

cratic quality of Moshoeshoe the Great whose determination to identify himself closely with his people foreshadowed modern developments.

The Rev. A. Brustch of the Lesotho Evangelical Church and Mr Mohale, the Lesotho Minister of Transport, spoke on the *Cultural and Social Structure of Lesotho* and the effects of change. Dr Illich summed up the week's deliberations. He urged Lesotho to reflect: What economic framework to choose? What kind of surplus can promote rather than disrupt? What degree of organisation can be tolerated? What degree of wealth undermines the life and liberty of people, and impoverishes them? The growth of wealth will not be hurtful if development is equitable.

He alluded again to Mr Tevoedjre's reflections on the value of poverty. Endorsing them he said: "True human intimacy

depends on the willingness to share the least of riches".

Development is people. This was the prevailing theme repeated over and over in various ways through the lectures and discussions. It is not measured in terms of GNP and per capita income. Furthermore once the GNP yardstick has been discredited as a measure of prosperity one is made aware that a rich and highly industrialised society may well be a case for development, being politically backward and socially underdeveloped. Hence development is all *people*. Ivan Illich in summary asserted his belief that Lesotho, if it chooses to refuse the process of unchecked industrialisation that causes social atrophy has the potential to become a model of a truly modern economy because it has not yet reached the point of no return. Except that for Lesotho, with its paradoxical boundary, the choices are not quite as simple as one could wish

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION AND THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

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In general, a conscientious objector is someone who refuses to submit to combat training in his country's defence force. On the other hand, conscientious objectors do not agree what this refusal involves. Only some of them are conscientious nonmilitarists who refuse to submit to any kind of military service whatsoever. And only some of them are pacifists who believe that it is always wrong to use any kind of force whatsoever to attain one's goals.

I am interested in those conscientious objectors who are neither pacifists nor conscientious nonmilitarists. And there are two reasons why I am interested in this kind of conscientious objection. *Firstly*, according to the Minister of Defence someone may be assigned to a noncombatant unit under section 67 (3) of the Defence Force Act even if he is neither a pacifist nor a member of one of the historic peace churches. (*Hansard*, Volume 53, 1974, question 20.) *Secondly*, although I am a conscientious objector, I am neither a pacifist nor a conscientious nonmilitarist.

For convenience, therefore, I will reserve *conscientious objector* and *conscientious objection* for the kind of refusal to submit to combat training which is not equivalent either to pacifism or conscientious nonmilitarism. And I will try to explain why some Christians are conscientious objectors.

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. For example, on the Second Sunday after Christmas, we pray that 'we may have the pattern of his life always before our eyes'. And on the Fourth Sunday after

Pentecost we pray for grace 'to follow the pattern of his most holy life'.

But this emphasis on the imitation of Christ does not have its origin in Liturgy 1975. It is an emphasis which is at least as old as the New Testament. For example, Paul is convinced that Christ's life is the paradigm for the Christian's life. For example, he reminds the Christians at Rome that 'Christ did not please himself'. (Romans 15:3). He appeals to the Christians at Corinth by reminding them of 'the meekness and gentleness of Christ'. And he urges them to be more generous because, although Christ was rich, he became poor, so that by his poverty they might become rich. (2 Corinthians 10:1 and 8:8-9)

These examples are sufficient to establish that both the New Testament and the Church's worship encourage Christians to try to follow Christ's example. But does Christ's example support or undermine conscientious objection?

I will try to demonstrate that his example supports conscientious objection. More specifically, I will first discuss a positive and a negative thesis which are essential ingredients of this claim. And when I have demonstrated that two classic arguments for and against these two theses fail, I will try to defend the claim that Christ's example supports conscientious objection because he spent a great deal of time healing people.

The conscientious objector's positive thesis

The conscientious objector's positive thesis is that the New Testament contains narratives about Christ which suggest that, if he had been required to do so, he would have refused to submit to combat training. Amongst many other examples, conscientious objectors usually concentrate on Matthew's account of his arrest in Gethsemane. (26:47-56)

According to Matthew, one of those who were 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'.

S.G.F. Brandon has claimed that this maxim should not be attributed to Christ. Alternatively, if it is attributed to him, 'the saying cannot be regarded as a proverbial condemnation of the profession of arms, since it is manifestly untrue that all soldiers die in armed combat.' (*Jesus and the Zealots*, Manchester, 1967, pages 306-307.)

Brandon's claims have not received much support. And his objection is certainly due to an over literal interpretation of what Christ said. More specifically, T.H. Robinson is nearer the mark when he claims that the saying expresses Christ's conviction that 'a kingdom founded on force is always liable to be overthrown by superior force.' (*The Gospel of Matthew*, London, 1928, page 220.)

These disagreements amongst the commentators indicate that it is not always that clear what can and what cannot be attributed to Christ. In addition, they underline the fact that Christ's words are not always easy to understand. Nevertheless, most commentators are on Robinson's side rather than on Brandon's. And conscientious objectors have not hesitated to appeal to this incident to support their claim that, if it had been required of him, Christ would have refused to submit to combat training.

The conscientious objector's negative thesis

The conscientious objector's positive thesis is not sufficient to support his conviction that Christ's example supports conscientious objection. What is still required is a negative thesis. In other words: conscientious objectors also have to demonstrate that the New Testament does not record any incident which suggests that Christ would have been prepared to submit to combat training.

John's account of the cleansing of the Temple (2:13-17) is often advanced as evidence that, if it had been required of him, Christ would have been prepared to submit to combat training. And conscientious objectors who appeal to Christ's example have found this claim uncomfortable. For example, G.H.C. Macgregor is obviously embarrassed by the cleansing of the Temple because it suggests that Christ was 'capable of righteous anger, which expressed itself in an act of aggressive personal violence against the desecrators of the Temple'. (*The New Testament Basis of Pacifism*, London, 1936, pages 17-19)

Does the cleansing of the Temple undermine the conscientious objector'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 always renounced the use of every kind of force. But conscientious objection is not equivalent to pacifism. And so this passage is a problem only for those conscientious objectors who are pacifists.

Unfortunately, Macgregor has defended the conscientious objector's negative thesis in a way which creates problems for his positive thesis. In his discussion of the cleansing of the Temple he argues that this incident 'has no relevance whatsoever to war'.

This point must be granted. 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 which is a typical and essential feature of war. But if Macgregor's point must be granted here, then it must also be granted in discussions of Matthew's account of Christ's arrest. Violent resistance to arrest is also a long way from the kind of

violence which is a typical and essential feature of war.

In other words and more explicitly: if someone who is *opposed* to the claim that Christ's example supports conscientious objection 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 *sympathetic* to conscientious objection and supports his position with an appeal to Matthew's account of Christ's arrest.

In defence of conscientious objectors who appeal to Christ's example

I think Macgregor's observation has undermined many of the arguments for and against the claim that Christ's example supports conscientious objection. And it has done so because the incidents to which people usually appeal have no relevance to war. Fortunately, Christ's healing ministry supports those conscientious objectors who are neither pacifists nor conscientious nonmilitarists; and who refuse to submit to combat training because they worship Christ and try to follow his example.

When Matthew comes to the end of the series of healing narratives which follow the Sermon on the Mount, he comments on this aspect of Christ's ministry with the help of a quotation from Isaiah's description of the Servant: 'This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: *He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.*' (Matthew 8:17)

Suzanne de Dietrich draws the implications of this passage: 'Matthew shows us not only the Messiah victorious over sin and death, but also the Suffering Servant who conquers only by taking upon himself the weight of our misery as well as the burden of our faults. *Each healing is a battle of the One whom Peter called the Author of life (Acts 3:15) against the forces of death.*' (*Saint Matthew*, London, 1962, page 53.)

In the light of all this, it is possible to argue that Christ's example supports conscientious objection to war. *Firstly*, it is perverse to doubt that the healing of men's bodies and minds was an essential ingredient of Christ's ministry. *Secondly*, it is obvious that Christ's healing ministry is relevant to the discussion about whether or not he would have refused to submit to combat training. Healing people and waging war on them are about as incompatible as any two activities can ever be.

And so, if one allows oneself to be trained and used as a soldier, then by no stretch of the imagination is one allowing oneself to be used to preserve or to restore the health of human bodies and minds. More specifically, anyone who is pledged to the imitation of Christ is required, amongst other things, to try to contribute to the healing of people's bodies and minds. But this is something which a combatant never does.

This discussion began with a reminder that both the New Testament and the Church's worship encourage us to try to follow Christ's example. In addition, the Church's worship underlines Christ's healing ministry. For example, on the Eighth Sunday before Easter we use this Collect:

Almighty and everliving God
whose Son Jesus Christ healed the sick
and restored your people to fullness of life:
Look with mercy on the anguish of this world
and, by your healing power
make whole both men and nations.

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