
Christianity and the Idea of a Just War

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'Wars and rumours of wars.' It seems all too often that this phrase sums up the contents of the foreign reports in our newspapers. We live in an age when warfare, and the preparation for it, are rife, and the recent changes in Soviet military policy, with their avowal of a policy based on defence rather than offence, only heightens the uncertainty — should we trust their policy declarations, what response is called for on the part of the West, and so on? How should Christians react to these issues — how, in particular, should they think about war in the light of the teachings of Scripture?

We might expect the answers to these questions to be complex, and indeed they are, but Christians have thought about the subject for two thousand years, and their legacy, although ambiguous, is both rich and illuminating. In particular, there is the just war theory, a body of teaching which has a long and prestigious history and which even seems to some people to provide a complete solution. I intend to make a good deal of use of this theory in the course of the discussion though it will not be entirely uncritical. For all its insights, the just war theory has flaws and it will be important as the argument develops to stress some of the dangers which are present. I will also indicate where it seems important to depart from a certain influential strand in the theory's tradition.

Before we look at the details there are some more immediate problems. After all, the very term 'just war' might seem a travesty to some; a gross misuse of terms. War is one of the most terrible of human activities. Even the most limited of wars involves suffering and misery, pain and violent death. **How can something so dreadful, so inhumane, ever be regarded as just?**

This apparent paradox is confronted head on by the Christian just war theory which begins not with the discussion of justice but with the recognition of evil in the world. It accepts that the whole of creation has been subjected to futility until the restoration of all things in Christ¹ and sees the violence of war as an expression of that futility. Because of the fallen nature of the world, resistance of evil by force is justifiable. A war is just if it has the aim of restraining an enemy from carrying out his evil intentions against an innocent state.

These simple statements bristle with conceptual problems, but before addressing them directly it is important to distinguish the concept of the just war from a theory with which it is often confused, and from which it has sometimes drawn too much. This is the theory of the holy war or crusade, and it is a concept which many assume is central to Christian teaching in this area. Certainly it has a long tradition in religious thought and yet, as we will see, it is alien to the teachings of the New Testament.

A crusade is fought to promote an ideal, and also to destroy what is perceived to be evil in the enemy. Thus the Christians of the High Middle Ages went crusading to spread the gospel and destroy the infidel or — in the Albigensian crusade — to destroy the apostate. Because a crusade is fought to further what are taken to be the interests of God, those who have advocated crusading have argued that those who kill the enemies of the crusaders — and by extension the enemies of God — are absolved from all guilt. Indeed, in most theories of the crusade those who die in battle are especially pleasing to God, and are rewarded by Him accordingly. There is a sobering reminder of this in the reports from the recent Iran Iraq war of Iranian zealots going to a war which they regard as blessed by Allah dressed in death shrouds and seeking martyrdom on the battlefield.

This is not the place to discuss the morality of crusading in detail but there are two points to make in passing which will help to clarify some aspects of the just war theory.

The first is that although the advocates of crusades in the Middle Ages argued that there was a precedence in the Old Testament — such as the commandment which God gave to the people of Israel to utterly destroy the tribes in the Promised Land² — there is no justification for treating these Biblical cases as being anything other than exceptional. *Moses and Joshua saw themselves as being directly commanded by God and they had a clear instruction as to what to do:* the medieval crusaders, by contrast, had not been given divine guidance and were acting from their own sense of what should be done.³

The second point is that the crusading spirit is in direct conflict with much that the New Testament has to say about becoming a Christian. *To propagate the gospel by means of the sword is at variance with the basic New Testament teaching that a person becomes reconciled to God only through personal repentance and faith.* To force men and women to profess faith in Christ at the risk of death or enslavement has the potential of creating not so much a community of godly Christians as a group of people who, while outwardly confessing the faith, inwardly bitterly reject it for what they see to be its harsh, imperialistic domination of their culture and society. Even if no such reaction took place it would still be wrong to force someone to profess Christianity, because to do so encourages an outward observance of forms and ceremonies rather than an inner commitment of the heart.

We can begin to sketch the outlines of the just war theory by seeing how it contrasts with the crusade on these two issues.

Unlike crusaders, politicians and soldiers engaged in what they regard as a just war do not claim that the war is directly sanctioned by God. If they are Christians, they will argue that they are fighting a war for which God has granted permission: but they will not claim more than that. Indeed, a Christian just war theorist may accept that non-Christians can fight a just war, providing only that the circumstances under which they fight meet the requirements of justice. Concerning the aims of the war, the just war is always limited in scope to military and political ends — it does not seek to impose a new religious or moral order on the world. It seeks only to redress the balance and to ensure that the rights of aggrieved states are defended.

The preceding comments have only shown what the just war theory is *not* like. How may we characterise it positively?

Because the theory is very old it has had many exponents and defenders, not all of whom have been in anything like full agreement. Consequently, it will be useful to take one writer and examine the theory through his work. I have chosen **Thomas Aquinas** for two principal reasons. The first is that Aquinas' version of the just war theory was, and very much continues to be, highly influential. This is so not only amongst theologians and philosophers but also among soldiers and politicians — and not only Roman Catholics. The second reason is that Aquinas' theory is a very illuminating one — it penetrates to the heart of much that is crucial to the idea of a just war. Given its long and continuing influence it is perhaps not surprising that it should have this quality but, as I shall be arguing in a while, it does not follow that Aquinas was correct in his view of war; indeed part of the importance of examining Aquinas' version of the theory is that it helps prepare the ground for a more satisfactory version.

Aquinas lays down three conditions which must be met in order for any war to be regarded as just.⁴ The first condition is that the war may only be declared by a properly constituted government. The second is that there must be a good cause for fighting the war; it must be the case that, in Aquinas' own words, 'those who are attacked are attacked because they deserve it on account of some wrong they have done.'⁵ Thirdly, those who wage war must do so from correct motives, 'they must intend to promote the good and to avoid evil.'⁶

In my view these three principles do set out certain of the necessary conditions which must be satisfied if a war is to be regarded as just; but as they stand they are in need of clarification and development. Aquinas' argument that **a war may only legitimately be waged by a properly constituted authority** is an important one because it addresses itself to a fundamental problem about the relationship of the Christian to war. One of the central principles of the New Testament is that the Christian is called upon to love his enemy and to turn the other cheek if his enemy strikes him. How can this be reconciled with the claim that Christians may justly participate in war?

Aquinas' answer is that *there is a distinction between the activities of the individual and those of the state*. The individual has no right to seek vengeance against someone who does him harm, but the state has a duty to try and prevent that kind of harm being done — or, if it cannot prevent it, it has a duty to punish the offender. In this context Aquinas refers to Paul's argument in Romans 13, that 'he (the ruler) beareth not the sword in vain for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil,' and comments that the ruler may, 'lawfully use the sword of war to protect the commonweal from foreign attacks'.⁷

This idea that the state has an obligation which transcends the duties — and rights — of individuals is an essential part of Thomist political theory. A contemporary Thomist, Joseph Mackenna, expresses the concept in a clear and illuminating manner:

'One moral characteristic of the state is its obligation to seek the common earthly welfare of its citizens. Linked with this is a second, its right of self-defence.

'If the evil could, with impunity impose their will upon the innocent, social life would be reduced to chaos; for the good of its citizens, then, a state unjustly attacked by force may resist by force.'⁸

On the basis of this argument, Mckenna goes on to argue that a Christian has no need to regard fighting in a just war (on the right side) as in any sense evil: 'an act of self-defense or an act of vindictive justice, although imposed by circumstances which are regrettable, is morally good.'⁹ He contrasts this view with the Protestant and humanist views which maintain that war can only ever be the lesser of two evils, a view which he regards as being far 'bleaker' than the Thomist position.

Despite its impressive pedigree this view of the state is not without its problems, especially in the context of the just war theory.

Aquinas is quite right to point out that Paul is making a distinction in Romans 13 between the moral duty of the individual to turn the other cheek and the right of the ruler in the state to bear the power of the sword.¹⁰ Yet there is a tension here that the Thomist position is unable fully to come to terms with, namely that the state is composed of individuals who are in themselves evil by nature. It is not an entity which is independent of them, and it therefore reflects their moral values and nature. Mckenna highlights the way in which the Thomist position fails to appreciate this problem when he talks of the state as having 'moral characteristics', or when he speaks of the state's 'obligations' and 'rights'. In fact, of course, only people can be said to have moral characteristics, obligations and rights.¹¹ When we translate Mckenna's language out into talk about people the situation becomes far more complex than it first appeared. To take one example, when Mckenna writes that 'one moral characteristic of the state is its obligation to seek the common earthly welfare of its citizens' is he talking of the moral responsibility of the ruler — or the members of the government — to defend the people or is he referring to the rights which individuals have as members of a community to defend their shared way of life?

If we return to Romans 13, it seems at first sight that Paul is thinking only in terms of rulers. If this is so it would seem to follow that if an individual is instructed by the ruler to fight in what the ruler regards as a just war the individual's sole moral responsibility is to obey the ruler. Consequently he need not be concerned about the morality of the way in which the war is fought, or even whether his country ought to be involved in the war at all.

This interpretation of Romans 13, in which the emphasis is placed on the obligations of those who are governed provides a view which is too one-sided, because there are implications in what Paul says for the rulers too. There is even a sense in which Paul's discussion at this point can be reduced to one of the formal nature of the power-relationships within states, although clearly that was not his express intention when writing.

The essential element here is that Paul talks of the governing authorities as having been instituted by God. In saying this he is not arguing that God has appointed particular individuals but that He has instituted a political role or office. Those

who hold such office are entitled to respect, honour and obedience in virtue of their office — and in virtue of their office alone. From this it follows that if rulers exceed the powers of their office, or go further and try to claim authority and power as private individuals, they are no longer entitled to such respect, honour and obedience. This seems to accord well with Paul's contention that 'rulers are not a terror to good conduct but to bad.' The only sensible way to understand this (in the light of the fact that many rulers in the past clearly have been a terror to good conduct) is to accept that Paul is talking about rulers as they ought to be, not necessarily as they are.

A ruler who governs rightly and justly is carrying out his true role as God intended it, and is the agent of God in providing peace and harmony within the society. Such rulers are highly desirable, and Paul tells Timothy to urge his congregation to pray 'for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.'¹²

This reading of Romans 13 has significant implications for an understanding of the role of the individual in times of war. The ruler of a state has a right by virtue of his office to declare war if he considers that the circumstances justify it, but *his decision is not to be taken uncritically by those over whom he has authority*. If the people over whom he rules believes that he is wrong in his understanding of the situation, or if they believe that he is acting from evil motives, they have a duty not to obey him. By the same token, if they believe that he is right in his understanding of the situation, and that he is therefore justified in declaring war, they will be obliged to participate in the war.

Things are not normally quite so straightforward as all this might suggest. There are, in particular, very significant differences in the levels of understanding between the ordinary citizen and the much better informed ruler. There will be many occasions when, having done all that he can to find out the truth about the situation, the individual citizen will have to give the ruler the benefit of the doubt. As long as the evidence which he has been able to acquire convinces him that it is right to fight he must follow the lead of his government. Of course, governments may seek to deceive — and often succeed. Where they are successful in misleading their people they carry a correspondingly higher burden of guilt.

The implications of all this for the individual who is confronted with the possibility of fighting in a war is that he is far more intimately responsible than the Thomist position admits. There are different levels of awareness which imply different levels of responsibility, but each is responsible for what he is in principle capable of understanding and controlling.¹³

This discussion of the extent to which the individual can judge the rightness of the war to which his government is committed leads into the second condition which Aquinas lays down for a war to be just. **There must be a good cause for fighting the war** and those who are being fought deserve to be fought because of some wrong they have done. This is a very reasonable and necessary condition, but it raises the difficult question of who decides which side is right. Some people have seen this as providing an irrefutable argument against even the logical possibility of there ever being a war which could be seen as objectively just.¹⁴ Despite such

confident assertions the problem is not as formidable as it seems.

All combatants in time of war obviously claim that their actions are legitimate and that those of their opponents are not. But it does not follow from this that there are no objective criteria for judging who is justified in fighting and who is not. The argument that it is always impossible to judge between the claims of the combatants is a variation on the argument that all values are relative to the societies in which they are produced, and that all the combatants in a particular war may be justified because the criteria are internal to their society.

The idea that no moral judgements can be made about particular wars is an old one in Western culture, but it has come to special prominence in the last two hundred years. The most important statement of this position is that of **Carl Von Clausewitz**, whose major work, *ON WAR*, has exerted a profound influence on the study of warfare in the modern world. *It has also provided the most important challenge to the just war theory.*

War, according to Clausewitz, is an act of force to which, 'there is no logical limit.'¹⁵ The purpose of war is to overthrow the enemy and render him helpless, to place him in a position where he has no choice but to submit to your demands. In this context there can be no limitations, short of those imposed by military and geographical factors, on the manner in which war is fought. Most emphatically, there can be no restrictions imposed by international law, which Clausewitz dismisses contemptuously as 'imperceptible limitations hardly worth mentioning'.¹⁶ Nor can there be any moral restraints, for, he says, 'moral force has no existence save as expressed in the state and the law.'¹⁷

It is almost impossible to overestimate the influence of Clausewitz's thinking among the foreign policy makers of the modern developed world, both in the capitalist and the communist blocs.

From Marx and Engels onwards, Marxists have frequently quoted Clausewitz as an authority on military matters. In particular they have adapted his celebrated phrase that 'war is merely the continuation of policy by other means'¹⁸ to fit in with their argument that war between Socialist and Capitalist/imperialist powers is part of the necessary development of history. In such a conflict, morality has no place; all that matters is the victory of the proletariat, and the foreign policy of socialist countries can only be judged by their service to that cause.

Clausewitz's ideas are scarcely less important in the West. The highly influential school of **Realism** argues from the same Clausewitzian premiss that because war is the continuation of policy by other means only the interests and securities of the state are of any importance. Again morality is of no concern.¹⁹

In the views both of Soviet and Realist defence analysts, morality in foreign policy in general, and war in particular, is not only out of place but meaningless. When Realists analyse wars they do so not in terms of the morality of the situation but in the context of the political and strategic advantage to their own states, even though they often seek to hide their true intentions under the cloak of moralistic language. Thus the United States justified its involvement in Vietnam — which in reality was concerned with matters of global strategy and international trade — in terms of defending the people of South Vietnam from a foreign, communist

aggressor. In similar fashion, the Soviet Union justified its invasion of Afghanistan in terms of support for communism against reactionary forces, although it is clear that its concerns were for its own security and the defence of its own interests in the region.

Despite the great influence of this relativistic stance in the way in which people have thought about war and international relations it rests upon a notion which to the Christian is obviously false. This is the argument that there is no such thing as an objective morality. *The Christian just war theory argues that there is an objective morality* and that it holds good for all men in all places and at all times. This is the morality which has been given to mankind by God.

The Christian doctrine that there is an objective morality which is in principle accessible to all men does not imply that they are always aware of it, nor does it claim that those who are aware of it are correct in their interpretation of it at all points. It is quite conceivable that two Christians might disagree fundamentally on the implications of Christian morality for fighting a war.

What a belief in an objective moral code does imply is that men are bound to obey that morality to the best of their ability and according to their understanding. So a Christian who is faced with the problem of whether or not he should fight in a particular war is obliged to examine the situation in the light of the objective morality as he understands it. That involves not only thinking through the issues as carefully and as precisely as possible, but also approaching them in a deeply prayerful manner.

The answer, therefore, to what seems the unanswerable question, 'how is it possible to find some neutral standpoint from which to judge which side is right?' is that the Christian may appeal to the law of God. Stated in this way the claim might seem to the relativist to be no more than a cynical, or perhaps self-deluded, way of disguising what a hard-headed rationalist would see to be obvious. Christians disagree over the interpretation of the law of God, and they do so particularly when they are on different sides in a war. That is because their beliefs serve the interests of their state (or, in the Marxist version, their class). But such criticisms miss the point. Of course Christians disagree, but their understanding of the law of God is not merely theoretical. Christians believe that the God who has given this law will also judge men according to it. The Christian who fights in what he takes to be a just war must do so in the knowledge that God will call him to account for all his actions, not only in deciding to enter the war but in how he fights the war as well.

This is what makes the Christian position here a moral one. The judgements made in time of war are not to be seen purely in terms of how they deal with the present, and they are most emphatically not to be understood as having been arrived at on an *ad hoc* basis. They are made in the context of deeper, universal principles, which have implications far beyond the requirements and demands of the immediate situation. Above all, they look beyond the circumstances of the war, and even beyond the interests of the state, to an order of values which has eternal roots.

This talk about values and motives clearly separates the just war theory from the heirs of Clausewitz, and marks them off as two separate traditions. It also brings

us to the third condition which Aquinas lays down in order for a war to be just. **Those who wage war must do it from the correct motives**, they must, 'intend to promote the good and to avoid evil.'²⁰ Here Aquinas is reinforcing the point that it is not enough that the cause be just, it must also be the case that the person who claims to wage a just war must do it from the right intentions. Why does he wish to make such a distinction? Surely, it might be argued, the objective features of the war which make it just also guarantee that anyone who fights in the war will be acting justly. This is not so, but to show why it is not we need to look at the distinction that is made in just war theory between the justice of a particular war and the justice of particular actions within that war, the distinction between *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*.

An example might help at this point. Let us assume that the British were fighting a just war against the Germans in the Second World War. Even granted that the war itself was declared by a morally acceptable authority, for the purposes of resisting evil, it does not follow that every action in which the British forces engaged was thereby morally sanctioned. Take, for instance, the decision on the part of the British government and Bomber Command to attack Dresden in 1945. This was the culmination of a series of attacks on German cities which the allies had been conducting throughout the latter part of the war. The attack on Dresden was particularly bad because the British government knew that the city was full of refugees and because the bombers dropped incendiary bombs which, as expected, caused firestorms to rage through the city. The attacks on Dresden and other German cities were carried out with the prime intention of terrorising their populations, with the hope of a consequent collapse of morale and a consequent shortening of the war. It is estimated that 25,000 people died in Dresden, most of them refugees.

It seems clear that the bombing of Dresden was unjust. The civilian refugees were not able to defend themselves, represented no threat to the allies and in no sense presented a legitimate military target. So this particular action was unjust, even though the war as such was a just one. *The ability to make a distinction between the justice of a war and the justice of the actions within it is a crucial one.*

But while the bombing of Dresden is a fairly clear cut example of a military action carried out from evil intentions, and is therefore impossible to justify, there are many occasions when the issues are by no means so well defined. What judgement are we to make, for example, of the bomber crew who attack an enemy military camp knowing — but not desiring — that their actions will lead to the deaths of innocent women and children in the refugee camp next door? Many just war theorists have sought to deal with this problem of the foreseen but unintended evil consequences of a good action by evoking **the principle of double effect** (PDE).²¹ This principle plays a central role in Thomist just war theory and it will be appropriate at this point to discuss whether it is capable of bearing the weight which is often put upon it.

The PDE seeks to show that it is morally permissible to carry out acts which are morally good in themselves but which have morally bad consequences, even when those consequences have been foreseen. Clearly, to be of any practical value this

cannot be meant to apply indiscriminately, not just any good act with foreseen bad consequences is permitted. We can distinguish **three conditions** which help to clarify the issue.

The first is that the consequences which are to be judged must result from an act which is itself intrinsically good, or at least morally neutral. It does not allow the performance of an evil act from which good may come.

The second is that the good consequences must be positively intended and the bad ones merely foreseen. The bad effects must not be desired at all — neither as the end nor even as a means to the end, and all reasonable steps must be taken to avoid them.

Thirdly, the foreseen evil consequences must not be disproportionate to the good which is intended. If a great evil is foreseen as an unintended but unavoidable consequence of an action which is intended to bring about a comparatively minor good then the action is not justified.²²

Much of the burden of the argument falls on the second condition, that the good consequences must be positively intended and the bad ones merely foreseen. This proposition has often repelled people by its apparent equanimity in the face of the suffering of the innocent. It is all very well, it is said, to say that the bomber crew did not intend to kill and maim the refugees in the camp next to the military target, but that does not alter the fact that innocent people are dead and maimed.

I think that this repulsion is justified. The great problem with the PDE as applied to war, along with the general Thomist theory of a just war, is that it excuses too much and fails to take seriously enough the responsibilities which people have for their actions. Against the PDE, it seems that the bomber crew who foresaw that their action against a military target would have as one consequence the death of innocent people were faced with an intractable moral dilemma. It was right to attack the military base but wrong to kill and maim the innocent civilians, who would not have been harmed if the raid had not taken place. This last phrase needs to be emphasised because it underlines the point that the crew brought about the deaths. This is not to say that the military base should not have been attacked under any circumstances, only that those who planned and executed the attack cannot escape the responsibility for killing the civilians.

One possible way around this problem is that suggested by the idea of moral hierarchicalism. According to **Norman Geisler**, an influential proponent of this view, it is possible to grade absolute moral values into an order of greater and lesser importance. Lying, for example, is lower down the order than causing the death of innocent people so although it is normally wrong to lie this principle may be waived if telling the truth would cause the death of an innocent person.²³

Unfortunately, even if we accept that ethical hierarchicalism works in helping us grade different principles it does not offer any assistance where two alternative courses of action lead to a conflict with the same principle, and in war this is precisely the dilemma that often occurs. The example of the airmen who killed the refugees as an unintended consequence of bombing the military base is a case in point. Should they break the principle that it is wrong to cause the deaths of

innocent people in their own country?

In a way ethical hierarchicalism is similar to the PDE in that it supposes that there must always be a way out of the moral problems that men face. But that is wrong; *because of the fallen nature of the world we sometimes encounter situations where there is no perfect solution.* War provides perhaps the clearest examples of this.

This is a messy solution to the problem because it provides no clear answers. It leaves combatants with the knowledge that even in a just war dilemmas of the kind that have just been discussed may be present. But that is not an accidental part of the conclusion, because any Christian version of just war theory must accept that war itself is messy and confused. War is the result of evil in the world, and evil is an ever present reality against which all participants in war must be continually on guard.

The Thomist version of the just war theory fails to appreciate this seriously enough and allows that the combatants in such a war may, at least in principle, remain innocent of any moral guilt for their actions. This view is in part a hangover from the different but related theory of the crusade, where it was held that those who fought for the cause of the gospel would not only be absolved from guilt if they killed the infidel or heretic but would actually be rewarded by God for having taken part in a holy war.²⁴

The conclusion to be drawn from our discussion of the Thomist theory of the just war is a sobering one. *There are wars which must be fought to avoid a greater evil, and these may be regarded as just. But fighting in such wars may bring moral dilemmas which cannot be resolved without incurring guilt, because all wars, even just ones, are fought by sinful men in a sinful world*

If a Christian wishes to fight in a just war he must be aware that he cannot fight without frequently facing moral dilemmas. He may face intolerable moral conflicts during the war, but he also knows that it would be wrong not to defend the innocent and to prevent a greater evil. Having realised that there is the constant danger that he will give in to the temptations which war brings he may still take up arms, but with a heavy heart and deep foreboding.

Mckenna is right to point out that this view of war is a bleak one. But he is wrong to criticise it thereby, for we live in a bleak world and war is a horrible manifestation of that bleakness — **a step of last resort** taken only to prevent an even greater darkness. A theory of the just war which does not take that into account is neither realistic nor Christian.

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References

1. See, for example, Romans 8:18-25
2. Deuteronomy 7:1-5, 20:16-18, Joshua 6:20&21, 24-26. The requirement to fight a holy war was rare even in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 20:10-15 lays down humane guidelines for the conduct of ordinary warfare, and the

instructions for fighting a holy war in 16-18 are clearly seen as exceptions to these general rules.

3. It has often been pointed out that the crusades were fought as much for political and economic reasons as for religious ones. This point can be overstated, to the extent that the religious motivation is sometimes made to appear almost irrelevant, which it was not. The general point is, nevertheless, an important one, and further stresses the contrast with the godly warriors of the Old Testament.
4. Thomas Aquinas *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE* translated by Thomas R Heath O P, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1972, Volume 35, Question 40, article 1, pp 81-85.
5. *Ibid* p 83.
6. *Ibid* p 83.
7. *Ibid* p 83.
8. Joseph Mckenna, 'The Just War' in Rachels and Tillman (Editors), *PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES: A CONTEMPORARY INTRODUCTION*, New York: Harper and Row, 1972, p 264.
9. *ibid* p 265.
10. Aquinas was by no means the first Christian writer to use this distinction as an important part of his moral and political theory. He acknowledges his particular debt to Augustine on this matter and in his discussion of war generally.
11. The general concept of rights is problematic in itself and has been much discussed in recent years. For a general introduction to the literature see Jack Donnelley, *THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN RIGHTS*, London: Croom Helm, 1985. For a Christian perspective see Ian Shaw 'The Right Balance (Christian thinking about human rights)', *FOUNDATIONS* 14, Spring 1985, pp 10-15.
12. 1 Timothy 2:2.
13. This also raises the thorny question of revolution. What happens when the government acts so badly that the people feel they need to overthrow it? What is the moral status of revolutionary and civil wars? This is too large a subject to be adequately dealt with here, but see my *POLITICAL ALIENATION*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, 1978, especially chapters 5 and 6, and 'Liberation Theology', *EVANGELICAL TIMES* March 1986.
14. See, for example, Martin Wight, *POWER POLITICS* (edited by Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad) Second Edition, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1986 p 109.
15. Car Von Clausewitz, *ON WAR* (1832) Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976, Book I chapter 1 section 3, p 77.
16. *Ibid* Book I chapter 1 section 2, p 75.
17. *Ibid*.
18. *Ibid* Book 1 chapter 1 section 24, p 87.
19. Among the most important modern Realists are E H Carr, *THE TWENTY YEARS' CRISIS 1919-1939*, London: Macmillan, 1946; Hans J Morgenthau, *POLITICS AMONG NATIONS* (1948), New York: Alfred A Knopf 3rd Edition 1963; **RAYMOND ARON CLAUSEWITZ:**

PHILOSOPHER OF WAR (1976), translated by Christine Booker and Norman Stone, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983; and, as the arch-practitioner, Henry Kissinger. Realism is particularly influential in the United States, where it is often contrasted with the parallel moral or idealistic tradition associated with Presidents such as Jefferson and Wilson. The most recent advocate of this approach to American foreign policy at the highest level was President Carter, whose thinking on this subject was overtly Christian. See Jimmy Carter, *KEEPING FAITH: MEMOIRS OF A PRESIDENT*, London: Collins, 1982, especially pp 141-151:

20. Op cit p 83.
 21. For a recent discussion of the Principle of Double Effect in the context of the just war see David Fisher, *MORALITY AND THE BOMB* Beckenham, Croom Helm, 1985, chapter 3.
 22. This is usually referred to as the **Principle of Proportionality** and provides a major ground for those just war theorists who argue against the use of nuclear weapons. The moral objections to the use of such weapons are manifold — the very high probability of widespread death of non-combatants, the possibility of a nuclear winter, even predictions about the end of human life on the planet in the event of an all out strategic nuclear exchange. All these seem to many just war theorists to demonstrate that the use of nuclear weapons would be in conflict with the principle of proportionality — the amount of evil involved in their use would far outweigh any possible good. Some Christians have been led by these considerations to favour a policy of nuclear pacifism, arguing that while some conventional wars may be just there can be no just nuclear wars. John Stott defends this position in *ISSUES FACING CHRISTIANS TODAY*, London: Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1984, chapter 5. Not all Christian just war theorists are nuclear pacifists, though. Some argue, using terms drawn from nuclear strategy, that while counter-city attacks are immoral, counter-force strikes need not always be. See David Fisher op cit, and Richard Harries, *CHRISTIANITY AND WAR IN A NUCLEAR AGE*, London: Mowbray, 1986. However, even if it were possible to justify the use of nuclear weapons in a limited counter-force way, it seems clear that the principle of proportionality must rule out any possibility of a major nuclear exchange, where civilians would inevitably be involved.
 23. Normal L Geisler, *ETHICS: ALTERNATIVES AND ISSUES*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1971, chapter 7 and *OPTIONS IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN ETHICS*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1981, chapter 5.
 24. Not only Thomists are affected by this way of thinking. The Confederate Southern Presbyterian theologian Robert L Dabney (certainly no Thomist!) mixes a defence of just wars with a belief that the spirit of self-sacrifice which marks the Christian soldier, 'is precisely that of the martyr, who yields up his life rather than be recreant to duty, to his church and to his God.' Robert L Dabney, *DISCUSSIONS: EVANGELICAL AND THEOLOGICAL* (1890), London: Banner of Trust 1967 Vol I, p 619.
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