

salvation most difficult to foresee. She suggests that the form that salvation might take would be best shown by accepting contact with the disturbing other, for instance with the maltreated animal. It's a paper well worth reading that opens up *Lograire* anew.

Finally it should be said that the book has some troubles with misprints, especially in Merton's original texts quoted in Ebert's paper on his dreams. The word breaks at line endings can be surprising and presumably result from the German typesetting software used.

Peter Ellis is a retired archaeologist, and an enthusiastic follower of Merton. He has a special interest in animals and would like to see the human/animal debate in Christian anthropology moving toward a more creaturely posthumanism.

Writing Straight with Crooked Lines: A Memoir

Jim Forest

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Jim Forest has spent a lifetime in the cause of peace and reconciliation. In this welcome memoir he tells his own story through his intimate encounters with some of the great peacemakers of our time, including Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Daniel Berrigan, Henri Nouwen, and Thich Nhat Hanh. Forest, the son of ardent American communists, chronicles his personal journey that led to his enlistment in the U.S. Navy, and then his discharge as a conscientious objector following his conversion to Catholicism. Initially joining the Catholic Worker community in New York he went on to play a key role in mobilizing religious protest against the Vietnam War, and served a year in prison for his role in destroying draft records in Milwaukee. But his journey continued, including extensive travels in Russia in the last years of the USSR, his reception into the Orthodox Church, and his work as the author of over a dozen books on spirituality and peacemaking including biographies of Day, Merton, and Berrigan.

Forest's memoir offers valuable insights for readers interested in the history of popular protest in general and American pacifism in particular. Readers familiar with the history of dissent are aware that Forest is a

figure of consequence. His name keeps reappearing within the history of the American radical religious left. Patricia McNeal in 1992 consulted Forest for her section on Thomas Merton while researching her history of American Catholic conscientious objectors during the twentieth century.¹ In 2003 historian Penelope Moon mentioned Forest in association with the Catholic Peace Fellowship as a movement that played a role in supporting American Catholic conscientious objectors during the Vietnam War.² Most recently, in 2019 Vanessa Cook has included Forest in her study of the undervalued religious strand that informed the formation of New Left politics.³ This vision shares certain commitments to a democracy such as the United States, but it radically challenges a culture that privileges economic efficiency over solidarity with those on the margins of society, or national interest over international human rights. A central message in Forest's memoir is that the values of Christian communitarian personalism ought to generate in citizens both a greater degree of civic responsibility and the capacity to challenge secular individualism and economic efficiencies that reduce personhood to utilitarian ends.

For readers specifically interested in Thomas Merton this memoir casts a new light on the pivotal role that Forest himself played as mediator between Merton in the cloister and pacifist activists in the world who were involved in advocating for nuclear disarmament in the dangerous year that was bracketed between the Berlin crisis in October 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 recounted by Merton through his *Cold War Letters*.⁴ In this instance, Forest, as editor of *The Catholic Worker* newspaper, played a crucial role in introducing Merton, through correspondence, to John C. Heidbrink who was Secretary of Church Relations for the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) at its headquarters in Nyack, New York (pp. 114-15). It was through this correspondence with Heidbrink that Merton made contact with Hildegard Goss-Mayr, an Austrian Catholic pacifist with the international wing of the FOR, who contributed to advancing the case of conscientious objection during the Second Vatican Council along with Archbishop Thomas Roberts, S.J., in England who was associated with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the English Pax Society. Forest was also instrumental for introducing Merton to Charles S. Thompson of the Pax Society in England that had connections with Dominicans at Spode House near Rugeley in Staffordshire.⁵ Merton published a summary of his ideas on nuclear pacifism as 'Christian Action in World Crisis' in Blackfriars, the journal of the English Dominicans, in June 1962.⁶ In this, Merton drew

attention to the dangers for international peace in the nuclear era of America's normal posture of going to war only in self-defence or in pursuit of legitimate goals that came close to the *jus ad bellum* requirements of the just-war teaching. Merton's activist writings did anticipate a recurring irony of Cold War Western anti-nuclear protest, namely, that it was citizens in the Free World who used their freedom of protest to put pressure on their own democratic governments to slow down the nuclear arms race. Merton's writings contributed a philosophical ground to the emergence of the American Catholic New Left as pointed out by Patricia McNeal, but Forest also played a collaborative role in facilitating Merton in 1961 to engage in this process.

At the heart of Forest's memoir is his awareness that one of the perennial obstacles for developing positive peace is negative peace as maintained by military force and structural violence, which is accepted almost without question within our technocratic culture. This is a theme in Forest's revisiting of the 'Spiritual Roots of Protest' retreat for peacemakers, hosted by Merton in mid-November 1964, and attended by prominent members of the radical religious left as exemplified by the presence of Abraham J. Muste, dean of the American peace movement, and young members of an emerging Catholic Left as exemplified by Daniel and Philip Berrigan, Robert Cunnane, James Forest and Tom Cornell (pp. 146-52). Their later protests that involved burning draft cards to highlight the human cost of the Vietnam War (pp. 160-64) can be viewed as both an illegal and futile act; but on a deeper level such protests called attention to the limits of technological determinism as represented by the failure of U.S. military force to bring its war in South-East Asia to a victorious conclusion by means of the force of technological might. The psychological rupture in the American consciousness as a consequence of this failure still haunts American preparations for war and its prosecution.

Forest has written a valuable memoir that casts a valuable light on the radical religious left that still remains a marginal concern to historians as highlighted by Cook in 2019, but which does deserve to be historically reconsidered. The radical religious left, of which Forest was a prominent member, has made a contribution to our understanding of war and peace by highlighting the structures of violence that condition and direct our public and foreign policies. Often, the failures of peace activists are more noticeable than any of their successes, but it is ultimately their religious faith that has given hope to radical pacifists, like Forest, who do not consider the success or failure of their efforts as being reduceable to a

series of political manifestos or election cycles. Because their work will always be a process of becoming, activists like Jim Forest are primarily concerned with the revolution of personal consciousness.

Notes

1. Patricia McNeal, *Harder than War: Catholic Peacemaking in Twentieth-Century America* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992), pp. 105-130.
2. Penelope Adams Moon, "'Peace on Earth: Peace in Vietnam': The Catholic Peace Fellowship and Antiwar Witness, 1964-1976', *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 4 (2003), pp. 1033-57.
3. Vanessa Cook, *Spiritual Socialists: Religion and the American Left* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), p. 101.
4. Thomas Merton, *Cold War Letters*, eds. Christine M. Bochen and William H. Shannon (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006).
5. Brian Wicker, 'Making Peace at Spode', *New Blackfriars* 62 (1981), pp. 311-20.
6. Thomas Merton, 'Christian Action in World Crisis', *Blackfriars* 43, no. 504 (June 1962), pp. 256-68.

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Shaped by the End You Live For: Thomas Merton's Monastic Spirituality

Bonnie B. Thurston

Foreword by Paul Quenon, OCSO

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Thomas Merton wrote that 'your life is shaped by the end you live for. You are made in the image of what you desire' (Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*; and cited in Thurston, p. 129). This powerful challenge, with its sacred and haunting overtones, is the key thread around which Bonnie Thurston weaves ideas in her most recent book about Merton. Throughout his life, she notes, Merton is concerned with questions of identity - monastic, personal, religious, social, etc. But he knows this quest to understand identity is forever tied to God's will; and the