

PRONOUNCEMENT

The AFM of SA and Pacifism

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INTRODUCTION

The AFM of SA exists in a global environment where such matters as peace and war will arise from time to time, and the church should take a stance and provide guidance and leadership to its membership and structures in this regard. Where war or violence is waged or perpetrated against them or their loved ones, it also affects ordinary church members. What should they do in such instances? Should they pacify or engage in what is called Just War? Does violent crime require AFM members to defend their families or possessions against violent attacks or should the church encourage its members to minimise violent reprisals as far as possible and to never react in retaliation? Is that always possible and the way to go, in as far as the Scripture is concerned or what Christ encourages Christians to do?

EARLY HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The early Christians were at variance with the Greco-Roman world as to the participation in war. For the first three centuries, no Christian writing, which has survived to our time, condoned Christian participation in war. Some Christians held that for them, all bloodshed, whether as soldiers or executioners was unlawful.

Pacifism was the dominant stance for Christians from the time of Jesus until the late fourth and early fifth centuries and while some scholars conclude that Christians did not serve in the Roman army because of persecution, the witness of the Early Fathers tells us that Jesus's command to "love your enemies" was the major reason for their refusal to shed blood (Fahey, 2018). Fahey further argues that even Roman soldiers converted to Christianity and he further illustrate this point by saying that St. Martin of Tours (316-397 CE) was representative when he stated, "Hitherto I have served you as a soldier, let me now serve Christ...I am a soldier of Christ and it is not lawful for me to fight." (Fahey, 2018)

Some commentators are of the opinion that when Jesus was alive here on Earth, He was advocating a "third way" between passivity and violence: "Jesus was actually counselling nonviolent resistance when Jesus told his followers to "turn the other cheek," "give your cloak," and "go the second mile." (Matthew 5: 38-42). He concludes that Jesus was counselling public humiliation and resistance to slave masters, tax collectors, and Roman soldiers.

Pacifists also hold that St. Paul's counsel in Ephesians 6:10-17 to "put on the whole armour of God" demonstrates the centrality of nonviolent resistance in Christian life. Paul urges Christians to use spiritual weapons against their adversaries: Christians are to use "the sword of the spirit".

At one stage in its history, the influential church of Alexandria looked suspiciously upon receiving soldiers into the church membership. Furthermore, they allowed deployment in the platoons only in exceptional circumstances. Hippolytus, prominent in Rome wrote what he believed to be the apostolic tradition, which was authentic Christian teaching. He maintained that when applying for admission to the Christian fellowship, a soldier must refuse to kill men even if he was commanded by his superiors. The church expected that military commanders must resign if they were to continue as catechumens.

A catechumen or baptised persons according to Hippolytus, who sought to enlist as a soldier must be cut-off from the church. Tertullian also argued against Christians being members of the Roman army on the grounds that this brought one under a master other than Christ. That it entailed taking a sword, and that even when the military was employed for police purposes in peacetime, it made necessary the infliction of punishment and all revenge was forbidden to the Christian. He said in disarming, Peter Christ 'ungirded' every soldier.

Another consideration which weighs against service in the armies was the strong possibility that as a soldier, the Christian would be required to take part in idolatrous rites. Some Christians would permit service in the legions in times of peace when the function of the army was that of the police but frowned upon it in war. The opposition of the early Christians to bearing arms was so clear, that Celsus in his famous attack on them, declared that if all were to do as the Christians did -the empire would fall victim to the wildest and most lawless barbarians. In reply, Origen did not deny that Christians were pacifists. Indeed, he said that Christians do not fight under the emperor "although he required it." Instead, he argued that if all were to become Christians, the barbarians would also be Christians. Besides that, even though Christians were in the minority, their love, labour, and prayers were doing more than the Roman arms to preserve the realm.

For early Christians, pacifism was mostly theoretical, for they were chiefly from groups other than those from which soldiers were recruited. They did not have responsibility for formulating state policy.

Despite the general trend among Christians towards pacifism, in the third century the number of Christians serving in the legions seem to have increased. It was primarily since the borders were threatened by invasion and war.

Moreover, after the Emperor has embraced Christianity, Christians became officials and were charged with responsibility for the body politic and for government. The attitude of most Christians did not renounce that change.

Christians now begin to believe that some wars were just. That was the position taken by Ambrose. Augustine elaborated on the theoretical basis for a just war. He held that the wickedness must be restrained, by force if necessary and that the sword of the magistrate is divinely commissioned.

Not all wars are just according to Augustine. A war must be waged under the authority of the prince, and it must have as its object the punishment of injustice and the restoration of peace. Moreover, it must be fought without vindictiveness and unnecessary violence. Furthermore, it should be carried out with inward love. Without the authority of the prince, the civilian must not use force to defend even his own life. The clergy and the monks were to be entirely exempt from military service. The principle of a righteous or just war, was held by a large proportion of Christians in subsequent centuries.

A HISTORICAL PENTECOSTAL STANCE:

Some say that the Pentecostal movement started out in general as officially pacifist, requesting exemption from military service for members of the AFM. Others say that there is no clear documentary proof of this.

Developments in the 1940s and 1950s triggered a basic shift in Pentecostal belief about Christians bearing arms and partaking in battles. In its quest to shed its image as a sect and the accompanying discrimination at the hand of established denominations, (white) Pentecostals like the church in the fourth century, started seeking for acceptance and approval by the state and community. Predominantly this happened because of Pentecostals' assimilation into the cultural and religious mainstream during and following the Second World War. From the 1940's some Pentecostals experienced social and economic mobility, requiring them to gain acceptance as a denomination and cultural accommodation and for this reason they cooperated with evangelicals and changed their stance toward several issues such as the ministry of women as assembly leaders, democratic participation of all believers as the body of Christ and also pacifism in accordance with evangelical theology, while they also built church buildings that reflected the main-line churches.

Since the Second World War, the AFM never officially changed its official stance on believers' participation in war, but practice shows that the then white division of the AFM did change its viewpoint, because of the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and a new interest and involvement in politics from the side of some prominent Pentecostal church leaders. Today the church has several chaplains serving the different departments of the defence ministry.

THE ORIGINS OF WAR

Some correspondents are of the opinion that war originated when human beings at Babel believed that they were capable of living without the acknowledgement of their creatureliness, and hence without God, leading to the fear of 'the other' becoming the overriding passion which motivated each group to force others into their story or to face annihilation. In many cases 'the other' became stereotyped into 'the enemy'.

Others say that Genesis 3, where Cain stoned Abel is regarded as the first murder of one individual by another. Long before metal spears, the stone was regarded as the first weapon of war. Thus, long before Babel, people were already fighting.

All correspondents agree that Pentecost restored what was destroyed at Babel, which consisted in the scattering of humanity by the confusion of different languages (Gen 11:5-9).

Jesus bore witness of a new possibility of relationships based on peace and love; He characterised it as the reign of God, a community consisting of the restructuring of relationships achieved by the intervention of the same Spirit who anointed the Christ. For this reason, Christians believe that God, through Jesus Christ, has inaugurated a history that frees all people from the assumption that there is no moral alternative to war.

The reign of God represents a social ethic; the revelation of Jesus, His teaching and His ministry model, serves as its social ethic and role model.

Spirit baptism engendered glossolalia, is a sign that in Pentecost God had begun to gather together the world's scattered peoples into one new people. Babel's divisions and their resultant hostilities have been overcome. The church as an actual way of living among a concrete group of people has become an alternative to Babel, the way this world operates.

The absence of any authority above States, to prevent or adjust conflicts, leads to the inevitability of war. The restoration of the kingdom of God on earth in the shape of the church, however, establishes God as the highest authority, making peace a possibility amid a world at war.

The kingdom is not only yet to come but has also been made present fully in Jesus Christ and through the baptism in the Spirit in the church. The miracle we call the Church, is God's sign that war is not part of his providential care of the world.

Some writers feel that Pentecostals should (along with other Christian traditions) become the embodiment of the new humanity whose Spirit-filled lives make present to the world the reality of God's kingdom.

In this Kingdom no-one participates in killing as a means of vengeance; they live in peace with one another as far as possible (Heb 12:14) because the peace of the Christ rules in their hearts (Col 3:15).

Some correspondents see violence and war as fundamentally immoral. Especially in the atomic age where a war may claim the lives of millions of people and even destroy the earth, they feel that the church's pacifist voice needs to be heard urgently.

THE NATURE OF ARMED CONFLICT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

What is understood by the term "war"? -Is it limited to the traditional, narrow picture of two opposing forces facing off on a battlefield? - or a more sophisticated military force engaging opposing forces like the campaign of the US armed forces in Iraq?

Some correspondents feel that this picture of armed conflict is quite outdated, for war has become extremely complex and messy, with many actors and angles. Conventional war is waged jointly (Involving different arms of service: Army, Air Force, Navy, Special Forces) and often Multi-nationally.

The current scenario is quite different from conventional warfare in most global hotspots, we see many forces, factions and actors are involved in a so-called asymmetrical war.

The concept of armed conflict has changed completely, especially after 9/11. Who would have imagined that aircraft can be used as weapons? Terrorists plant IED's, extremists' gun down believers, and suicide bombers target indiscriminately.

Recent incidents where innocent civilians were killed occurred in a Mosque in New Zealand, as well as in cathedrals in Sri Lanka and Colombia.

It is argued by some that it is no longer a question of whether one should join the armed forces or not, bear arms or serve as a non-combatant or at the sharp end, we must all be aware of the threat of terrorism and extremism, and be ready to respond to possible threats to our communities' safety and security.

A MORAL DILEMMA

Some people argue that World War II was blatantly aggressive and unjust: -Would it be wrong to honour soldiers for their sacrifice in that war? Should we only honour those who give their lives in a Just War, and who followed the rules of war, outlined in the Geneva Conventions, for instance? Is it conscience or cowardice that keeps pacifists out of the military?

Would we be prepared to work in non-combat roles as medical orderlies, stretcher-bearers, ambulance drivers, cooks or labourers or would we refuse to do anything that might help the war effort? Which religions promote peace and pacifism most? Some religions, such as Buddhism, promote pacifism. Others have strong pacifist elements like in Christianity -but have accepted that war is sometimes inevitable and sought to provide moral guidance in dealing with conflict.

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ARMED CONFLICT AND THE USE OF VIOLENCE

References to armed conflict and believer's involvement in it is recorded often in Scripture.

In the Old Testament numerous battles are described and many instances of violence are mentioned, most of which were committed under instruction of God. (i.e. The exploits of Samson, King Saul, David and his mighty men.)

New Testament examples:

1. Peter's sword: - First Christ instructed him to get one, then in the garden of Gethsemane He told him only to sheath the sword, not to abandon it. (Luk 22:36, Matt. 26:52-54). Some take this as an indication that Christ was not against bearing arms.

2. Christians in the Roman army: There are indisputable evidence that Christians served in the Roman Army - In Acts 10:1-48 we read about Cornelius, a centurion who came to Christ. He was not instructed to leave the military, neither were another centurion who exhibited exemplary faith in Christ (Mat 8:5-13).

3. State authority to be obeyed: Rom 13:1-7 says: *“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor”*.

From this can be deducted that government has been given the power of the sword, and this power was given by God.

4. Advice to soldiers. Luke 3:14: John the Baptist did not suggest to soldiers that came to him with questions to leave the army, but that they should not rob, and be content with their pay.

5. Christ the Warrior: Rev. 19:11-16 The warrior Christ is awesome to behold. These and other Scriptural references clearly indicate that the God of the Old Testament, the Christ of the New Testament, and the practice of the early church are familiar with and does not condemn war or armed conflict in toto.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE

A State must provide safety and security on both national and personal levels to its citizens. Most correspondents felt that we must not stumble over these concepts as though they are evil, and regard Nationalism as a sin, as some suggests. They felt that rabid support and allegiance to anyone, but Christ is unacceptable. But that surely saluting our national flag, supporting nation-building, protecting national interests, developing national values and projecting national power is beneficial to all? Or must we turn a blind eye to security threats and retreat into our little spiritual sub-cultures and refuse to protect and serve?

National Security refers to five aspects (National security quintet): National Identity, National Values, National Interests, National Will, and National Power. The latter obviously includes both hard-, soft- and smart Power.

“National security must reflect the resolve of South Africans as individuals and as a nation, to live as equals, to live in peace and harmony, to be free from fear and want, and to seek a better life.” (Section 198 (a) Constitution of the RSA, 1996).

The mandate of the Defence force: “The primary object of the defence force is to defend and protect the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law regulating the use of force”. (Section 200(2) Act 106 of 1996).

“.....the President or the Minister may authorise the employment of the Defence Force for service in the Republic or in international waters, in order to – Preserve life, health or property in emergency or humanitarian relief operations; Ensure the provision of essential services; Support any department of state, including support for purposes of socio-economic upliftment; and Effect national border control”. (Section 18(1) Act 42 of 2002).

The RSA Constitution: The State must ensure Security and Safety for all its citizens – many constitutions, including the one of the RSA pronounces that the state must provide ... an all- encompassing condition in which all South Africans:

- o Live in freedom, peace and safety
- o Participate fully in the process of governance
- o Enjoy the protection of fundamental rights.
- o Have access to resources and the basic necessities of life, and
- o Inhabit an environment which is not detrimental to their health and well-being.

National security is thus seen as a very broad concept encompassing a variety of factors that may influence the livelihood of individuals and the quality of service the State must provide for its citizens. In other words, the State must ensure not only National security, but also Human security. It must protect the innocent and punish evildoers.

The South African White Paper on Defence: The White Paper on National Defence for the RSA, (1996) states that *“national security is no longer viewed as merely a military and police problem - it incorporates political, economic, social and environmental matters and it specified that the concern is with the security of the people. Also “security is an encompassing condition in which individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety (:28).*

The White Paper also explores the idea that this approach is important for policy making purposes in an era of new threats such as terrorism, illegal migrants and refugees, international crime syndicates, proliferation of small arms, money laundering schemes, drug trafficking, environmental degradation, spread of diseases and trans-border crime.

Most correspondents felt that since the lines between war, armed conflict, terrorism and internal and transnational crime have become so blurred, it is naïve to reckon that a State's role is merely policing and that AFM members stand aloof from any protective roles and responsibilities in society or on a national in multinational level.

What should the role of the AFM, the broader church then be to ensure that National security is supported? Would any form of pacifism be enough? National security is only the umbrella term, what we must also consider is human security.

HUMAN SECURITY

Human security was defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as subsumed under seven aspects: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security. *“Human security is now widely taken to include more than the absence of violent conflict with its agenda of peace building and conflict prevention. It also includes a relative safety from acute infectious disease, minimum complements of safe fresh water and adequate nutrition, and a formal guarantee for basic human rights and dignity”.*

The human security mosaic: Unlike traditional military security, human security is much less about procuring arms and deploying troops than it is about strengthening the social and environmental fabric of societies and improving their governance. To avoid the instability and breakdown witnessed in many areas around the globe, human security policy (and strategy) must take into account a complex web of factors, namely: Economic, Social, Political, Technological, Environmental, Law, Military, Cultural/customs and Religious:

As such human security entails:

- Protecting the vital core of all human lives in the ways that enhance human freedom and human fulfilment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms - freedoms that are the essence of life.
- It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations.
- It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks for survival, livelihood and dignity.”

In order to establish and maintain human security, **the use of force may be required.** Most correspondents felt that AFM members must be creatively involved in our society to protect, serve and ensure that human security is attained, as This is what Christ expects of Kingdom citizens.

Loving our neighbours may often imply that we must protect them from danger, for it would be immoral to allow evildoers to rape, assault and rob our relatives or neighbours whilst we fold our arms and spectate.

RESPONSIBILITIES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

Due to the RSA's presence in and power on the African Continent, it has a duty to create peace and stability in other countries too. We have at any given stage thousands of South African National Defence Force members deployed internally and externally to assist the African Union and the United Nations with peace missions.

The demands and needs for peace building operations on our continent is varied and complex: One can differentiate between kinds of missions:

- Peace-making, -keeping, -maintaining, -building, -enforcing.
- Soldiers are also involved with reconstruction and development in post-conflict situations.
- The use of force is often required, especially when peace must be enforced by the barrel of a gun. Often all that is required is the mere presence of power symbols such as Submarines and Fighter aircraft which acts as deterrents to potential opposing forces.

The SANDF was recently again tasked to assist with disaster management both internally (KZN) and externally (in Mozambique). They helped with evacuation of casualties, provision and dropping of water, food parcels and medical personnel and -equipment.

CHURCH/STATE RELATIONSHIP

Some correspondents noted that Christians are inevitably part of two worlds - the physical and the eternal. We are not expected to choose between the two. We are in the world, but not of the world. Of course, the most important and only lasting kingdom is the Kingdom of God, but we were placed in and are responsible for human security in our earthly kingdoms too.

In the light of this most correspondents do not agree with the notion that "...Nationalism is a sin of no little significance..." They feel that Christians are indeed called on to serve and obey the authorities, including the State, as discussed above under the section "Biblical position on armed conflict".

Believers and non-believers alike must share the duty of National and Human security. Should AFM members refuse to protect and serve also in a military capacity, whilst we expect non-believers to stand in the gap and even sacrifice their lives for the sake of our safety and security?

Some correspondents noted that in the 70's and 80's for example, pacifism was a challenge for many AFM members who were engaged in the riotous situation. Particularly many young people of that time. They were involved as "young lions" physically fighting for freedom. Some of those who were involved were born again Christians, who were not necessarily stone throwing, but were generally associated with the comrades throwing stones.

For members during this experience, there was no time to justify one's stand other than praying while running back and forth with the warriors. For them, the comrade warriors did a great work that eventuated in a democratic South Africa today and they were part of that experience. In this way, the biggest contribution was to pray and trust God for a better outcome with no casualties.

Chaplains involvement in the military.

The church has several chaplains serving in different arms of services in the Defence Force. It should also be mentioned is that AFM has signed a "State/Church agreement" in the Security Cluster of the Republic of SA. The current president of the church (Pastor MG Mahlobo), while he was General Secretary, was once Chairperson of this cluster. AFM chaplains are appointed based on this state/church agreement. A question to be asked would be why the AFM church entered into this agreement.

The Role of Military Chaplains in the Defence Force:

Correspondents differ on the role of chaplains in the Defence Force: Some suggested that they should be *"using their influence to divert the national decision by the president of going to war."*

Others maintain that chaplains are part of the Multi-Professional Team (MPT), that comprises of Chaplains, Social Workers, Psychologists, Medical Doctors, etc. These members are protected by the United Nations and Red Cross and are not regarded as combatants. They are in the Mission Theatre (war zone) to give support to members and to their families. They are also there as the moral and ethical conscience of the warring factions. They do not discriminate in their service to members and Prisoners of War (POW) or the wounded enemy soldiers.

The Difference between military and police services' functions:

Some correspondents pointed out that the two services do not contradict each other but are complementary. Soldiers exist to protect the citizens against external forces. They protect the borders (Army), the sky (Air Force) and the oceans (Navy) of a country. It is against the constitution for a state to use military force against its own citizens. Internally, police protect citizens within the borders of a country. Soldiers do not arrest citizens but can rarely be used to help police to maintain law and order within the country. Both soldiers and police need each other.

All correspondents agree that the church should reject violence in any form. The role of the church in a violent situation is of that of bringing peace and propagating non-violence protests as seen in examples of Desmond Tutu, Frank Chikane, and many of Black Theologians during the apartheid era state violence.

"If Christians and the church are parts of a larger community, as citizens it may be expected of them to assume responsibility for and participate in the business of the state. Scriptural principles should guide not only the church, but also the secular state and civil society (1 Tim 1:8-10)".

Participation in the police force and private security agencies:

As a violent society, South Africa is characterised by domestic violence; robbery and other violent property crime; conflict between groups over territory, markets and power; xenophobia; attacks on farmers and farm workers; vigilantism and the abuse of excessive force by law enforcement; and resistance to law enforcement intervention, to name a few.

There exists in the unredeemed world an order, consisting of the relation to him who ordains it, what Romans 13:1-7 refers to as order (taxis) and duty (opheilein). This allows us to speak of a structure of society whose main lines we may ascertain from revelation, and not nature, and which forms the framework of Christians' judgment about ethics for states. Romans 13 and the parallel passages in 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Peter 2 give the criteria for judging to what extent a state's activities are subject to Christ's reign. If the use of force is such as to protect the innocent and punish the evildoers, to preserve peace so that all might come to knowledge of the truth, then that state may be considered as fitting within God's plan, as subject to the reign of Christ.

If, however a state abandons this function and does not submit to a moral order higher than itself, and punish the innocent and reward the guilty, that state is best described as demonic. One implication is that the state has no general authorisation to use the sword independently of its commission to hold violence to a minimum. Some correspondents interpret this to mean that the state's function is limited to policing and that war is thus illegitimate because it does not fit the definition of the police function according to the prescriptions of Romans 13 and 1 Timothy 2.

The police function thus distinguishes the innocent from the guilty and preserves a semblance of order, whereas war cannot. Proponents of this view say that when the state does not listen to the church's testimony against war, the church does not therefore become silent or irrelevant; she still has a word to say about the state's ways of waging its wars.

According to this line of thought, the AFM should encourage its members not to participate in the (necessary) violent suppression of violent crime that is the function of the police or private security agencies. Christians should only serve in offices that is concerned with the administration of the police force in non-combat facilitation, without partaking in the active defence of society requiring violence and even the taking of lives. As citizens of a heavenly kingdom they are called to make peace, not to partake in the necessarily violent behaviour that characterises the sinful world (Matt 5:9).

Others say that Romans 12 and 13 encourages Christians to subject them to the state while it also distinguishes between the individual Christian and the state. While individual Christians may not avenge themselves, the power and authority of the state is delineated in other terms (Rom 13:1-7). The state is to avenge; it is a terror to evil. The state serves as a police force, and therefore it must do battle when needed. The state may also misuse its power and authority and needs the prophetic voice of the church to guide it.

Church and community involvement:

Most correspondents agreed that Pentecostals should be involved in the politics of the day, and when it becomes essential to overthrow an essentially unjust regime they should participate, but then always in a nonviolent manner, by way of passive resistance.

Some added to this that Pentecostals, as part of the Ecumenical movement and as community members, should work with communities and other churches to bring about changes in their communities. Barclay (1971: 193) illustrate this point better by stating that:

“The Christian duty depends on one principle which cannot be evaded. If we think that conditions should be changed, if we think that in any area of life conditions are not what they should be in a so-called Christian country, then there is only one way to alter them—through political action”.

One of these areas of life is domestic violence: Most correspondents are of the opinion that this point needs more attention and should not hide under Pacifism as the church’s theological position to military engagement. Domestic violence is rife in South Africa and the church should consider an appropriate reaction to this challenge in our communities.

THREE POSITIONS ON WAR AND VIOLENCE:

Malusi Mpumlwana (1998: 187) states that three positions developed on war and violence in Christian ethics namely: **Pacifism, Just War Theory and Crusade Theology.**

Pacifism remained for the first three centuries the dominant and only theological position. Hereby Christians can refuse to serve in the army of a state that did not recognise God and can also refuse to resort to violence in self defence against the persecution of the state.

A. PACIFISM

Christian Pacifism is defined as the theological and ethical position that any form of violence is incompatible with the Christian faith. Followers of this theory believes that God is the only Giver of life, and human being are just the stewards and have no rights to take another’s life. War is considered evil.

Pacifists also hold the view that the innocent must be protected, and that evil must be resisted through means that are both persuasive and coercive. Hence, pacifism employs many social, economic, and political methods of active nonviolence to restore justice (Fahey, 2018).

Among the propagators of pacifism are persons like Hippolytus of Rome who said:

“A soldier of the civil authority must be taught not to kill men and to refuse to take an oath. If he is unwilling to comply, he must be rejected for baptism. A military commander or civic magistrate must resign or be rejected, for he has despised God.”

TYPES/ LEVELS OF PACIFISM:

1. **Absolute or Universal pacifism:** They believe that it is never right to take part in war, even in self-defence. They believe that human life is so sacred that nothing justifies taking one's life deliberately. This view is hard to follow since it even states that it is unethical to use violence to rescue an innocent person in danger.
2. **Conditional pacifism:** The adherents to this theory are against war and violence in principle but accept that there may be circumstances when war will be less bad than the alternative.

Conditional pacifists usually base their moral code on Utilitarian principles:

Utilitarianism is a theory in normative ethics holding that the proper course of action is the one that maximises utility, usually defined as optimising total benefit and reducing suffering or the negatives.

3. **Selective pacifism:** These pacifists believe that it is the matter of degree, and only oppose wars that involve weapons of mass destruction – nuclear or chemical and biological weapons – either because of the uniquely devastating consequences of such weapons or because a war that uses such weapons is not 'winnable'.
4. **Active pacifism:** These pacifists are heavily involved in political activity to promote peace and to argue against a particular war. During war some of the adherents to this theory will refuse to fight and only resort to drive ambulances.

Ethics for a brave new world page 349, adds the following to the list above:

- Christian Pacifism, which proposes that although non-believers may justly kill in certain instances, Christians are never allowed to use any violence.
- Private Pacifism. Which holds that personal violence is always wrong, but a nation may sometimes be justified to take up arms in a just war.
- Anti-war Pacifism, which maintains that although one may personally defend oneself by any means, war is never morally justified.

Nowadays most democratic countries accept that people have the right of conscientious objection to military service, but they usually expect the objector to undertake some form of public service as an alternative.

B. JUST WAR THEORY

Ambrose of Milan developed the just war teaching which states that force or violence can be justifiably used in certain circumstances. Augustine consolidated this doctrine that a war should have a just cause or be a better evil. Its end or purpose should be just, it should be declared by a legitimate authority, should be used only as a last resort, and be conducted by just means.

The "just" war theory deals with the justification of war (*jus ad bellum*) and how it must be fought (*jus in bello*) to respect the moral principles which govern our individual or collective actions (Bertrand, 2012).

In a perfect world like Paradise or Utopia, there will be no need for wars because:

(Isa. 2: 4 "He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.")

But in this imperfect world, a country establishes military force to protect its citizens, failing which, it will be conquered. Until paradise comes, nations will be involved in wars. And if this is how things are like, the question is how Christians should be involved in protection of their country when duty calls. Bonhoeffer said about government and the church:

"Government is instituted for the sake of Christ; it serves Christ, and consequently also serves the church. Yet the dominion of Christ over all government does not by any means imply dominion of the church over government... if (government) fulfils its mission as it should, the congregation can live in peace, for the government and congregation serve the same Master" (1953:314).

It is the church's responsibility to be prophetic and play the role of guardianship to the government. In its protection of its citizens, the government uses both the military and the police. And both should be ready to protect citizens by any means necessary.

Just war theory is based on four premises: (Feinberg 1993:361)

1. Some evil cannot be avoided.
2. The just war position is normative for all, believers and non-believers alike.
3. Just war theory does not attempt to justify armed conflict.
4. In the context of armed conflict, only governments may use force, not civilians.

Both sides cannot be just in a war, even if both sides think they are just. One is not (Feinberg1993:357). Just war is a defensive, not an aggressive war. Just war seems to be the only sensible and responsible stance to take.

Just War can be an alternative to Pacifism theory. Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin and many others followed Saint Augustine in subscribing to this theory. The point of departure of the Just War Theory in the New Testament is Romans 13:1-6, in which Paul emphasizes the obligation of Christians to pray for and obey governing authority. Here we see that the state was created by God to maintain order. To preserve this order, the civil authority has the right to use military protection.

Some writers differ on this and say that: The state's function is limited to policing. That war is thus illegitimate because it does not fit the definition of the police function according to the prescriptions of Romans 13 and 1 Timothy 2. The police function distinguishes the innocent from the guilty and preserves a semblance of order, whereas war cannot"

Stages of the Just War Theory:

1. **Jus ad Bellum (Justice before war):** A just cause for a nation to go for war must fit within these reasons:

- The fundamental rights of the citizens and state must be at stake; directly or indirectly.
- Only the legitimate authority (state) may resort to war and make its decision public to its citizens and to the enemy state.
- War must be the last resort after all peaceful alternatives have been exhausted.
- There should be the probability of success. If no such probabilities exist, no nation should resort to war.
- Probabilities of ends. No nation should engage in a war that will not end or where chances of casualties are more compared to gains.

2. **Jus in Bello (Justice during war):** This is the responsibility of military personnel during a war situation. In every war, chaplains and other Multi Professional Teams are there and play a role in reminding the commanders about the following. Soldiers are expected to fight ethically and must be aware of the following:

- **Discrimination:** Soldiers are only entitled to target those who are engaged in harm and should not attack non-combatants. Prisoners of War (POW) and injured enemies are to be protected and taken care of.

- **Proportionality of means:** Soldiers should only use force proportional to the end they seek. Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and drones are out of the question when it comes to military engagement.

3. **Jus post Bellum (Justice after war):** After a war, it is the duty of the nations involved to prepare their soldiers to be rehabilitated back into communities. Chaplains play a pivotal role in Pre-, During- and Post- resilience activities of soldiers. If Chaplains do not understand the theories of war, they will not be effective in ministering to members during a Jus post Bellum situation.

Interestingly, in the Catholic Church, we see a growing debate about the acceptability of the Just War approach (Dennis, ed., 2018). Notably, Pope Francis has spoken a great deal about peace. He stated in his World Peace Day Message of 2017, “To be true followers of Jesus today also includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence...I pledge the assistance of the Church in every effort to build peace through active and creative nonviolence” (Dec. 8, 2016; see Dennis, ed, 2018, pp. 221-229). Generally, the church is of the view that war and violence is not the way to go as that is contrary to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the cornerstone of the Christian community and its principles and therefore on how to approach such difficult matters.

C. CRUSADE THEOLOGY:

Mpumlwana (1998: 188) argues that crusade theology used (or abuse) the just war theory to sanction war as a means of promoting the gospel and the crusades soon became a means of defending the empire for the sake of the church. During the struggle against apartheid the question about the theological understanding of an armed struggle against apartheid power structures became of great importance, whether violence was ethically permissible or whether the South African regime was evil enough to warrant it.

Some correspondents are of the opinion that war theory debates by arm-chair critics (i.e. experts and professors from institutions) are different from those whose boots are dirty and muddied and are affected by the realities on the ground.

CRITISICM OF PACIFISM

In an article by W.J. Danaher in the Journal of Lutheran Ethics (JLE dated 6/1/2003), Danaher points to many weaknesses of Pacifism, and one of those weaknesses “...is in regard to secularism. In this regard, pacifism provides a way for the church to articulate its distinctive moral vision in the midst of the prevailing secular culture. In so doing, pacifism ensures the further marginalization of the church in an increasingly secular society”.

Some writers argue that Pacifism is a lofty ideal at best, but cowardice at worst. They maintain that Pacifism can only work if all parties embrace it and if all evil men are docile. Generally speaking, only a fool glorifies armed conflict, for war is horrible, terrible and disgusting. Others say that because we live in a broken world with many evil, violence prone and power-hungry leaders who often engage in armed conflict as a means to project power, commit genocide, attempt regional or even world domination, we must stand in the gap and oppose them.

Feinberg, 1993:353 declares: "Some killing, including killing in self-defence, which is often precisely what happens in war, can be morally acceptable, despite the immorality of killing in general." "Ethics says what ought to be the case, but what if "ought" does not match "is"? In fact, what if it is impossible to obey an "ought" such as "never use violence", unless everyone else does? The problem is that: "never use violence" presupposes a world in which no one does violence." Although we do not face a real threat to our safety and security on a conventional war level, we do not know how extremism and terrorism may impact our communities in the RSA in future. We as AFM members, should consider the threat and prepare for it.

Some questions remain: What is the difference between conditional pacifism and selective pacifism? The devastating consequences of chemical and nuclear weapons are considered to result in a war without winners; should we stick to this point of view? Conditional pacifism usually bases its moral code on utilitarian ethical theory, which principles of utilitarianism make such grounds possible? How can a true conditional pacifist avoid warlike situations? How can a true selective pacifist avoid warlike situations?

A CONTEMPORARY QUESTION ON PACIFISM

In the twentieth century, the tragic wars and the international arms race inspired almost all Christian churches to examine their long-held tradition of accepting the institution of war. The Catholic church was representative when the world's bishops in Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* declared that we must "undertake an evaluation of war with an entirely new attitude" (80). Part of this new attitude was an endorsement of pacifism in the form of conscientious objection to war on the part of Catholics. The idea of Just War and Total war militates against what Christ really advocated when he was here in the world. Here is a question asked by Adeboye (undated):

"Should Christians in (particularly Nigerian) also involve (themselves) in warfare in order to gain peace and freedom just like the Old Testament people did?" This question was asked in the context of Exodus 32:26-28 and shows us that divine anger is executed through human beings (the Levites) wielding the sword against their fellow Israelites:

26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me!" And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him. 27 And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Every man of you put his sword upon his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbour.'" 28 So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

The church has entered the stage where it must defend its Christian faith against other religions. Like in Nigeria between Christianity and Islam, where churches/mosques and Bibles/Quran are burned. Lives are lost from both sides of the spectrum in the name of just war by the warring sides.

-If Christians (The AFM) in South Africa were to find themselves in similar circumstance, what must they do?

PARTICIPATION IN WAR

Some correspondents are of the opinion that the AFM should say "no" to Christian combatant participation in war and be opposed to its members training or in any way preparing to kill or drilling for combatant military service in any capacity. They feel that the AFM should regard participation in war as incompatible with Christian's citizenship of the heavenly kingdom and not simply because the violence inherent in war was wrong, but because the idolatrous allegiances demanded by war are trivialised by comparison to the allegiance demanded by God. According to this view Christians should consider their engagement in a conflict between spiritual forces as infinitely more important than any earthly struggle. Furthermore, the AFM should be against killing in any form and support a non-combatant stance.

This view also purports that while the government is legitimate, it only has limited authority over the lives of Christians and allegiance to the government is always subject to the believers' allegiance to God. Therefore, *should members of the AFM be called up for military service, they are encouraged to serve only in a non-fighting capacity and only if it is absolutely necessary. The AFM should again campaign for exemption from active military service and its army chaplains should also campaign for its members' exemption.*

Other correspondents are of the opinion that this view is dangerous and could be classified as refusing legal orders by a member of the defence force. Soldiers are under command and if duty calls, they should respond accordingly. Failing to do so is regarded as disobeying legal command and it's a militarily punishable offence. And since there is no longer forced conscription in SA's defence force, each individual, regardless of faith, joins the military voluntarily.

There is also a view that we should distinguish between different levels of participation. Participation in armed conflict and violence, or non-participation through pacifism are exercised on two different levels.

- 1.State/public: On the one hand we have the decidedly public duties and responsibilities of the State towards national and human security.
- 2.Private/personal: On the other hand, we have private/personal safety and security. The latter addresses aspects like self-defence, protection of loved ones and property, prevention of violence against women and children and our neighbours.

TYRANNIES OF VIOLENCE

The atrocious and enduring nature of oppression caused by some dictatorships and tyrannical enemies may require that they be stopped forcefully. This may not be viewed as a holy campaign because it is not religiously motivated but serves as an attempt to prevent an anticipated act of oppression. The question is then, what about a just revolution to overthrow tyrannicide?

Pentecostals should partake in the politics of their day and when it becomes essential to overthrow an essentially unjust regime they should participate, but then always in a nonviolent manner, by way of passive resistance. This happened during the apartheid regime when Pentecostals opposed its unjustness but by way of passive resistance.

The principle of the kingdom of God is so radical and integral that it never ceases to appeal to Christians to continue towards a peace which is always larger and deeper, until everything is led to its perfection by God himself in his eschatological kingdom. Christians must realise the radicalism that forms an essential element of the gospel in a world of sin, with the duty of avoiding and excluding war and violence as far as possible, but also of intervening in favour of rights, freedom and the well-being of those who are the victims of aggression or injustice.

Their fundamental and deep-rooted repugnance against all forms of violence that result from their confession that God is their partner must inspire and stimulate their moral creativity so that they can continually discover possibilities to resolve conflicts without violence, or with the least amount of violence possible and to reverse situations of injustice without shedding blood or creating new forms of injustice in its stead.

Personal violence

Violence can be defined as a behaviour which is intended to hurt or kill people, for example hitting, kicking, or using guns or bombs, including oppression, injustice, systemic unfairness or mental cruelty. There is violence of a political nature used either for maintaining or disturbing the status quo. Then there is violence committed by individuals, consisting of violence within people by way of inner conflicts and violence outside them in the form of external social conflicts. Outer violence can take three forms: 'hot' violence refers to the use of guns and bombs, 'cold' violence refers to abuse of economic power to dominate or destroy others who lack it and 'cool' violence which gives apparent legitimation both to the hot and cold violence. At the source of all violence is all sorts of inequalities which have to do with economic, social and political life that characterise specifically the South African society for historical reasons: inequalities in food, shelter, land, health, freedoms and lack of them, self-determination and demands for equality between peoples.

Some correspondents say that a stance for pacifism will imply that members should react to personal violence with nonviolent resistance that asks one to stand for love rather than to strike back. Its resistance does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent but to win friendship and understanding because the attack is directed against forces of evil rather than against the people doing evil. The resistance avoids not only external physical force but also internal violence of spirit. Christians should be excellent citizens, respect the government and pray for those in authority but their citizenship in a given nation is second to their primary citizenship in the kingdom of Christ. For this reason, they are pacifists, refusing to support any military enterprise, even non-combatant service that still supports the function of war and at best only releases the individual from the responsibility of directly taking a life.

The church should resist evil but not by violent means. It should rather do so by preaching and teaching, by ministering to the needs of those who might be tempted to erupt violently against society, by supporting just and compassionate government and by protesting social evils and injustices.

Matthew 5:39 (and related texts) that supports non-violence refers not to governments or churches but to individual Christians. Individuals are not to take the law into their own hands, but instead of carrying out retributive justice (*lex talionis*), they should turn the other cheek and go the second mile, serving the interests of distributive justice. The implication is not that justice does not matter but that the individual believer does not have a stake and no part in law enforcement. Non-resistance calls for love to replace hatred and for just and limited punishment to replace kangaroo courts, blood feuds or lynch mobs.

The government is God's means of justice, and retributive justice may at times require of the government to utilise violence. However, Christians may not serve as the agents to apply the violence in the attempt to bring individuals or a part of society under the control of justice.

Domestic violence

The phrase 'domestic violence' itself is a softened-up phrase for the more graphic 'wife-beating', 'battering', 'wife torture', or 'wife-murder'. At times men are also the victims of gender-based violence. All correspondents agree that the AFM should renounce any form of domestic violence of one person against another for any reason, including violent beating of children for disciplinary means.

State and violence]

Some correspondents feel that the AFM should renounce all participation in war and seeks to influence national representatives and international organisations to campaign for peaceful methods of dealing with all international differences. The AFM should urge Christians to be involved in inter-class and interracial challenges to solve their conflicts by means of good will and understanding.

If Christians and the church are parts of a larger community, as citizens it may be expected of them to assume responsibility for and participate in the business of the state. Scriptural principles should guide not only the church, but also the secular state and civil society (1 Tim 1:8-10).

Proponents of this view feel that waging war can only be justified in the case of a defensive war against an unprovoked act of aggression. This serves as the only just cause for going to war, provided that the defence has some chance of succeeding and the means chosen are proportionate to the end to be achieved. Most of the actual war situations that arise in history do not fit this category. They further believe that Christians should not wage the state's wars. Their allegiance to the kingdom of God excludes serving the state's attempts to solve its challenges by means of violence.

Self-defence

There is also an opinion that violent crime might require church members to defend their families or possessions against violent attacks but that they should be encouraged to minimise violent reprisals as far as possible and never to react in retaliation.

KAIROS THEOLOGY: A RESPONSE TO A SITUATION OF CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND WAR

The Kairos document expressed an understanding of violence and war from three perspectives namely “State Theology,” “Church Theology” and “Prophetic Theology.” State theology is the theology of the apartheid state that use theological concepts to justify the status quo which at that time was using Romans 13: 1-7 to give absolute and divine authority to the state, the use of law and order to determine and control what people may be permitted to regard as just and unjust, use of the word communist to brand anyone who rejects state theology and lastly using the name of God.

Church theology is critical of apartheid but is regarded as superfluous and counter-productive because it lacks in-depth analysis of the signs of the times, relies rather on stock ideas derived from the Christian tradition and applies it uncritically to the situation. Stock ideas used by these church leaders are reconciliation (peace), justice and non-violence. Prophetic theology do not just offer a generalized Christian perspective but give a kairos response that is biblical, spiritual, pastoral and prophetic and not just sitting on the fence but taking a stand. For the sake of our paper I will focus on the stands that these three different theologies present with regards to violence and war.

Contribution of the Kairos document to a relevant position on war and violence:

Considering the different circumstances in which the document was produced, some interesting remarks was made with regards to violence and war. The document criticises the way in which state theology read Romans 13: 1-7 out of context when it tries to legitimize an attitude of blind obedience and absolute servility towards the state, an absolute and universal principle that is equally valid for all times and in all circumstances. The correct reading is that Christians are not exonerated from subjection to secular laws and authorities, but the text does not make it clear what Christians should do towards an unjust government like the one under Pharaoh, empires compared to beasts in the books of Daniel and Revelation. God allowed these governments to rule but did not approve of what they did because his will is freedom and liberation.

Church theology stance on non-violence is regarded as counter-productive of interest, it turns non-violence into an absolute principle that applies to anything anyone calls violence without regard who is using it, which side they are on or what purpose they have in mind (Leonard, 2010: 22).

Violence was regarded as a loaded word because from the state and media perspective violence was only what those who boycotted through stone throwing, the burning of buildings and killing of collaborators but the brutality of the police and the military was regarded as misconduct or atrocities not violence. When churches criticized violence, they equated acts of oppression, injustice and domination with acts of resistance and self-defence. The document concludes that the side one is on will determine what you regard as violence or self-defence. The danger with neutrality is that it enables the status quo (oppression) and thus in support of brutal violence.

The *lack of social analysis* consequently leads to the tendency to make use of absolute principles like non-violence and applies them indiscriminately and uncritically to all situations (Leonard, 2010: 60). An *inadequate understanding of politics and political strategy* is the reason for the church's inability to relate relevantly to issues in society. There is no specifically Christian solution but a Christian way of approaching political solutions to change structures in society. The reason for the church's inadequate understanding of political issues is the *type of faith and spirituality*, described by the document as "otherworldly," whereby social and political matters is seen as worldly, beyond the sphere of spirituality, making spirituality private and individualistic. Waiting on God to change everything, with nothing for us to do keep the church in paralysis, this is not in line with Romans 8: 18-24 whereby God redeems the whole person and creation, penetrating every sphere of human existence.

The document state that biblical faith is prophetically relevant to everything that happens in the world, which mean the ability to read the signs of the times (interpret this kairos according to Luke 12: 56); is always a call to action (calling for repentance); is always confrontational (taking a stand), always have a message of hope; is deeply spiritual; and is practical and pastoral (denounce sin and announce salvation).

in Genesis 4: 3-8 we read about the violent conflict between Cain and Abel through which the latter was killed. The Road to Damascus document explains that this killing took place while they were just coming from offering sacrifices to the same God. As a people Israel was born in struggle against the power of Egypt, had to confront the empires of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks and the Romans and so was the early Christians also regarded as a threat in the Roman empire. In modern times Colonialism and Western Imperialism had become a threat to people from Third World countries which led to various forms of resistance culminating in low intensity conflict, low intensity war, total war, total strategy, and total security. When this happens the church also become a site of struggle because both sides (oppressed and oppressor) seek religious legitimation.

The Kairos document interpreted in Palestinian resistance to Israeli injustice and violence:

Christian Palestinians call religious and political leaders, Palestinian and Israeli society, the international community and all the churches all over the world to see Israeli occupation of Palestine as an injustice, an evil and sin that must be resisted and removed because it brings suffering to the people. They see love as a means to resist this injustice and to end it with creative resistance, not resisting evil with evil. It is integrated because as Christians they know that love refuses evil and corrects it, through for example civil disobedience, not through death but through respect of life. Disinvestments, boycotts, advocacy campaigns are part of an integrated way not to take revenge but rather to put an end to injustice, liberating both the perpetrator and the victims of injustice. The document states that the “aim is to free both peoples from extremist positions of the different Israeli governments, bringing both to justice and reconciliation...with this spirit and dedication ...reach the longed-for resolution to their problems, as indeed happened in South Africa...”

The Palestinian Christians see their future as one and that they must choose either the cycle of violence that destroys both of them and peace that will benefit both. Israel should stop pretending that it is a battle against terrorists, but the roots of terrorism are in the human injustice committed, that all people from Israel should be their partner in peace and not in the cycle of interminable violence. They call on everyone who are engaged in political activity to accept the word faith to mean that human beings were not made for hatred or to kill but to foster the culture of love that accept the other. Where do all these inputs leave us now in terms of Christians and specifically Pentecostals with regards to pacifism, violence and war? History warrants from us a response to any form of violence and war. The side that we choose in times of conflict, violence and war is not only determined biblically and spiritually but is also done from a social and political standing together with certain interest like the economic and cultural. Therefore an “other-worldly” approach to the situation is not helpful and relevant but it must be balanced with social analysis of the situation. Having an adequate understanding of the socio-political factors influencing the conflict and having a holistic spirituality which focus on God’s command to love the other, also to work towards change in a creative and integrated way as change agents, is crucial to end violence and war.

Martin Luther King junior once said that an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind, therefore fighting violence with violence cannot always be the answer to end conflict but there are cases in which violence can be used to prevent a greater evil. Mpumlwana (1998: 190) states that the theological problem facing the church is how to hold the challenge of the early church and the need to compromise the use of violence in a creative tension. He states that “the Christian church is fundamentally pacifist, but under certain circumstances there may and probably should be a need to consider the use of violence to prevent a greater evil. The theological ethical challenge is whether it is possible to establish viable criteria by which to measure any deviation from the norm of pacifism.

Mpumlwana (1998: 191) provide an option for Christians to promote actively the values of the reign (Kingdom) of God within which human persons are seen to be of inherent worth. This requires a holistic ethical approach to the question of violence, grounded in the conviction that human beings are created in the image of God, an image of holiness, love and freedom, an image of creative power. Deriving his argument from the theologian and ethicist Paul Tillich, Mpumlwana argues that disempowerment of people is a form of de-humanization and where human power is denied expression, violence is inevitable. An act of violence is sometimes the only course of action open to an abused and oppressed person who either has or knows no other way of giving expression to their humanity. Manifestation of human power lies in the quest to be and without creative ways it is expressed in violence and non-social forms of behaviour, violence become than a necessity for survival, security and countering the prospect of annihilation.

We are called through the life, death and resurrection of Christ, to accept His liberating and saving power to act in a life-giving way against all oppressive realities before it threatens the very being of humanity. Mpumlwana (1998: 192) states that a life empowering ethic allows violence as an inevitable means of affirming one’s own life. Such an approach is holistic because it addresses all possible experiences of violence with the same degree of concern for the dignity and the power of being, in other words it means that where being human is violated, violence in one form or another is likely to follow.

THE POSITION OF THE AFM -Matters to consider.

God’s people should pursue peace with all as far as possible. The sword should only be used as last resort. AFM members, as responsible members of society and citizens of a country are co- responsible to contribute to the safety and security of our fellow citizens and of course fellow believers.

Does loving our enemies entail that we accept violence from their side without proper and equal response. Should we not see to it that justice prevails? Can loving our enemies also mean that we should protect and serve them, even by using force against evildoers? Would this be aggression or vengeance, or can it be seen as retributive justice?

No one in his right mind should pursue armed conflict or violence on any scale. War is terrible, horrible and disgusting – in one word, hell. There is nothing noble or romantic about war. It should always be the last resort, not the first or even the second option. Peace is to be made at all cost, preferably by peace.

We live in a sinful, broken world where many individuals and States resort to violence. It seems that some differences and conflicts can only be stopped by engaging in violence. Is it not an unrealistic ideal to take a stance of pacifism and propose that AFM members may only serve in non-combat roles? Fact is, even in recent peace missions that the SANDF were engaged in, soldiers had to defend themselves or be wiped out.

What is better, should an AFM member only care for the wounded, or rather prevent a fellow soldier from being wounded in the first place, even if he has to kill opposing forces to prevent injury? Should we stand idly by as our families', friends' and neighbours' lives are threatened?

CONCLUSIONS BY THE CORRESPONDENTS

M NEL:

Nel proposes that the AFM again subscribes to the principle of conditional pacifism, implying that it teaches its members to refrain in principle from war and violence in any form.

Nel maintains that in discussing the implications of the pacifist stance, it must be remembered that ethical injunctions should not be followed in a legalistic way but that Christians' role model for behaviour and decision-making is Christ and his teaching. Christians should measure their ethical decisions by the effects of applying the love commandment (Matt 22:37-38).

Nel mentions that the AFM consists of volunteer membership and does not make its ethical stance compulsory for its members. However, members are taught the evangelical prerogatives for ethical behaviour. At the same time, the pastoral code of conduct expects of pastors of the AFM to comply with the ethical views of the church. Nel is of the view that should members of the AFM be called up for military service, they should be encouraged to serve only in a non-fighting capacity and only if it is absolutely necessary. He feels that the AFM should again campaign for exemption from active military service and that its army chaplains should also campaign for its members' exemption.

D ANDREW:

Andrew is of the opinion that Nel's position for pacifism based on his biblical and doctrinal beliefs given the origin of Pentecostalism in South Africa is justifiable but should be regarded as too "otherworldly" given the history of struggle against the "war on terrorism" and the "total onslaught."

Responses from Christians against the apartheid governments use of war and combating violence as expressed in the Kairos and Damascus documents and its re-interpretation in other contexts requires from us to look at pacifism and just war from a creative, integrated, holistic and ethical perspective.

Andrew's view is that we should find a balance between pacifism which find justification in both Old and New Testaments and its development in early Church history, but also how stances in between can be used to suppress and oppress people's right to resist injustice in South Africa and other places in the world. As Christians we are bound to the logic of love and the integrity of human beings and their environment. Wherever that imago Dei is threatened in the other, the church cannot remain quiet or criticise from a distance. Social and political analysis is needed to arrive at a responsible course of action to address the conflict, violence and war. Pentecostal Christians is part of the world and will be placed in a situation where they should choose a response in times of conflict, violence or war.

Andrew agrees with Nel, that in those situations considering the reign of God and what is the most ethical decision to react to the conflict, violence or combat during war (when they serve in the army or police) should be taught by the church to its members. Today we have a democratically elected government, ruled by the Constitution of the country that provides provisions for right action in times of threat and danger.

We cannot simply take the law in our hands or dismiss the law of the country on the basis of Scripture, unless such laws are in direct opposition to the will of God expressed in Scripture and our Christian theological tradition. The church can only give guidance to members about how to interpret their faith in the light of situations of conflict, violence and war but at the end, the decision to act in a responsible and ethical Christian way remains a personal one.

Andrew feels that Nel's view that the allegiance of Christians is firstly to God and the Kingdom and then to the state as citizens, clearly indicates a two Kingdoms doctrine as developed in Reformed theology, based on Augustine (the City of God), and Luther (Two Kingdom's teaching)

He also feels that Nel's strong encouragement of believers to pursue non-violent and non-combatant means to deal with violence domestically and in society, with minimal violence and no retaliation, almost give the impression that Christians and specifically Pentecostal Christians are not part of government, the state, police and the army, even when they serve in these institutions. This Andrew says, lead strongly to an "otherworldly" approach in the pronouncement which he does not necessarily regard as balanced and helpful to deal with a Christian and more specific a Pentecostal stance to war and violence.

H KOTZE:

Kotze proposes that the AFM of SA should subscribe to the principle of creative involvement in the establishment and maintenance of National Security in the RSA and peace building on the Continent based on the principle of the Just War Theory.

He feels that the AFM should encourages its members to shoulder their responsibility as dual citizens of the Kingdom of God and the RSA and participate fully in the human security process, whether it be in an administrative or combat role.

For him the issue of AFM members' stance towards armed conflict and the use of violence is indeed important. The AFM and its members should investigate it thoroughly and decide on our position responsibly and conscientiously.

In full agreement with Feinberg Kotze feels that we cannot see pacifism as a realistic position on armed conflict (1993:381). He does not agree that Scripture mandates pacifism for all or even just for believers, and certainly not only for AFM members whilst other believers and non-believers put themselves at risk so we may sleep safe at night.

MS Molobi:

Molobi feels that Humans are essentially social beings who will respond to anything that threatens them. In that sense it seems that pacifism is determined by the situation taking place, or about to take place. It raises an uncomfortable moral and social dilemma that is at the roots of identity and nationhood. According to him a crucial role of pacifists is to counter the momentum of potential armed conflict.

Pacifism requires that humans apply control, and this is opposite to our defensive instinct, which may exacerbate the situation in times of crises.

TJ Skhosana:

Skhosane feels that Pacifism as deliberated by Nel's article should not be used as a position paper by the church without further debate and discussion involving theologians and military chaplains in the church.

He feels that this topic should be included as one of the topics to be discussed in conferences and the GBM. A symposium can be held where different role players can be organized for theological enrichment in our church.

Skhosana is further of the opinion that the church should consider Chaplaincy as one of the courses for theological training. He also says that the church should not silence different voices in its midst, thus failing to learn anything new except 'recycled popular non-empowering theological views'.

SB Khumalo

According to SB Khumalo, the world is trying at all costs to pursue peace including engaging in just wars which are not just at all in some instances. Wars are fought for many reasons under the pretext of just war. Countries fight for dominance and resources and justify the war, even if it is immoral in nature. Khumalo notes that the church is not immune from violent conflicts as is happening for example in some parts of Nigeria. He asks whether the AFM of SA is prepared to maintain its pacifist stance in the mist of provocation and violent attacks that lead to loss of lives, property and church buildings? Is the theory of Just War an option as suggest by Nel (2019)? Or should we give the other cheek when stroked on one side?

According to Khumalo, the AFM of SA should pursue a pacifist viewpoint and position. A viewpoint that pursues nonviolent means to attain peace. Although it is indeed not always practical in the world the AFM of SA finds itself in. There are instances where a just war may be necessary, although says Khumalo, such an unfortunate situation will make the church to be in contrast with the teachings and the gospel of Christ, because wars are brutal, cruel and evil in nature.

Khumalo proposes a possible “third way” between passivity and violence, the option where Jesus was actually counselling nonviolent resistance when He told his followers to “turn the other cheek in Matthew 5: 38-42.

CONCLUSIVE SUMMARY

From the six contributors to this discussion the following can be summarized:

That the AFM should give guidance to members about how to interpret their faith in situations of conflict, violence and war -but that the decision to act in a responsible and ethical way remains a personal one.

There are strong arguments for an ethical position somewhere between **Conditional Pacifism** and **Just War Theory**. Conditional Pacifism on the one hand, implies that our members should refrain in principle from war and violence and only (re)act in life threatening situations. On the other hand, there is an equally strong opinion that pacifism is not always a realistic position, and that the church should also contemplate the principles of a **“Just war.”** This is especially relevant in circumstances where our Christian faith and/or the lives of our loved ones are endangered and there is no other option left. In certain circumstances, like violence or oppression instigated by the State, another option being **Nonviolent Resistance**, is available to believers.

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