

"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes that which belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do unto you." (Luke Ch. 6 Vs. 27-31).

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In doing this you will heap burning coals on his head."

Do not be overcome by evil; but overcome evil with good." (Romans Ch. 12 Vs. 17-20).

The commands of loving my neighbour as myself, and doing unto others as I would have them do unto me, I believe, call me to act in love to all around me, even those whom oppose me. War demands a depersonalisation of ones neighbour which runs contrary to the loving of ones neighbour/enemy and

seeing them as having the same fears and aspirations as yourself.

If I respond in violence to those who have resorted to violence I am implicitly endorsing violence as a legitimate option to adopt against myself and others. But if I respond in love out of a spirit of obedience to God, I am demonstrating in a costly way, an alternative to violence. The fact that the consequences may be costly, as I voluntarily open myself up to attack and make myself vulnerable, creates a crisis situation where that perpetrator of violence may perceive himself as a murderer of defenceless human beings rather than engaging in what is an accepted activity. This gives him a unique opportunity to lay down his arms. I believe that within everybody lies a God-given potential to change and about this we should be ever hopeful.

In our vulnerability we are given encouragement and a means of preparing ourselves for this from Paul in the Letter to the Ephesians:

"...be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground,

and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly as I should." (Ephesians Ch. 6 Vs. 10-20).

From this we can see that in our 'vulnerability' we may equip ourselves so that we are put in a position of moral and spiritual strength, as against physical weakness. This position will demand great courage and moral integrity which will convict and disconcert ones opponent. Rather than reinforcing violence, as does meeting violence with violence, it is a most effective tool against violence. This may not be effective in stopping someone from going through with his intentions to kill, but the symbolic effect will remain. While with regard to ones life it is noted that:

"... whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses life for me and for the gospel, will save it." (Mark Ch. 8 Vs. 35).

The Beatitudes are also pertinent here:

"Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of
righteousness,

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven....

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in
heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the
prophets who were before you." (Matthew Ch. 5
Vs. 9-10,12).

Conclusion

The above biblical substantiations; prayer and reflection; the lives of various individuals who have given concrete expression to pacifism both here and in other countries; as well as certain books such "Christ and Violence" by Ronald Sider and "Strength to Love" by Martin Luther King which have enhanced my understanding of the issue; form the basis of my commitment to pursuing pacifism as a basic tenet of my Christian faith.

I regard my commitment to pacifism as a witness to peace wherever violence is found. I therefore refuse to participate in any armed force or institution that promotes the cause of violence. By not participating in war and destructive activities I believe I can be true to my

conscience, honestly preaching the gospel of love as a witness to hope and peace.

I ask the Board to give due consideration to this statement, offering my skills as a development planner in service to the poor and disadvantaged and future resources of my country. As a Christian I am called to serve above all the Lord Jesus Christ and to use the talents he gives to me. I believe that he has led me towards a life of service in the field that I am now working. I find myself in a position to act as a peacemaker and reconciler in my daily life and believe that I am able to serve the poor and my country as an extension of my faith.

Anton,

I read your statement. I personally think it is very good and convincing. However, I would suggest that you think about a few changes and additions specifically for "consumption" by the Board. One thing you must remember is that no-one on that Board is a pacifist, and basically their opposition to pacifism, (they claim), is scripturally based. Secondly, it is your duty to convince them of your religious convictions against any participation in any armed force.

Applying this to your statement, perhaps you could consider some of the following points:

1. Your role in the SADF has been in a medical unit - as a Christian, "loving your neighbour", could you not serve in a medical capacity? You must convince the Board that you could not be linked in any way to any army - perhaps to avoid this sort of objection by the Board, make your position more explicit.

- related to this, explain some more your experience of a deep seated uneasiness while in the SADF. What was it, and what caused it? You should try to be personal - what they want is your religious convictions & experience.

2. Also you should be more explicit about your

spiritual rebirth - it is a very important aspect of your statement as you base your convictions largely on this. Don't be afraid to lay it on thick.

3. Regarding your personal particulars, you must be careful to show your involvement in your Church. Get affidavits verifying your attendance and any involvement in Church activities.

- also explain your degree change. Perhaps make a short note on why this change would help you follow Jesus.

- at the last hearing, there was confusion over what a "House Church" was. An objector from Durban (Dorn Edwards) mentioned it, and the Board did not know much about it. Perhaps explain a bit about it, its links etc with other Churches, how it relates to the Anglican Church ...

- leave out your KTC activities, but rather just mention prayer groups in Cape Town. Perhaps even leave out that they were for CO's etc.

4. One thing the Board take great delight in, is presenting pacifists with simulated hypothetical situations like someone invading your country, attacking your wife, murdering innocent people, hijacking a plane etc etc. They try to get you to say that you would defend yourself, fight back to save another person etc.

This is always a tricky area. I think you handle it well, but if you do have to actually appear before the board, you must make sure you have a convincing & consistent argument.

- regarding your mentioning a "violent world" perhaps also mention how your present occupation can reduce violence. This is basically to show that you are an active pacifist, and that military objection is not your only involvement.

5. Some general points regarding scripture. They like to appeal to the OT and the wars of Israel. Also, again the tricky question of "love" → one loves one's enemies, but also the people they attack!

- another point is regarding the discernment of God's will. They emphasize Romans 13, and the idea that the government is God's instrument of authority. → you obey God's will when you obey the government! (personally I think it is rubbish → but how will you respond?).

⇒ regarding these last points you do not have to make changes to your statement, but perhaps these are things you must prepare yourself for if you have to appear. You seem to have a good knowledge of the Bible, so you should not have too much of a problem.

Lastly, I would suggest that you make your

conclusion more explicit. Make it clear that your pacifism extends to all armies, to all involvement in violent institutions, in violent ways of attempting to solve conflicts and problems. Make it explicit, to the point of being repetitive, that your response to Christ is the avoidance of all evil, and that all wars are evil.

I hope this does not sound negative - it was not meant to. I think your statement is very well *prepared (just check grammar etc!). Check with Richard and see what he says. If you would like to talk about this a bit more, just give me a call.

Good luck
Regards
Brendan.

P.S. Many of the points I mentioned do not need to be changed on your initial statement. However, I think it would be good to make your conclusion more "conclusive" and explicit. Basically just make it very explicit that pacifism includes any role in any armed force, explain your spiritual experience and perhaps a bit more about your Christian convictions.

* better prepared than mine was when I sent it!!

I.

FACTS AND GROUNDS UPON WHICH MY APPLICATION IS BASED

The reasons, in summary, for my objection to military service in any capacity are as follows :

- (1) I uphold the Christian principles of love, peace and non - retaliation.
- (2) War is unconstructive, and only leads to further violence.
- (3) My work as a medical doctor is in conflict with military principles.
- (4) The South African Defence Force constitutes a significantly divisive force in South African society.
- (5) Participation in a military system in any way amounts to active support for the military effort.

The relevant events in my life which have lead to this position are presented below, followed by an explanation of the above reasons.

The relevant events in my life which have lead to my objection to military service are presented here.

I was brought up in a Christian family of four children characterized by a loving warmth which set the tone for the rest of my life at an early age. Although I was confirmed in the Anglican Church at the age of 14, it was only two years later that the significance of Christ's gospel was revealed to me and I chose to follow Him. This came about to a large extent through fellowship, discussion and teaching at a series of Scripture Union youth camps on the Natal south coast, which I attended during school holidays. Rev. David Cooke, who at that time worked for Scripture Union, was a major influence on my life, and his affidavit is attached hereto.

School

At boarding school we formed a small bible study group which met regularly despite adverse peer pressure. By contrast with the fellowship I experienced there, I found, particularly as a prefect, that the all-important school hierarchy of age and seniority among the boys limited genuine human interaction. Through this I began to realize the need to establish and maintain warmth in human relationships in place of the distance which impersonal structures impose upon us

My first direct experience of the military was school cadets, which were introduced in my final year. Although they did not have a great impact upon me, being relatively poorly organized at that stage, the rigid imposition of discipline, and the assumption that the world was divided into "us" and "them" were two aspects which began to elicit a reaction in me. They were closely linked to my feelings of alienation in the school hierarchy, and difficult to reconcile with the concept of love which Christ was teaching us in the bible study group.

University

After a post-matric year, life at the University of Cape Town presented new challenges. I joined ANGSOC, the Anglican Student's Society, as a matter of course, but I found the concentration of attention on student-related matters limiting, since there were important issues outside of campus life which demanded a Christian response. I therefore joined Christchurch, Kenilworth of the St. John's Parish, Wynberg, where I worshipped regularly for the rest of my time in Cape Town. Rev. David Cooke was later appointed priest in charge of Christchurch.

One of the most significant influences on my maturation as a Christian came through my experiences in house-churches attached to Christchurch. They provided for deep fellowship, discussion and teaching in a small group, and were the mainstay of my Christian growth while at university. Ken Ironside, whose affidavit is attached hereto, was the leader of one of the first house-churches I joined.

I served regularly in the Christchurch orchestra, and in 1979 we were invited to lead the musical worship at SACLA (South African Christian Leaders Assembly) which took place in Pretoria. This was an eye-opening experience as I came across Christians representing all of South Africa's diverse peoples, whereas previously my experience of Christian worship had been largely limited to my own social group. The assembly gave us all an exciting vision of what South Africa could be like without apartheid, and underlined the iniquity of an ideology that seeks to separate Christians on the basis of race.

Medicine

My decision to pursue medicine as a career was based in part on relatively vague humanitarian ideals. However over the last seven

years, as I have grown in experience both as a Christian and as a medic, the need for an active, rigorous and thorough response to the responsibility involved in caring for people's lives and health, has become more and more apparent. The influence of my teachers at UCT was considerable, especially in encouraging a questioning attitude towards the status quo. I took a year out of the medical curriculum in order to complete a BSc research year, which afforded me a more original and creative attitude in tackling problems than that which the medical curriculum offered. This proved to be very successful, and on returning to the mainstream course I began to apply the same principles to the problems I encountered in the wards. It was obvious, and became increasingly apparent, that there were vast differences in the health of the different population groups.

On investigating the reasons for these differences, it became apparent that there existed huge inequalities in health care expenditure, resource allocation and distribution, as well as in access to health care facilities and personnel. My starting point in this enquiry was the area of medical education, since it affected me more directly. This led to my helping to establish a reading group on medical campus, and the organization of a conference on medical education at UCT in 1984.

We felt that our education was inappropriate to the pressing health needs of the majority of South Africans. Secondly we realized that health has far more to do with social, political and economic factors than it has to do with specific bacteria. Tuberculosis, for example, a major cause of morbidity and mortality in our community, occurs almost exclusively in African people as a result of poor nutrition, overcrowding and inadequate access to medical care. Most of the preventable disease in South Africa is merely an expression of social, economic and political deprivation. Therefore it is necessary for me to address these issues as well as caring for individual patients

if I am to take my duties as a Christian and as a doctor seriously. My objection to military service forms part of this response, since I view war in general as incompatible with ultimate social, economic and political stability, and the SADF in particular as a protagonist of the social and political injustices in this country.

While at university, Janet, whom I later married, lived in a Christian community of nine people, who sought to live out basic Christian principles based on the lifestyle of the early church. This included living simply, sharing of income, and being available to people in need as a supportive group. Through close contact with them I met and developed close friendships with a number of sincere Christians, who were unafraid to challenge issues which required a Christian response, both within and outside of the church. Among these were other conscientious objectors, with whom I was able to work through ideas concerning military service. From schoolfriends who had completed their national service when I had started university, I gained an insight into the military, and my ideas were further formed by reading. The recent spate of violence around the country, a fraction of which I witnessed at Inanda in August, has driven home my convictions regarding objection, since the situation has demanded more than ever before, a firm and deliberate step out of the vicious circle of violence in response to violence, towards peace.

Having completed my medical degree in Cape Town I chose specifically to complete my internship year at McCord Zulu Hospital in Durban. Firstly it is an excellent training ground for the type of medicine which is relevant to the health needs of the majority of South Africans. In addition it is one of the few remaining autonomous mission hospitals in South Africa and it retains a Christian spirit which is unique. The relationships between the nurses, patients and doctors of different racial groups are further testimony to the

absurdity of an ideology which separates people on the basis of race. The affidavit of Dr. Cecil Orchard, medical superintendent of the hospital since 1968, is appended.

Should I be granted alternative service by the board, my wife and I hope to be placed in a rural Natal hospital for the duration of the six years, consistent with our belief that it is necessary to practice where the need is greatest. We are currently engaged in equipping ourselves as well as possible with the necessary skills for such a period of service.

An explanation of each of the reasons for my objection, given in summary above, is presented here.

(I) I UPHOLD THE CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES OF LOVE, PEACE AND NON-RETALIATION

As a committed Christian, I am guided by the example and teachings of Christ in my decision to object to military service. There are numerous references in the New Testament to the basic Christian principles of love, peace and justice, which I seek to live out in my lifestyle, work and relationships. The basis for these principles lies in Christ's specific command, " Love your neighbour as yourself " (Matt 22:39). Specific teachings in relation to conflict situations stress the attitude of non-retaliation in response to aggression, and these form the foundation of my objection to participation in war. In Christ's own words, " Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you " (Matt 5:44). There are many other examples : Matt 5:38, Luke 6:27, I Peter 2:21, Proverbs 25:21, and Romans 12:17-21.

On the subject of killing, in which military service would require me to participate, Christ goes much further than the Old Testament law " Thou shalt not murder " by saying, by contrast, " that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgement " (Matt 5:21). Christ's teachings set totally new standards which are impossible to maintain through human efforts alone : it is only through His suffering on the cross that we are acceptable in God's sight. For example, I am aware of my own tendency, upon being confronted by aggression, to want to respond with aggression, and I find this emotional response disturbingly at odds with my firm belief in the necessity to respond instead in love. However through Christ we are made new, and I pray that the Holy Spirit would work to enable me to respond to aggression with love, as I grow spiritually.

(2) WAR IS UNCONSTRUCTIVE, AND ONLY LEADS TO FURTHER VIOLENCE

War is a totally unconstructive means of progress both on an individual and a societal level, and is always detrimental to both. That violence begets violence is undeniable; for example the "Great War", far from ending all wars, begat the second world war, which in turn created the atomic bomb, under whose threat we all now live. I reject the view that war is necessary to attain a lasting peace, since it negates by its very nature the values and principles upon which peace is built. In virtually every part of the world at present there is conflict and violence to which there appears to be no end : a vicious circle of aggression and violence in reaction to violence. The only possible ^{positive} response, in my view, is a totally non-violent stand for peace.

The military system deliberately and specifically dehumanizes all those involved in it : it creates "enemy" and "ally", and by depersonalizing both it is able to objectify the act of killing and even glorify it. In this way war becomes self-perpetuating, and the destruction inherent in war is justified by its protagonists. By contrast the Christian message of hope, love and peace is irreconcilable with the process of war, precisely because it is intensely personal and affirms every individual as being made in the image of God.

However apparently worthy the cause, I cannot support the use of military violence in its name : I therefore do not uphold the " Just War " theory in my objection to military service. The only justifiable place for force is in certain civil affairs, such as in police and prison services and in self-defence, where it must be controlled by strict conditions defined by law.

(3) MY WORK AS A MEDICAL DOCTOR IS IN CONFLICT WITH MILITARY PRINCIPLES

I have chosen a profession in which I have made a lifelong commitment to the preservation of human life and the alleviation of human suffering. Military system, behaviour, values and methods amount to the antithesis of all the principles by which I work. Military behaviour involves the depersonalization of the individual, both "ally" and "enemy", whereas medical care demands the utmost attention to the individual, physically and psychologically. Whereas military method is designed to kill, injure and destroy, I am engaged in methods designed to preserve life and promote health. Whereas military values see human life as of secondary importance to the ultimate military objective, I as a doctor and as a Christian view human life as sacred and my first priority. This is a crucial principle, and one which every doctor must decide upon clearly, since we are legally given power over life and death, for example in performing legal abortions. If human life is not maintained as the foremost priority in medical practice, it has been my observation that the whole of one's attitude towards patient care is proportionately degraded, and medical work becomes a matter of mere self-interest.

While I recognize that there exists a need for medical service in times of war, I am not prepared to use my medical skills subject to an authority whose primary objective involves killing ; a medical corps in this situation is a vital part of the military machine, and as such is as responsible for perpetuating war as the combatant corps.

(4) THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE FORCE CONSTITUTES A SIGNIFICANTLY DIVISIVE FORCE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

I have been called to serve specifically in the SADF. The same principles which guide my universal objection to serve in any armed force, as elucidated above, form the foundation of my objection to service in the SADF. In addition to these, as a result of my progressive awareness as a Christian of the injustices in South African society, I object to service in the SADF specifically for the following reasons.

South African society is uniquely beset with injustice and inequality, stemming from the denial of political representation to the majority of its inhabitants. The consequent oppression of the aspirations of this majority by a white minority government is unjust and contrary to Christian principles. These are clearly stated in this respect in Galations 3:28 : " There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus ". Furthermore, apartheid has been condemned as a heresy by a number of churches, including the Anglican church.

Because it lacks true credibility, this white minority government has kept itself in power by the application of increasingly severe repressive legislation, which limits not only the political rights but also the freedom of movement, housing, education and employment opportunities of the majority of South Africans. In addition, sweeping powers have been given to the police force, out of all proportion to its normal civil mandate, in order to enforce these measures.

The SADF is currently engaged in a civil war which has evolved from the institutionalized violence inherent in the policies of the present South African government. The ideology of apartheid and all its attendant evils is unequivocally supported by the

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SADF, and many examples illustrate this point. The exclusive conscription of white males aligns the SADF with apartheid at a fundamental level. The most graphic demonstration, however, is the increasing deployment of troops in the townships, where the "enemy" has now become other South Africans. Even on the country's borders there is evidence that a large number of the "enemy" forces are in fact South Africans who have fled the country as a result of the policies of the government in order to carry out an armed struggle for liberation. In Namibia particularly, SWAPO is supported by the majority of the inhabitant population, and the SADF is regarded as a force of foreign occupation by most Namibians. Indeed, international opinion regards South Africa's presence in Namibia as illegal.

In the light of this, I object to service in the SADF specifically because it supports a system of oppression and injustice which operates contrary to Christian principles. In addition I object to service in the SADF primarily for the same reasons that I apply to service in any armed force.

(5) PARTICIPATION IN A MILITARY SYSTEM IN ANY WAY AMOUNTS TO ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR THE MILITARY EFFORT

In my view, participation in the military system in any way, even as a medical doctor, amounts to active support for the military effort. The Surgeon-General of the SADF is quoted as having said that a doctor in the defence force is as much a combatant as any other member of the defence force. In addition he maintained that the presence of doctors on the border boosted the morale of the troops and lowered the morale of the enemy. I therefore object to serving in any capacity in a military uniform, since I refuse to be identified with a system whose objective involves killing.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the above, and in the sincere belief that I am carrying out God's will, I hereby register my objection to military service in any armed force, and request a non-military alternative.

Stephen J. Reid

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