75.
2. In his book, *Silent Lamp* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), William H. Shannon speculates about the possible impact of the *Cold War Letters*. He states: “Quite a number of copies of *The Cold War Letters* circulated in the famous yellow cover. Several copies were put into the hands of various bishops at the Second Vatican Council in Rome. It is tempting to think that this work, as well as Merton’s other writings on war and peace, exerted a positive influence on the council fathers when they came to write the section (arts. 77-82) on war and peace in *Gaudium et Spes* (The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World).” Shannon mentions the bishops’ stance on nonviolence, condemnation of total war etc—“all these stances resonate with positions on these issues that Merton had taken in his articles and letters during what we might call his ‘year of the Cold War letters.’” (p.215). A few pages later Shannon remarks, “Just a year after Merton’s war-writing ‘industry’ was shut down, Pope John XXIII published his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, which contained a number of things Merton had been saying. Merton promptly wrote to the abbot general, Dom Gabriel Sortais, expressing mock relief that Pope John had not been an American Cistercian. For the American censors would never have approved the Pope’s peace encyclical” (p.223).
3. Patricia A. Burton, *Merton Vade Mecum*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: The Thomas Merton Foundation, 2001), pp. 161-164.
4. *Witness to Freedom, Letters of Thomas Merton in Times of Crisis*, ed. William H. Shannon (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1994), p. 17.
5. *Witness to Freedom*, p. 18.
6. *Witness to Freedom*, pp. 19-20.
7. *Witness to Freedom*, pp. 20-21.
8. Thomas Merton, *Raids on the Unspeakable* (New York: New Directions, 1964), pp. 45-49.
9. *Witness to Freedom*, pp. 21-22.
10. Thomas Merton, *Passion for Peace, The Social Essays*, ed. William H. Shannon (New York: Crossroad, 1995), p. 3.
11. Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. xv.
12. Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 1961), p. 78.

13. *Breakthrough to Peace*, Introduction by Thomas Merton (New York: New Directions, 1962), p. 91. It was the intention of Thomas Merton and publisher, James Laughlin to publish the works of well-known authors on the dangers of nuclear war. Merton was originally to be the editor of the book but "he changed his mind" about being named editor after he had been given his orders to no longer publish writings about "war and peace." Therefore the book has no official editor but Merton still carried out the responsibilities. He also wrote the introduction and contributed a rewrite of one of his earlier essays which is quoted in the text. This essay is "perhaps the clearest statement of his position on nuclear war." *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia*, eds. William H. Shannon, Christine M. Bochen and Patrick F. O'Connell (Maryknoll; New York: Orbis Books, 2002), p. 32.

14. *Witness to Freedom*, p. 32. Cold War Letter 28, February 4, 1962.

15. *Witness to Freedom*, pp. 303-304. Cold War Letter 89, June 23, 1962.

16. *Witness to Freedom*, pp. 35-36. Cold War Letter 41, February 24, 1962.

17. *The Hidden Ground of Love, The Letters of Thomas Merton on Religious Experience and Social Concerns*, ed. William H. Shannon (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1985), p. 380. Cold War Letter 98, 1962.

18. *Witness to Freedom*, p. 69. Cold War Letter 110, October 30, 1962.

19. Thomas Merton, *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, ed. Patricia A. Burton (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), p. 3.

20. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 319. Cold War Letter 5, December, 1961.

21. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 175. Cold War Letter 6, December 7, 1961.

22. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 445. Cold War Letter 10, December, 1961.

23. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 446. Cold War Letter 10, December, 1961.

24. *Witness to Freedom*, p. 30. Cold War Letter 23, January, 1962.

25. As quoted in John T. McGreevey, *Catholicism and American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003), p. 228.

26. As quoted in *Catholicism and American Freedom*, p. 227.

27. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 176. Cold War Letter 29, February 4, 1962.

28. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, pp. 177-178. Cold War Letter 53, March 10, 1962.

29. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, pp. 205-206. Cold War Letter 26, January 30, 1962.

30. *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, p. 88.

31. Thomas Merton, *Passion for Peace*, p. 73.
32. *Witness to Freedom*, p.61. Cold War Letter, 97, August, 1962.
33. *Witness to Freedom*, pp 61-62. Cold War Letter, 97, August, 1962.
34. *Witness to Freedom*, p.23. Cold War Letter 4, December, 1961.
35. *Passion for Peace*, p. 74.
36. *Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 145. Cold War Letter 86, June 16, 1962.
37. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 254.
38. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, pp. 263-264. Cold War Letter 31, February 6, 1962.
39. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 270. Cold War Letter 101, August 27, 1962.
40. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 265. Cold War Letter 61, March 28, 1962.
41. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 266. Cold War Letter 69, April 29, 1962.
42. *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, p.3.
43. *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, p. 108.
44. Thomas Merton, *The New Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1961), p. 149.
45. *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, p. 127.
46. Thomas Merton, *The Inner Experience: Notes on Contemplation*, ed. William H. Shannon (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003), p. 35.
47. *Passion for Peace*, p. 4.
48. Thomas Merton, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Merton* (New York: New Directions, 1977), p. 384. This passage is taken from the essay, "A Letter to Pablo Antonio Cuadra Concerning Giants," which "likened the two world powers of the Soviet Union and the United States to the figures of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel, and looks to the 'Third World,' particularly to Latin America, as providing hope for renewal should the two giants destroy each other Despite its use of symbolism, it clearly is an essay rather than a poem; it remains from an earlier conception of *Emblems of a Season of Fury* as a combination of verse and prose, perhaps because it serves as a kind of transition to the group of translations, the first of which are of poems by Cuadra." *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia*, p.133.
49. *Witness to Freedom*, p. 23
50. *Peace in the Post-Christian World*, p. 162.
51. *Peace in the Post-Christian World*, p. 93.
52. *Peace in the Post-Christian World*, p. 93.
53. *Witness to Freedom*, p. 36. Cold War Letter 41, February 24, 1962.
54. *New Seeds of Contemplation*, p. 119.

55. *New Seeds of Contemplation*, p. 122. Also Pax Christi, a United States peace group, states that Americans must overcome its stereotype of Iran in order to assess better President Bush's claims that the Muslim nation is building nuclear weapons. Dave Robinson, Executive Director of U.S. Pax Christi, has just completed a 12-day visit to Iran and commented, "Enemy imaging dominates the U.S. media. This makes Americans 'easy targets' for accepting a U.S. 'preventive war' against Iran rather than a negotiated solution." Mr. Robinson was part of a delegation of mostly U.S. peace activists organized by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, an international interfaith peace movement (Catholic News Service, May 6, 2006).

56. Victor A. Kramer, *Thomas Merton, Monk and Artist* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1984), p. 63.

57. *Thomas Merton: Spiritual Master*, ed. Lawrence S. Cunningham (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 251.

58. *New Seeds of Contemplation*, p. 296.

59. *New Seeds of Contemplation*, p. 297.