

*Early Christian thought . . . was concerned to deny any analogy between private and public defense in order to say that a Christian, who might participate in armed and bloody conflict for the sake of public protection, would OF COURSE not resist even by mild or passive means any neighbor who might assault him when his own goods and life alone were threatened. In direct contrast, much modern pacifism also attempts to break down all analogy between private and public defense, but for the purpose of establishing almost the reverse conclusion, namely, that OF COURSE individuals ought to resist by going to law if someone wishes to take away their coat . . . Nevertheless, it is clear that modern pacifists, in withdrawing completely from resistance on behalf of national defense, frequently make greater accomodation to the supposed natural necessity of self-defense . . . than ever occurred to the great thinkers who first forged a Christian theory of Justum Bellum. [Ibid., p. 182]*

We must be aware of the non-Christian influences which have produced modern pacifism in order to formulate a biblical attitude toward the use of force whether in self-defense, the private defense of another, government sponsored warfare, or revolution. Modern pacifism (and its cousin, nonviolence), in contrast to the pacifism of the early Christians, is inspired more by a revulsion at the sight of violence than by revulsion over the sin which is its cause. And it places an unbiblical value upon life. (Witness the flowering "quality of life" ethic, in contrast to the true Life given by God in Christ.) "Life" in the Christian value system has to do with harmony with God. Christians give up this physical life to gain that Life which never ends. Consider the martyrs and the value they placed on this Life above the life of their bodies.

And even though human bodies have a value as God's creation and the habitat of the soul, the value is not infinite; the body is not inviolable. Guilty persons may be executed, for example; Capital offenders may be violently stoned to death. Wicked nations may be violently exterminated. A righteous God destroys the world with a flood and incur no charge of wrongdoing. He is the Author of our value system.

The alternate value system presently intruding itself is a skewed one which admits Kevorkianism and prohibits capital punishment at the same time. Accordingly, life must remain under the control of the individual and the value of a life is to be determined by the individual - apart from any value or purpose God has for a life. Man is autonomous, free even to kill himself, though not another (abortion, of course, is problematic; hence the denial of the humanity of the fetus). Violence is to be shunned because it threatens another's autonomy and jeopardizes the tranquility of the neighborhood.