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# **The Ultimate Conflict: An Evaluation of the Conflicting Stances in the Nuclear Debate**

DAVID KIBBLE

Over the last few years a number of books, articles and pamphlets have been published on the nuclear debate. Many of these are written from a Christian standpoint: indeed it might be said that the Christian church has debated the nuclear issue more fully than any other section of society. Certainly many of the publications on the topic are by Christians or in Christian journals and magazines. Christians have undoubtedly examined with rigour the arguments on both sides. The topic itself continues to make news headlines: Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev have signed the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces agreement ridding the world of their intermediate range missiles in Europe. Both sides hope to make some progress soon on long range strategic missiles. In terms of domestic British politics the nuclear issue, and especially the issue of Trident, has been one of the factors leading to difficulties between the Democrats and the S.D.P.

In arguing for and against the use of nuclear weapons various different arguments have been used, some distinctly Christian, some not. The aim of this article will not be primarily to evaluate the individual arguments themselves but to see if there is a fundamental stance taken by those on either side and to see whether this fundamental stance can itself be evaluated.

## **Arguing Against Nuclear Weapons**

In one sense, of course, everyone is 'against' nuclear weapons insofar as everyone hopes that they will never have to be used. I use the term 'against' here to refer to those who argue that we should not possess them and that those countries that do possess them should abandon them. Some authors who are against the possession of nuclear weapons are also total pacifists.

One of the major considerations in any avowedly Christian stance is the teaching of the Bible. Different authors debating the nuclear issue use the Bible in different ways. As far as the Old Testament goes, this seems to receive scant attention from those who argue against the possession of nuclear weapons. Aukerman's book,

*Darkening Valley*, probably makes more use of it than others. For example, he devotes one chapter to a study of the first commandment and Isaiah 47:8, concluding that nationalism and patriotism, which tend to sanction the possession of nuclear weapons, contradict the commands given by God in the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> Other chapters of Aukerman's book make use particularly of the psalms and the prophets. R.E.D. Clark looks at the Old Testament contribution to the nuclear debate but believes it to be minimal. This has to be the case in his view as Jesus fulfilled Old Testament teaching and fundamentally changed man's understanding of the nature of God (and especially his understanding of war).<sup>2</sup>

More important for nuclear pacifists are themes from the New Testament, especially the words of Jesus and the person of Jesus. Particularly important are the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, where the Christian is told that loving his neighbour includes loving and praying for his enemies. In his own hermeneutical style Aukerman takes the command of Jesus in Luke, 'Bless those who curse you,' and draws the following conclusion:

Hydrogen bombs and their missile carriers can be seen as an extraordinary concretization of human cursing . . . The curse once uttered took on a certain autonomy between those cursing and those cursed . . . Precision with words and ritual has become precision in nuclear weapons technology.<sup>3</sup>

Aukerman elsewhere argues for a pacifist stance using passages like the woman taken in adultery from which he concludes that no man has the right to condemn either a person or a country.<sup>4</sup>

A stronger case for nuclear pacifism using the New Testament is that put forward by those who argue not so much from the words of Jesus as from his person. Although sometimes Aukerman's theology is terrible<sup>5</sup> his hermeneutical studies of 1 John 4:20<sup>6</sup> and of the temptations of Jesus<sup>7</sup> present powerful arguments for pacifism whatever view one holds. More orthodox are those, like Noel Moules, who study the person of Jesus as a peacemaker. Again, whether one ultimately agrees with the final position of Moules, the Christian must admit the power and incisiveness of much of his argument.

Peacemakers cannot bring peace without first finding peace within themselves. All conflict and violence, from personal to international, has to do with the issues of 'identity' and 'security'. It was Jesus' knowledge of who he was, his origin and destiny, that gave him identity and security.<sup>8</sup> Many authors argue for pacifism or nuclear pacifism through an appeal to the person of Christ.

Following on from arguments using the Bible, out of the argument based on the person of Christ comes the argument based on what many be called 'Kingdom theology.' Put simply this states that

Christians are members of the kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus: as God's kingdom is a kingdom of peace and not war if Christians claim to live as members of God's kingdom then they cannot be involved in fighting a war—and certainly not a nuclear one. Willard Swartley and Alan Kreider, both Mennonites, argue in this sort of way believing that any Christian who takes up the sword turns his back on God's call to the church to demonstrate in its total existence and life the peace of God's humanity. According to them the church's most important task towards governments and to evil in society is to live as a new society of peace bearing witness to the gospel of reconciliation.<sup>9</sup> Chris Sugden echoes Swartley and Kreider's call:

The church's role is to demonstrate how God establishes right relationships by giving people a new identity through Christ, bringing together people of different cultural backgrounds in the family of families thus strengthening the family as a unit of society which God has ordained for its redemption.<sup>10</sup>

The Church of England report, *The Church and the Bomb*, hints at the kingdom approach; its brief allusion to it, however, needs a far more in depth treatment.<sup>11</sup>

The whole basis of the argument against nuclear weapons in the Church of England report is the Just War theory. This theory says:

1. A war must be undertaken by the leaders of the state.
2. A war must be undertaken for a just cause.
3. Recourse to war must be a last resort.
4. There should be a formal declaration of war.
5. Those engaging in war must have reasonable hope of success.
6. The evil and damage which the war entails must be judged to be proportionate to the injury it is designed to avert.
7. Non-combatants must be immune from attack.
8. The methods of war must not result in disproportionate harm for any of the populations engaged, or for third parties.

The report believes that a nuclear war would be unable to fulfil many of these demands. It is difficult, according to the report, to see how any side could have 'success' in a nuclear war, in view of the devastation that would occur to both the physical and social fabric of the nations involved. The report also questions whether the damage which would result from a nuclear war could be said to be proportionate to the injury it is designed to avert: 'What injury or injustice would be so great that it would be reasonable to avert it in such a way and at such a cost?'<sup>12</sup> Whilst it stresses that non-combatant immunity does not imply that non-combatants can be

protected against all the consequences of war, it maintains that action is ruled out where it is taken 'intentionally against non-combatants.'<sup>13</sup> In discussing non-combatant immunity, it concludes that:

. . . attacks which indiscriminately destroy anyone and everything in an area containing non-combatants cannot be justified even though there are legitimate military objectives in the area.<sup>14</sup>

Finally it believes that the last requirement of the just war, the principle of proportion, cannot be met in the case of a nuclear war. Since nuclear war would be so terrible, the report believes that it must result in disproportionate harm. To argue that small tactical nuclear weapons would satisfy this criterion is not acceptable since the report believes that once such weapons have been used, escalation would invariably follow. The report therefore concludes that

. . . the use of nuclear weapons cannot be justified. Such weapons cannot be used without harming non-combatants and could never be proportionate to the just cause and aim of the war.<sup>15</sup>

The just war requirements rule that nuclear warfare is immoral.

Aside from the Biblical argument in all its forms the Just War theory is the most popular argument presented by those opposed to the possession of nuclear weapons. It forms the basis of Gill's case for nuclear pacifism<sup>16</sup> and that put forward by A.F. Holmes<sup>17</sup>. Holmes argues that the horrendously disastrous nature of nuclear weapons, weapons that spread death and destruction across large segments of the globe, exceeds the principle of proportion: there would be disproportionate harm to vast sections of the population. It makes a 'sheer mockery of any notion of justice or love.' Thus he concludes that

. . . no moral cause and no moral ends could by any stroke of the imagination justify a morally responsible decision to launch, join or support such nuclear destruction. Nuclear pacifism, I conclude is the course Christians and all morally responsible persons should follow.<sup>18</sup>

There are a number of other arguments put forward by those who would outlaw nuclear weapons. One revolves around the notion of stewardship. To destroy and contaminate parts of the earth with radiation is to deny man's stewardship of it. According to the Bible man was placed on earth to look after it and to cultivate it: to use nuclear weapons is to risk long term damage to the environment and the ecosystem. It is the very opposite of looking after and cultivating the earth. If the use of aerosols is questionable the use of nuclear weapons must be far more questionable. The Church of England report takes up the issue of stewardship and concludes that the rise of ' . . . long term and possibly fatal damage to the global environment

is evil, an anti-God act.<sup>19</sup> Stewardship, moreover, means not just looking after the ecosystem now and for the generations to come: it also means looking after human life on the planet. One author puts the message starkly:

Essentially the arms race is theft from the poor, in the name of national security. We see the price being paid for our nuclear arsenals in the wasted bodies and frustrated hopes of the world's poor, in the decaying inner cities and deteriorating services in our own country.<sup>20</sup>

To back up his case he presents a number of statistics: Britain spends over five per cent of its Gross National Product on defence; the Ministry of Defence employs over 1,000,000 people; at any one time it has contracts with over 10,000 companies; over half of Britain's research and development in the scientific field is devoted to military purposes; and he notes that defence accounts for almost half the output of the British aerospace industry and for over one third of the output of the British electronics industry. The Vatican II *Pastoral Constitution* similarly described the arms race as 'an act of aggression against the poor.'

The last argument that is used is what we might call an argument from 'real world considerations.' Gill warns us, for example, that as nuclear weapons continue to proliferate, the chances increase that some leader, some terrorist organization or some nation that feels it has nothing to lose, will come to possess such weapons. Whilst East and West are skilled in diplomacy and are likely to urge restraint and caution such niceties might not be cherished by, for example a Middle Eastern terrorist group.

In such situations the deterrent function of nuclear weapons soon evaporates. For many it appears to be only a matter of time before such situations arise.<sup>21</sup>

Professor Maurice Wilkins adds two more considerations from 'the real world.' His first is that the destructive capacity of our nuclear weapons is so great that nuclear war would lead to a victory that would not be worth having. The object of war, as generally understood, is to gain control. Who would want control of a devastated and contaminated country? The use of nuclear weapons therefore defeats the whole object of war. His second consideration is that the burden of nuclear warfare would be such that neither presidents nor military commanders would be capable of making rational decisions. If the unleashing of nuclear weapons heralds the unleashing of irrationality is it worth unleashing those weapons at all?<sup>22</sup> Finally, Anthony Kenny, although tempted by the argument that nuclear weapons act as a deterrent and that the West might aim to launch only a small limited attack if it 'came to the crunch,' points

out that the stated Soviet response to any nuclear attack is massive nuclear retaliation. Although in theory therefore one might argue for the real deterrent effect of a limited nuclear attack that fell within the bounds of the Just War theory, in practice massive destruction would ensue.

Even if a damage-plan could be devised which would satisfy the strictest scrutiny in accordance with the principles of non-combatant immunity and proportionality, putting it into action against an enemy prepared and willing to launch massive retaliation would be an act of reckless folly.<sup>23</sup>

### **Arguing for Nuclear Weapons**

There can, of course, be no Biblical support as such for the possession and use of nuclear weapons. Such weapons were not invented in Biblical times. But just as many of those who put forward an argument against nuclear weapons make use of the Bible so too do many of those Christians who put forward an argument for them. Any Christian multilateralist must first make sure that his case cannot at least be demolished by Biblical teaching even if it cannot positively support it because Biblical times did not know about such weaponry. Harries spends a chapter discussing the teaching and example of Jesus.<sup>24</sup> Pride of place is given to a discussion of Matthew 5:38–42, the passage that contains the apparently pacifist injunction, 'Do not resist one who is evil. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also . . .' Harries makes two points in his exegesis: first, he believes that hitting a person on the right cheek actually signified a personal insult rather than a physical assault. On the assumption that most people are right handed, we can only be struck on our right cheek by the back of another person's hand. This, Harries points out, was a recognized insult. Secondly, he notes that all the examples in the passage from the Sermon on the Mount refer to an alien action against the reader (originally their hearer). They do not, he claims, tell us how we are to react if the injury is about to be inflicted on a person for whom the hearer is responsible.

The significance of this passage is therefore less wide reaching than is sometimes assumed. It deals only with relatively minor injuries to the person addressed. It does not consider direct threats to the life of someone for whom we are responsible.<sup>25</sup>

One of the strongest Biblical cases put forward by a Christian multilateralist is that of Jerram Barrs. He points out that God is, of course, a God of love: he is also, however, a God of justice. In biblical teaching 'God himself established the institution of government that there might be some reflection of his character as judge in human society.'<sup>26</sup> Government, therefore, has the duty to act as a reflection

of God's anger at wrongdoing. Barrs notes that judges and rulers are, according to the teaching of St. Paul in Romans 13, God's ministers, *diakonoi*, to bring justice in society, just as others are God's ministers, *diakonoi*, to teach in the church. The same word *diakonoi* is used by Paul of each: both judges and church ministers have a similar, but different, God-given function. God wants his own character in its aspects of love and justice to be reflected in the world: he uses the organs of government and the state as one means of reflecting that justice. This conclusion is drawn by Barrs from a host of Biblical passages from both the Old and New Testaments. Not only will the Christian want to ensure as a result that his country has a commitment to justice at home, he will also want to ensure that it has a commitment to international justice. Along with a commitment to justice at home,

... a nation will quite rightly be concerned to protect its people against aggression from an enemy, or to answer the requests for help from other nations which are being attacked unjustly.<sup>27</sup>

Against the unilateralist Barrs argues that peace is not simply the absence of war: peace is the restoration of justice. That is why in the Bible there are more prayers for justice than there are for peace. If the Christian longs for peace in the world, therefore, Barrs concludes, his prayers and efforts must be devoted to establishing justice.

That will mean both the preparedness to be armed with whatever weapons are necessary to deter an enemy, and also the readiness to fight wars to resist evil when no other way forward can be found.<sup>28</sup>

Barr's mention of deterrence leads us on from Biblical arguments to the multilateralist equivalent of the unilateralist's 'real world considerations.' Once the 'Biblical foundations' have been laid, the main thrust of the Christian argument for retaining nuclear weapons (like that of his non-Christian brother) is that if in the real world we abandon our nuclear weapons unilaterally, we lay ourselves open to nuclear blackmail by other countries. Nuclear weapons are kept, therefore, not in the hope that we might use them but in the hope that they will deter a potential enemy from becoming an aggressor. This argument constitutes the major plank of the Christian multilateralist's platform.

Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford, has written widely in support of Christian multilateralism. Writing in one volume he begins his study from a practical viewpoint and notes that the life we live here on earth is one which is fallen. Life is characterized by the clash of self-interest and sometimes by malevolence and brutality; such characteristics make the use of force by government a necessity. In this fallen world the job of the Christian is to bring the peace of the



kingdom of God into the world as far as possible, but because it still remains a fallen world he too must accept the use of force and that includes the concept of deterrence. God's peace does not yet reign fully on earth.

This means that the main way in which major powers are going to be prevented from going to war with one another is by assuring that it is not in their interests to do so. Though we can and must strive to maximize the peace of heaven on earth, we cannot afford to dispense with the uneasy peace based on a parity of power.<sup>29</sup>

What would happen, Harries asks, if the West was to renounce its nuclear weapons? Such a policy could be 'the first step towards world tyranny.'<sup>30</sup> If the countries of the Warsaw pact had a nuclear capability and the West did not, what could there be to stop the one nuclear power from imposing its will on the world as a whole? Against nuclear weapons there is no non-nuclear deterrent. The West would either have to capitulate or suffer horrific consequences. Harries makes another point: because nuclear weapons are so destructive, so horrific, deterrence has a greater chance of preventing a war between the two superpowers simply because the stakes are so high. Nuclear deterrence therefore ensures an equilibrium that must of necessity be secure.

Many authors besides Harries argue for deterrence by imagining what would happen if the West were to renounce its nuclear capability. Sir Frederick Catherwood emphasizes the duty of protecting the lives of others through deterrence.

For one country to remove its own stockpile does little to remove the threat overhanging mankind. It is no part of Christian love or duty to opt out, trying to protect ourselves whilst leaving others vulnerable.<sup>31</sup>

Michael Quinlan, like Catherwood, again stresses the Christian necessity to protect the vulnerable:

- Renunciation then amounts to saying, in effect, that the right Christian response to the discovery of boundless military force is simply to leave the aggressive and the unscrupulous to wield it unopposed for any purposes they like, even if those turn out to be the purposes of Hitler or Stalin or Pol Pot. Frankly, I have difficulty in agreeing that that must be what Christ our Lord requires us to accept, not only for ourselves individually but also for our neighbours and our children for the rest of time.<sup>32</sup>

Those who support the possession of nuclear weapons feel that the reality of the world in which we live demands nuclear deterrence. Graham Leonard, like Harries, stresses the fact that we do not live in an ideal world: sometimes, he says, the reality of a situation forces us

to choose between two courses of action neither of which is wholly good and each of which has elements that we deplore. We cannot opt out: to opt out may be in itself an act that results in evil. What the Christian must do is to consider all the possible courses of action and positively to choose that which he believes will bring the greatest good out of the situation and minimize the bad consequences.<sup>33</sup>

It was an acceptance of the concept of deterrence that led the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to pass the following positive resolution in 1981:

While recognizing that there are church members and others who feel compelled to support the present campaign for unilateral disarmament, but believing that the majority of members support Her Majesty's Government in its nuclear deterrent policy, and also recognizing the W.D.C. and commending its aim of multilateral disarmament, the General Assembly believe that we must support the maintenance of a British nuclear force in order to fulfil our commitments to N.A.T.O. strategy, and to allow Britain to exert her influence in the S.A.L.T. negotiations and in all future arms control negotiations in order to achieve a stable East-West relationship.<sup>34</sup>

One other author must be mentioned in our discussion of 'real world considerations': Ronald B. Kirkemo. He, too, argues that deterrence is the only workable road to peace because of the nature of the world in which we live. The world is divided, whether we like it or not, into separate nations, nations which are armed and which have their own history, their own culture and their own interests. This can cause tension between nations, a tension which is aggravated by resources which are unequally distributed. This tension results in disagreements which cannot be easily solved since there is no global mechanism to provide the world with legislative, judicial and security services necessary to ensure harmony. Righteousness and justice are therefore difficult to achieve in practical terms and goals are limited by what is possible, means by what is effective. 'The ethic of perfect righteousness must be replaced in world affairs with a morality of responsibility.'<sup>35</sup> The responsible Christian will therefore wish to see those goals established to promote peace in a nuclear world. The first goal is to preserve a strategic balance between East and West; the second is to minimize danger by eliminating unintended appearances of threat, promoting adequate control of subordinate commanders and limiting the extent of damage in the event of a nuclear exchange; the third goal is to ensure that neither side perceives its enemies in a simplistic way, that the horrors of nuclear war are kept before our eyes and that we do not give way to a despair that abandons concern for the quality of life. With regard to the first goal Kirkemo argues that a number of requirements be met: the West must be able to respond in kind and assure mutual levels of destruction—to deter a

potential nuclear attack at any level we must be able to respond at any level; the West must also have nuclear forces that can survive an attack and remain operational to launch a retaliatory strike; and it must have the will to use the protected nuclear forces if it becomes necessary.

Finally, on the multilateralist side use is made of the Just War theory to prove that the possession and use of nuclear weapons can be in accordance with Christian morality. James Turner Johnson in particular takes such a stand. He even argues that in some cases it is more in accordance with the Just War theory to make use of a nuclear weapon than it is to make use of a conventional one. He asks us to picture an area in West Germany which has been invaded by the Warsaw Pact armies. The inhabitants have all fled from the area. The question of non-combatant immunity does not therefore arise: there are no non-combatants around. Johnson proposes that in such a situation it might be morally right to use a neutron bomb. A neutron bomb is a nuclear weapon but one which is significantly different from the traditional atomic weapon like that used at Hiroshima. The traditional atomic weapon releases a large amount of blast and heat and causes damage to life and to the ecosystem through the release of radiation. Half the energy of the Hiroshima bomb was transmitted as blast, one third of its energy was transmitted as heat, and the remainder was transmitted as radiation. The neutron weapon, on the other hand, attempts to exploit the radiation effect as compared with blast and heat. In a neutron bomb the proportion of energy released as blast and heat is considerably smaller than in traditional atomic warheads. The amount of damage done by blast and heat is therefore small in comparison. Moreover, the neutron radiation emitted is especially enhanced: its power enables it to penetrate steel so that tank crews, for example, would be incapacitated. The neutron radiation, however, is not long-enduring so that the lingering radioactive contamination in the affected area is diminished. In practice this would mean that a neutron weapon would kill the invading army but because of the lack of the effects of blast and heat the buildings in the area would be largely left intact, ready for use again shortly after the explosion. The lack of lingering radioactive contamination would mean that after the wave of war had passed, the non-combatant inhabitants could return to their homes and begin work again.

Turner believes that the use of the traditional nuclear weapon in this situation would be unjust. The damage done to property, and particularly the long term effects on the environment, would force us to classify its use as unjust according to the Just War theory on account of the damage that would be done by blast, heat and radiation. More importantly, however, Turner maintains that the use of traditional weapons in this situation would also be unjust

according to the Just War theory. It would be unjust because in order to stop the advancing Warsaw Pact tanks, the collateral damage to property would be enormous were the advance to be stopped with traditional weapons which rely on blast and fire alone. He therefore concludes that

In cases like the one sketched here the possibility does seem to exist that in some conditions the neutron weapon can be used with greater moral discrimination than tactical fission weapons and even conventional high explosives.<sup>36</sup>

## Conclusions

What conclusions can we draw from our study? The Christian case against nuclear weapons rests on one or more foundations:

The Old Testament, the New Testament and the person of Jesus;  
Kingdom theology;  
The Just War theory;  
Stewardship;  
'Real world considerations';

Those Christians who believe that the possession of nuclear weapons is a moral option have their case, too, resting on one or more foundations;

The Old and New Testaments, and in particular the character of God;  
The necessity for deterrence and other 'real world considerations';  
The Just War theory.

Both sides make use of the Bible. The Christian unilateralist or pacifist is more likely to focus on the person and the words of Jesus in arguing his case. Particular attention is paid to his ethical injunctions, especially those in the Sermon on the Mount. Some of the unilateralist's exegesis, however, has been branded as simplistic.<sup>37</sup> Many Christian unilateralists and pacifists fail to interpret passages from the Sermon on the Mount in anything other than their simple, apparent meaning. They fail to look at the original context of pericopes or to interpret them with any rigour. They also often fail to take enough account of passages from the Epistles, especially Romans 13. Kingdom theology represents the weakest plank in the anti-nuclear platform. Essentially kingdom theology is about the individual Christian or the Church as a whole, living in a manner that expresses the quality of life which will exist in the consummated kingdom. What kingdom theology, by definition, cannot deal with or cope with is the question as to how the Christian should conduct himself in the sphere of national and international politics. It is just

not good enough to say that the Christian should propound the ideals of the kingdom for national and international legislation.

Here it seems is actually the nub of the whole problem. The Christian unilateralist or pacifist tends to take his stance on an individualistic Christian morality. 'The Christian ideal is peace and non-violence therefore as a Christian I cannot take part in war or will not use nuclear weapons because they offend my individual conscience.' The unilateralist takes his stance on his own personal moral ideal: his ideal becomes the focus around which decisions are taken. Because he takes this individualistic or idealistic stance he remains unable to allow the use of nuclear weapons *even if* their possession would actually prevent war and therefore save lives, as the multilateralist claims. The unilateralist is never willing to do anything that 'offends his individual Christian conscience' even if by so doing dreadful consequences follow. The Christian multilateralist, on the other hand, believes he has to look at far more than the Christian ideal alone: he has also to look at the real world around him as it is at present. By so doing, by having his morality based upon real world considerations as well as (or even in spite of) distinctly Christian ones he claims that he is able to promote a more Christian state of affairs. Thus the multilateralist is willing to agree to the possession of nuclear weapons if by doing so the Christian ideal of peace is promoted. He is happy to 'soil his hands' in order to ensure that life is preserved.

The Christian unilateralist is not prepared to 'dirty his hands' even if by so doing he could save life and promote a Christian ideal. The Christian multilateralist sees his major aim as promoting the Christian ideals of peace and justice and is prepared to 'break the rules' along the way if it is necessary to achieve those ends, and particularly where he sees breaking the rules as the *only* way to achieve those ends. In sum, it is one type of Christian thinking against another: the individualistic stance against a stance which also takes into account the politics of the real world. It is difficult to brand one approach as right and one as wrong: it is more a case of using two methods that are different and incompatible. The Christian is forced to make his own decision as to which he believes is right.

Making such a decision is not easy. So difficult is the decision, in fact, that some authors try to keep a 'foot in both camps', a stance which is blatantly illogical. The Church of England Report<sup>38</sup>, Gill<sup>39</sup> and Holmes<sup>40</sup> are three examples of authors who argue on the one hand that nuclear weapons are intrinsically immoral (nuclear pacifism or unilateralism) but go on to embrace a multilateral approach in an attempt to come to terms with the real world. If nuclear weapons are wrong in themselves then one must logically support unilateral and total disarmament here and now. What one cannot do is to argue with any logic that the nuclear deterrent is immoral and then propound the multilateralist cause; even a unilateral first step along a multilateralist

path is not logical if one believes that nuclear weapons are intrinsically immoral. If they are wrong in themselves then one can have no truck with them at all. The fact that many authors do so after arguing that they are intrinsically immoral would seem to me perhaps to indicate that the more just conclusion in this fallen world is to permit the possession and use of nuclear weapons if it will promote greater good than the unilateral alternative. I realize that others may take a different standpoint, and because I can see that theirs is a *different* standpoint I cannot argue against them. To do so would be to follow a different form of logic, a logic which in this instance I cannot accept on account of its possible consequences.

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### NOTES

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- 2 R.E.D. Clark, in O.R. Barclay (ed.), *Pacifism and War*, I.V.P., Leicester, 1984, p.101ff.
- 3 D. Aukerman, *op. cit.*, p.8.
- 4 *Ibid.*, ch.3.
- 5 Consider the following:  
The explosion of a nuclear warhead can be seen as a parody of Jesus' rising . . . Uranium and missiles are raised out of the depths of earth and sea. The inert bursts upward in resplendent, irresistible power . . . Our Lord in his rising reaches out to draw all creatures, all creation, up into his life. In a nuclear explosion matter moves up, out, and down as an infernal counterpart to that rising. (*Ibid.*, pp. 121-1).
- 6 *Ibid.*, ch.8.
- 7 *Ibid.*, ch.11.
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- 11 The Church of England, *The Church and the Bomb*, Hodder and Stoughton/C.I.O., London, p.148.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p.96.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p.87.
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- 16 R. Gill, *The Cross Against the Bomb*, Epworth, London, 1984.
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- 20 P. Mitchell in D. Mills-Powell, *op. cit.*, p.138.
- 21 R. Gill, *op. cit.*, p.9.
- 22 M.H.F. Wilkins, in R. Harries (ed.), *What Hope in an Armed World?* Pickering and Inglis, 1982.
- 23 A. Kenny, *The Logic of Deterrence*, Firethorn Press, London, 1985, pp.42-3.
- 24 R. Harries, *Christianity and War in a Nuclear Age*, Mowbray, Oxford, 1986, ch.2.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p.14.
- 26 J. Barrs, in O.R. Barclay (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.142.

## The Ultimate Conflict: An Evaluation of the Conflicting Stances

- 27 *Ibid.*, p.154.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p.160. Having laid his Biblical foundations Barrs gives little space to actually discussing deterrence. He is at his weakest when he argues that nuclear weapons are only 'quantitatively different' from conventional ones: they are not of a 'different order'. (p.157). Few Christian (or secular) multilateralists would agree with him. A nuclear weapon, because it can have an effect on the whole ecosystem, because it can produce such long term debilitating diseases, and because it can disrupt society so much, must be of a different order from a conventional weapon.
- 29 R. Harries in R. Harries, *What Hope in an Armed World?* p.94.
- 30 R. Harries, *Christianity and War in a Nuclear Age*, p.143.
- 31 Sir F. Catherwood, in O.R. Barclay (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.175.
- 32 M. Quinlan, in F. Bridger (ed.), *The Cross and the Bomb*, Mowbray, Oxford, 1983, p.151.
- 33 G. Leonard, in *ibid.* ch.1.
- 34 *Committee on Church and Nation*, p.106.
- 35 R.B. Kirkemo, in D.C. Curry (ed.), *Evangelicals and the Bishops' Pastoral Letter*, W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1984, p.122.
- 36 J.T. Johnson, *Can Modern War be Just?* Yale University Press, New Haven, 1984, p.117. For a discussion and critique of Johnson's position cf. my 'The Neutron Bomb: a Morally Superior Weapon,' in *Crucible*, Jan-March 1986.
- 37 Cf. J.S. Bray, in D.C. Curry (ed.), *op. cit.*, ch.1.
- 38 The Church of England, *op. cit.*, p.158ff. The Report argues for Britain unilaterally to renounce her nuclear weapons whilst remaining under the nuclear umbrella of N.A.T.O. Its stance is therefore one of multilateralism with a unilateral British component.
- 39 R. Gill, *op. cit.*, p.86ff. Gill argues for a N.A.T.O.-wide multilateralist approach but remains agnostic about whether Britain should adopt a unilateral approach.
- 40 A.F. Holmes, in O.R. Barclay (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp.31-2.