

CHRISTIAN JUST WAR THEORY OR CHRISTIAN JUST WAR FANTASY

A theory is an idea supported by a wealth of observable facts that describes and predicts conditions and which is then followed as the basis of action, e.g., the theory of relativity, theory of gravity, quantum theory, cell theory. An hypothesis is a provisional idea whose *de facto* merit is to be evaluated for its acceptability as the basis of action. A fantasy is an idea that is the work of the imagination. It has no verifiable basis of support in observation or experimentation outside the mind. It may be quite intricate and logically elaborate but when called to task by external reality, it shows itself to be whimsical, illusionary and incapable of providing an empirically possible basis of action.

The words “theory” and “hypothesis” are used in the non-exact sense to mean opinion—mere conjectures.

Since no war in the history of Christianity has ever met the standards of Christian Just War Theory (CJWT) from the time it was first concocted by Christians as a substitute for following Jesus’ Way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies, what does this say about calling this so-called theory a “theory?” Since no national hierarchy has ever declared the war of its own state or nation unjust while the war is taking place, what does this say about calling this so-called theory a “theory?” CJWT posits that only one side to a war—the defensive side—can be engaged in a just war. Offensive just war, being a contradiction in terms, does not exist. What, then, does it say about the validity of calling this so-called theory a “theory” when all parties to all sides of all wars in which Christians have been killers have thought themselves to be engaged in a just war? Since CJWT always means not only that the entire war must meet certain standards in order to be just (*jus ad bellum*), **but also** that every individual act of war within the war must meet these standards (*jus in bello*), and since no nation trains its military personnel to continuously and conscientiously weigh what they are commanded to do in war according to these standards, what does this say about calling this so-called theory a “theory” or even an hypothesis?

How much time needs to pass before a theory—that says the sun will rise in the West—ceases to be regarded as a theory or even as an hypothesis, and becomes self-evidently a fantasy? Is not “Christian Just War Fantasy” the accurate and truthful term that should be employed? Is it not grave evil to use a fantasy to evaluate whether the mass destruction of human beings is justifiable in the eyes of Jesus?

Emmanuel Charles McCarthy
