

If your convictions lead you to be a non-cooperator you may wish to record those convictions here. Non-registration is currently illegal.

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In answering this question, the counsellee must state whether his or her beliefs are religious, moral, or ethical, whichever actually apply in the particular case, and whichever are in conformity with the detailed answers that are being given. This is the most important question on the worksheet, and must be answered carefully.

Some questions which might be helpful in conducting a discussion of the counsellee's beliefs are:

- \* What are the basic reasons why you believe it is not possible for you, in good conscience, to participate in war ?
- \* What are the basic moral principles which you observe and on which you insist, and how do these principles apply to your participation in war ?
- \* Do you believe in the sacredness of human life ?

If the counsellee believes in ideals such as love, non-violence, or the ethical teachings of scripture, be careful that he or she states them in such a way that they refer specifically to his' or her conscientious objection to war.

Specific answers are required by this question. Uncertain or vague responses such as "I just feel I could never participate in war ... I don't know why ..." would probably lead the reader to think that the writer is expressing a "merely personal moral code".

It is difficult for many people to express the moral or religious principles by which they live, but the counsellor can help overcome this problem by discussing with the CO those things in life which the CO feels are of highest value to her or to him. Discuss these values, and ask how they relate to his or her refusal to participate in war.

To some, it may be difficult even to discuss values in a clear way. It may be easier for some to discuss the duties, rights, and responsibilities of one's religious body, or of citizenship. What are these rights and duties? Which does the counsellee feel are most important? What is the source of these responsibilities?

Encourage your counselees to state their beliefs in a positive way. Do not let the statement of conscientious objection be used as a place to explain what the CO does not believe, but rather, what he or she does believe.

You can be especially helpful to the CO if you encourage him or her to be forthright and simple. If you find things in the statement which have nothing to do directly or indirectly with the person's objections to war, suggest that these be dropped from the statement. The statement is not the place to confess doubts or uncertainties, but to express what the CO does believe.

If political issues come up in the counsellee's statement, he should show how these issues relate to his basic beliefs.

The purpose of the second part of this question is to determine whether the objector should be classified as a total CO or non-combatant. If the objector feels he or she is only interested in exemption from combatant duty in the armed forces, then he or she need only answer in that way. If the person feels that he or she is seeking exemption from all military service, then the answer to this question should explain why he or she feels that any participation in the armed forces is contrary to his or her convictions, even though he or she would not have to bear arms. You should specify to the counsellee that it is important to note what it is about non-combatant service in the armed forces which would violate his or her conscience. These reasons have to be related to the beliefs which were expressed in the earlier sections of the statement.

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QUESTION 2: DESCRIBE HOW YOU ACQUIRED THESE BELIEFS

In answering this question, you should include any formal religious training you have had if you feel such training has helped you arrive at your position. If you feel you believe as you do with no help from your formal training, there is no need to mention it. The influences of clergy, teachers, family members, books, membership in organizations, are essential to list. Be specific; you must show that strong influences in your life have stimulated you to think seriously and clearly about participation in war.

Specific incidents can be included, such as demonstrations, seminars, or conferences you have attended, to show that you believe as you do. If you refer to political issues, you should indicate how your basic beliefs shape your political judgements.

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This question deals with how the objector arrived at his or her beliefs. The answer must be more than just a nominal listing of the possible influences suggested by the question. For example, if a book is mentioned as a major influence, then the points which were the most influential should be pointed out. If an association with a member of the clergy, or a teacher, or close friend were listed, then the objector must point out what convictions were strengthened under this influence.

It is not necessary for the CO to show any history of formal training, but the religious and moral influences which shaped the person's thinking about war have to be mentioned. There is no need to shy away from negative experiences (such as media accounts of war, movies about war) if these experiences shaped the conscientious beliefs of the counsellee, or made these beliefs stronger. This answer must show that the beliefs detailed in the answer to Question 1 are a result of strong influences which motivated the CO to think seriously about war.

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QUESTION 3: DESCRIBE HOW YOUR BELIEFS AFFECT THE WAY YOU LIVE, AND THE TYPE OF WORK YOU DO OR PLAN TO DO.

This is sometimes a difficult question for the young objector, since he or she has not had experiences which can show deeply held beliefs. Such a person should discuss how his or her future plans are deeply affected by a commitment to those beliefs. Describe kinds of employment you have had or plan to have which reflect your commitment. Discuss any public expression, written or oral, you have given to your beliefs.

Describe your lifestyle; mention your life's goals as you have set them, and show how they are an outgrowth of your beliefs.

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This question is asking the CO to demonstrate that he or she is fundamentally committed to the position he or she is taking. All counsellees are to be encouraged to use this question to relate any

public expressions the counsellee has made, either written or oral, against participation in war. If there have been no such public expressions, then have the counsellee explain why not. It may be that the person simply had no opportunity to do so or that he or she is not the type of person who easily makes public statements.

Has the counsellee made sacrifices in the past for his or her beliefs (eg. cadets at school), or, is the counsellee willing to make sacrifices for them in the future? For example, would he or she be willing to forego a well-paid job that might be connected with the war industry? If so, have him or her explain so that the reader thoroughly understands that the claim for conscientious objection is not just a matter of expediency or "an easy way out" for him or her. It is helpful if he or she can point to other areas of his or her life where there are very deep moral or religious commitments which the counsellee follows consistently. By recounting a situation in which he or she acted with moral resolve, the counsellee can illustrate the fact that he or she is a person who seeks to act consistently with his or her moral principles.

As the worksheet commentary says, this is a tough question, particularly for the younger person who has given little thought to the question of occupation, or for the person whose beliefs have matured recently. If he or she cannot demonstrate such "affect", it should be frankly stated. Use this question to show that the beliefs which the counsellee professes are not inconsistent with the way he or she lives, or intends to live.

Has the counsellee been involved in activities of any kind which evidence his or her concern for human life? What are the counsellee's goals in life, and how do these goals reflect the values he or she claims to hold?

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## VII

COUNSELLING AFTER DECISION

1. If the counsellor decided that he can and will participate in the SADF in an armed capacity the counsellor could refer him to the material in Appendix F.

However, if the counsellor has taken the decision to be a conscientious objector the counsellor may then refer him to the following appropriate resource material which deals with

- (a) the religious pacifist position in which recognition and the granting of non-combatancy or alternative service is likely (Appendix G)
- (b) the other positions (ethical pacifist, just war objector, etc) which are not likely to be recognised (Appendix H).

At present there is not actual experience of the procedures involved, therefore what is offered here is based on the Defence Amendment Act of 1983 (see pages 14-27), past experience of SADF and court procedures, and some projecting of possibilities that have not yet been tested.

Since it is not known at this stage for certain who will qualify for recognition as "religious objectors" it is suggested that both Appendix G and Appendix H be supplied to the counsellor for study.

It is the counsellor's responsibility to help the CO to understand his own position and for him to choose an appropriate response based on that position. An effective way to aid this process is to let the CO compose a complete statement of his conscientious objection. Suggest that he document his reasons for taking the CO position. To provide some ideas and framework for drafting this statement, the counsellor may refer him to Appendix I, which contains statements by some existing CO's.

3. The counsellor should also make the CO aware of the consequences of his objection other than the legal ones outlined in Appendices G and H. In some cases it will lead to estrangement from family and friends who do not agree with the CO's position. If he is alone in the struggle, it may lead to feelings of self-doubt. The

counsellor should be able to direct the CO to the nearest support group and/or sources of support of a church or other nature. Appendix L contains details of organisations and resource materials.

4. The counsellor might be able to arrange for a role play of an appearance before the Board to accustom the counsellee to that experience.

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST PARTICIPATION IN WAR

Cuba, Ethiopia, Angola, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan,  
Israel ...

Wars real and threatened plague our world and test each Christian who prays, "Thy will be done." In the Bible, does God require us to participate in certain wars, or to reject all calls to military action? In the following two articles taken from "Christianity Today", two men of opposing views state their cases. Both started as conscientious objectors and have rethought their positions. One now supports "justified wars", while the other has become confirmed in his earlier beliefs. A third article "Agonised Participation" takes a position somewhere between these two views. A fourth article by Dr James Moulder argues for the non-combatant position in the army.

1. JUSTICE IS SOMETHING WORTH FIGHTING FOR

- Robert D Culver -

Old Testament

By any reasonable assessment, many divinely authorized (approved) wars, prosecuted wholly by God's people, are reported in the Old Testament. But what God prescribed in one dispensation he could forbid in another (for example, the eating of swine's flesh). What is more relevant is that contrary to common opinion, Old Testament believers lived under an ethical system in which any act of personal revenge was proscribed. Self-defense was permitted only with severe limitations. Brotherly kindness extended swiftly to one's neighbors - both compatriots and foreigners - was encouraged by Mosaic religion. What the priest and Levite did in Jesus' Good Samaritan parable was contrary to Mosaism.

Passages like Romans 12:19-21 exude the very atmosphere of peace, but in this they are similar to Mosaic religion. A large part of the passage is quoted directly from the Old Testament. For example, "But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head" is quoted from Proverbs 25:21-22.

King David was rebuked for even contemplating revenge on Nabal. Joab was executed by Solomon for an act of revenge: he shed the blood of war in time of peace. After Moses, the Jewish "citizen" had access to public law for justice, and if that failed he still did not have the right to take matters violently into his own hands, though self-defense against attack was not denied him. But use of physical force was limited even in defense of property - a proprietor could not slay a day-light burglar obviously bent on theft only. A night-time burglar, whose intentions were not obvious, might be slain.

Thus, the Old Testament taught a personal ethic of nonretaliation and of nonviolence to neighbors, along with duties of kindness to all in need. It did not see this as contrary to its social ethic, which allowed limited personal self-defense, vigorous action against insurrection (Absalom), and just wars of defense and of execution of national policy. If these two strains of thought were consistent



with one another in the Old Testament dispensation, might they not be consistent in the New Testament dispensation too? The answer seems to be yes.

#### Sayings of Jesus

The principles of nonviolence to one's neighbor and nonresistance to evil, along with other ways of saying, "as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men," are certainly present in Jesus' words, especially in the Sermon on the Mount. Yet though none should deny that Jesus put moral ideals in a more purely spiritual perspective than Moses did, the break is not absolute, since after all, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," is Mosaic.

Moses made many statements about nonviolence in personal disputes, but he also set up a coercive civil structure for handling those disputes, though without encouraging excessive litigation. Jesus quoted Moses' law of exact public justice ("an eye for an eye") and then put "resist not him that is evil" (Matt. 5:39, ASV) beside it with an introductory, "but I say unto you." But he should not be understood as refusing all recourse to law when acts of persuasion fail. Nor should we think of him as merely forbidding physical retaliation: he is inculcating a deep spirit of love for God and man. Paul prayed every day for Israel and could wish himself accursed from God if that would save them. More than once when the Jews tried to kill him, Paul ran.

But when they caught him he tried legal defense in Palestine, and when that failed he appealed to Caesar. It is surely a mistake to interpret Jesus' sayings as if they must have unconditional application - that is, apart from other biblical revelation and apart from all interpretation.

The Old Testament is not wanting in instructions very similar to Jesus' famous sermon. Jewish scholars rightly protest that Jesus' ethical sayings were not unique to him among ancient rabbis. Pacifist writers sometimes find what they think are their own pacifist teachings in the Old Testament, but when they do so the divinely commanded (not merely permitted) wars do not fit the scheme.

Jesus did not intend the literal, uninterpreted application of every one of these sayings. He did not even apply them to himself in this way. Though our perfect example of patience, when he was smitten on the face he answered, "If I have spoken evil bear witness of the evil, but if not, why smitest thou me?" If we look only to the words, he did not obey his own precept for he did not turn the other cheek. Yet he had come to Jerusalem prepared not only to be smitten but crucified by men for whose forgiveness he would pray to God. He also gave some verbal defense (see John 18: 22-23). And though he once said, "Swear not at all," he accepted abjuration, being put under oath at his own trial.

Likewise Paul seems to fail to obey his Lord, for when smitten on the face he cried out to the chief priest, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall, for sittest thou to judge me after the law and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" (Acts 23:3)

Two conclusions are suggested. First, the rigorous nonresistance to evil required by Anabaptist and modern pacifist interpretation is not required by Jesus. (Neither is the rigorous nonparticipation of Anabaptist sects). Second, the similarity of Jesus' ethic to the Mosaic ethic, enlarged upon by Old Testament poets and prophets, suggests that if Moses' disciples did not think they were required to embrace pacifism, probably Jesus' disciples need not embrace it either.

#### War: A Moral Evil?

Is it true that war, as such, is sin? War is a social evil; this cannot be denied. A disposition, national or personal, to glory in mortal combat is of the devil (James 4:1-2). War, however, is not an unmixed evil, or God would not have commanded wars to be initiated by his people. Furthermore, a sober view of history will find some good from settlement of international quarrels by war. It must be acknowledged, however, that most wars are both unnecessary and wrongfully motivated. Yet Scripture never calls war, as such, a moral evil. Hell is an evil also, but it is a moral necessity. Evil lies behind the necessity for such things as hell, jails, criminal courts, and war. Let us not be coerced from debate by unsupportable, question-begging denunciations. If war were morally evil, per se, we would not read of Michael and

his holy angels at war with the devil and his angels: the military figures and symbols of Scripture would be inappropriate. Certainly no text of the Bible would declare, "The Lord is a man of war, Jehovah is his name" (Exod. 15:3). After all, Miriam was a prophetess.

Most biblically motivated pacifists agree that the sword has been given to rulers of civil commonwealths. Scripture certainly says so - whether the civil unit be small or large. It is not correct to say, as one contemporary pacifist writer does, that Romans 13 is only descriptive of what happens wrongly in this world. Good men must regard obedience to the magistrate and approving respect for his sword as a matter of conscience (v.5)

If it is right for rulers to use coercive force, then most men of good will and good conscience will say that it is right for the Christian to be a part of the force. Reality, most will agree, provides no "division of labor" whereby one section of humanity, as a matter of necessity and duty, does something for my benefit in which it is too sinful for me to help out. How can I be excused from that task by making contribution to society in some other way? It is of great significance that military duty in the Mosaic system was not restricted to a military class, and that executions by stoning were carried out by the whole congregation of Israel.

#### Social Isolation

There really appears to be no way in this world to escape complicity (or, as some would have it, cooperation) in the ongoing of necessary social processes and institutions: "For this cause pay ye tribute also." Membership in family, clan, nation, tribe, or whatever is a "given". We simply cannot escape it. This is a demonstrably scriptural teaching. It is simply impossible for earth-and-time-bound man to step out of the world (family, tribe, clan, nation) to make his "contribution". Social separation is not a goal to be striven for. We are supposed to do our service for God in society, not out of it or beside it. True, sometimes within that family, tribe, clan, or nation my Christian witness may lead to suffering. If it is to be thought "not strange", neither is it to be contrived (see 1 Peter 3:12-19). Sometimes, of course, social ostracism makes social separation necessary.

It has been pointed out by Werner Elert in The Christian Ethos that there is no consistency in the refusal to be a part of civil government, refusal even to endorse its task of restraining evil men, unless one goes beyond the Mennonite position to Tolstoi's: To fight evil is sin; because the state fights against evil, the state itself is evil. Recent avant garde pacifists like to accomplish the same end by a bit of verbal magic. Drop the neutral word "force" and employ instead the pejorative word "violence". In this way the murderer employs violence to kill men and the policeman uses violence to apprehend and to restrain the murderer. The murderer and the policeman are equally evil. Such a view is perverse and certainly merits the biblical denunciation of those who call evil good, good evil, and who put darkness for light and light for darkness (Isa. 5:20).

#### Just War: A Biblical Base

What then is the Christian witness to "the state" in regard to war? Certainly no professor or prelate has professional competence to give omniscient guidance. Everywhere, for us as it was for Paul, government is a universal fact in a world under the condition of sin. Paul and other New Testament Christians did not tell the pagan governments much of anything. But once the ancient Roman Empire officially professed Christianity, Christian teachers had much to say.

When people in civil authority will listen, Christianity speaks. Yet we search in vain for any adequate, timeless statement of the "doctrine of the just(ified) war". There have been many doctrines of the just war. In my judgement, God-fearing Christians and their counselors in every age, in dealing with this problem, have applied rather constant conceptions of basic biblical truth coupled with their best spiritual insights and common sense. An ancient Christian knew he could not be part of Caesar's army if Caesar were to compel him to worship an image of the emperor. A Soviet Christian is in the same position if compelled to sign an atheistic oath upon induction into the army. Yet each might be quite willing to serve in a national army if overt denial of his faith were not required. Each might subscribe to some sort of just war theory if given a chance. There is a praiseworthy sameness through the centuries in spite of apparent differences.

The sameness has roots in a common biblical world view. This is essentially one through all ages. The biblical God is Creator, Sustainer, and providential Ruler over and in a world where sin and the Devil also "reign". Christians of every epoch know that humans are sinners and incorrigibly rebellious. They must be coerced to good behavior by other men who are likewise sinners and rebellious. Yet it is right that these rulers employ police, backed up by courts, prisons, guillotine, and gallows and, if national policy requires it, by army, navy, draft law, and much (if not all) of the rest. This puts Christians on the side of their magistrates and civil order except in the very most unusual of situations. They recognize that short of the consummation there is no alternative. The system works imperfectly, but civilization goes on. These Christians have also read 1 Timothy 2:1-4 and so pray for their rulers. Ordinarily Christians support and obey them in both war and peace. Christians, as well as other subjects have expected their rulers to be foresighted in protecting their realms, having information about dangerous attacks and making preparation for them before they occur. They have not usually tried to tell their rulers when or how they ought or ought not to do these things. It is a reasonable assumption most of the time that our fulltime rulers are rational and in possession of facts they cannot disclose to the public. Assumptions to the contrary - now seemingly universal in democratic countries - are hardly verifiable, much as we wish our leaders would individually consult us about every next move. It is also commonly assumed in Christendom that no army should wantonly attack nonmilitary targets or harm noncombatants, especially women, children, and the aged.

We must remember that Jesus pronounced the peacemakers blessed. Some think the peacemakers are all employed at work like producing crops, running factories and schools, perhaps bandaging wounds, preaching sermons, and soothing irritated tempers. People in these endeavors do employ some of the arts of peacemaking. But they are not the whole of the peacemaking enterprise. Some of the peacemakers win military campaigns decisively enough and with sufficient justice that no one cares to challenge the civil order for a long time. I prefer to think that Jesus meant to include all peacemakers.

## 2. WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULDN'T CARRY SWORDS

- John Drescher -

Biblical pacifism results from Christian discipleship. Refusal to fight is based on my calling as Christ's disciple. Jesus is Lord! To be his disciple also means he is my teacher. To accept Christ is to accept his person and teaching, and to follow in his steps regardless of consequences. My way of life and ethics must be in harmony with his. As the way of salvation is determined by him, not by me, so the way I am called to live is determined by his standard, not mine. Christ commands me, "Love your enemies".

Biblical pacifism's objective is to lead others to know Christ and follow him, thus experiencing reconciliation with God and others and becoming ministers of the gospel of reconciliation to everyone. To do this it is impossible to participate in any program of illwill, retaliation, or war that conflicts with Christ.

### Christology

Fundamental to my peace position is my understanding of who Christ is, what he says, and what he did. Who Christ is lies at the beginning. He is the "Word become flesh". He is the one through whom God has spoken in these last days. Christ is the full and final message to us of God's will. All the records of Christ's works indicate that he spent his life in matters related to the will of God and his redemptive work. If there is one thing upon which we all agree, it is that Jesus personified in his person and relationships - in his love for even his enemies - by dying on the cross, the way of love and nonviolence. No one has ever dared to picture Christ with a gun in his hand.

Jesus Christ is also called the Savior of the world. A clear concern of Scripture is to present him as the cosmic Christ; he died for all and he cares equally for each person. Here is a chief difficulty: we love to localize Christ. We regard him as a respecter of persons, and demand he become a national, denominational, or personal God only. Especially during wartime, in spite of our confession of faith, we limit his love. It seems difficult to believe that he came to save our enemies as well as us. We try to confine Christ in the small container of one country or one denomination.

But Christ cannot be thus confined. He has called disciples from every tribe, tongue, and nation: he is the Christ of all cultures. He is not necessarily on the side of the biggest bomb. He will never sanction belief in racial superiority, the sin of cultural pride, or the destruction of his other children. As the Savior of the world, he cannot.

My Christology must further take into account not only who Christ is but what he says. Jesus declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life". To believe this is to accept him not only as the way to God for salvation, but to accept his teachings as the way of daily discipleship. So I live under his lordship. He is the authority for both belief and behavior - even though the temptation remains to live a life and to use methods he never allowed and even spoke against.

Christ demonstrated the way of peace in contrast to war and retaliation, and he commands his followers to do the same. We are to be as he is in this present world. We are to have his Spirit in relating to our enemies. The Sermon on the Mount is the essence of Jesus' teaching and it is picked up phrase by phrase throughout the New Testament, calling for obedience here and now. As a peacemaker, Christ calls me to invade and penetrate all of life and society with not death, but life, and to preach the practical possibility of reconciliation among men. I witness, by what I say and do, that the war is over, that hostility is an outright denial of the message of Christ, and both are contrary to the Spirit of his teaching. He said, "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight ... but my kingdom is not of this world."

I cannot go to the Old Testament to prove it is right for the Christian to engage in warfare any more than I can go there to prove that polygamy or slavery or the doctrine of grace are right. Christ came to fulfill the law. Reports of Joshua's battles do not become the basis of belief and behavior for the New Testament believer. Nor does the Christian derive his doctrine of war and peace from David's destruction of Goliath and his killing of ten thousands. I take seriously the truth that Jesus is God's final message. This means that I cannot add "except" to Christ's commands.

I cannot say, "Love your enemies (except in wartime)"; "Put up the sword in its place, for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword (except when the government tells me to fight)"; "If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar (except when he fights in war)"; "Bless those who persecute you, bless and curse not (except when my country is at war)".

Jesus is my example, and my Christology must take into account what he did. He demonstrated throughout his earthly existence the way of suffering love in contrast to retaliation: all Christ's words were brought to living expression in himself.

He says, "As my Father has sent me, so send I you." According to the apostles, the way Christ dealt with evil and how he bore his cross instead of retaliating against his enemies are to be imitated. All the New Testament writers, with the possible exception of Jude, call us to do this. Paul says, "Follow me as I follow Christ." Peter points to it clearly, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2: 21-23).

Without doubt, the great betrayal of the church through the centuries is that it reaches out to claim the benefits of the Cross for salvation but refuses to take the way of the Cross as the means to live the Christ life.

### Gospel

Fundamental to my peace position is my understanding of the gospel. The entire New Testament teaches that the gospel is global. One distinguished advocate of world missions wrote: "Nothing is more deeply embedded in Christianity than its universality". The gospel is to be preached to every creature. The reconciling work of Christ cannot be restricted to one community, church, country, or continent. The gospel is the good news of one who, rather than following the world's way of righting wrongs, gave himself for the wrongdoers.

J B Phillips paraphrases Paul's statement in Ephesians: "For he



reconciled both (Jew and Greek, insider and outsider) to God by the sacrifice of one body on the cross, and by his act killed the enmity between them. Then he came and brought the good news of peace to you who were far from God (the outsiders, the Gentiles) and to us who were near (the insiders, the Jews)" "Eph. 2:16-17). That is the gospel: war is not only sin, but war for the believer is over.

That is the good news. It means that for me as a Christian all persons loved by God are my beloved also - even though they may consider me their enemy. Redeeming love is at the heart of the gospel; love and peace are God's plan for people regardless of who they are. For me to participate in warfare means that I go contrary to all I understand the gospel to mean.

War gives death instead of life, hate instead of love, judgement instead of forgiveness, retaliation rather than reconciliation; it is to search and destroy instead of to seek and save - to use weapons against the very persons to whom I'm told to give the gospel. In fact, to me, engaging in warfare is the supreme denial of the Great Commission and all Christ said and did. I agree with Charles Clayton Morrison who said, "Nothing more antithetical to Christianity can be imagined than war. It is the denial in the boldest possible form of the very life principle of the religion of Jesus. It is anti-Christian in the rawest, nakedest form."

Engaging in warfare strikes at the heart of discipleship and evangelism. Each person I face in combat is either a Christian or non-Christian. If I destroy a Christian, I kill the brother for whom Scripture says I should lay down my life. If my enemy is a non-Christian, I destroy him for whom Christ died and take away any further opportunity to be a reconciler or to let him find salvation. In the interest of the gospel and salvation, I cannot participate in war.

I sense kinship with Christopher Butler who wrote in The Catholic Worker: "Let us take the opportunity of saying clearly that the church, the people of God, does not seek protection from its enemies - whoever they may be - in war, and especially not in war of modern type. We are the mystical body, and Christ is our Head. He refused to defend himself and his mission by the swords of his

disciples or even by legions of angels, the ministers of God's justice and love. The weapons of the gospel are not nuclear but spiritual; it wins its victories not by war but by suffering ..."

### Church

Fundamental to my peace position is my understanding of the church. Scripture recognizes the existence of nations. Most of the time, however, when we read of "the nation" the text says that out of every tribe and tongue, people and nation, God gathers and redeems men and women as his people, his family, Christ's body on earth, the church. "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Peter 2:9). The nation to which the Christian belongs first is the nation over which Christ is king: it is the church of Jesus Christ. That nation exists under every form of government. Members belong first to each other regardless of race, country, or political system. This unity in Christ bridges all that separates and it breaks down all barriers.

The entire New Testament teaches that the church is an interracial, supranational, transcultural body composed of all who put their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and follow him as Lord. When one group including Christians takes up arms against another group including Christians, both are saying that Caesar, not Jesus, is Lord. Christians of one land battle and kill Christians of another land because these are requirements of nations at war; Caesar commands it. Persons in one church family put to death persons of that same church family.

It is striking to me that in the great cry for church unity and oneness, not much is made of the great division and death that war brings to the body of Christ. Christians are yielding to the state's demand for closer solidarity in the secular struggle rather than responding to the inward and genuine call to unity in Christ across cultures and curtains. The church thus becomes representative of some select form of Christianity (American, British, etc), bearing more the marks of a culture or country than of the Cross of Christ and of a universal fellowship where there is neither black nor white, Easterner nor Westerner, American nor Russian. The church sings, "We are not divided, all one body we" - until wartime, when each church backs whatever territory it happens to be in.

On an existential level, this means the body of the nation dare not be rent, but the body of Christ may be. And nation, not church, is the "destiny" man cannot escape.

### Government

Fundamental to my peace position is my understanding of what the Scripture says about government and human authority.

In the context of Romans 13 - nonconformity, peace, love for the enemy, and leaving vengeance to God - we have the statement that the "powers" are "ordained" by God. God planned order, not anarchy. Further, God is over the powers. Certainly Paul does not mean, as is sometimes suggested, that God is morally responsible for every ruler in power. He ordained all rulers in the same way, since this is written to Christians regardless of the government under which they live. He ordained all in the same way he ordained marriage; it cannot mean he puts his stamp of approval on each.

Paul goes on to say that government "officials" are ministers of God to the extent that they reward good and evil according to their merits. Therefore I should do good. Here in Romans, as elsewhere in Scripture, I am told to be in submission to the authorities. Notice, however, that obedience is reserved for God. And if obedience to God conflicts with human authority and results in punishment or persecution, then I, along with Christ, the apostles, and disciples through the centuries, must submit to the consequences of that obedience. It can never mean that I must do whatever any king, president, dictator, or magistrate orders. If so, why try war criminals who obeyed leaders without question? I render to Caesar what is his, but I give all of life and first loyalty and obedience to God. The problem of the church has always been that of rendering to Caesar more than his due, and giving God less than belongs to him. To "render them their due" can never mean to "render to the state all it asks."

Romans 13 also tells us not to resist the powers. Does this mean that one should neither question nor seek to change existing programs or policies of government? Hardly! It is a call away from revolution and violence. It means the Christian is not to engage in the overthrow of governments.

Thus Romans 13 (and other passages usually used to sanction the Christian engaging in warfare) really calls Christians to refuse to be squeezed into the conformist and pagan values of the world's systems so that we may be free to pledge full allegiance to God and to live under the lordship of Christ. According to New Testament teaching the loyalty and relation of the Christian to government is a limited one: to pray and honor always, to overthrow never, and to obey when not in conflict with God's will.

Finally, a biblical pacifist is a realist. He knows the power of sin. He knows the way of reconciliation many times means death. He does not ask, "What will happen to me if I am faithful to Christ?" He knows what it cost Christ. Like his Lord, he may be faced with the accusation that he is socially irresponsible and a traitor to his nation.

A true pacifist is not passive. He believes in the power of love and the power of God. He gives priority to resolving conflict at his own risk rather than at the risk of another. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers," not just the "peace keepers."

### 3. AGONIZED PARTICIPATION

The moral response to war for which the term "agonized participation" is descriptively appropriate appeared with greatest clarity during the Second World War and was accompanied by a revival of a theology in which the plight of sinful man was understood with radical seriousness. This outlook broke radically with the self-righteousness of the crusader and returned to the Augustinian realisation that in war the plight and predicament of sinful man is seen with special clarity. The influence of this perspective, summarised by the saying that "war is hell, not sin", was widespread in the Second World War and may even have made the spirit that characterised the pursuit of that conflict different from the spirit of the First World War and its greater use of crusade morality.

- (a) This position believes that while war can never be an act of justice, it may sometimes be necessary for the prevention of a greater evil that would result from permitting morally perverse power to gain political dominance. Agonized participants freely acknowledge that war is a tragic event, that it is based upon actions at variance with the love ethic of the gospel, and that it cannot have significantly positive effects. But they also proclaim that the morally responsible Christian may face circumstances in which he has no choice but to use war in order to maintain the minimal conditions of human decency in the international order.

The Christian Century, through the pen of its former editor Charles C Morrison, argued that once war has begun, the examination of issues must be in terms of national commitments and not moral ideals. The pacifist who judges war to be morally wrong, while probably right in the abstract, ceases to be relevant once the nation is at war. The decision to fight is a tragic necessity, but the refusal to co-operate is but a futile gesture that also involves moral compromise.

The term "nonpacifist", which was used during the Second World War to describe those supporting the war on the grounds of a tortured Christian sensitivity, bears its own subtle witness

to the inner logic of this position. "Militarist" does not fit because it implies the acceptance of warfare as a morally virtuous action, as a positive belief in the efficacy of coercion. "Non-pacifist", on the other hand, suggests that while the abstract moral impulse of the gospel is pacific, there are times when it is crucial to resort to arms in the defense of the right to believe that gospel.

Most men, when they go to war, convince themselves that it serves a noble purpose. They either whitewash war or toss out their Christian scruples in order to accept the demands of combat with the least amount of tension. But the agonized participant acknowledges the necessity without obscuring the tragedy.

- (b) The agonized participant insists that war must be conducted with contrition and kept free of vindictive hatred for the enemy. Men who go to war as citizen-soldiers usually believe their cause is just; that of the enemy, evil. They fight believing that the enemy is guilty, unfit to live among the family of nations because he has pursued policies that disregard law and order. Especially in the atmosphere of a crusade the guilt is presumed to lie with the enemy. "Get the infidel", "Destroy the Hun", and "Crush the aggressor" pour forth as rally cries. Agonized participants are more likely to make the following confession: "We know that our enemies were guilty, but we were guilty too. Although we protest that our sins were less than theirs, we know when we look at the Cross of Christ that nothing justifies us. We cannot fight against wrong without confessing that we are guilty of the wrong."

In the opinion climate of the home front such acknowledgements were equally unpopular. The conscience of the crusader, even among civilians, has never nurtured a well-cultivated sense of moral ambiguity, nor has the psychology of conflict naturally bred a desire to identify oneself, however partially, with the shortcomings of the enemy. Agonized participants who attempt to stem truculent self-righteousness and vindictive hatred during wartime are hardly sliding along a path of least resistance!

- (c) Military victory, while necessary, is but a negative attainment that clears the way for subsequent political and social programmes designed to re-establish reasonable justice and order. Instead of showing a "Hit it hard and get it over quickly" attitude during a war, the agonized participant gets in for a long, slow haul of social and political reconstruction following the cessation of hostilities. War is defended as a precondition to solving a political or social problem in the international sphere, not as a solution. To defeat an enemy is not to make a friend, to force a nation to its knees is not to create a partner in the world community.

It takes wisdom, spiritual maturity, and patience to accept the burdens of reconstruction following the cessation of hostilities. The agonized participant does not forget, nor would he let his fellow countrymen forget the tasks that follow in the wake of every military success.

The impact of these perspectives, represented in significant proportions within both the statemanship and the ecclesiastical leadership of the nation during the Second World War, may have been considerable. Many pulpits, while accepting the necessity of war, preached, "Thou shalt not hate, even when fighting". They also called the nation to shoulder its continuing responsibilities as both a sternly benevolent occupying force and a partner in the urgent tasks of reconstruction. It is a record of which this nation may be justly proud despite the disillusionment that has occurred with its failure to secure a completely enduring peace.

- (d) Lastly, the agonized participant acknowledges the right and privilege of conscientious objection to war even though he disagrees with those Christians who consider themselves called to this witness.

All too few just war theorists, despite the possibility that their teaching may yet acquire significance for moral objection to particular wars, have defended the moral legitimacy of conscientious objection to all wars or worked to extend and protect the freedoms of individuals called to take such a stand.

Agonized participants break with this perspective, as they also do with the hatred and contempt sometimes shown to conscientious objectors by a general public in wartime. While they deny through a vigorous polemic the claims of some pacifists to have a more advantageous and strategic way to deal with armed tyranny, they never accuse the pacifists of bad faith or moral turpitude. The agonized participant may criticize as politically naive the perfectionism he sees at the heart of the pacifist position, but he respects and accepts conscientious objection as a valid witness to a truth in the gospel. Conscientious participants have sought and defended the fair treatment of conscientious objectors and sought to maintain fellowship with them in the life of the church. Rather than resenting the pacifist as a coward or a traitor, the agonized conscientious participant has welcomed his witness even while denying as vigorously as possible the pragmatic preference of pacifism to the agonized use of armed resistance against tyranny and injustice.



#### 4. THE NON-COMBATANCY OPTION

- From an article by Dr James Moulder -

Conscientious Noncombatants are conscientious objectors who refuse to submit to any kind of combat training whatsoever. More specifically, they are convinced that their opposition to war requires them to refuse to submit to any kind of training which is designed to enable them to kill or to seriously injure someone else. At the same time and more positively, many conscientious noncombatants are prepared to train and to serve only in the medical corps of their country's defence force or in some form of community service. And there are two reasons why they are not prepared to be allotted to any other kind of noncombatant unit. It is obvious that someone who is being trained to serve in a medical corps is not being trained to kill or to seriously injure someone else. In addition, the Geneva Conventions recognise only the medical corps and the chaplains' corps of a country's defence force as noncombatant units.

#### Is the conscientious noncombatant's position inconsistent?

Some conscientious nonmilitarists employ the conscientious noncombatant's observation about the important place which a medical corps has in a country's defence force to accuse him of inconsistency. I will try to rebut this accusation. And I will do so by discussing a specific example of the charge and by explaining why conscientious noncombatants are not nonmilitarists.

Guy Hershberger is a good example of a conscientious nonmilitarist who has accused conscientious noncombatants of being inconsistent:

There is ultimately no such thing as noncombatant military service. Every man in the army is essential for the operation of the machine of destruction. Therefore, every man in the army is, for practical purposes, a combatant. To attempt a distinction between combatant and noncombatant service is to attempt a distinction without a difference. (Hershberger, 1969: 267 and 315-316. The emphasis is Hershberger's)

Hershberger's remarks suggest that someone who is prepared to submit

to training in the medical corps, but who refuses to submit to combat training in the South African Defence Force, is being inconsistent. If Hershberger's suggestion has any force, then it is because of the suggestion that someone who serves in a military hospital or in a medical corps contributes to the physical well-being and to the morale of the combatants in his country's defence force. And so he contributes to the efficiency of that force and especially to its effectiveness as a fighting unit.

This fact must be granted. On the other hand, conscientious non-combatants can argue that Hershberger's accusation proceeds on a dubious assumption. This is the assumption that, if it was ever the case, it is still possible to guarantee that one is not making an indirect contribution to the efficiency of one's defence force. And this assumption is dubious because he has failed to notice that a modern state is a corporate and totalitarian entity in the sense that, to a greater or a lesser extent, there is a tendency towards centralised control and governmental management of the economy and of the economic side of the country's military preparation. (Wright, 1969: 1008)

In addition, the economy of any technologically sophisticated nation is both extremely diversified and highly integrated.

The men who run a country's defence force are aware of this sophisticated relationship between military and other forms of efficiency. General Magnus Malan, the head of the South African Defence Force, has emphasised this point:

The Defence Force cannot be seen as a separate entity. Some see strategy only as the means of fighting and winning a war. But in a mature state the fundamental concept of conflict entails far more than war. It means the formulation of national objectives in which all the country's resources are mustered and managed on a co-ordinated level to ensure survival. This entails a united and collective effort which includes diplomacy, politics, economics, industry, local authorities, the military. (Sunday Times, 13th February, 1977)

But once these points are taken, it is apparent that nobody can calculate the extent to which his work contributes to the efficiency of his country's war effort. And so it is impossible for a conscientious noncombatant to guarantee that he is not involved in work which contributes, more or less directly, to the efficiency of his country's defence force.

In fact, a conscientious noncombatant can argue that his position is superior to the one which the conscientious nonmilitarist has adopted in the sense that he has a better idea of what his work in a medical corps involves. The important point is that, national and international economic arrangements being what they are, it is impossible for someone to guarantee that he is not indirectly involved in work which contributes to some nation's military efficiency. And since this is so, conscientious nonmilitarists and conscientious noncombatants are in the same boat.

#### Conscientious Noncombatants and the Imitation of Christ

The Defence Amendment Act No. 34 of 1983 allows three categories of CO (which have been referred to) but only if the person concerned has religious convictions which require him to refuse to submit to all combat training.

I therefore want to explore one strand in the Church's debate about conscientious objection and war. More specifically, I want to explore the position of those Christians who are conscientious non-combatants because they are convinced that Christ's example supports their refusal to submit to combat training.

#### The Worship of the Church and the Imitation of Christ

The imitation of Christ is rooted in the Church's worship. For example, the Anglican Church's Liturgy 1975, contains a Eucharistic Prayer which ends with this petition:

Grant that as we await the coming of Christ our Saviour in the glory and triumph of his kingdom, we may daily grow into his likeness ...

And many of the Collects which are used in this Liturgy strike the same note. (2nd Sunday after Christmas, 4th Sunday after Pentecost, Palm Sunday)

These prayers support Peter Strawson's claim that 'men make for themselves pictures of ideal forms of life'. (Strawson, 1974:26). But conscientious noncombatants who worship Christ do not simply see their moral endeavour as an attempt to realise an ideal pattern of life. In addition, they are convinced that this is their primary obligation. In other words, they are convinced that their attempt to worship Christ and to follow his example is more important than all their other obligations. More specifically, they are convinced that their obligation to serve in their country's defence force as combatants is not as important as their obligation to try to follow Christ's example. At the same time, however, conscientious noncombatants who worship Christ and try to guide their moral endeavour by his example are prepared to admit that they do have some obligations to the other members of their society. And so, although they are opposed to the homicide which is an essential ingredient of conventional ways of waging war, they are prepared to discharge their military obligations by serving in a medical corps of their country's defence force, or in some form of community service. Does Christ's example support a refusal to submit to combat training? I will try to demonstrate that it does.

#### A Positive Thesis

The conscientious noncombatant's positive thesis is that the New Testament contains narratives about Christ which suggest that, if he had been conscripted, he would have refused to submit to combat training. Amongst many other examples which conscientious noncombatants employ to support this thesis, they place a great deal of emphasis on Matthew's account of Christ's arrest in Gethsemane. (Matthew 26:47-56)

According to Matthew, someone who was with Christ when he was arrested drew his sword and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his ear. Christ commanded the person concerned to sheath his sword: 'for all who take the sword will perish by the sword'.

T H Robinson claims that the sayings expresses Christ's conviction

that 'a kingdom founded on force is always liable to be overthrown by superior force'. (Robinson, 1928:220). Most commentators are on Robinson's side, and conscientious noncombatants have not hesitated to appeal to this incident to support their claim that, if he had been conscripted, Christ would have refused to submit to combat training.

Does the cleansing of the Temple undermine the conscientious non-combatant's negative thesis? I do not think it does. And it does not undermine this thesis because if it establishes anything about conscientious objection, John 2:13-17 merely establishes that Christ was not a pacifist in the sense that he renounced every kind of coercive behaviour. But not all conscientious objectors are pacifists. Some of them are only conscientious noncombatants. And conscientious noncombatants refuse to submit to combat training, not because they have renounced all forms of coercion, but because they have renounced all those actions which are designed to enable people to kill or to mutilate each other.

A single individual, armed with a whip of cords which he uses to drive some traders and their animals out of the Temple, is a long way from the kind of violence and homicide which is such a typical and essential feature of war.

In other words and quite explicitly : if someone who is opposed to the claim that Christ's example supports a refusal to submit to combat training may not appeal to John's account of the cleansing of the Temple because the passage 'has no relevance to war', then the same must be said to someone who is unsympathetic to this claim and supports his position with an appeal to Matthew's account of Christ's arrest.

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ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST PACIFISM1. PACIFISM

- by Major R Aldworth Cowan, MBE -

It is not my intention to deal with this subject in respect of political or general terms but in the specific aspect of its implications for a sincere Christian who is called on to take up arms in the defence of his or her country. This action constitutes the essential and practical test which crystalises the Christians attitude to pacificism (sic).

Now we must be clear that when we talk of "pacifism" and refer to a "pacifist" we are not simply describing a "peace loving person." All sensible people are included within that category, but what we are referring to is the one who refuses, under any circumstances, to take up arms in the defence of his country, irrespective of who threatens it or for what reason it may be attacked.

Let me state my position. It is that I am not a pacifist and the reason why I am not a pacifist is that I do not believe Holy Scripture, properly understood, teaches pacificism (sic).

Unfortunately, we live in a world which is under the dominion of sin. It is largely controlled by the evil one whom Jesus Christ described as being the "prince of this world".

(Jn. 14:30)

For that reason a Christian does not always find himself confronted with a clear cut decision between "right" and "wrong". Frequently the choice he has to make is between two evils and the best the Christian can do is to choose the lesser of them. For instance, no one would suggest that it is a kindly act to deprive a man of his liberty and lock him in a small cell behind iron bars. But the Christian prison officer does this every day, regarding it as a lesser evil than the evil of letting a criminal loose to disrupt society.

The Christian lives his life under the authority of the government of his country and the teaching of the Bible is that he must, as a good citizen, be subject to the laws of that government. One passage dealing with this principle is found in Romans 13 and states, for example:

"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted".

(vv1, 2)

Now the context of this passage and the tenor of New Testament teaching indicates that this principle applies up to the point where that authority might be in conflict with the laws of God. In such circumstances the laws of God are always supreme. For this reason we find Peter, when commanded by the Sanhedrin to stop proclaiming the gospel, replying in these words:

"We must obey God rather than men!"

(Acts 5:29)

When these two principles; the primacy of obedience to the command of God and that of obedience to the civil power govern Christian action, it means that the Christian will subject the military service to which he may be called to the test of God's will insofar as he may discern it.

Even in relation to the civil authority it has been ruled in trials following World War II that it is not a valid excuse for a man to commit an act of atrocity and claim he was not responsible for his action due to the fact that he acted under orders from a higher authority.

Now although the circumstances are not identical the principle has a bearing and consequently the Christian will consider the justice of the cause in which he must take up arms. If it then appears, in the light of God's commands that it would be wrong for him to do so, he will have to act in accordance with this conscience. In circumstances such as an unjustifiable and purely aggressive war it would be proper for him to object conscientiously to involvement in that war.

We must next consider whether pacificism is commanded in Holy Scripture. We know that grace and kindness, love, mercy, peace and a host of other such qualities are commanded. But so also are



lawfulness, justice, righteousness and the supreme penalty of death for certain forms of wrongdoing.

Some passages of scripture, if considered in isolation from their context, may appear to teach pacificism. For instance, the words of our Lord taken from the Sermon on the Mount, are often quoted in this connection:

"But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn him the other also".

(Math. 5:39)

Now it is interesting to see that in the life of Jesus Christ he resisted evil most forcibly! When he found the temple traders engaged in harmful and evil practices, he actually made a whip and physically drove them from the temple precincts.

(Jn 2:15)

Again we find that when an officer struck him in the face in the house of Annas he did NOT turn the other cheek but rebuked him and very properly questioned his right to act in such a manner.

(Jn 18:22)

Consequently, when we find the very one who spoke those words on which pacifists place so much reliance apparently acting contrary to them we are left with only one of two conclusions.

Either (a) Jesus Christ did not practise what he preached, or (b) He did not preach the pacifist message as now adopted and we must enquire whether his words are being correctly interpreted.

The first alternative is unworthy of consideration and completely contrary to the historical record and the person of Jesus Christ. The truth lies in the second. For the real meaning of the words of Jesus Christ,

"Do not resist an evil person."

is a prohibition on the Christian seeking personal revenge or retaliating for a private wrong.

For example, in Cyprus the Apostle Paul strongly resisted the evil of Elymas the sorcerer when he tried to influence his master against

the gospel (Acts 13:4ff). Paul's resistance to this harmful action upon another person reached the point where he actually pronounced the curse of blindness upon him. But this was not a private injury for which Paul was seeking revenge - it was an attack upon the Christian faith intended to prevent the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus from turning to Christ and, in a circumstance like this, Paul considered positive action to be justified.

In Philippi, however, he did not resist arrest although, as a Roman citizen it was his right to do so. When he received a severe flogging (which was in the nature of a personal injury) on account of preaching Christ, he did not withstand it.

Whilst the pacifist frequently appeals to the Bible to support his contentions it is noticeable that it is to the New Testament he refers. Now it is true that the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ is found there. But it is not true to suggest that the God of the New Testament is a different God to that of the Old Testament.

He is the very same God. And it was that God who commanded his people to fight, time and time again. Individuals, families, cities and nations had to fight for their very existence in the midst of a sinful society. In respect of the law of that eternal God, Jesus said:

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

(Math 5:17)

Peace was, in Old Testament times as it is now, the objective of God's people. But there were occasions when peace was only attained as a result of fighting against the enemies of God (as, for example, in taking over the Promised Land) or fighting in defence of their own land or property (for example against forces of the Philistines).

When Jesus Christ came he sought to show men and women the way of peace. If all were to place themselves under the rule of Christ as Saviour and Lord, the peace he taught would be a reality. But so long as his teaching is rejected and his dominion over the lives

of men and women is denied, peace will not be the experience of the human race.

Now Jesus Christ recognised this and when he came to the last day of his life, knowing he had been rejected by men he referred back to certain instructions he had previously given his followers. In the light of the circumstances which they were to face from then on, Jesus revised certain practices he had made them follow in the days he was present with them. He finished his discussion with these words:

"If you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one."

(Lk 22:36)

Advice like that is certainly not the advice of a pacifist!

But we must look further at the New Testament record and when we do, we find that in the last book to be written, Revelation, we are again face to face with war. Not only do we find the people of God resisting the violence of the enemy but we find Jesus Christ returning to make war against sinful man on earth. This is what we read about Christ:

"With justice he judges and makes war ... the armies of heaven were following him ... out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations."

(Rev. 19:11-16)

Whilst much of the Book of Revelation is symbolic, there is no doubting the message of these words. Whatever they may symbolise they are certainly not symbolic of a pacifistic approach!

Again, the words of the sixth commandment, which were repeated by Christ are often quoted to support the pacifist argument. They are simply these:

"You shall not kill."

(Ex. 20:13)

But when we enquire about the scope of the word "kill" we find that, in Hebrew or Greek, there are two words for kill. The original word used in the Ten Commandments implies violent killing of a personal enemy and consequently is translated with its real meaning

in the RV, NEB, NASB, and other versions:

"You shall not murder", or  
 "You shall not commit murder."

If we were to understand the command, "You shall not kill" in Exodus 20 (see also Genesis 9:6) as a definitive prohibition against taking human life under any circumstances, we would be confronted with a divine contradiction when we read in Chapter 21 that God himself commanded that a person should be put to death for reasons such as murder, kidnapping, assault on one's parents and even the act of cursing them.

Referring back to the sixth commandment we should also notice that whenever Jesus Himself quoted it, the original text uses the Greek word meaning, "murder".

That there is such a thing as justifiable war is evidenced by the fact that the principles of lawful war are specified in Deuteronomy 20:1-20 which commences with the significant statement:

"When you go forth to war against your enemies ..."

Numerous references could be given to God commanding his people to make war on those who were opposed to him. Only one in this vein need be quoted to show that God not only permitted, but commanded a just war on his enemies:

"Therefore when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your enemies round about ... you shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget."

(Deut. 25:19)

If it were true that the Bible taught pacificism we would not expect to find the imagery of war so prominent in its pages. The Christian is encouraged to fight as wholeheartedly in the spiritual sphere as a good soldier does in war (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4 etc). When Paul wishes to describe the state of preparedness in which the Christian must always be found, he uses the analogy of a fighting man. From the armour which he wears in battle, he draws lessons for Christian living. If Paul had been a pacifist it would not only have been illogical but thoroughly misleading for him to have written in these terms.

However when we read the New Testament, far from finding the profession of arms to be viewed with disfavour, we find that it is accepted as a legitimate occupation. There is not a hint that the soldier's calling is dishonourable or unlawful. For example, Jesus Christ denounced the merchants in the temple precincts but never spoke a critical word regarding any of the military men with whom he came in contact.

Our Lord described his immediate predecessor, John the Baptist, as being amongst the greatest of the prophets. Now when he preached in the Jordan area men of various types came under his stern denunciation. But one day he was approached by a group of soldiers who had been moved by his challenge to repent and they asked him,

"What shall we do?"

(Lu. 3:14 RSV)

He told them they must not extort by violence from people with whom they had to deal or falsely accuse or terrorise by virtue of their position. But he did not suggest that they should cease to be military men. In fact, he envisaged them continuing to draw their wages with contentment. If the teaching of the Bible was that of pacificism, John would have answered their question by pointing out the error of military service and commanding them to give up that way of life.

In the New Testament we also find four centurions mentioned. These were Roman officers who commanded approximately one hundred soldiers. The interesting thing is that each of these centurions is actually commended in some respect.

(Lu. 7:9, 23:47; Acts 10:2, 27:43)

The home of one of them, Cornelius, became the locality of the first non-Jewish Christian church. After he and others with him received the gospel and were baptized, the Apostle Peter stayed and instructed him in the ways of God. But in the preaching of Peter there was no suggestion that, as a member of society or especially as a Christian, he should refrain from following a military occupation.

War is a dreadful thing. Indeed the true horror of it is most clearly seen by those - especially military men - who are called to engage in it. No rational person would ever choose war in its modern form and all responsible people (civil or military) have peace as their goal.

In this respect the soldier, sailor or airman resembles a policeman. Peace is his objective but the policeman must be ready to deal with those who break the peace.

Pacifism, carried to its logical conclusion, would not only abolish military forces which seek to preserve law and order in relation to the defence of a country. It would have to abolish the police force which seeks to maintain law and order within the boundaries of the state.

In an imperfect world there will always be men motivated by evil desires. Jesus himself told of an incident in which the tenants killed the owner's son when he tried to collect the rent. The conclusion was that the young man's father forcibly destroyed them in turn - and this Jesus accepted as the natural outcome of the tenant's wickedness.

(Math. 21:33-41)

The Bible gives each man the right to defend his person, his family and his property from attack. We cannot envisage for example, any normal father adopting the philosophy of pacifism, when an intruder has broken into his home and is attacking his wife and children. Any responsible man would seize whatever weapon was available and use it to drive off the assailant.

The principle is exactly the same, whether it is a man defending his family or a policeman defending a community or a soldier defending his country.

We may sum up by affirming that peace is the Christian's goal. He proclaims divine peace in his heart and life through Jesus Christ. He points the only way to peace whether in personal, national or international affairs. But so long as sin prevails and men reject the Peace of God there will be a call for the Christian to defend

himself and others against the violent onslaughts of sinful men. The Christian has the authority of God's word to do so, and even in the midst of a warring world his objective will be peace - **real** peace - but no pacificism.

## 2. CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION AND THE BIBLE

- by Rev R J D Robertson -

Most conscientious objection in South Africa is likely to be based on the Christian faith and the Biblical record of that faith. This is true of the total pacifist and the just war objector.

### THE TOTAL PACIFIST

The Christian who is a total pacifist finds the basis of his belief in the whole life of Jesus and of His apostles as described in the New Testament pages. It consistently teaches pacifism and repudiates the acceptance of war found in the Old Testament (Mtt 5:38-48; Lk 6:27-36 and 9:54,55; John 18:36,37; Rom 12:14-21; 2 Cor 6:3-10 and 10:3-5; Eph 6:10-20; 1 Pet 2:18-25). Jesus heals, reconciles enemies, challenges wrong without attempting to kill the wrong-doer, and finally gives his life refusing any defence (Mtt 26:51-54). Although His land had been invaded and was ruled by heathen foreigners He does not suggest using arms against them as the Zealots did. His total victory is achieved not by inflicting death but by giving His life.

The succeeding three centuries of the church's history indicate that this is the way Christians understood they were to live. Down to the time of Constantine no known Christian author approved Christian participation in battle, and all the prominent writers repudiated warfare (Bainton: Christian Attitudes to War and Peace).

However, for the Christian pacifist there are some "problem passages" of Scripture which we need to look at.

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Although Christians find it very hard to follow, the New Testament ethic on war and violence is very clear. We are to forgive those who wrong us, do good to them, etc. But according to the Old Testament God sanctioned and even commanded war, so why should Christians not regard Him as doing so now? There are three main views on this problem which apply, incidentally, not only to the question of war but also to many other differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament.



- (a) The Fundamentalist approach emphasises the inspiration of all Scripture and sees this as meaning that the Old Testament is of equal value and validity to the New Testament. The tendency of those who hold this view of Scripture is to settle for a solution in which the wars of the Old Testament and Romans 13:1-7 in the New Testament are seen as the right behaviour for the State, while the pacifist ethic is to be applied to personal affairs only. It is possible to point to personal pacifism also in Old Testament times (eg. Genesis 26:19-22). Fundamentalists can hardly object to waging war unless they are also Dispensationalists.
- (b) Dispensationalism, which sometimes develops from the Fundamentalist view, suggests that there was a valid war ethic in Old Testament times but that this is changed by the coming of Christ. God did instruct Israel to go to war, but now, since the Cross, a new way of dealing with enemies is possible by the strength and grace given us by Christ.
- (c) The Developmental view takes the inspiration of Scripture to mean that God's will has been progressively revealed, culminating in a complete revelation in Christ (Heb 1:1). Therefore we have in the Old Testament a partial understanding of God's will which must be judged in the light of Christ. In respect of warfare this means that Moses and other Old Testament prophets recorded God's word to them as sanctioning war and killing, but they had not heard the word perfectly. Their understanding was inspired in the sense that it is better to go to war in a just cause than to do nothing about evil. But from a New Testament point of view it is even better to overcome evil with good by Christ's way of intervention and self-sacrifice.

Before we leave the Old Testament it is worth noting that warfare was seen by Israel in a radically different way from their pagan neighbours, though they sometimes compromised the two views. They believed that the Lord fought for them (Ex 14:14 and 15) and that human effort or numbers had little or nothing to do with it (Josh 24:12), so long as they kept His commands and had faith. This meant that they considered other human activities more important than war, even against a total onslaught (Deut 20:5-9), and they were distrustful of sophisticated

weapons (Ps 20:7, Ish 31:1). Their early warfare was led by prophets (Moses, Deborah, Samuel) and was won by divine miracle rather than human skill. When the kings took over leadership they often found the prophets in opposition to their warmaking, even on occasions of justified resistance (1 Ki 22 and Jeremiah).

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT

Five main passages are referred to as justification of war.

- (a) John the Baptist, Jesus and Peter all have dealings with soldiers, yet do not tell them to relinquish their occupation (Lk 3:14, Mtt 8:5-10 etc, Acts 10). John the Baptist is pre-Christian, and the other two events only present an "argument from silence". Jesus also dealt with a prostitute but is not recorded as telling her to leave her profession (Lk 7:36-50).
- (b) The cleansing of the Temple, in which Jesus alone and unaided drives out many merchants, is an act of non-violence rather than of violence. The whip was used on the animals, and even if it was used on people there is a qualitative difference between a whip and a rifle, let alone a nuclear bomb.
- (c) Luke 22:36-38. The enigmatic character of this passage is admitted by most commentators. The words "It is enough" can mean "Enough of that!" If each was commanded to have a sword then two were not enough for twelve men! That they did not take this instruction literally is almost certain from Luke's second book, the Acts of the Apostles, where never once do we hear of a Christian possessing a weapon of any kind. That again is an "argument from silence" but over a much greater area of events. Imagine what the Acts would have read like if Stephen had defended himself with a sword, if the people Saul locked up had fought back, if Peter and John had been armed when arrested, not to mention Paul in his many brushes with death. The only thing this passage surely indicates is that Jesus had not forbidden His disciples to carry swords (see also Mtt 26:51, 52) until He had Himself demonstrated His way of meeting His enemies.

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