COLD WAR CHRISTIANS AND THE SPECTRE OF NULEAR DETERRENCE, 1945–1959

JONATHAN GORRY

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Jonathan Gorry

Lecturer in Politics and International Relations, Nottingham Trent University, UK

For my boys
Keep the Faith

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Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations

(i) Text

BCC	British Council of Churches
CA	Christian Action
CCFL	Council on the Christian Faith and Common Life
CCIA	Commission of the Churches on International Affairs
CIFSR	Commission on International Friendship and Social Responsibility
CJDP	Commission on a Just and Durable Peace
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CMSBI	Conference of Missionary Societies of Britain and Ireland
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
COPEC	Conference on Politics, Economics and Citizenship
DIA	Department of International Affairs (BCC International Department)
FoR	Fellowship of Reconciliation
FCC	Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America
IMC	International Missionary Council
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCANWT	National Campaign against Nuclear Weapons Tests
NPC	National Peace Council
PPU	Peace Pledge Union
SCM	Student Christian Movement
UNA	United Nations Association
WCC	World Council of Churches

(ii) Endnotes

Co. (BCC) Commission Minutes

DIAM Department of International Affairs (Minutes)

SGM Study Group on the Moral Aspects of Disarmament (Minutes)

1
Introduction

> For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and
> flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities,
> against the cosmic powers of this present darkness.
>
> Eph: 6:12

Today the use of nuclear weapons is practically unthinkable. It is hard
to imagine a circumstance in which the use of such weapons could be
politically or morally justified. Yet the spectre of nuclear war ending
history itself casts a surprisingly small shadow over how we have con-
structed the ethics of twentieth century foreign affairs. Cold War narra-
tives have traditionally placed great emphasis on the idea that credible
threats of mutually assured destruction explain the puzzle of 'non-use'
since 1945. In so doing they uphold the realist account of time as one in
which material power and military force shape past and present. Or in
plainer terms, meaning is power and Thrasymachus was right in seeing
visions of imaginative civilising action as illusory.

In the aftermath of World War II, E. H. Carr concluded that devel-
opments in modern weaponry were threatening the 'Westphalian
moment' by fundamentally subverting the modern nation-state as an
organisation capable of providing security for its citizens. As a response
to the dilemma of new technologies, Carr anticipated pooled security
and would argue that throughout the Cold War a de facto habit of
nuclear non-use became a collectively held form of conflict manage-
ment. An increasing number of scholarly accounts now take this
self-reinforcing normative opprobrium as proof of the evolution of a
moral teleology in which values, ideas and culture matter as much as
material power in explaining the efficacy of nuclear deterrence.[1] But
whether deterrence worked to keep the peace or not, it most certainly

worked to instil fear. As Nina Tannenwald points out in her seminal *The Nuclear Taboo* (2007, p. 9), 'no one today views a nuclear weapon as "just another weapon"'. Yet it was not always so. Throughout the 1950s many democratic leaders sought to establish nuclear devices as 'just another weapon' so much so that in 1957 US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles declared the 'ultimate inevitability' of tactical (battlefield, theatre or smaller-yield) nuclear weaponry gaining conventional war-fighting status. While the revealed historical record demonstrates that western politicians were surprisingly open to the possibility of nuclear use, it is also clear democratic leaders felt constrained by public horror, antipathy and widespread feelings of civic revulsion. It seems a reasonable proposition to further investigate, therefore, Tannenwald's conception of proscription both as radically dependent variable and as plausible foil to conventional accounts of deterrence in explaining the history of nuclear inaction. *The Nuclear Taboo* divides its story into defined stages: an initial period of emergence, 1945 to 1959, in which ideas of taboo vied for supremacy against attempts to conventionalise; and a second period of consolidation and institutionalisation from the 1960s to the 1980s, in which notions of taboo successfully prevailed over the competition. The interesting questions are from where, how and in what ways did the norms that theoretically stigmatised the nuclear class emerge?

The writing of this book was guided by an interest in the crucial formative period in which the nuclear taboo was raised and the particular roles played by Christians in both enabling it but also, more provocatively, resisting its emergence with a counter vision of justified limited use. The late 1940s, in the wake of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, was a period of great political uncertainty and as World War II ended the first chills of Cold War were felt. In the summer of 1945, the American defence strategist Bernard Brodie declared: 'Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now its chief purpose must be to avert them'. But the stigmatisation of these weapons first emerged in the 1950s as a result of operational precedents and categories that established them as qualitatively different. In early 1952 Winston Churchill's Conservative government become the first to formally adopt the concept of deterrence by the threat of massive nuclear retaliation as the basis of its national security policy. This 'New Look' strategy reflected both the initial short-lived western monopoly of nuclear weapons, a poverty of accurate delivery systems and the West's more enduring unwillingness to pay the financial cost of matching Soviet conventional forces. London thinking was ahead

of Washington by two years and no official distinction was made as to whether the unleashing of a nuclear holocaust on Russian cities was to be a pre-emptive first-strike response to a conventional Soviet invasion of Western Europe or as a countervalue second-strike response to Soviet nuclear attack. (It is worth noting that this ambiguous policy would remain the basis of British nuclear strategy until the purchase of the Polaris missile system in the early 1960s and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's [NATO] adoption of its current strategy of flexible response in 1967.) The official view was simply that nuclear weapons had abolished total war and the primary focus of defence was to bolster the deterrent. The Marshal of the Royal Air Force and chief architect of massive retaliation, Sir John Slessor (1954, p. 108), argued that 'citizens must steel themselves to risks and take what may come to them, knowing that thereby they are playing as essential a part in the country's defence as the pilot in the fighter [plane] or the man behind the gun'. This reckless strategy soon unleashed a turbulent and vigorous debate within Britain not least because it assumed, as Sir Michael Howard (1970, p. 161) would later note, 'that the civilian population might be induced to grin and bear the nuclear holocaust as cheerfully as they had endured the German blitz'. Christians quickly became among the most vocal and articulate critics of a public policy process that seemed to condone an overwhelming obligation to die. Tannenwald's account emphasises the role of grassroots anti-nuclear activists as prime actors in shaping prohibitions; can we perhaps assume that the very idea of nuclear opposition was raised from a Christian base? Does this not suggest a case history par excellence of the progressive impact of religious ethics on the secular public square?

It is often taken for granted that the churches and individual lay Christians were vocal instigators of anti-nuclear sentiment. And it is also true that the churches' role deserves due consideration as it is easy to forget they were the main forum for debating nuclear morality in Britain before the onset of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in 1958. But Christians were in fact deeply divided in their judgements. On one hand there were those who felt that nuclear weapons were different-in-degree and that their moral nature was determined by use. Such conventionalists endorsed traditional military arguments about the value-neutrality of technology and blurred the line between nuclear and other weaponry. On the other hand, however, there were absolutists who believed that there was something different in kind about nuclear weapons and so sought clear lines of demarcation. In theological terms, one might say that the former denied the seriousness

of nuclear possession while the latter embraced its danger as absolute evil. The point is that radically different visions of order regarding deterrence and warfare were imagined and articulated. Unpicking the form(s) and character of these inventions requires a sense of historical, cultural and social context. It also involves upholding an account of social action based on hermeneutics and intersubjective meaning while demonstrating the way ideas are always instantiated through institutions and practices. It means stressing, contrary to conventional constructivist accounts, that (Christian) norms are not stable and monophonic but contested. Ecclesiological similarities, to put another way, cannot and do not guarantee distinguishable modes of action.

This book has been guided by a concern to recover the form and function of a specifically Christian judgement on what is normally considered an entirely secular series of foreign policy interventions. It sets to unpack the assumptions and policy prescriptions that led the British Council of Churches (BCC[2]) to reimagine the Augustinian tradition of moral and theological thinking in order to affirm the idea that nuclear deterrence was ethical and the battlefield use of nuclear weapons could be just. The BCC have been described by Adrian Hastings (1987), the accepted academic authority, as arguably the key institution of British Christianity in the Cold War period. That little has been written about the churches' role in this pivotal but largely under-explored area of twentieth century history is all the more strange considering the context. There was probably never a time since the middle nineteenth century when traditional Christianity was taken so seriously by so many. Where the personally committed and orthodox believer was once the exception, as had been the case throughout the first half of the twentieth century, by the 1950s they were very nearly the norm, not least within the corridors of British political power. That intellectual and cultural elites would associate with the churches was considered normal and a Christian sensibility was the social capital that bound Britain together. Throughout the English-speaking world in the late 1940s and 1950s much public and scholarly discussion on East–West relations also possessed a distinctly metaphysical quality. The widespread view was that communism was the ultimate threat to western, Christian civilisation and this tended to align the churches alongside the government (Kirby 1993). Participants frequently defended their foreign policy positions as articles of faith at a time when the prospect of war – this time with nuclear weapons – against 'godless' Soviets could not be easily dismissed. Perhaps even more suggestive was the way in which a specific language of providence,

sin and order took hold and became an intellectual currency in an era of sharp anxiety and terror. From this perspective, notwithstanding empirical events, the Cold War can be seen as a series of battles between faith-based metanarratives. Nowhere was this confrontation more acute than when debating communist intentions and the ideologies of nuclear deterrence.

The early Cold War period was a time of great social transition not least because the British defence consensus was brought to the point of collapse over attitudes to nuclear deterrence.[3] In policy terms the churches' endorsement of nuclear weapons can be remembered for helping to reconcile a broken consensus at precisely the time when the traditional security paradigm was most under threat from an organised anti-nuclear peace movement with its unconditional commitment to denuclearisation. A comparative focus that historically and theoretically locates the churches' contribution aside the development of such a protest movement is useful in that it also helps bring focus on the centrality of imagination in an ideational terrain. And this is in two respects. First, because the peace movement demanded a new, expanded vision (not least from Christians) of the form of civic responsibility necessary in a nuclear era. The second reason is that peace activists claimed that the orthodox just war synthesis between political pragmatism, force, and ethics was rendered obsolete by the invention of nuclear weapons. It is against this background that this book attempts to provide meaningful answers to the following questions: How did theological–political judgements affect an ecumenism that aimed to influence Cold War security policy? How did Christians within the BCC imagine their own obligations as active responsible citizens when faced with threats of nuclear apocalypse? In analysing such evaluations this book makes extensive use of the hitherto unused archival material and official publications of the British Council of Churches.

One further reason why a book of this nature is needed is that it illustrates nicely how security issues have driven and can drive secularity. This also questions the standard sociological paradigm of secularisation as a process of desacralisation (rationalisation, privatisation, differentiation, etc.). The received wisdom sees the marginalisation of religious belief as essentially a positive act – to remove that which is superfluous and additional to reveal what is human and self-sufficient (Milbank 2006). Here secularisation has become, sociologically speaking, the inexorable creation of modern space that enables a knowable and authentic human autonomy through the separation of the natural/supernatural distinction. But the idea of a stark divorce between secular

reason and religious faith cannot be so easily sustained. Secularisation appears something more suggestive than a simple absence of belief and practice or the inevitable by-product of modernisation. By reflecting on a disjointed Christian discourse on foreign policy this book follows Martin (2005) into arguing that history, culture, different theologies and ecclesial structures are significant factors in demonstrating that there are different dynamics rather than one master narrative of secularisation. The aim from this perspective is to reveal the subtleties of secularity by using a case history to better specify the varieties (despite similarities) of Christian witness in time and place.

In the secularisation literature there is clear tendency to concentrate on the wider cultural presence of the churches and to relegate questions of the quality and content of religious belief. There is less interest in assessing the cultures of religious participation and commitment. Yet if the early years of the nuclear age represents a period of enormous 'religious vitality' (e.g. Hastings 1988) how can it concurrently be a key phase in the 'de-Christianisation' of late post-industrial modernity (e.g. Brown 2009)? If Christianity was taken so seriously by so many in the 1950s why did belief collapse so radically in the following 'secularisation decade'? It is not my purpose here to begin to answer such questions but posing them suggests we are arguably at either a distorted understanding of the early Cold War years as an age of religious revival or we have an incomplete sense of the nature of the violent cultural attacks that followed in the 1960s. If this is so, both Callum Brown's 'death of Christian Britain' and Hugh McLeod's (1981) 'end of Christendom' theses are qualified. This study hence casts light on a wider narrative of large-scale social change by linking questions of late 1940s and 1950s religiosity to nuclear ethics and fears. The debate is interesting because it gives a sense of how the churches saw themselves and their responsibilities at a time when it had become difficult to treat Cold War politics in moral terms because, to paraphrase William Faulkner, there was only one frightful question left: When will I be blown up?

From the very beginning Christianity has shown itself as very adaptable in terms of its cultural setting and political role. As will be shown in Chapter 2, not all believers have seen this ability to remake existing culture as a positive feature of their religion. Transforming culture to reflect the demands of the gospel, for some purists, is nothing other than a metamorphosis of the gospel to reflect culture. But many Christians wish to see questions of coercion/non-coercion as fundamental criteria in separating secular and sacred markers. Yet Roy (2010, p. 89) has taught that within all religions 'cultural markers and religious

markers are continually being connected and disconnected, secularised and made sacred, in a see-sawing that is never a simple repetition'. In this light the following can be regarded as a modest attempt to further shape the conversation pursued by Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2007) in which he isolated the ethical dynamic implicit within Protestantism (as opposed to Weber's emphasis on the cultural dynamics implicit within Protestant ethics) as one that dislocates the transcendent in favour of post-Enlightenment immanence. Within such narrative the churches are themselves agents of a 'political' rather than 'existential' secularisation (Katznelson and Stedman Jones 2010). My intention is to add colour to a picture that sees secularisation not so much as Christian loss or disenchantment (Weber's term is 'Entzauberung'), but more as a transformation in Christian understanding, ambition and action.

* * *

It should be noted before proceeding that the terminology used in this book belongs to a highly contested field. It is appropriate to clarify the meaning of certain key terms. The title 'church' refers to the collective Christian church and not one particular denomination (e.g. Church of England) unless otherwise specified. The term 'state' describes not only elected government (Cabinet and Prime Minister) but also the permanent institutions of civil service, and coercive apparatuses such as police, armed forces, and judiciary. In this sense my study brings into focus a tension between citizen and state. It draws attention to the ways in which the Christian duty of allegiance to his or her state is articulated.

My understanding of (political) 'realism' and 'idealism' is very much influenced by Max Weber's 'taxonomy of responsibility' in *Politics as a Vocation*. Realism earns its label by emphasising consequences over moral principles and idealism by emphasising moral imperatives over expediency. For Weber (Gerth and Mills 1991, p. 120) 'we must be clear that all ethically orientated conduct may be guided by one of two fundamentally differing and irreconcilably opposed maxims: conduct can be orientated to an 'ethic of ultimate ends' or to an 'ethic of responsibility'. This is not to say that an ethic of ultimate ends is identical with irresponsibility or that an ethic of responsibility is identical with unprincipled opportunism'. Weber's discussion is suffused with theological content and the Sermon on the Mount constitutes his 'ideal type' of intention. For realists the theological referent tends to be the Passion. The terms of the debate are familiar. Realists see

(liberal) idealism as deontological, utopian, or normative political theorising that attempts to moralise politics. Idealists see realism as the consequentialist notion that morals should have no part in political decision-making.

'Pacifism' (without the qualification 'nuclear') is used to define the position held by individuals and groups who reject the use of direct force and violence. James Hinton's excellent study *Protests and Visions* (1989) offers a compelling insight into the etymological origins of the word. 'Nuclear pacifists' accept that war can be a morally legitimate venture as long as it is not waged with nuclear means. '*Pacificists*', while working for peace and the prevention of war, look for the removal of force from international relations. A '*pacificist*' does not reject the use of force in all circumstances. Following Ceadel (1980) the term '*pacificist*' will be italicised to avoid visual confusion with pacifism. 'Peace activists' include all those who challenge from within the 'peace movement' the dominant culture of war. The term includes pacifists, *pacificists*, anarchists, international socialists, as well as traditional liberal-idealists. Whilst most pacifists are peace activists, not all peace activists are pacifist. Before the nuclear age, many peace activists would in fact have associated themselves with the just war position, particularly in world war struggles against fascism.

'Deterrence' is defined as a military strategy whose primary purpose is the prevention of hostile action by a foreign adversary through fear of counter-attack. The idea involves persuading an adversary that the potential costs of military action will exceed the expected gains. The standard texts are Morgan (2003) and Freedman (2004). Fisher (1985) and Finnis, Boyle and Grisez (1987) provide ethical assessments of the nuclear variety. 'Just war' is a moral vision of deterrence-cum-retribution that, in this book, usually refers to the tradition that encourages states to find alternative methods of conflict resolution and set limits on the effects of war if there is military engagement. Formally articulated in the fourth century by St Augustine, just war theorising begins with the assumption that armed conflict is wrong but can be justified if certain conditions are fulfilled. Its greatest utility lies in its ability to encourage judgement on both *ius ad bellum* (declared reasons for war, announced war aims), and *ius in bello* (strategies adopted, the morality of the means employed). It thus sets to reconcile a central theme of Christian thinking – prohibitions on the taking of human life – with a recurring feature of history – the prevalence of warfare. Just war arguably stands as the only area of applied ethics where an essentially medieval conceptual vocabulary still commands contemporary currency. Yet it is a discourse

which, in supporting a sovereign right to deterrence, self-defence, and retribution also tends to validate a specific vision of politics and moral order. The bibliography to this volume provides a fairly extensive listing of just war material.

On one level the standard conceptualisation between 'unilateral' and 'multilateral' disarmers is more heuristically convenient than terminologically precise. This is because church initiatives advocated a combination of contingent (conventional) and non-contingent (absolutist) initiatives. Notwithstanding this, I argue that the defining feature of the churches' line on disarmament was its privileging of mutually agreed and co-ordinated approaches to disarmament. The key distinction is necessarily moral because to maintain a nuclear deterrent pending multilateral disarmament, or even as leverage to encourage phased disarmament, is to maintain the 'murderous intent' (Finnis et al. 1987) which the deterrent involves.

* * *

This book is divided into three sections. The two chapters of Part I: Vision and Order deal with the task of establishing an appropriate theoretical and historical foundation for subsequent discussion. Chapter 2, 'Presumptions against War', offers a framework to connect the wider theological and political themes that shape Christian approaches to the morality and methods of deterrence with the particular questions raised by nuclear weapons. In order not to take too much for granted, the object is to highlight 'pacific idealism' and 'just war realism' as principal but competing visions. This chapter is particularly interested in sketching the origins and language of the just war tradition established by St Augustine as it was the appropriation of this particular moral framework that took on new dimensions and dominated the debates of the early Cold War years. Augustine has been described as the 'great seculariser' and the 'first modern', not least because his approach to violence and (dis)order is often read as a rationalisation and bureaucratisation of the gospel message. But this secularism from within engendered the Christianity we now know today. The Enlightenment, however, represented an attack on the core of what is often understood as pessimistic Augustinian realism. The nineteenth and early twentieth century drive towards ecumenism, the process in which Christians of different denominations set aside confessional and fractional loyalties to unite, was a practical expression of an optimistic normative shift away from traditional state-centred orthodoxy. Chapter 3, 'Prophecy

and Diplomacy at a New Frontier', subsequently examines the plan for a supranational Christian council as a pioneering and progressive reconciliation that saw its task as rejuvenating Christendom in a detraditionalised world suspicious of religion. In delineating ecumenism as a representative aspect of a robust liberal-internationalism assaulting secularism, sectarianism and ecclesiastical monopoly, this chapter introduces the institutions at the heart of this study. It provides a fresh and distinctive articulation of the driving forces and social norms behind the creation of the World Council of Churches and its constituent assembly the British Council of Churches during World War II. Here ecumenism is conceptualised as both a product of secularisation but also as a reaction against it.

Following these foundations, the task of Part II: Faith and Fear is to take up the challenge of unpacking post-World War II church debate regarding nuclear deterrence and war fought with nuclear weapons. It is particularly concerned with deepening understanding of the ways in which the West's use and manufacture of the atomic bomb 1945–48, together with the development and deployment of thermonuclear weapons 1950–57, increased tensions between the traditional Christian presumptions against war discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 4, 'Christians in an Atomic Age', examines the British churches' first exploration of the logic of nuclear deterrence, *The Era of Atomic Power* (also known as the Oldham Commission report) and illustrates the ways in which British membership of the atomic club raised new ethical questions for Christians. Before Hiroshima, war involved humanity in particular states and regions without threatening its ultimate survival. The challenge of nuclear weapons now lay in the reality that they created a radical new prospect in warfare: the possibility that human beings themselves might put an end to human history. Chapter 5, 'The Churches and the Thermonuclear Revolution', considers the development of Christian thinking towards the development and testing of hydrogen weapons. This chapter assesses the extent and nature of the differences between pacific idealists and just war realists in the nuclear age.

Part III of the book, Power and Justice, contains three chapters. The first chapter here, Chapter 6, 'The Moral Aspects of Deterrence', begins with an overview of the West's New Look deterrence strategy characterised by the threat of massive nuclear retaliation. Against this background it examines Admiral Buzzard's posture of limited war (or graduated deterrence) as a specific attempt to describe for the churches an alternative, more morally acceptable nuclear strategy. Yet this approach was also one based on battlefield nuclear fighting. It was a logic of preparation for actual use

(whether first, pre-emptive, or launching under attack) rather than just an attempt to dissuade. It was not a policy of no-first-use. The most important consequence of Buzzard's mission – recently retired as the youngest ever Director of Naval Intelligence – was the creation of a BCC working group to give continuous study to the moral aspects of defence policy and disarmament problems in the light of nuclear armament. Chapter 7, 'Strategies for Survival', examines the methods and processes of this group and considers the development of Buzzard's brand of (just war) realism within the BCC. Here the challenge for the churches lay not in discovering ways in which Buzzard's thesis could be transformed into a Christian nuclear judgement on deterrence, but in securing specific policies that would lead to nuclear disarmament. This distinction was important and one not reconciled by easy talk. But the study group's deliberations moved the BCC into depoliticising nuclear weapons with an unconditional demand to normalise or conventionalise their use. The birth of the CND in 1958 however served to politicise nuclear weapons by seeing their very existence as reason for proper political passion, confrontation and division. As a consequence of the formation of the CND the debate in the churches was shifted from one that primarily considered the probity of pacifism and just war into one concerned with articulating differences between multilateralist and unilateralist approaches to nuclear disarmament. CND was important because it served to clarify and institutionalise the sense that the real ethical significance of nuclear deterrence is revealed only by examining the contrasting positions taken regarding nuclear disarmament. The penultimate chapter, 'Redacting Just War' (Chapter 8), shows that in the late 1950s the BCC was agitated most with the fact that the West was planning, if war came, to first use nuclear weapons. The BCC believed that Britain could escape from this moral predicament by transferring its nuclear armoury from national to international control. In this way the concept of deterrence could be underwritten by international law. The CND view that the supreme ethical requirement was to prevent massive retaliation by abolishing British nuclear means did not carry weight. As long as the British government came out in favour of the ultimate aim of abolition and the intermediate aim of collective control, the BCC believed Britain should retain nuclear weapons as a contribution to western deterrence and be prepared to use them if deterrence should fail. British church discussion regarding nuclear ethics consequently moved from a generalised means–ends calculation to a concerted discourse supporting a specific nuclear deterrent strategy. This proposition is developed via a detailed study of the 1959 BCC report *Christians and Atomic War*.

Although the focus of this book is ostensibly to explore Christian understandings of ethical citizenship in a nuclear context, my theme is not one easily confined to the museum of Cold War history. War and peace and the dilemmas they raise are, after all, as much a feature of twenty-first century life as they were in the twentieth. It is with respect to this prospect that the conclusions marshalled in this book serve to challenge perceptions of Christian involvement in defence and disarmament debates. In providing answers modest movement is made towards rethinking questions of secularisation. The goal of this book is not simply to describe, compare or contrast but to argue that the development of modern weapon systems in general, and nuclear ones in particular, brings into sharp relief the role and shape of Christian faith within the so-called secular public square.

Part I
Vision and Order

2
Presumptions against War

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing a Christian is to negotiate a theologically honest faith-based participation in social affairs. Questions of power, politics and violence are foremost. Arguably the most basic of all Christian presumptions is one against war and war-fighting. But tensions between the church as it *is* and the church as it *ought* to be, between its theory and practice, have been part of Christianity since its earliest days. On one side stands a 'counter-cultural' position represented by 'idealists' who hold (however imprecisely) that threatening or waging war represents an unchristian militarism that must be rejected. Here an unbridled confidence in human creative action brings forward the desire to hold fast a Christ-like, pure politics. On the other side stands a 'culture-making' position best represented by 'realists' who maintain a qualified support for a state's right to sometimes threaten or wage war. This opposing vision of a flawed and imperfect politics is based on the notion that in an unredeemed world moral failure is ascribed to natural human limitations. In short, the belief that deterrence as an instrument of policy must be renounced clashes with the reality that church teachings are in fact flexible. Such theoretical and practical oppositions bear witness to the church's origins in the heart of the Greco-Roman world and together bring into focus the difficulties of precise sacred and secular markings regarding attitudes to war. Yet it is a readily accepted presupposition that the early church, following the crucifixion of Christ (AD 30), was essentially idealist in its detachment from classical thinking and only later made realist following the conversion of the Emperor Constantine in AD 312.[1] Should we take such original purity of mission to be an objective reading *of* church history or rather an ideological imposition *on* it? It is not the purposes of this chapter to adjudicate the authenticity of various approaches but rather engage

with them in a way that provides a moral framework against which to assess modern theologies of deterrence. Virtually all readers of primitive Christianity would probably agree that it contains a theological narration that could or should have a bearing on the political stances taken by modern Christians. The task is to demonstrate the origin and nature of the theological concerns alive in the church debates of the 1940s and 1950s Cold War.

Over two millennia of Christian history, material has been found that can justify almost any position on political violence from pacifism to unadulterated crusading. This basic acknowledgement is the key to unlocking Christian thinking. A straightforward reading of church teachings is that they are contested, multilayered, and/or contradiction-riddled. Political interpretation has affected the theology, and theology the political interpretation. And while there may be naive and politically unaware theology there can never be apolitical theology (Moltmann 1974). An analysis normally begins with the Bible but, as is well known, selected texts can be plucked at random (and out of context) to prove or justify one position over another. Most commentators would probably still agree that Christ's teaching condemned coercive power and political violence. After all this presupposition was the strange, new law at odds with prevailing Judaic and Hellenistic culture. Take as example Christ's teachings in the Sermon on the Mount:

> You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'. But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. (Matt. 5:38–41)[2]

Christian idealists point to this weighty conceptualisation to support the authenticity of a politics of counter-cultural resistance; ranked against them Christian realists argue that the relationship between Christ's injunction and its relevance to political or military practice is far from simple. For critics like Reinhold Niebuhr (1953, p. 14) it is more important 'to take all factors in a social and political situation which offer resistance to established norms into account, *particularly the factors of self-interest and power*'.[3] Christian idealism is hence subject to 'illusions about social realities' characterised by unquestioning loyalty to moral ideals and over-optimistic expectations that encourage 'ideologically pure' strategic commitments. Christian realists subsequently reject the idea of Christ's ethics as 'historical possibility' because to them

attitudes to deterrence and war must first be based on a dialogue of diverse interests. Christian responsibility, in other words, is to transform rather than reject traditional culture and the Christian should enter the debates never in pursuit of Christ's ethical injunctions but only in order to check 'evil'. Rather than striving for a pure world free from imperfection, proponents of Christian idealism fundamentally challenge the notion that the conflation of politics with anti-war ethics confuses the 'real issues' in an immutable realm of the given.

The most quoted, and as a consequence most influential historians have argued that the church was essentially idealist in its first three centuries (e.g. Cadoux 1919; Bainton 1960). Here the marshalled evidence asserts those within the early Christian communities were essentially pacifists who opposed political violence on sacred grounds.[4] Others writers, especially Harnack (1981) and Helgeland, Daly and Burns (1987), have claimed that Christians were essentially realists supportive of political authority and its right to violence. Jonathan Koscheski (2011) goes further still by arguing that forms of early Christianity not only glorified war and political violence but actively sought it out.[5] Although scholarship is divided, for the first three centuries after Christ's death the early church did seem ambivalent to the state's claims including its right to wage war. It was not just St Paul (Rom. 12:2) urging: 'Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds'. As both private individual and responsible citizen, the faithful were obliged to respond to injury by turning the other cheek. Although Paul and more than one other New Testament writer arguably also enjoined obedience to government, the Christian faith did automatically subvert the political authority of established classical culture in this important sense.[6] This non-conformism held good; however many Christians appreciated the order established by Rome which enabled the expansion of their new faith. Almost all early Christian theologians saw the threat of coercive power as incompatible with the law of peace with justice as laid down by Christ. A prototypical early Christian thinker can thus be theorised as idealist to the extent they had in mind a particular vision of hope and change within a this-world future. This unifying *telos* was a desire for a New Kingdom on earth. In this respect early church thinking can also be considered counter-cultural in two crucial ways. First, it represented an alternative idea – an abstraction of meaningful action – that transcended traditional political approaches. And second, in the sense that it brought into popular life the idea of the essential fellowship of all under God rather than Emperor. But Christian hope, whether present or future,

long deferred or imminent, lay ultimately in eschatology or 'end times'. The dominant concern of the early church was never toward the public realm but rather toward ecclesiastical orthodoxy. This is why throughout these centuries critics maintained that the specifically Christian approach threatened *Pax Romana*. Pagan philosophers argued that Christians were willing to accept the benefits of belonging to Rome but unwilling to discharge their civic responsibilities. This was a common charge and one the early 'Fathers', particularly Tertullian, Origen and Lactantius, took care to refute.

One of the more uncompromising of these early theologians was the third century Carthaginian scholar Tertullian (AD 160–225) who famously asked: 'What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?' Tertullian's fundamental demand was that Christians maintain a stark separation of secular reason ('Athens') with religious faith ('Jerusalem'). But his somewhat paradoxical (and often misquoted) writing makes clear that, even before the Constantinian settlement, Christians were serving in the army and occupying state positions despite prohibitions against military service. In the case of the *Thundering Legion* we even have an example of a second century Roman regiment composed mainly of Christians. The main objection to such service was not that it exposed Christians to the threat of war but that it involved idolatrous practices. In *Apologeticus pro Christianis* (AD 197) Tertullian used this knowledge to argue that Christians were able to support the state in every conceivable way: 'we sail together with you, we go to war, we till the ground, we conduct business together with you' (*Apology* 39 in Tertullian 1896). Christians were as good, if not better, citizens. 'We are', he writes, 'a body knit together as such by a common religious profession, by unity of discipline, and by the bond of a common hope' (*Apology* 42 in Tertullian 1896). Christians were loyal subjects who offered prayers for the Emperor to have a long life, brave armies and a peaceful reign. Any suggestion that they might rise in rebellion was unjust because Christians would 'rather be killed than kill'. Such evidence suggests that substantial sections of the church were not idealist or pacifist in our sense if there were those who could square military service with conscience. Tertullian intimates that the ethical dilemma suggested by militarism was not actually an issue. What also could be argued is that attitudes varied from place to place. To be sure the powerful church at Alexandria, for one, looked askance upon the reception of legionnaires into its membership and believed enlistment was only possible in exceptional circumstances.[7] But it is interesting to note that Jews and slaves were disqualified from legion membership and

those Christians drawn from these groups were ineligible for service. The early Tertullian appears to tacitly condone soldiering. Tertullian is nevertheless important because his rhetoric emphasised a necessary conflict and discontinuity between the idealism of Christian theology and the realism of secular reason. He is sharp in rejecting the claims of Athens at least in this regard. In later commentaries including *De Idololatria* (AD 200) and *De Corona Militis* ('The Chaplet' or 'On the Soldier's Garland', AD 204), Tertullian makes clear the contradiction between classical culture and Jerusalem.

In *De Idololatria* (19:3 in Tertullian 1896) Tertullian makes probably his most famous idealist and pacifist statement: 'By taking away Peter's sword, the Lord disarmed every soldier thereafter. We are not allowed to wear any uniform that symbolizes a sinful act' and in *De Corona Militis* (11 in Tertullian 1896) he argues that a soldier who converted to Christianity should give up military service. First, because the soldier's oath of allegiance was uncongenial and contradicted baptismal vows. (Christ taught that believers could not serve two masters.) Second, because soldiering involved taking part in idolatrous practices. Finally, because taking up the sword made it necessary to inflict violence when to shed blood was contrary to Christ's commandment.[8] The decisive point being made was that in its very nature political violence was compromising. Some conclude that Tertullian's mature position was more contradictory than revolutionary. Young (1989), for example, argues that Tertullian was happy to refute the suggestion that Christians were enemies of the state when addressing Romans, but equally happy to warn against military ways if he were addressing Christian audiences.

Yet to Tertullian the idolatries and apostasies increasingly to be found in the church did seem to signal that the idealism inherent in the Christian message was diluted by the cultural realism of a Hellenistic world. For him a true knowledge of God was to be found through creative social witness and maintaining a division between the ideals of Christian virtue and the realities of secular philosophy, Stoic, Platonic or dialectical. To be a Christian was to accept certain standards and renounce worldly values. But the issue that really exercised Tertullian was never the moral legitimacy of armed force but the quality of the authority applying it. In demonstrating antipathy towards political culture, Tertullian can perhaps be categorised as the innovator of a Christian counter-cultural attack on political sovereignty.

The Alexandrian philosopher Origen (AD 184–254) endorsed Tertullian's sentiments albeit within a recognition of the need for order and civil authority. Unlike Tertullian, Origen's approach was more grounded in

an appeal to Platonic and Stoic conceptions of a natural law. For Greco-Roman culture the need for order, enforced by the state through violence, was seen as the necessary expression of a rationality discovered in the nature of things. This moral law was known by humans through reason. When in conflict with human law, natural law was to be obeyed. Origen thus appeals to pagan conceptions of reason in his defence against accusations that Christians did not abide by secular law. In doing so, Origen seems close to anticipating theories of civil resistance:

> As there are, then, generally two laws presented to us, the one being the law of nature, of which God would be the legislator, and the other being the written law of cities, it is a proper thing, when the law is not opposed to that of God, for the citizens not to abandon it under pretext of foreign customs; but when the law of nature, that is, the law of God, commands what is opposed to the written law, observe whether reason will not tell us to bid a long farewell to the written code, and to the desire of its legislators, and to give ourselves up to the legislator God, and to choose a life agreeable to His word, although in doing so it may be necessary to encounter dangers, and countless labours, and even death and dishonour. (*Against Celsus* 5:37 in Origen 1896)

In *Against Celsus*, a reply to a pagan critic, Origen confronted the charge that Christians were socially feckless. According to Celsus, Christianity, like Judaism, had originated as a violent rebellion and set a disastrous example that encouraged frequent Barbarian uprisings. Origen retorted that if the church were indeed seditious 'the Christian Lawgiver would not have altogether forbidden the putting of men to death' because nowhere does Christ teach 'that it is right for His own disciples to offer violence to any one, however wicked' (*Against Celsus* 3:7 and 8:14 in Origen 1896). If all were Christian, even rebellious Barbarians would be rendered meek. Although Christians should be exempt from military service (on grounds similar to that of the Roman Priests who kept their right hand pure for the sake of sacrificial purity) they were still good citizens:

> As we by our prayers vanquish all demons who stir up war, and lead to the violation of oaths, and disturb the peace, we go into the field to fight for them. And we do take our part in public affairs, when along with righteous prayers we join in self-denying exercises and meditations, which teach us to despise pleasures and not be led away by them. And none fight better for the king than we do. We do not

indeed fight under him, although he require it; but we fight on his behalf, forming a special army of piety – by offering our prayers to God. (*Against Celsus* 8:73 in Origen 1896)

Origen's position differed from Tertullian's in that it has been seen to demonstrate that a pacific idealism was a dominant Christian concern. Kertesz (1989), for example, believes Origen to be 'truly pacifist'. Yet such argument (including the definition of pacifism) is highly contentious in that a 'special army of piety' who prayed for military success was condoning war albeit if fought by non-Christians. Indeed Origen suggests that non-Christian citizens should be left to get on with the fighting and be encouraged to do so. In no way can his rationale be seen to be a universalisable principled objection to war on religious grounds. Yet Origen's approach is significant for two reasons: first, because of his appeal to the idea of a sacred law that stands over and possibly against, the demands of the sovereign state. Second, because his albeit elitist and idiosyncratic form of quasi-pacifism still suggested a circumscribed form of Christian responsibility regarding attitudes to that state's use of political violence.

Lactantius (*c*. AD 260–325), who ironically became advisor to the Emperor Constantine, was the last of the main early Fathers to bear counter-cultural witness. He wrote:

... when God forbids us to kill, He not only prohibits us from open violence, which is not even allowed by the public laws, but He warns us against the commission of those things that are esteemed lawful among men. Thus it will be neither law-full for a just man to engage in warfare, since his warfare is justice itself, nor to accuse any one of a capital charge, because it makes no difference whether you put a man to death by word, or rather by the sword, since it is the act of putting to death itself which is prohibited. Therefore, with regard to this precept of God, there ought to be no exception at all; but that it is always unlawful to put to death a man, whom God willed to be a sacred animal. (*Divine Institutes* 6:20 in Lactantius 1896)

In his principal work, *The Divine Institutes*, Lactantius's ethic of responsibility makes much of the idea that humanity is a universal and indivisible moral community. Like Origen, Lactantius appeals to natural law. To Lactantius, however, a free human will spoke not of the necessity for power and political violence but rather the bestowal of love and the rejection of war. An interesting feature of Lactantius' contribution

is that he lived through the Constantinian revolution and his later work marks a shift from third century pacifism to St Augustine's fourth century just war formulations.

A sense of being in, but not of the world usually compelled early Christianity to respond to social issues on terms not entirely of their own making. But the message is confused, the evidence complex, and firm conclusions difficult to draw. Theoretically, Christ's teaching was idealistic and at odds with the demands of secular society. A real polarity existed, as Wogaman (1994, p. 10) notes, between reliance upon state power (however designated and restrained) and obedience to the ways of peace and love. The first loyalty of Christians was to God, not Emperor. Christianity, by bringing the church into existence, was hence an institution whose principles rivalled (if not physically menaced) the secular state's claims. Yet the practice on the ground suggests, although many Christians rejected military service, they did not see this as the abnegation of political responsibility or an attempt by them to undermine the authority of the state by refusing political authority. The convert was opposing a specific judicial demand, not the state's general right to use force which Christianity seemed to qualify. Reading the literature of the time, one is struck by the frequency of Christian assurances that they are not enemies of Rome. It is noteworthy that no Christian rebellion was aroused by the repeated and often violent persecutions of the first three centuries. Christian apologists generally insisted that the state owed its stability and prosperity to their faith.

The Augustinian temper

It is commonly accepted that St Aurelius Augustine, bishop of Hippo (AD 354–430), is Christianity's first theologian of the secular and (perhaps not inconsequentially) the foundational source for the western tradition of deterrence known as just war. It is Augustine who is often also accused of capitulating Christianity to coercive power by creating a secular and theologically neutral space for the state.[9] In our present context it is relevant to consider his answers to three particular questions: first, what should the relationship between Jerusalem and Athens, the sacred and secular spheres be? Second, does responsible citizenship require a Christian to bear arms and threaten force? Finally, what constraints should be put upon the conduct of the Christian warrior if deterrence fails and war is waged?

In the fourth and fifth centuries, following three centuries of essential ambiguity, Christian political attitudes underwent transformation.

Legend has it that in AD 312 the Roman Emperor Constantine's successes on the battlefield were attributed to a vision received instructing him to mark his standard with the sign of the cross. Following the First Council of Nicaea in AD 325, and then the Edict of Thessalonica's adoption of Christianity as the official Roman religion in AD 380, the distinction between sacred and secular spheres became increasingly blurred. Prior to this détente the church was an often persecuted body struggling to survive. For many Christians the conversion of Rome led to the assumption that, if the state no longer persecuted the church, it was a sign of sacred legitimacy. The speed with which Roman law reformed many of the practices critiqued by Christian theologians suggests that, in the beginning at least, Constantinianism was less the capture of Christianity by a sovereign power than the transformation of the character of sovereign power by a faith community. This in turn led to a marked marginalisation in Christian nostalgia for idealistic discipleship. In appearance at least the church became part of political culture rather than constituting the suggestive counter-cultural influence it had once been.

Historically, the context was one in which Germanic Barbarians besieged Rome. The sacking of the Eternal City by Alaric's Visigoths in AD 410 was Rome's '9/11 moment' and dramatic proof that the Empire's political, administrative, and military system was in terminal decline. Previous to this, as shown above, the attitude of Christians to coercive power and secular space was mixed. The idealism and quasi-pacifism of theologians such as Tertullian, Origen and Lactantius were not explicit heresies but positions which orthodox Christianity could support with ample New Testament authority. But to pagan critics Christ's teachings increasingly imperilled society and Christians were nothing but insidious fifth columnists. Augustine responded by composing his magnum opus the *City of God* and dramatically re-envisaging the nature and function of a Christian in politics. He did this through drawing out theoretical tensions between the *civitas Dei* and the *civitas terrena*. Many have interpreted the division of these kingdoms as a systematic reflection on church (Jerusalem) and state (Athens) and proof that Augustine thought it best for the Christian to abandon politics. It is argued that he prefigured Max Weber's sociology by erecting a conceptual barrier between private and public imperatives and secularising the oppositions between church and state, private faith and public life. Hannah Arendt is perhaps prime instigator when she writes 'Augustine seems to have been the last to know what it once meant to be a citizen' (1958, p. 14). But Augustine was fundamentally not interested in the

opposition between the individual and the *civitas*, or even God and the *civitas*; he was concerned with mapping the personal encounter of the individual with God. Augustine's work cannot be understood without reference to what was grasped as seamless traffic between secular and sacred time (i.e. not physical space or institutions). Expressed another way, as Rowan Williams (1987, p. 58) puts it, Augustine 'engaged in a *redefinition* of the public itself, designed to show that it is life outside the Christian community which fails to be truly public, authentically political'. This is arguably the cornerstone to his critical system – an attempt to traverse an imbalance between secular and sacred while maintaining a loyalty to both. For Augustine the interests of community clearly demanded meaningful transformation if Christians were to share a productive citizenship with non-believers.

What marks the *civitas Dei* above the teachings of the early Fathers is the repudiation of the view that individual or collective felicity was of theological concern. Augustine savaged the popular idea that following the Christianisation of Rome God had assigned a special divine role for political authorities. The state's legal and institutional adoption of Christianity was theologically neutral and would not bring an end to war or usher in an age of ever-lasting temporal order. He shifted attention away from discussing whether a Christian should be allowed to serve in an army to the kind of force that could be legitimated. Theoretically, Augustine drew upon Hebraic thinking and established Roman teaching (particularly Cicero [106–43 BC]) on the circumstances in which war could, or should be, legitimately threatened and waged. According to Augustine (1972, XXII.24) 'the wretched condition of humanity' was the 'punishment for sin.' War and violence, like greed and injustice, was inevitable. While all war was an inherent product of sinful human nature, Augustine believed some uses of political violence to be ethically defensible or 'relatively just'. When force was used ethically it was a good rather than an evil and as such could service God's purpose. War was henceforth to be divided into two classes: those that are just and those unjust. Some wars were fought for justice ('truth'), and others for unjust ('falsehood contending') reasons. A just war was waged so that wicked people might be overcome by kindness, or rather that the evil which is in the wicked may be overcome by good, and that the 'just' may be delivered from evil (1972, XVII.13). There are at least two presuppositions in force here.

First, we see what is traditionally interpreted as an ineradicably pessimistic 'metaphysics of fallen man'. Put another way, Augustine reasons that Adam's original sin turned human nature with a bias towards evil.

This 'genetic' modification was less the sin of the first man, more the first sin of all humanity. Even though this regard for the radical universality of sin is Pauline, Augustine is credited with being the first to raise the so-called anthropological question. In providing an anthropocentric reading of (corrupted) human nature, Augustine roots the causes of war not in politics but within a pre-political nature. In practice this means power and its aggressive pursuit by individuals and states is unavoidable and cannot be ignored. Whereas Tertullian, in particular, began with a corporate spirituality that rescued human nature from the corruption resident in a secular political culture, Augustine began with the salvation of individuals outside community relations whether sacred or secular. It is this 'with but not of' sense of citizenship that makes Augustine's Christianity seem harsh. To influential commentators such as Markus (1970) Augustine effectively atomised society as one irremediably rooted in a tension-ridden and disordered condition where there could only be eschatological resolution.

The second presupposition we find in Augustine, flowing directly from the first, is the idea that the state is a necessary bulwark against sin. Sin is something that can be mitigated – but never vanquished – by reason and rational government. Athens was to be accepted by Christians as punishment but also remedy for the constraints of fallen finitude. Political authority was instigated by God to provide the element of stability necessary in the post-Fall anarchical world. Here the idea of original sin as individual and ahistorical merges with notions of governance as the technical manipulation of chaotic (ignorant and weak) human forces. Niebuhr (1940, p. xiii) sums up the sentiment well albeit in more modern terms: 'Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary'. Howard Williams (1992, p. 27) argues 'Augustine's starting-point is realism's starting-point: a divorce between the actual and the desirable.' From this angle shared (state) utility appears superior to individual morality and Augustinian metaphysics (Christian, idealist, and absolutist) moves with a utilitarian (realist, pragmatic, and calculating) temper. It was such analysis that led Augustine to the concept of just war waged in obedience to a series of stipulations. On one hand, we have *deterrence* – theories to encourage 'evil' people to respect another's rights; and on the other, arguments suggesting the need for (just) *retribution* should deterrence fail.

Given that Augustine saw a fundamental imbalance in the state of nature, it is not surprising that international politics is a realm in which relations between states were fraught. In this natural order civil

authorities had been provided with the power and means to perform deterrence duties in order to secure the safety of the commonwealth. From the Old Testament Augustine took the view that the state had a God-sanctioned duty to safeguard society, and from Cicero a responsibility to resort to force if attacked. Deane (1963, p. 157) notes: 'Just as God does not force men to sin – to rob, to kill, to injure one another – and yet regulates and uses their sinful actions so that they become instruments for carrying out His eternal designs for the world, so He permits states and rulers, even if they are acting unjustly, to wage war only insofar as their battles and campaigns contribute to His ends – the punishment of the wicked and the testing and training of the good'. Because war had a tendency to engender great evil, for Augustine, the resort to political violence to secure temporal order was never sufficient justification should deterrence fail. Peace with order was always the objective (Childress 1986). In fact, one might well add justice as another concept Augustine interchanges with peace-order. Yet the issue was not peace-order-justice per se but rather the type sought. The restoration of peace-order-justice essentially meant using deterrence to preserve the status quo. Most of the wars waged between states are, consequently, in no sense 'just' merely internecine quarrels (Deane 1963). Augustine was well aware of the suffering caused and was convinced that the state's possible recourse to war had always to be the lesser of two evils:

> But the wise man, they say, will wage just wars. Surely, if he remembers that he is a human being, he will rather lament the fact that he is faced with the necessity of waging just wars; for if they were not just, he would not have to engage in them, and consequently there would be no wars for a wise man. For it is the injustice of the opposing side that lays on the wise man the duty of waging wars; this injustice is assuredly to be deplored by a human being, since it is the injustice of human beings, even though no necessity for war should arise from it. (1972, XIX.7)

War was so dreadful that conquest, pride or glory was never sufficient reason. War was justifiable only in order to correct wrongdoing and ensure injustice did not flourish following a failure of deterrence. War must be waged as necessity and waged only that God may by it deliver people from that necessity and preserve them in peace. Augustine was sure that the difference between the 'pirate and emperor' was in fact one of degree not kind. He offered three main conditions for determining whether or not a war was to be considered just. First, all defensive war

was to be judged just. Aggression was a breach of peace-order-justice and self-defence a legitimate response to that breach. Second, an offensive war could be just so long as it was waged against a state that refused to make reparations for wrongs committed. In this case war was 'acted not in cruelty, but in righteous retribution, giving to all what they deserved, and warning those who needed warning' ('Reply to Faustus the Manichaean' XXII.74 in Schaff [ed.] 1979d). Finally, again following Cicero and anticipating Michael Walzer's notion of 'supreme emergency', the state may engage in war in order to defend its survival. Although death often rescued individuals from pain (instead of bringing disaster), the death of a whole community was a disaster that must be avoided (Augustine 1972, XXII.6). In this sense a ruler should never write cheques that the *civitas* cannot honour. The state cannot be preserved at any cost – some prices are simply too high. This is an aspect of his thinking often overlooked but one with clear relevance to 'better dead than red' Cold War calculations.

Augustine saw intimate connection between social and moral orders. A sin against the former logically involved sinning against the latter. If one state violated the legal sovereignty of another it broke natural law. Threatening violence was justifiable if it stopped an individual from misusing their liberty, or alternatively, protected the innocent. The reluctant and limited use of force was a charitable response by Christians to the needs of innocent neighbours assailed by aggressive power. Above all else just war is seen as action designed to restore the justice of violated peace-order-justice. An emphasis on the subjective guilt or *culpa* of the enemy not only condones the use of force but demands it in limited circumstances. Augustine effectively justified war in the same terms used to qualify criminal punishment. In other words, the authority for waging war is the same as for meting out punishment for criminal behaviour. The end to be achieved was the re-establishment of existing peace, but the means employed provided a suitable chastisement of those presumptuous enough to disturb the status quo. When one state injured another, or failed to make reparations for its wrongdoing, the aggrieved state had a just reason for punishing the aggressor state in the same way it was justified in inflicting punishment on domestic criminals. War appears as a form of divine punishment in a forfeiture of rights argument. In these ways Augustine can be seen as also moving the Christian analysis of war away from the early Fathers' ambivalence towards support for political authority.

To counter the quasi-pacifism of the counter-cultural idealists Augustine demonstrated that his ideas did not contradict gospel precepts. This

involved establishing both why individual Christians should kill or threaten to kill for political authority, and why individual Christians must obey political authority. He is seen to do this by primarily declaring a form of personal pacifism insofar as the individual was concerned. To Augustine the act of murder was unambiguously immoral. The *Decalogue* (Ex. 20:13, Dt. 5:17) made clear that killing by private individuals is both heinous crime and absolutely prohibited This was sacred law. Although a Christian was not free to kill even in an act of self-defence they were, however, permitted to do so if acting as an institutional employee (e.g. soldier). This did not make the act of killing less sinful – all sins are equal in themselves – but it excused those who committed the licensed killing from punishment. The prerogatives of different law are crucial. On one hand we have temporal (secular) law that often demoralised and brutalised the Christian; on the other, there is natural (sacred) law that enshrined all human life as inviolate. Because Christian salvation was sought beyond history the individual was literally enjoined to turn the other cheek where personal rights were violated – passivity or stoicism in the face of adversity was demanded. Yet the demands of legitimate authority were an exception to this general prohibition. Obedience to secular law, consequently, was a common good and the Christian should only disobey if it contravened God's sacred law. The Christian just warrior was essentially to threaten or make war not for themselves but out of love for others. It is 'these precepts [that] pertain rather to the inward disposition of the heart than to the actions which are done in the sight of men' (Letter CXXXVIII in Schaff [ed.] 1979a). However for Bainton (1960) the inwardness of such an ethic of intention can easily serve to justify massive (even disproportionate or apocalyptic) levels of violence. The requirement to vindicate justice in the public realm certainly seems to supersede the demands of charity that should obtain in the Christian's private life (Hartigan 1966).The Christian idealist's policy of withdrawal essentially appears to Augustine as 'mere cowardly dislike [of death], not any religious feeling' ('Reply to Faustus the Manichaean' XXII.74 in Schaff [ed.] 1979d). The sin of the pacifist was to shun conflict and capitulate to 'tyranny' (individually and collectively) at the price of subjection to injustice. The breakdown of moral order caused by such irresponsible anarchical behaviour was the worst of all possible evils.[10] By waging war Christians were literally doing an aggressor a service:

> ... many things must be done in correcting with a certain benevolent severity, even against their own wishes, men whose welfare rather than their wishes it is our duty to consult; and the Christian

scriptures have most unambiguously commanded this virtue in a magistrate…. And on this principle, if the commonwealth observe the precepts of the Christian religion, even its wars themselves will not be carried on without the benevolent design that, after the resisting nations have been conquered, provision may be more easily made for enjoying in peace the mutual body of piety and love. (Letter CXXXVIII in Schaff [ed.] 1979a)

This stark dichotomy between individual and collective responsibility, juxtaposed with an acceptance of the state as legitimate authority within a moral order, forms the basis for Augustine's consideration of the conduct of war if fought.

In conducting wars, as in peaceful relations with other states, governments should fulfil and guard conventions, agreements and treaties made by friends and enemies alike. At the heart of these strictures are notions of intentionality, proportionality and discrimination. These principles govern what means of war-fighting are right (acceptable, legitimate, permissible) and what means are wrong (unacceptable, illegitimate, indefensible). 'Proportionality' (of anticipated damage and costs to expected good results) makes a distinction between proportional and disproportional levels of force, whereas 'discrimination' (or non-combatant immunity) distinguishes between combatants and non-combatants (i.e. it prohibits direct attacks on non-combatants). Failure to abide by these precepts renders unjust even the most just of causes. 'The real evils in war', writes Augustine, 'are love of violence, revengeful cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance, and the lust of power' ('Reply to Faustus the Manichaean' XXII.74 in Schaff [ed.] 1979d). The atrocities common to war were always to be avoided. Yet because a righteous war was waged by a just state for just reasons, Augustine was confident that both in the conduct of the war (and in the establishment of peace) the just state would strive to punish evildoers without being cruel, vengeful, or avaricious. A just soldier kills only out of necessity and never choice. But a soldier need never determine the justices of a particular action for themselves because to do so would invite a dereliction of duty that would throw both army and state into anarchy. At least one commentator concludes that Augustine was first and foremost a crusader because any concept of proportional violence was in reality diminished in favour of militant piety (Der Derian 1987). It is certainly somewhat shocking to turn to Augustine's actual statements on the killing of non-combatants and discover an indifference to their fate. As the deaths caused by war were not the real evil to be shunned he thought it lamentable, but not

condemnable, that the good and wicked would suffer the same fate. In both cases war is a rough justice in which the innocent suffer with the guilty. The death of good and bad alike is justified because:

> ... although the good dislike the way of life of the wicked, and therefore do not fall into the condemnation which is in store for the wicked after this life, nevertheless, because they are tender towards damnable sins of the wicked, and thus fall into sin through fear of such people (pardonable and comparatively trivial though those sins may be), they are justly chastised with afflictions in this world, although they are spared eternal punishment; ... (Augustine 1972, I.9)

The death of innocents is, at base, an incidental consequence of Augustine's ideas on just war. Nine centuries later St Thomas Aquinas would translate this into the principle of double effect with a greater emphasis on intentionality, but a refusal to recommend mercy over justice (until victory was assured and just peace restored) is a striking feature of Augustine's writing. Hartigan (1966, p. 2) adds that he has been unable to find a single instance in any of Augustine's writings on war wherein he recommends that mercy should ever replace justice in dealings with an enemy. Augustine was surely writing with tongue firmly in cheek when he observed that Romans were lucky to always have met enemies unjust and horrible enough to cast their own cause in a righteous light (1972, IV,15).

Throughout the medieval period and into modernity scholars and lawyers refined and added to Augustine's ethics of political violence. From Augustine to Thomas Aquinas, the tradition was firmly embedded in Judaeo-Christianity. By the mid-sixteenth century, its religious bias gave way to more rationalist forms of morality, and from there to a positivistic juridical one anchored in contemporary international law. Its transition from Augustine's ancient world to today's modern one has been described as seamless (Russell 1977).

* * *

This has constituted an essentially theological and necessarily anachronistic survey of themes that shape Christian approaches to the morality and methods of warfare. My intention has not been to simply highlight pacific idealism and just war realism as principal and competing visions but to sketch the roots and particular importance of Augustinian themes and language in better understanding Cold War nuclear

deterrence debates and the relationship between secular and sacred markers therein. I hope to have made several points clear.

First, that the teachings of Christianity do not provide a consistently developed philosophy regarding the ethics of deterrence. Agreement over the importance of the early church and the desire to reveal cardinal principles from it does not translate into a clear guide as to what the relationship between power, politics and violence was or should be. The relationships that tie theology to the Christian religion, theory to practice, are complex and take cultural and counter-cultural forms. Too often the debate has been approached in the hope of declaring authentic voice and standing it over and against the inauthentic. It should hopefully seem rather naive to suppose that diversity of view is a modern phenomenon and the practice of the church throughout subsequent generations represents a failure to live by the ideals of a pure, uncontaminated time. Rather than adjudicating, it is more appropriate to suggest that from its earliest days the church has succeeded in containing a wide spectrum of approaches. Interestingly the political lines drawn do not necessarily coincide with the historic distinctions among the churches (Niebuhr 1951). Here ethical positions regarding deterrence depend on theology as much as theology depends on ethical position.

Notwithstanding this, the second point has been to suggest that in Christianity's first three centuries a form of counter-cultural pacific-idealism *did* largely figure. Christianity as a way of life was seen to be quite distinct from secular culture and conventional attitudes to warfare. To most modern commentators this either/or judgement on human affairs is the most straightforward reading of both Christ's teaching and the early church's particular legacy. In demanding distinct and pacifying forms of social responsibility, Tertullian, Origen, and Lactantius can be seen, at least from this angle, as useful antecedents for the regeneration of Christian critiques of nuclear deterrence. But it is important to understand that early Christianity appears generally quasi-pacifist (Teichman 1986) rather than truly pacifist in the modern sense. In truth the early church had a marked inclination to withdraw from all social responsibility, not just the politics of war. The nature and fact of sin was a central motif. In theological terms, primitive Christianity tended to see culture in its existent form as sinful and the church as a new value-centre for those who would flee from sin. It was this otherworldly distance and counter-cultural Puritanism that St Augustine thought to challenge in the post-Constantinian era.

Third, I have argued that these – once mainstream – forms of counter-cultural idealism were marginalised by St Augustine's realism. For Arendt

(1993, p. 73) 'that this was possible without the complete perversion of the gospel was almost wholly due to Augustine' who is 'certainly the greatest theorist of Christian politics'. Augustine engaged in a fundamental reanalysis of the function of a Christian in politics. Some see in him a turn from Christ to Plato, from Jerusalem to Athens. To a modern reader Augustine's biggest failure is probably that he offered no clear formulation of the proper relationship between sacred and secular and no delineation of their spheres of operation. But the *City of God* can also be read as authentically suggestive in the debates of this book as it sought to argue that only the theological can make politics real. Augustine can be usefully seen as one who sought to make politics more sacred, rather than one who set to secularise Christianity. For the Augustinian Christian the authentic opposition is not between sacred and secular, church and state; it is ultimately between political virtue and political vice. Augustine did not seek to direct attention from this-world; rather he sought to direct attention toward God from all worlds, both material and spiritual. Attempting understanding of the significance of his ideas, as many moderns seem to have done, without taking his theological typing seriously is to emasculate his thinking and deprive it of sociological resonance.

Finally, Augustine's deterrence-based theory of just war dominates modern Christian discourse. In the first instance war is an area in which the sinfulness of humanity is most apparent. Christians ought to hate all war and desire peace but resign themselves to the fact that real peace cannot be achieved on earth. Yet because war and violence, like greed and injustice, is inevitable Christians are also morally obliged to try and affect the terms in which the debate over war is conducted. It is these issues that will be elaborated as we turn to questions of Cold War nuclear confrontation.

3
Prophecy and Diplomacy at a New Frontier

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries evolutionary philosophy and idealist metaphysics combined in an immanentist teleology that secularised a Christian sense of transcendental providence. The Protestant reformation and the inception of modernity had privatised and spiritualised the sacred and reimagined human nature and society. Eighteenth century secular rationalism and nineteenth century political radicalism concomitantly produced a broad ethical consensus that understood international human affairs, not in terms of the maximising of national sovereignty, but as the establishment of a community of peaceful co-operation and mutual tolerance. In the face of intense chauvinistic nationalisms, a new order was to be built via the creation of international organisations that would educate public opinion in loyalties wider than narrow, state-centric interest. The intention was to replace old-order Westphalian morality based on bounded territorial sovereignty with an 'imagined community' based on a trans-territorial mutual reciprocity. The European Protestant churches, faced with these liberalising attempts to unlink political community from nationality, set to reconcile the gospel with a programme that was complementary with, not in opposition to globalisation and its optimistic faith in progress. However a particular problem for Christianity was that in place of the promise of God as the ground for hope, the 'brotherhood of humanity' threatened to replace the 'kingdom of God'. The churches' mission was henceforth to raise the appeal of Christ beyond the level of universal belief to purposive action in a detraditionalised world suspicious of religion. But this crusade could not be realised by simply adding a little holy music to political processes; what was needed was an authentic, faith-based response to the new reality of secular globalism. This task would involve both the

recovery of what was specific about *Pax Christi* and a new openness to the dilemmas and possibilities of the contemporary world. It is in this normative light that the driving forces and theology behind the World Council of Churches and its constituent assembly, the British Council of Churches (BCC) should be cast. The ecumenical intent was to Christianise international order and remind western civilisation of its Christian soul.

Professor Latourette (1937) observed that the nineteenth century, measured in terms of geographical spread and influence, was Christianity's greatest. In spite of an intimate connection with the expansion of European, ostensibly Protestant empires, there was less direction and active assistance from the state than in any era since Constantine adopted Christianity in the fourth century. The expansion was chiefly a result of voluntary organisations financially supported by private individuals. By the end of the century Christianity had become a global, albeit doctrinally divided, religion. Yet in 1880 Nietzsche caustically observed that Christianity also had effectively 'crossed over' into a 'gentle moralism'. This immanence was easy to ignore in the light of the phenomenal success of missionary activity and the growth of new churches in Africa and Asia. Coinciding with this fragmentation had been the rise of the nation-state, many with national churches. But the missionary impetus globalised a spiritual movement that had no intention of being ignored or taken as a religious adjunct to the absolutist claims of the nation-state. The churches were not interested in defending a secularising western culture – national or international – but in advancing a wider idea of western civilisation (Roy, 2010). Various transdenominational bodies began to form in the hope of fostering a fresh sense of Christendom. Of particular importance was the creation of the Young Men's Christian Association (1844), the Evangelical Alliance (1846) promoting 'Scriptural Christianity', and the World Student Christian Federation (1892). The merger of international and inter-church groupings with a similar doctrinal basis swiftly followed. Here the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops (1867) became the precursor to international associations such as the Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System (1875), the World Methodist Council (1881), and the Baptist World Alliance (1905). In Britain the Society of Friends founded the Friends' Peace Committee (1888),[1] and throughout the 1890s the main English and Welsh Nonconformist or 'Dissenting' churches – Baptist, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, and Methodist – came together to create a National Council of Evangelical Free Churches. In 1900 the majority of the Free Church of Scotland

united with the United Presbyterian Church to form the United Free Church of Scotland. Although these developments are ecclesiastically noteworthy, it was not until the early half of the twentieth century that the ecumenical movement as it is known today finally took shape.

The birth of the modern ecumenical movement 'proper' probably began largely thanks to the pioneering efforts of Scottish United Free Church evangelist Dr Joseph Holdsworth Oldham and the World Missionary Conference he helped organise in Edinburgh during June 1910.[2] Oldham has been reliably characterised as 'undoubtedly the greatest pioneer of the twentieth century ecumenical movement' and one who saw Christianity 'not primarily [as] a philosophy but a crusade' (van der Bent, 1978, p. 16). He was also the archetypal Athenaeum Whig, accepting the principle of progress (at least within Britain), whilst quietly devising new strategies, spotting and bringing together the people who really mattered (Hastings, 1987). At this time Oldham was secretary of the Student Christian Movement and its influential theological press (SCM). The SCM effectively became the 'ecumenical think-tank of the Protestant churches' (Kent, 1992, p. 15).[3] The Archbishop of Canterbury (Randall Davidson) attended the Conference and summed it up as 'the most serious attempt which the church has made to look steadily at the whole face of the non-Christian world, and to understand its meaning and challenge' (cited in van der Bent, 1978, p. 16). From this response developed the 1912 Conference of Missionary Societies in Britain and Ireland (CMSBI), and from there the establishment of various National Christian Councils and Councils of Christian Congregations. Yet the most important consequence of Edinburgh was the creation of the International Missionary Council (IMC) and its subsequent Faith and Order movement. This movement bequeathed the organisational pattern that became the first major strand to constitute modern ecumenism.

In 1920–21 Joe Oldham helped create and organise the IMC.[4] First, he envisaged the IMC would link together existing National Christian Councils. The Church of England's Lambeth Conference supported this with their 1920 'Appeal to All Christian People' urging 'all [to] unite in a new and great endeavour to recover and to manifest to the world the unity of the Body of Christ' (cited in Payne, 1972, p. 3). Oldham's second aim was co-ordinating the activities of national missionary organisations and in so doing bring together all Christians who sought a greater involvement in international affairs. Bishop Charles Brent, an American Episcopalian, proposed that missionary assemblies could be a vehicle for this. It was Brent's hope that a series of conferences on 'Faith and

Order' could be instigated by 'all Christian communions throughout the world which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour' (van der Bent, 1978, p. 21). The first world conference on this theme was held at Lausanne, Switzerland in 1927. Complementing this international, interdenominational, and growing missionary co-operation came two other prongs that illustrate the ways in which Protestantism was endeavouring to reinvent itself to meet secularising times.

The second prong of ecumenism, parallel to the essentially ecclesiological developments of Faith and Order, came from Christian peace activists. Three strands of opinion played a key part: pacifist, democratic socialist, and liberal-internationalist. All strands regarded war as unnecessary and believed by co-ordinated effort war could be abolished, as slavery was abolished. An important driver here came from the Tory tradition of *noblesse oblige*, associated with the liberal tradition and usually allied to the Church of England; these activists saw their commitment in terms of a paternalistic humanitarianism. This impetus to foster internationalism, from both within and without the churches, centred on the belief that Christian thinking was a force, despite secularisation, that had a role to play in the formation of public policy. The principal focus for this ethic of universal fellowship was undoubtedly pacifism with its belief in the rejection of war as an instrument of policy. Articulated in either Pelagian or Kantian terms as the imitation of Christ as highest moral example, of war as an anachronism in human evolution, or of the aspiration for 'One World' beyond the evil of national attachments, Christian pacifism typically looked to the force of love and moral suasion as the essence of an alternative political programme (Epp, 1990). In 1914 the Cambridge-based Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR) was founded to unite Christian pacifists into one global organisation. This idealistic body was particularly successful in drawing British Nonconformists and Quakers together (Kent, 1992).

Concern over the increased rivalry and diplomatic tensions in the years leading up to the Great War led peace campaigners, Anglo-American and German, to form a World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches in the summer of 1914.[5] Dominated by the Anglican and Liberal MP, Willoughby Dickinson, this organisation held a series of conferences and published its own newsletter *Peacemaker* supported by a mixture of Quakers,[6] pacifists, socialists, anarchists, and social liberals including the American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie.[7] Despite the outbreak of world war in August, the British section for 'international friendship' was sufficiently robust to

withstand hostility to the World Alliance's desire 'to organize the religious forces of the world so that the weight of all churches and Christians can be brought to bear upon the relations of governments and peoples to the end that the spirit of peace and goodwill may prevail, and that there may be substituted arbitration for war in the settlement of international disputes; friendship in place of suspicion and hate; co-operation instead of ruinous competition; and a spirit of service and sacrifice rather than that of greed and gain in all transactions between the nations' (cited in Afflerbach and Stevenson, 2007, p. 266). At the first post-war meeting of the World Alliance held at Oud Wassenaar near the Hague in 1919, the persuasive Swedish Lutheran Archbishop of Uppsala, Nathan Söderblom, appealed for 'cooperation in testimony and action' to 'consider [the] urgent practical tasks before the church at this time' (Chandler, 2012, p. 29). In particular he called for a further conference to be held in Stockholm in 1925 to facilitate post-war reconciliation and frame the application of Christian ethics to international relations. There had been various antecedents for this idea, particularly Nonconformist radicalism and nineteenth century Christian socialists[8] and American social gospel leaders[9] but nothing quite to this scale. Söderblom's vision of Christendom captured the zeitgeist and made a lasting impression on many delegates, not least the Archbishop of Canterbury's chaplain and conference representative George Bell – an 'obstinate little priest who was quite determined that the church should not sink in war to being the state's spiritual auxiliary' (Hastings, 1987, p. 374).[10] Retrospectively, Bell would describe Oud Wassenaar as 'the decisive event of those early days' and the origins of the wind that 'at last brought the ships of all the churches, outside Rome, to the harbour [of Stockholm,] for the first universal gathering of the post-Reformation world' (in Chandler, 2012, p. 29). An important element of what became known as the Universal Christian Conference on 'Life and Work' was the call to give the League of Nations a 'Christian Soul' and make it an associated instrument of a revitalised western Christendom.[11] Bishop Bell emerged as the president of the British section of Life and Work. The third prong of ecumenism was now complete.

The Life and Work movement

The 1925 Stockholm Conference Report stated that 'the sins and sorrows, the struggles and losses of the Great War and since, have compelled the Christian churches to recognise, humbly and with shame, that the world is too strong for a divided church'. The church was

hence called to assert a new form of universal, faith-based citizenship 'while leaving to individual consciences and to communities the duty of applying them with charity, wisdom and courage'.[12] This novel invocation of a principles-based rather than rule-based approach to Christian international ethics was intended to: first, bring security to the West by reawakening the religion's essence as peacemaker; and second, to transform western society into one dynamic 'Kingdom of God'. Söderblom called upon the churches to widen the social area to which Christian meaning could be given by particularly concentrating on peace-making and peace-building. The intention was to devote time and resources in order for the churches to understand more fully the issues before them. Yet this intent made little sense if the churches had no equivalent of the League through which to apply public pressure. By creating a socio-religious movement that united all, Christian internationalism could react to a rapidly changing post-war situation and be reconciled in a single Christianity that encouraged the rediscovery of its former central position as far as politics and society were concerned. Support for such initiatives increased after 1918 when many concluded that just war credibility had been damaged by national churches supporting the Great War. The success of these independent attempts to join together disparate denominations with an interest in the idea of western Christendom encouraged many more peace activists, pacifist and *pacificist* alike, to become active in ecumenical affairs.

The British preparations for the Stockholm Life and Work conference included a large and important Conference on Politics, Economics and Citizenship (COPEC) held in Birmingham in April 1924. William Temple[13] (then Bishop of Manchester) chaired the conference supported by the secretarial skills of FoR member Canon Charles Raven.[14] Elford attests that it was Temple who 'vigorously urged the churches to enter spheres of social, political and economic thought where, previously, religion had been regarded as a trespasser …. [He] had the effect of preparing both the churches and the political establishment for a much closer Christian engagement with political and military issues than had often previously been the case' (1985, p. 176–77). COPEC was seen as an opportunity to guide a lethargic church towards common social action and as the foundation for a global 'League of Churches'. Like Söderblom and most Christian leaders of the time, Temple assumed that the churches should be the motor of human history, and no real progress was sustainable without them. But for Temple the British state was constant, but not identical, with his vision of Christendom (Suggate, 1981). Because of this Temple believed that the COPEC

movement should proceed from primary gospel principles to secondary principles in order to offer government effective guidance.[15] This meant, in other words, the churches laying down principles of action for secular legislators. Temple's hopes of building a progressive coalition were, however, soon thwarted. The outspoken Cambridge theologian and priest Alec Vidler (who, as Chapter 6 of this book shows, turned down an opportunity to serve on the 1957 British Council of Churches' Study Group on the moral aspects of nuclear deterrence) reported that 'seldom was a satisfactory balance struck between idealism and realism. There was an awful amount of amateurishness and lack of expertise' (cited by Hastings, 1987 p. 179). This 'amateurishness' was particularly apparent in the publication of the report *Christianity and War*. Here a marked ambivalence was shown to ways in which just war thinking had been used to sanction the violence of the Great War. While the report did suggest that 'the mode of conducting war since 1914 … derives far more obviously from the Old Testament, even from the standards of our pagan forefathers, than from the gospel of Christ' it also declared 'all war is contrary to the spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ, and that *therefore* in time of war more than ever the Church of Christ must witness and labour for the Christian way of life against hatred and cruelty'.[16] Such unseemly confusion of thought (despite a *pacificist* tone) has led at least one commentator to conclude that the Conference demonstrated how little thought had really gone into the relationship between individual conscience and political authority (Chandler, 1995). Despite Temple's impassioned call for a united front, the memories of war seemed painfully problematic for further discussion by the British churches, particularly the Church of England. It was not until ten years after Armistice that the churches gained the confidence to challenge ideas about political violence. By way of explanation Canon Raven argued: 'No man who has offered his life for a cause and is still bearing the psychic and physical evidence paid, can, while the wounds are still fresh, discuss whether his offering was a mistake' (1938, p. 44). He would add: 'Until 1928 it needed some courage to renounce war from a public platform, and with the exception of the Society of Friends no Christian church had expressed any strong sense of its devotion. That autumn saw a definite change' (cited by Ceadel, 1980, p. 67).

In October 1929 the 'Christ and Peace Campaign' was launched to ultimately question a state's right to threaten or resort to violence in pursuit of foreign policy objectives. This Campaign held 25 meetings and conferences between October 1929 and April 1931. Its major success was the declaration (at its 1930 Lambeth Conference) that 'war

as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ' (in Ormrod, 1987, p. 191). Ceadel (1980) argues that although Anglican clergy took as active a role as their Nonconformist colleagues, lack of clear organisation and the failure to distinguish between condemning war in principle and preaching outright hostility to all war dented the Campaign's impact. In spite of such interdenominational attempts there was still no clear formula to guide Christian attitudes to deterrence. Norman concludes that the Christ and Peace Campaign was no serious advance on the earlier COPEC approach. As a guide to Christian duty on the question of war prevention, both were 'ambiguous formulas' (1976, p. 298). Although attitudes remained polarised, the 'counter-cultural' pacifists were forcing the pace of debate. Also in 1929 the Church of Scotland Peace Society was revived, while the FoR quietly increased its membership. Pacifist movements within the Congregationalist and Methodist communities soon emerged, swiftly followed in 1933 by the formation of a Council of Christian Pacifist Groups to co-ordinate denominational efforts.[17] In May 1936 the Anglican Canon, Dick Sheppard, together with his Peace Pledge Union (PPU) gave birth to the New Pacifist Movement in an attempt to combine the pacifist and *pacificist* traditions.[18] In 1937 the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship (i.e. an official voice from the Established church) was born. Church interest in peace issues, particularly pacifism, was stimulated by such organisations even if unresolved tensions between just war and *pacificism* remained.

By the mid 1930s all of these organisations and activities had succeeded in introducing local and national church leaders to one another. Vital networks of personal links had been forged and growing co-operation now transcended confessional and geographic borders. On Bishop Brent's death in 1929 William Temple, the new Archbishop of York, took over Brent's role as Chair of the Edinburgh Continuation Committee on Faith and Order. In 1934 Oldham resigned from his position as secretary to the IMC to become Chair of the Research Committee of the Life and Work movement, and in practice holder of 'the most strategic position in the ecumenical movement as a whole' (Hastings, 1987, p. 303). Around William Temple, 'the pope *in petto*', a small group of committed religious professionals had risen whose theoretical centre was no longer the restricted ethos of national churches. Temple, Oldham, and Bell were now the heart of a small, efficient and growing international epistemic community. In early 1937 the Archbishop of Canterbury (Cosmo Lang) urged a 'Recall to Religion'. Two of the consequences of this were, later that year, a Life and Work conference held

in Oxford, and a Faith and Order conference organised in Edinburgh. The maxim 'Service Unites, Doctrine Divides' was adopted to inspire delegates and avoid fragmenting discussion on doctrinal lines. Oldham undertook the main secretarial work for the Oxford (Life and Work) conference with a programme geared to understanding the relationship between sacred and secular community. The many different and diffuse strands involved in the ecumenical project were slowly beginning to weave together into a new frontier for western Christendom.

Service Unites, Doctrine Divides

The Oxford Conference on 'Church, Community and State' of July 1937 was undoubtedly the central ecumenical event of the inter-war years. Over 400 delegates from 120 churches in 40 countries came together to study and direct Christian thought and action (Clements, 1999). Its statements of intent fill eight thick volumes and, in one historian's words, 'remain to this day the most comprehensive ecumenical statement on problems of church and society and Christian social responsibility' (van der Bent, 1978, p. 22). A striking feature of this event was the number of Christian intellectuals committed to change. Besides the most distinguished theologians of the day (including Reinhold Niebuhr and Karl Barth), participants included Sir Alfred Zimmern (Professor of International Relations and first incumbent of the recently established chair at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth), controversial poet and playwright T. S. Eliot, and the earnest American Presbyterian politician John Foster Dulles.[19] But Oxford was also held in a decade dominated by the rise of the dictators and in the midst of worldwide economic depression. The optimistic intensity of earlier years was beginning to fade.

In *The Churches Survey Their Task* Oxford grounded its ethic in the eschatological concept of a Kingdom of God 'which both has come and is coming'. On one hand, this bore witness to 'the presence of His Spirit in the world'. On the other, it accepted the inevitability of 'conflict with a sinful world'. This did not mean, however, a historical identification with any one civilisation:

> Every tendency to identify the Kingdom of God with a particular structure of society or economic mechanism must result in moral confusion for those who suffer from its limitations. The former will regard conformity with its standards as identical with the fulfilment of the Law, thus falling into the sin of pharisaism. The latter will be tempted to a cynical disavowal of the religion, because it falsely gives

absolute worth to partial values and achievements. Both errors are essentially heretical from the point of view of Christian faith. (*The Churches Survey Their Task*, 1937, p. 96)

In Augustinian fashion, justice or the 'harmonious relation of life to life' was an attribute that had both desirable and undesirable implications. Negatively, it involved restraining evil. While the use of force was never good 'it cannot be assumed that the practice of Christian love will ever obviate the necessity for coercive political and economic arrangements'. Positively, the pursuit of justice encouraged the creation of 'forms of production and methods of co-operation' that facilitate 'the cause of human brotherhood by serving and extending the principle of love beyond the sphere of purely personal relations'. The Oxford Conference's analysis of the growing conflict between east and west was particularly even handed. In respect to communism, Oxford argued that its existence constituted an indictment upon the failures of the church but 'the churches must not regard an attack directed against themselves [by the Soviets] as an attack directed against God'. Nevertheless:

> The churches must continue resolutely to reject those elements in the actual development of communism which conflict with the Christian truth: the *utopianism* which looks for the fulfilment of human existence through the natural process of history, and which presupposes that the improvement of social institutions will automatically produce an improvement in human personalities; the *materialism* which derives all moral and spiritual values from economic needs and economic conditions, and deprives the personal and cultural life of its creative freedom; and finally, that *disregard* for the *dignity* of the *individual* in which communism may differ theoretically, but in which it does not differ practically, from other contemporary totalitarian movements. (*The Churches Survey Their Task*, 1937, p. 93)

The critique of western consumerism was no less provoking. In language echoing twenty-first century protest against the banks, capitalism was to be judged by its tendency to exacerbate inequalities, its 'enhancement of acquisitiveness', and by the way it concentrated power 'wielded by a few individuals or groups who are not responsible to any organ of society'. Oxford concluded that 'any social arrangement which outrages the dignity of man, by treating some men as ends and others as means, any institution which obscures the common humanity

of men by emphasising the external accidents of birth, or wealth, or social position, is *ipso facto* anti-Christian'.

At Oxford the main positions that formed the basis for subsequent ecumenical statements on war (i.e. just war, pacifism, unconditional obedience to the state) were stated for the first time in official form. Aside from the novelty of its conclusions, Oxford's approach was prophetic in methodological terms. Its approach paved the way for at least two decades of ecumenical practice. Christian notions of political responsibility were to be facilitated by never allowing 'individual acts of charity to become a screen for injustice and a substitute for justice'. What Oxford in fact argued was that the church should refrain itself from normative discussions of the 'rightness' or 'wrongness' of particular social policy. Rather than concerning itself with the means with which a policy was implemented, the church should confine itself to a more generalised discussion that expressed its opinion on the ends sought by policy. Here church action would transform culture into something more Christian. As famously coined by Oldham, such a position would mark a 'middle axiom' within Christian social ethics. Yet such middle axioms could suggest an easy instrumentalism. Means and ends do appear separated for tactical reasons – in order for the church to express its political witness more clearly in a secularised world. Idealists would take exception to this approach because it suggested that the Christian way of life couldn't be concretely embodied in social structure with any degree of specificity. If this is so, then the Enlightenment/Marxist/Nietzschean charge that a transcendentally focused Christianity distracts attention from, and weakens commitment to, the characteristically human responsibilities of this world carries weight (Dyson, 1989). Sensitive to the implications behind these discussions, the British branch of the World Alliance for International Friendship lobbied for a more representative body to prosecute common political concerns. It soon became clear that it would be more practicable if such efforts were co-ordinated with the Faith and Order movement.

In Edinburgh, delegates (including William Temple and Reinhold Niebuhr[20]) were faced with a problem. On one hand, the Faith and Order movement could be transformed into a federation of independent churches based on doctrinal compromise, yet separate from the Life and Work movement. Alternatively Faith and Order could play a part in something much more innovative. Professor Adrian Hastings summarised the churches' dilemma thus:

> The ecumenical movement had grown with the League of Nations and must have seemed at times in the comfortable twenties

but a pale religious reflection of the League's secular aspirations. But now the League was breaking down, its aspirations scorned. Faced with the challenge of Nazism and stiffened by the revival of a more conservative theology the churches of the thirties saw themselves as the church over against the world … The ecumenical movement and its earlier international organisations long claimed to be in no way a replacement for existing churches. In a profound way, however, in the thirties the movement felt called to make of itself a unified body precisely so as to fulfil the first duty of the church and witness in faith and with independence to the world of sin, modern ideology, and secular tyranny when the [independent national] churches could, or would, not do it. (1987, p. 305)

This is important. Although Archbishop Temple's biographer, John Kent (1992), criticises Hastings' 'exaggeration' of the importance of the churches' protests against 'modern ideology and secular tyranny', he might well have drawn attention to the fact that 'the church over against the world' was also a blueprint for social transformation. While the likes of Oldham and Temple can be credited with ensuring that the shift in thinking away from the secular individualism and imperialism of the nineteenth century did not produce a sharp schism with Christianity, a major change was in the fact that the Great War had collapsed faith in international progress and encouraged the revival of a more neo-orthodox or realist theology within the churches.[21] Ironically, this situation had also driven many liberal-internationalist minded Christians away from thoughts of federation towards a more reactionary realpolitik. However, to people like Oldham and Temple what mattered above all was that Christianity defend itself against the encroachment of the great secular excesses that were fascism, Nazism, and Stalinism. In this limited way many conservatives were indeed justified in thinking that Faith and Order, a rather cautious body, was being hijacked by the more politically ambitious but pragmatically minded leadership of Life and Work. Yet even the leadership of Life and Work offered, in Hegelian fashion, support for the ideal state that would both counter secular tyranny and disseminate a western Christian world-view. At no time did Faith and Order present a counter-cultural vision of Christendom. Temple, for example, was an impassioned believer in the concept of state sovereignty (as represented by the League) and opposed those 'cosmopolitans' who sought a worldwide federal system that would limit the sovereignty of member churches. Oldham believed that 'true internationalism' was 'not

the antithesis between, but the fulfilment of a true nationalism' (cited by Coupland, 2006, p. 5). After heated debate it was decided to unite the two streams of Faith and Order and Life and Work. The logistics of a transnational venture required equivalent national and international structures along similar lines to the IMC. The idea of a League of Churches or a World Council of Churches linked to some form of national counterpart was born.

Towards the WCC and the BCC

Once it had been decided to bring the Life and Work and Faith and Order movements together, a provisional committee chaired by William Temple was convened in the spring of 1938 at Utrecht in the Netherlands to establish a draft constitution. In the very year the League of Nations Assembly collapsed in the face of new world war, the driven Dutch theologian Dr Visser 't Hooft became the first General Secretary of a World Council of Churches (WCC) 'In Process of Formation'. Yet the formal inauguration of the WCC was delayed because of war until its first official meeting at Amsterdam, August 1948. If Temple was the overall architect, the chief clerk of works was Oldham.

Towards the end of the Second World War the Provisional Committee of the WCC, in partnership with the International Missionary Council, approached the US-based Commission to Study the Bases of a Just and Durable Peace (later called the Commission to Study a Just and Durable Peace or CJDP) in order to organise a small conference to discuss reconciliation in a post-war world. This intriguing commission, seen by some as a motor that helped prevent US mid-twentieth century isolationism, headed by John Foster Dulles and supported among others by Reinhold Niebuhr, had been set up by the American Federal Council of Churches in December 1940. It had caused quite a stir by publishing a Christian blueprint to end war that included 'no punitive reparations, no humiliating decrees of war guilt, no arbitrary dismemberment of nations' while warning about 'the shortsighted selfishness of [US] policies after World War I'.[22] The British counterpart to this was the Peace Aims Group chaired by Bishop Bell and his secretary William Paton. Members included Sir Alfred Zimmern, Arnold Toynbee, and Canon Herbert Waddams from the Religions Division of the Ministry of Information (Kirby, 2000). The conference convened in August 1946 at Girton College, Cambridge and from this emerged the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, commonly known as the CCIA. Professor

Henry P. Van Dusen, President of the distinguished Union Theological Seminary in New York, approached the energetic and politically connected Anglican Sir Kenneth Grubb, head of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and war-time Controller of Overseas Propaganda for the Ministry of Information, to take charge of its London office (Kirby, 2001a, 2001b). The principal office of the Commission, due to easy access to the United Nations, was New York. The key officer here was the human rights campaigner, member of the CJDP and professor at the Philadelphia Lutheran Seminary, Dr Fredrick Nolde.[23] Visser 't Hooft summarised the CCIA thus:

> This [venture] could only be done if men could be found who had clear Christian convictions themselves and who had also a sufficient knowledge of international affairs to be taken seriously by the statesmen and the international civil servants. Did such men exist? And if they could be found would they be willing to undertake this unprecedented task? It was indeed fortunate that two such men were found and that they were willing to take the risk involved in this new adventure. They were very different. A very English Englishman and a very American American. But both able to open their eyes to problems of worldwide dimension and willing to listen to men of all sorts of nations and races. A layman and a theologian, but both eager to bring something of God's design into the disorder of men. (cited in Grubb, 1971, p. 194)

With the formation of this commission 'the churches of the world other than Roman Catholic [developed] a body possessed of the necessary expertise to study large international issues and [the ability] to formulate Christian judgement upon them' (Slack, 1960, p. 38). The CCIA was intended to serve as an instrument for calling the churches' attention to the causes of particular conflicts and the evils of militarism. By representing the churches in areas of peacekeeping, it sought to stimulate 'Christians to work for the healing of the nations, through peace and reconciliation' (van der Bent, 1978, p. 39). The CCIA's officers would serve to ensure that those charged with making international relations heard the voice of the WCC.[24] The Commission originally consisted of 40 persons, with John Foster Dulles a key figure until he was appointed US Secretary of State in 1953. Other key commissioners included the Bishop of Chichester (Bell), Reinhold Niebuhr, Professor Arnold Toynbee and politicians such as Conservative MP 'Rab' Butler (later Lord Butler), Labour MP Eric Fletcher (later Lord Fletcher), Gustav Heinemann (later

President of the German Federal Republic), and Johannes Leimena (later deputy Prime Minister of Indonesia). The essential point is that that the CCIA was semi-independent – virtually autonomous – in the sense that it could make its own statements which could, but never were, repudiated and that it effectively took over from the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches (Grubb, 1971, p. 167).

In these early years the Geneva-based WCC was also consolidated and designed as 'a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour'. Membership was open to any church who could accept this ethos. In practice this meant an original membership of 147 churches from 44 countries including Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Calvinists and Lutherans, Methodists, Mennonites, Quakers, Moravians, Disciples, Old Catholics, the Salvation Army and a number of the Orthodox churches. The majority of Protestant churches in western Christendom (Europe, North America, and Australia) joined but the Roman Catholics and most of the Orthodox community initially abstained (not joining until 1961). The Council did not see itself as a universal authority controlling Christian thought, belief or practice. Its authority was not to command but serve the churches by adding weight to deliberations. In particular Temple, as principal architect, did not intend the WCC to be a 'super-church', or an alternative Vatican. Rather, he envisaged an organisation that would provide the non-Roman Catholic churches with a collective voice that could play a creative role on the world stage while articulating a clear sense of a Christendom that transcended national limitations. The WCC saw itself as an authoritative international source that would help guide national member churches on problems of Christian responsibility. On these terms the Council saw itself as the moral custodian of the western state, a way of pointing society towards God, whilst helping Protestantism reinvent itself as a form of politico-ideological pressure that would help mould the form of liberal civil society in a more religious direction.

WCC statements and policies would be determined by representatives from national churches meeting in assembly, normally every seven years. These were complicated affairs that sought a balance not just in terms of nationality but also in terms of church or confession. Inevitably the organisation was dominated by white males (African churches did not join until 1961) who conceptualised the values of the modern western state mostly in positive terms, as a kind of secular offspring to Christianity. More detailed decisions would be taken by the 90 (later 150) members who made up the Central Committee (elected by the Assembly and meeting annually) and a

smaller Executive Committee (22 [later 25] members appointed by the Central Committee meeting twice yearly). The General Secretary would serve to implement and co-ordinate such efforts and give leadership to the World Council as a whole. At the inaugural Amsterdam assembly in August 1948, Bishop Bell was elected as the first moderator of the Central Committee, the Council's most important office (other than that of General Secretary).

From the start, the life of the WCC was fraught with controversy. Not everyone was happy for the churches to meddle in international affairs and there were suspicions that the organisation was more political than spiritual. As the Cold War was enjoined leftists began to see the WCC as a propaganda design against an atheist Soviet Union. Dianne Kirby (2001a) argues that President Truman's administration tried hard to appropriate the WCC (and Vatican) as part of an international anti-communist religious front. The now American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, for instance, intimated as much at Amsterdam and it was true that many WCC officers saw deteriorating East–West relations as the responsibility of the Soviets. Visser 't Hooft recalled in his *Memoirs* that the 'gravest tensions' were 'caused by the political and ideological divisions' created by Cold War confrontation (1973, p. 219). Out of the WCC's first assembly came a four-volume compendium of essays, *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, whose temper reflect the increasing ideological tensions of a world in the shadow of the Berlin blockade. It is clear that the intellectual climate of the time was indicative of a secular world in crisis. The axes of dispute lay between those who (following the likes of Niebuhr) prodded the WCC to take side on the West's relative justice vis-à-vis communism, and those (following Barth) who sought neutralism.[25] The Soviets thought the WCC was helping draw an Iron Curtain which encouraged the Eastern and South-Eastern European churches of Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria and especially the Patriarchate of Moscow to also agree. Some Evangelicals, however, thought the WCC was too liberal and formed a militant rival, the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) with Dr Carl McIntire, an American Presbyterian minister as its main driving force. Strong doctrinal convictions and an opposition to both ecumenism and communism marked this organisation (Renwick and Harman, 1985).

The British Council of Churches

In the wake of the 1937 Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences, Joe Oldham had formed an important group discussion that came to be known as the Moot.[26] A striking feature of these meetings was

the calibre and diversity of the discussants. Besides Oldham, regular contributors included his close friend T. S. Eliot, the social theorist Karl Mannheim, historian R. H. Tawney, educationalist Sir Walter Moberly, the polymath Michael Polanyi, together with the theologians Reinhold Niebuhr, Alec Vidler and the philosopher John Baillie. At the behest of William Temple, Oldham was urged to instigate a British 'Advisory Committee' in order to further pursue discussions on the relationship between faith and order in the context of a post-Christian British society undermined by political extremism and economic crisis. In 1938 this collaboration developed into the interdenominational Council on the Christian Faith and the Common Life (CCFCL) which was seen as a forum for the 'best minds' in Britain, particularly from the universities, to mould public policy in a theological and faith-based direction. After the war broke out, Moot members teamed up with the CCFCL to produce a broad circulation weekly publication, *The Christian News-Letter,* which enjoyed regular contributions from well-known contemporaries including Anthony Eden, Arnold Toynbee, Richard Crossman, Sir Stafford Cripps, R. H. Tawney and Basil Liddell-Hart (Reeves, 1999).

In July 1939 Archie Craig, a Glasgow University Church of Scotland chaplain, established the larger and more representative Commission of Churches for International Friendship and Social Responsibility (CIFSR) to further fuse social engagement and the communication of the gospel. Despite the pressures of war, these three organisations helped keep the spirit of ecumenical unity alive in Britain and by 1942 plans for a British Council of Churches were well advanced. The experimental ecumenical project was further encouraged by the April 1942 enthronement of William Temple as Archbishop of Canterbury. Temple's first sermon enthused about 'the great new fact of our era [a] Christian fellowship which extends into almost every nation' (recalled by Payne, 1972, p. 6). Within weeks the British Council of Churches was formally constituted. At the inauguration of the BCC and before its initial meetings held on 23 and 24 September 1942,[27] Archbishop Temple summed up the aims of the BCC from the pulpit of St Paul's Cathedral:

> To-day we inaugurate the British Council of Churches, the counterpart in our country of the World Council, combining in a single organisation the chief agencies of the interdenominational co-operation which has marked the last five years … These departmental agencies … could never catch the public imagination. The newly formed British Council of Churches may very likely

do this, and so become the channel of new influences upon our common life. Our differences remain: we shall not pretend that they are already resolved into unity or harmony. But we take our stand in the common faith of Christendom, faith in God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; and so standing together we invite men to share that faith and call on all to conform their lives to the principles derived from it. (cited by Payne, 1972, p. 7)

The First Article of the BCC Constitution stated that 'the British Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the Glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit'. Invitations to join were sent out to all those churches that had collaborated in earlier agencies. A total of 16 denominations joined the BCC in 1942 including all the major Anglican, Baptist, Congregationalist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker, Unitarian and Free Christian Churches of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Several interdenominational bodies including the SCM, the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), and YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) also affiliated. Article VI of the BCC Constitution defined the objectives of the Council to be 'the advancement of the Christian religion' and the means of consultation *between* the churches, and an instrument of common action *by* the churches in questions of faith and order.[28] From the start it aimed to do this by fostering links with government departments (especially the Foreign and Colonial Offices) and with both national and international organisations, statutory and voluntary, including the United Nations Association. Oldham, who became the BCC's first vice-president, was very useful in this regard as the 'spider at the heart of almost every non-Roman missionary web, the mind who could best interpret the future, the tactician who could handle … the Colonial Office, the international ecclesiastical statesman in comparison with whom almost every bishop appeared immeasurably provincial in outlook' and the figure 'more responsible than anyone else for the development of ecumenical institutions and a Christian sense of social responsibility' (Hastings, 1987, pp. 95, 264, and 304). The BCC was commissioned to serve as the focus for pooling of finite resources while being an expression of British churches who found it expedient not to go it alone, but were still not entirely united organisationally. By ensuring the BCC acted outside direct church control, it would serve as the political equivalent to the Victorian

Missionary Societies who were much freer to express themselves politically. It is no surprise that the basic structure of the BCC was similar to that of the WCC. Whilst the BCC was not a branch office or committed to every decision and action of the WCC, it was of the same ecumenical family and did share common interests. In turn the WCC granted to the BCC the status of an associated national council. This organic relationship did much to stimulate BCC participation in the concerns and work of the World Council. Yet the BCC was financially autonomous of the WCC and controlled its resources independently. Each member body maintained the BCC's work through annual grants proportionate to their size and financial capacity.[29]

A General Assembly (known simply as 'Council') was formed to serve as the principal source of authority for the BCC. The Council comprised delegates from member churches meeting every six months for sessions normally lasting a weekend. Its role was to determine public statements, resolutions, and policies (including the commissioning of reports). There was also a proviso for Private Member's Motions to be voted on in Assembly. In turn, the Council appointed an executive committee to meet at least six times a year in order to supervise Council work between Assembly meetings. The executive was chaired by a general secretary (Archie Craig became the first secretary). Other Council officers included a president (normally the Archbishop of Canterbury), vice-president and a treasurer. This central secretariat was supported by departments (each chaired by a secretary with their own staff) providing information, advice and practical support to members, and to other organisations that requested help, whether local, national or international. In time the BCC developed a distinctive life of its own and its debates, resolutions and reports can be seen to reflect a wider spread of Christian insight and commitment than could be found in any single church of the time.

International relations

The two main issues that brought together the BCC were international relations and social reform. Two specialised departments were henceforth set up within the BCC to deal exclusively with these issues. The department that dealt with international relations was at first known as the Department for International Friendship, which was the lineal descendent of the British section of Dickinson's World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches. In 1947 the Department of International Friendship came officially to be called

the 'International Department' and later the Division of International Affairs (DIA). In 1952 the Council of British Missionary Societies (CBMS) entered into formal association with the BCC, and from this point the DIA acted as a joint department for both Council and Conference. There were no hard and fast rules determining the range of the International Department's activities. Essentially, the DIA was concerned with the 'relationship between nations as political entities. This [was] not meant as a precise definition, but as a guidepost'.[30] A considerable amount of the department's work was spent in formulating and expressing, on behalf of the BCC, a politico-moral judgement on areas of international concern where they thought they had a duty to express such judgement. As World War II ended Oldham was particularly keen to reconcile Christianity with a secular humanism engaged in post-war reconstruction (Steele and Taylor, 2009). In the formulation of such judgements the department used the specialised knowledge and expertise of individuals, advisory, support, specialist, and ad hoc groups, not necessarily directly associated with the BCC such as the UN Association. Once the DIA's judgement was determined it set to express its opinion. The main constituency was the British government and public. Here the DIA saw itself as a pressure group speaking on behalf of a section of British Christian society (i.e. the BCC and its members). At the autumn 1944 Council meeting Oldham spoke of the need for the BCC to safeguard its character:

> At all costs the Council must preserve its church character and not seek to exercise the greater freedom that belongs to a private body. This means that the responsible church leaders who are members of the Council have no right to support any course of action which they are not prepared to commend and defend within their own several churches.

It was envisaged that this joint approach would be both more informed and effective than views expressed by individual churches. The department aimed to keep regular governmental contacts and secure top level deputations to help in the formulation of their ideas. It sought to ensure that the churches understood government policies, and that government was made aware of the views of the churches. The DIA also wanted to reach individual British churches and their members with the intention of articulating an informal voice on international affairs among British Christians. The department did this with various executive actions.

First, it issued reports and statements of general policy to the BCC Assembly. The basis of this was the 'Seven Point Policy for Joint Action by the British Churches'.[31] This formulation charged the department to work for: (i) the strengthening of communication with the Churches of Eastern Europe and East Asia; (ii) European unity, with a recognition of Britain's common spiritual inheritance with the peoples of the Continent; (iii) supporting the United Nations; (iv) persistence in negotiation with the Soviet Union; (v) opposition to racial discrimination; (vi) increased overseas service in terms of both personnel and money; and (vii) assistance to underdeveloped peoples. Next, the DIA created working parties to publish well-researched papers, reports, and reviews on major international developments in order to help others understand the complex factors at work. (It was this working-party method that was mainly used in influencing public opinion on nuclear matters.[32]) Third, it ensured comprehensive press coverage of BCC deputations to government sources. Fourth, it expressed views to the CCIA. This was important because the International Department acted essentially as the national commission of the CCIA in Britain. If the DIA needed to make a representation to a government (other than the British government) or to the United Nations, it would do so through the CCIA. Finally, the department wanted to express its views to Christian Councils of other countries. These expressions may have been messages of greeting on significant political occasions (for example, the political independence of a country), or alternatively an expression of concern over questions of human rights (e.g. missionary freedom). If the country concerned was within the British Empire or Commonwealth the DIA approached them directly; if in another territory the department approached the CCIA. All significant questions over the actions or policies of another country would be directed to the Christian Council of that country. The department would never contact the government of another country directly but trusted that their registered concern (e.g. perceived threats to world peace) would be related via the indigenous Christian Council to their own government sources.

In practical terms the DIA was interested in bringing a Christian judgement to bear on international relations. By drawing together representatives from groups of Christians who could speak with knowledge and experience, the department intended to make informative decisions vis-à-vis government and other state apparatuses. The department consequently saw its role as educational, even prophetic, through the provision of information and the drawing out of the moral factors involved in international political decisions. Such authority was moral and political

rather than legal or canonical. This carried the intrinsic disadvantage that the BCC, as a Christian institution making pronouncements on ethical, social and political matters, could thereby give the misleading impression of the unanimity of its own membership.[33] Yet it also gave the DIA a very high informal authority to speak on behalf of the BCC. Genuine differences were effectively marginalised and it was down to individuals within their midst to expose those differences and justify their disagreement.[34]

* * *

The WCC and BCC were products of an optimistic world-view whose starting point was the rediscovery of a Christian moral message for an increasingly post-Christian world. The movement involved three separate strands: Faith and Order, peace activism, Life and Work. The ecumenical movement, consequently, was established to further a spiritual and material reformation, to bring God back into social life and counter a secularised understanding of history. The BCC became the principal (indeed the only truly interdenominational) non-Catholic body dealing with social issues for the British Christian community. Theologically it combined a certain idealism (though never counter-culturally so) with a more pragmatic political realism. Despite ecumenism being grounded in an optimistic theory of human nature, many of its precepts were orthodox. This was for two main reasons. First, because it came to fruition at precisely the time nineteenth century progressivism was rejected in the face of twentieth century dictators. Two world wars and the failure of the League of Nations had provoked a neo-orthodox protest within the churches, just as realism had been the response to idealism within academia. Second, because from the beginning one of the greatest hindrances to the goal of unity was a secularised and self-centred conformity of national churches to their own society. The desire of some Christians not to invest all their hopes in one project was also strong and accounts for the setting up of similar projects throughout the Cold War period.

Part II
Faith and Fear

4
Christians in the Atomic Age

The outbreak of world war in September 1939 prevented the WCC from carrying out its mission immediately but this delay in the formation (or more accurately the implementation) of the World Council served to hasten the establishment of the British Council of Churches. These developments hide the divisions that World War II exacerbated in the traditional schism between just war 'culturalists' and pacifist 'counter-culturalists'. During World War II pacifism became increasingly tainted by its association with appeasement and was blamed for the outbreak of hostilities. Purists like Dr Donald Soper (a Methodist) and the Revd Dr George MacLeod (the Scottish Kirk), along with Canon Charles Raven, were discredited and banned from broadcasting by the BBC due to their anti-war protestations. Pacifist credibility was inevitably weakened amongst those who thought the war against Hitler just and that battles were being waged to save Christendom from totalitarian excess. Christian intellectuals on the liberal wing of pacifism, including the major ecclesiastical historian Rev. Cecil J. Cadoux (1940), thus began to give weight to non-pacifist and more Augustinian arguments. Many pacifists (not just Christian) concluded that war was 'relatively justified'[1] in the face of evil like fascism and that the Christian West was engaged in a deeply moral mission to defend Christendom. If Hitler helped rehabilitate warfare amongst pacifists (inasmuch as he made opposition to Nazism a moral prerogative) he also made just war concepts within British churches more mainstream than they had been before 1939.

Despite serious defections from the Christian pacifist camp throughout 1939–45 the British churches were not fully decisive either in their acceptance, or rejection, of the idea of just war. This was more a problem for the churches than the Establishment who by this time had begun to think that a 'smooth alliance of religion and politics' was distasteful

to the general public (Hastings, 1987). The Church of England's 1940 Convocation (an assembly of bishops and clergy) illustrated the depths of division at Canterbury. A resolution declaring just war as appropriate in the struggle with Germany was tabled, yet the bishops felt it wise to refrain from a decision until after the war. The British churches found it difficult to criticise 'disproportionate' Allied action, even the ferocious carpet bombing of German cities. The lone but vociferous protests of George Bell (now Bishop of Chichester) were a notable exception to this rule. Such protests were an important factor in preventing Bell becoming Archbishop of Canterbury after Archbishop Temple's death in 1944 (Collins, 1966). But Bell was adamant that the church 'ought to declare what is just' and maintain its 'right to prophecy'.[2] In the midst of war the American equivalent to the BCC offered its judgement. In 1944 a commission of pacifist and just war scholars appointed by the US Federal Council of Churches and chaired by Robert Calhoun (Yale's top theology professor) produced *The Relation of the Church to the War in the Light of the Christian Faith*. This study concluded that the war was 'a tragic moment in God's work of creating and redeeming man and in man's long struggle with himself and his Creator'.

Britain became the first western power to decide it was necessary to develop an atomic weapons capability (Baylis and Stoddart, 2012). From the spring of 1940 British and refugee scientists joined together in the Maud Committee to discuss the possibility of harnessing the power of the atom. Two major reports were produced: one on the technical feasibility of manufacturing a Bomb, and the other on the wider potential of atomic energy. The first report, presented to a small Cabinet committee in July 1941 declared 'in spite of the very large expenditure we consider that the destructive effects, both material and moral, are so great that every effort should be made to produce bombs of this kind … Even if the war should end before the Bombs are ready the effort would not be wasted except in the unlikely event of world disarmament, since no nation would care to risk being caught without a weapon of such decisive possibilities' (cited in Gowing, 1964, p. 394). Not only would the new explosive be considerably more effective than any other, it would be cheaper to produce and easily delivered by existing equipment (i.e. a new range of fast, high-flying, jet-powered V-bombers). At this point the weapon was not envisaged to be morally different from any other weapon and it was designed largely with physical use in mind rather than for deterrent or threat purposes. In the British Establishment the idea of atomic super-weapons was soon linked to great power status. Prime Minister Churchill in particular was enthusiastic about the Bomb

as an agent of decisive possibilities and the key to national power in the post-war world. While Britain was prepared to go it alone and develop the source independently, most insiders accepted that it would be expedient for Britain to work with the United States. Although the British did not want to rely on American goodwill, co-operation through the 1943 Quebec Agreement was seen as a pragmatic necessity based on cost analysis and the fear that the Axis powers would manufacture the A-bomb first. Yet the British still valued the idea of an independent atomic device and made clear to the US government that they wanted their own weapon once the war was won. Such reasoning led to decisive British–US government collaboration in the Manhattan project.[3]

By autumn 1944 it was clear that neither Germany nor Japan were close to developing their own atomic capability and were in any case on the verge of collapse. The Allied development of the Bomb nevertheless continued and on 8 May 1945 the European war ended with Germany's surrender. As the Pacific war dragged on, the first atomic test was carried out in New Mexico on 16 July 1945. Strengthened by this success the US government took the unilateral decision to use the Bomb on Japan bolstered by the belief that it would save lives by shortening war. On 6 August 1945 the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima killing approximately 200,000 people. Three days later a second more powerful atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. There was no dissent from the British (Ruston, 1989). With the end of the Second World War on 14 August, the British government was faced with the decision whether to opt out of the new atomic club. As early as July 1945 British scientists had started to conclude that 'the only answer … to the atomic bomb is to be prepared to use it ourselves in retaliation' and that this 'might well deter an aggressive nation'. The 'deterrent effect' was soon picked up and expressed as 'vital to our security' by Britain's military chiefs, worried by the experience of the Blitz and the impact of the new technology given Britain's geographical isolation. With the advent of nuclear weapons, the modern era of deterrence dawned (Fisher, 1985). The British physicist Professor P. M. S. Blackett (in Cox, 1981, p. 26) concluded 'the dropping of the atomic bombs was not so much the last military act of the Second World War, as the first act of the cold diplomatic war with Russia'.[4] Believing that the Soviet Union was the only likely future opponent, the Royal Air Force Future Planning Staff suggested that British security could best be achieved by 'threatening Russian cities' (Baylis and Stoddart, 2012). In 1946 Attlee's Labour government, following little public discussion, decided to manufacture the British A-bomb. The decision to develop the Bomb was taken by the Defence Committee

of the Cabinet. Other Cabinet members learned of this through the circulation of minutes. Passing references were made in the House of Commons but it was not until the testing of the first British device in the early 1950s that a formal announcement was made.[5] This entry into the nuclear age was welcomed by many who believed the Bomb had brought an early end to the Second World War. But exaggerated belief in the political (as opposed to military) potential of the 'Bomb that Ends War' ultimately reinforced Britain's decision to stay in the club.

The earliest source of moral debate on atomic issues was coming not from the World Council of Churches or even British Christians but from the BCC's sister organisation across the Atlantic. In early 1941, as Chapter 3 noted, the Federal Council of Churches had set up a Commission to Study a Just and Durable Peace (CJDP) headed by John Foster Dulles and supported by Reinhold Niebuhr. This study encouraged the US to embrace hegemonic responsibilities and globalisation, while rejecting isolationism. On 9 August 1945, the day the second atomic Bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Dulles' Commission once more waded into controversy by issuing a *Statement on the Atomic Bomb*. Although the CJDP was prepared to concede President Truman's assertion that 'atomic power can become a powerful and forceful influence toward the maintenance of world peace' they called for US self-restraint and regulation by the newly established United Nations. This statement became the first resolution advocating the control and use of nuclear weapons adopted by any official body, religious or secular. Mindful of this attempt by US churches to direct public opinion, concerned Christians back in Britain began to write to Archie Craig (BCC General Secretary) urging a declaration against the use of the Bomb.

For the first decade of the atomic age, church reports and commissions were the only real forums for British debate. Letters from BCC constituent churches began to arrive throughout August 1945 calling on the Council to lead in efforts to persuade Attlee's new government not to manufacture a British atomic device. Rev. Blacknell of the Hull Methodist Mission, for example, wrote to Craig asking for the BCC to organise a mass referendum so that British Christians could have their say over its manufacture. Craig argued that it was very difficult for the BCC to speak with any authority on behalf of its member churches and it wasn't for him to urge what action, if any, the Council ought to take. Craig did however think the suggestion of a Christian plebiscite impractical because 'mass votes of this kind were often very misleading' (Craig to Blacknell, 22 August 1945). Yet the calls for a BCC lead grew. On 22 August 1945 Rev. Harrison, President of the Methodist

Conference, wrote to the President of the BCC (the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher[6]) arguing that because the atom signified a turning point in history it demanded a response from the BCC to show the world at least that Britain was ready for the renunciation of war. It is interesting that the pacifist publication *Peace News* (25 August 1945) contradicted the spirit of Harrison by treating the A-bomb not as a historic revolution, but simply as an increase in humanity's quantitative capacity for destruction. Geoffrey Fisher, as BCC President, in turn wrote to Craig hoping for BCC action, not least so that the Anglican Church could escape criticism of falling silent.[7] While Fisher thought there was 'room for difference of opinion' he believed a declaration of sort by Christendom would be the most appropriate action because 'atomic bombs would certainly be used' as a means of weapons of mass destruction if there were another war. The important thing, therefore, was the universal repudiation of all war and support for the CJDP idea of transferring the control of the atomic bomb to the United Nations. Fisher suggested the BCC produce a considered document that could be submitted to the Council's members for ratification. Once done 'Christendom, America, Rome and the East' could affirm the document (Fisher to Craig, 30 August 1945).

Craig produced a considered and considerable reply to Fisher. Whilst agreeing on the need for a united voice he felt there was difficulty in finding a procedure both authoritative and reasonably speedy. Craig thought it wiser to concentrate solely on an all-British venture rather than seek multilateral international action. A larger-scale approach should be left to the WCC and if that were done the British statement would be a useful basis for discussion. The possibilities of a British response were: first, a statement by the 'Big Five' – the Anglican (English and Scottish), Roman Archbishops, plus the two Moderators (Methodist and Presbyterian). This would be much the quickest way and very influential. However this option would raise particular problems for the Moderators who, because they had no personal authority in matters of church policy, would find it difficult to co-operate. Second, a statement could be issued by the BCC 'off its own bat or after consultations with appropriate Church committees' (e.g. the Church and Nation Committee of the Church of Scotland who were engaged in preparing their own report). Such a statement could not, however, be properly drafted in time for the forthcoming BCC General Assembly (October 1945), but could be done well by April 1946. The third option, as Craig saw it, was a statement drafted and approved by the BCC and referred to the churches for endorsement at individual assemblies meeting next

in spring 1946. On the whole Craig was inclined to think that, because the atomic issue looked like being a long-term one, the disadvantage of a slow tempo should be accepted and this last option adopted (Craig to Fisher, 3 September 1945).

But Geoffrey Fisher was under growing pressure to act in his capacity of Archbishop of Canterbury. Although he showed a personal reluctance to condemn nuclear weapons or their use he did recognise the demand for guidance and the impossibility of remaining silent (Kirby, 1993, p. 252). A high-level deputation of clergy led by Canon Hudson (St Albans) was urging the Archbishop to form a commission to consider the moral and spiritual implications of nuclear warfare. Fisher was against the idea and hoped a BCC report would relieve the pressure on him to act personally. The Archbishop wrote to Craig arguing that the BCC start work on the British project in order to consider whether 'the old phrase the just war still had any definable meaning or relevance' (Fisher to Craig, 15 October 1945). Craig decided that the best candidate to draw together and act as chair for such a commission would be his old friend and vice-president of the BCC, Joe Oldham.

Oldham's reluctance

The record shows that Joe Oldham was less than enthusiastic about being tasked to lead a commission of this sort but in the circumstances found it difficult to refuse (Oldham to Craig, 19 October 1945). Oldham accepted: first, out of friendship and 'the office confirmed on me'. Second, because he had both the time and connections required. Finally, because he felt the commission might contribute to what he saw as the highly desirable end of further cementing relations between the BCC and his Christian Frontier Council on the Christian Faith and the Common Life (CCFCL). At its October 1945 meeting the BCC instructed its Executive Committee to set up a small committee to consider the problems created by the discovery of atomic energy and draw up a statement. As Craig had argued, the 'working party' was to communicate with the Executive Committee of the WCC and co-ordinate conclusions. Oldham was keen on securing a short title to convey the group's intentions:

> … to bring in anything about problems which concern Christians would make the title too long. The same objection applies to anything like 'the moral and spiritual implications of atomic energy', apart from the fact that atomic energy in itself has no moral or

spiritual implications, which have to do with the use which human beings make of it. I incline to suggest for a title as a compromise 'Commission on the New Era of Atomic Energy'. (Oldham to Craig, 9 November 1945)

The commission's composition would prove controversial. Oldham was keen on securing a good balance between 'Left and Right' yet the shadow of Fisher dominated discussions.[8] Oldham conceded that 'if the Archbishop wanted to keep an eye on things' it would be possible to appoint someone (Oldham to Craig, 21 October 1945). The Bishop of Winchester (Mervyn Haigh), well known for his anti-Soviet rhetoric, was seen as the natural choice. Oldham saw Bishop Bell as a 'sensible alternative' but Fisher did not care for his bishop's well-established reputation as 'trouble-maker'. Oldham, however, was mindful that in academic circles Haigh was regarded as 'theologically incompetent' (repeated by McCaughey to Craig, 31 October 1945). Bishop Haigh was approached but proved too busy to serve; Oldham henceforth wrote a series of letters to the Archbishop firmly requesting an alternative if he was sure he didn't want the 'trouble-maker' Bishop Bell to serve. Oldham became increasingly exasperated by Fisher's refusal to reduce Bell's workload or offer an alternative. To Oldham the atomic dilemma was now fast appearing as the BCC's top priority because 'unless something effective can be done about this, all our other activities are reduced to futility' (Oldham to Craig, 19 November 1945). Oldham's pressure on Fisher eventually secured Bell's membership but disquiet continued about commission recruitment. The International Department's Assistant Officer John McCaughey for example, was full of opinion about Oldham's suggested members. The exclusion of Oxford professor Canon Mortimer, 'one of the most brilliant and accomplished minds of his generation' was nothing short of preposterous, while the inclusion of Professor Alfred Zimmern, was 'scraping the barrel'. McCaughey was amazed that Philip Mairet was omitted because his 'articles on the complexity of problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy have been widely acclaimed as far more penetrating than anything else which has appeared' (McCaughey to Craig, 31 October 1945). Both Zimmern and Mairet were omitted as full Commission members but Zimmern would serve as advisor.

By November 1945 the final membership of the committee was secured. The commission was 15-strong (including two women), with a mixture of theologians, philosophers, lay Christians, and clergy. Members included: Oldham as chair, the Rev. M. E. Aubrey (General

Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland), John Baillie (Professor of Divinity, University of Edinburgh), Sir Robert Birley (Head of Charterhouse), Kathleen Bliss (editor of *The Christian News-Letter*), the Bishop of Chichester (Dr George Bell), R. Newton Flew (Methodist Principal of Wesley House, Cambridge), Rev. Norman Goodall (chair of the BCC's DIA, Secretary to the IMC), Kenneth Grubb (London Chair of the CCIA), Rev. C. E. Hudson (Canon at St Albans), Donald MacKinnon (Oxford Lecturer in Philosophy, Natural and Comparative Religions, member of the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics[9]), Sir Walter Moberly (Chairman of the University Grants Committee), Professor A. D. Ritchie (Professor of Logic and Metaphysics, University of Edinburgh), Dennis Routh (former fellow of All Souls, Oxford), Mary Stocks (Principal of Westfield College, University of London), and Rev. J. D. McCaughey, as secretary. Oldham wrote to Craig explaining that the 'only reason for not including a scientist is that we are so ignorant of the people concerned that a good deal of explorative work is necessary in order to make the right choice' (28 November 1945). Commission members Mary Stocks and Donald MacKinnon are described as belonging markedly to the 'Left'; 'Right-wing' members are not noted (Oldham to Craig, 9 November 1945).[10]

Issues were discussed at College Hall, Malet Street, London over three weekends between January and March 1946. Members were asked to provide written comments on memoranda, circulated drafts of chapters, with the aim 'to understand what is implied in the [nuclear] challenge' and 'what answer it demands'. Drafts of chapters were sent to 22 prominent non-Commission members for comments including T. S. Eliot (good friend of Oldham, a friend of Bell), Karl Mannheim, Michael Polanyi and the pacifist Canon Charles Raven. In procedural terms Oldham saw it necessary for the commission to be both workable and able to secure the representation of relevant experience and 'the best minds'. Experts were co-opted (e.g. Zimmern) on the clear understanding that full commission members had ultimate responsibility for the report. Initially it was not clear which 'constituency of believers' the report was aiming at: Was it to be addressed solely to Christians? Was it to be aimed at those outside the churches? Robert Birley saw the report as something that should appeal to all sorts of intelligent non-believers: 'something that would startle the intelligent non-Christian public, something both useful for the BCC and also alarming and interesting to other people'. Dennis Routh thought the report should be as uncontentious and populist as possible in order to 'stimulate but not shock

[because] it would be difficult to provoke and shock the ordinary public without provoking and shocking the BCC'. It was finally agreed that the report be written to enlist the interest of the public – Christian and non-Christian alike. The target would be the 'intelligent sixth-former' with an intention to 'provoke and stimulate' (Commission minutes, 4–7 January 1946).

Archie Craig (who appears in the minutes to these meetings but not in the acknowledgements of the published report) was particularly keen that the recently convened Church of Scotland sub-committee looking into nuclear war should co-operate with Oldham's commission. This was sensible not just because the Church of Scotland was a founding BCC member, but also because John Baillie (Edinburgh's Professor of Divinity) was involved in both working groups. Whilst the Scottish sub-committee welcomed the BCC overtures they were nevertheless still anxious to declare their own mind despite being represented in the BCC. To the Scots it was a case of appreciating the Council's greater resources and wider range of contacts, while not evading their own local responsibilities. The sub-committee's secretary (John Pitt-Watson[11]) summed up their view when he wrote to Craig on 17 November: 'the atomic bomb has created a situation which each church must face, not – let us pray – *by* itself but certainly *for* itself. A united Christian front is doubly to be wished, but, to be of real value, it must be a real front along which the churches are officially aligned'. Oldham was also in close contact with John Foster Dulles' CJDP and with the recently reconvened US Federal Council of Churches Calhoun Commission. Letters were written and received at least twice a month. Plans were exchanged, ideas tested, conclusions broached. Every chapter of the report in progress was sent across the Atlantic for comment. On 11 December 1945, for example, Dr John Bennett, the secretary of the Calhoun Commission, wrote to Oldham suggesting that a draft of the BCC report should pay increased attention to the necessity of eschatological thinking. He suggested that, though the BCC was competent in historical study, it was paying insufficient attention to the theological ramifications of nuclear power (i.e. its potential to extinguish all life) and that as a consequence they were failing to grasp that the restraints implied in the concept of just war were disappearing. This warning proved precipitous.

Throughout late 1945 and early 1946 correspondence ebbed and flowed between Oldham's Commission and the Federal Council of Churches. The Calhoun Commission had been quick to reconvene in order to supplement their 1944 report *The Relation of the Church to the*

War in the Light of the Christian Faith in the wake of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In March 1946 an addendum to this report entitled *Atomic Warfare and the Christian Faith* was issued warning that 'our latest epochal triumph of science and technology may prove to be our last'. It affirmed 'that the policy of obliteration bombing as actually practised in World War II, culminating in the use of atomic bombs against Japan, is not defensible on Christian premises'. The Calhoun Commission boldly argued that the methods of atomic warfare could not possibly fulfil the just war requirements of either proportionality or discrimination and so recognised 'that by misdirection of atomic energy, man can bring earthly history to a premature close' (*Atomic Warfare and the Christian Faith*, 1946, pp. 3–23). Whilst the Calhoun Commission did not reject just war per se, it rejected all weapons of mass destruction, particularly (but by no means exclusively) the atom bomb. The Federal Council's Executive Committee adopted one of the most controversial sections of the report as a message on 'The Churches and World Order':

> In the initial use and continued production of atomic bombs, the US has given and is giving sanction to these weapons of mass annihilation. We believe that this policy must not be continued. Our nation having first used the atomic bomb has a primary duty to seek to reverse the trend which it began. Unless the US will give moral leadership and accept risks for the sake of a new birth of confidence, we see little hope for escape from the growing crisis.

This ground-breaking plea for a more moral international politics suggested: first, a well-defined Christian eschatological hope for a this-world future; second, that the unilateral renunciation of atomic weapons could be a legitimate aspect of this hope; and third, that even neo-orthodox Augustinian theology had a role to play in rejecting nihilistic approaches to international affairs. The US report's conclusion that atomic warfare was 'morally indefensible' shocked many with its certainty. Indeed *Atomic Warfare and the Christian Faith* stands as the first official statement of a Christian *nuclear pacifist* position. It should rightly be regarded as a seminal contribution to moral thinking about nuclear weapons and a salutary lesson in applied theology and ethics.

The Era of Atomic Power

In May 1946, five months after its first meeting, the BCC accepted the completed Oldham report and authorised its publication as *The Era of*

Atomic Power.[12] The pamphlet begins by describing the discovery of the atom as one of the great turning points in history – an event comparable to the discovery of fire. The tone was at once philosophical and speculative. The atomic bomb was seen as the culmination of a process (the advancement of science) that, rather than presenting people with new problems, made more acute and urgent problems already present in western science-based history. In this regard the splitting of the atom had both good and bad potentialities. On one hand, it confronted society with an immediate threat to the survival of the human race; on the other, it placed at the disposal of states hitherto unimagined sources of power. Yet the report acknowledged that there could be no adequate defence against the Bomb:

> The atomic bomb has so increased the scale of destructiveness that a single stroke, or a few successive blows, may annihilate the industrial capacity, and consequently the recuperative power, of the nation attacked … The incentive to strike a crippling blow first and the possibility of doing this are incalculably increased, and a premium is thus placed on swift, ruthless aggression. The use of atomic weapons makes war not only more destructive and treacherous, but more irresponsible than ever. (*Era of Atomic Power* [hereafter *EAP*], pp. 10, 11, 12)

Although humanity was overshadowed, for the first time in its history, by the fact that it was equipped with the power to 'blot out in a moment of wickedness or folly an entire civilisation' there were clear grounds for hope. Caught up in the flush of Allied wartime success, the commission looked forward to a new era of Anglo-American hegemony in which the Bomb would serve as a vehicle to promote general human well-being. As a document *The Era of Atomic Power* was less concerned with the proven impact of nuclear terror (as witnessed by Japan) than in examining the 'social strains' created by its invention. The Bomb had unleashed such feelings of despair in the West that future birth rates were threatened:

> The mere discovery of the atom bomb itself, even if it is never used, might well create such strains in our society as to destroy it. If human experience counts for anything we can only conclude that in such a state of insecurity most men and women would be forced back into a life that accepted impermanence as something inevitable, and would live only for the present. (*EAP*, p. 17)

Fundamental to this thinking was the Augustinian belief that 'there are no Christian grounds for supposing that God will take back the freedom bestowed on man, or will certainly intervene to prevent its abuse'. But this did not tip the report into the eschatological radicalness of the Federal Council's *Atomic Warfare and the Christian Faith*, but towards a new self-awareness that might evoke a new direction in human history. *The Era of Atomic Power* called first and foremost for a positive engagement with the nuclear debate. A counter-cultural avocation to withdrawal from the dilemma, not merely as an individual vocation but as a generally right attitude to society, was to deny the significance of politics and to despair of civilisation. Christians had social contracts to fulfil and were morally obliged to draw upon their faith in order to ensure the control of nuclear power. Western civilisation had developed, by virtue of its close interlocking system of material organisation and popular sovereignty, a special body of ideals and principles that Christians were obliged to defend. Its genius lay in a balance between power and ideals which meant citizens had the potential to influence, make and shape their own futures. Because freedom and rights were more than mere expressions of the interests of a dominant class, liberal democracy offered the possibility of subjecting power to the control of reason and justice. Indeed the 'outstanding political achievement of the West' was that law limited power in the interests of justice. For these reasons the Cold War was profoundly ideological. This was so because public opinion in the Soviet Union could not restrain government in the same way it could in the West. An effective world community offered the only 'reasonable hope of eliminating from human society the danger of atomic war and therefore of preserving western civilisation from destruction'. Christians 'must therefore be prepared for a period during which Russia will appear as the crucial obstacle to the emergence of a world community and even as a menace to world peace'. Nuclear force, consequently, may be the only means open to defend a just way of life and maintain the conditions necessary for the growth of world community. The church, however, had a duty never to let the British state forget the lessons of Thrasymachus and allow 'justice to be nothing but the interest of the stronger'.[13] This Platonic allusion demands further examination.

The reference to Plato can be seen as a sign of the commission's determination to escape both cynical realpolitik and godless realism. It is true that Thrasymachus stands, next to the Athenian generals in Thucydides' *History*, as a figure from the ancient world most scholars would classify as realist. It is also true that the Oldham report suggests

Socrates more than Thrasymachus, for Thrasymachus would not have talked of responsibilities or obligations between states, and certainly not of the application of ideals (Christian or otherwise) to a global society. Two counters are necessary. First, during the course of his discussion with Socrates, Thrasymachus, as Hare and Joynt (1982, pp. 24–7) point out, came to use the terms 'just' and 'unjust' more conventionally so that 'injustice' was equated with the *unbridled* pursuit of self-interest. For Thrasymachus 'the best and most perfectly unjust state' is hence the state most likely to be 'unjustly attempting to enslave other states', or to have 'already enslaved them, and be holding them in subjection' (Book I Chap. 4). It seems logical that a state that was *perfectly* unjust on these terms would not be able to co-operate with any other in the pursuit of goals it was unable to attain single-handed. Most Christian realists would not deny this inevitable overlap between the interests of states, and the need for relations of co-operation or 'balances of power'. Second, Hans Morgenthau (1946, p. 35) ascribed to Thrasymachus the view that 'the political sphere was governed exclusively by the rules of the political art of which ethical evaluation was a mere ideological by-product'. Morgenthau thereby disassociated his realism from Thrasymachus's 'sophist realism' (c.f. the 'Nietzschean' realism heralded by Der Derian in Der Derian [ed.], 1995, p. 385) because he believed that although there were universal ethical demands they were ones in 'tragic' tension with the demands of power. These ethical demands could not henceforth be made of states because states could not operate by them; the best they could do was to operate by the perverted reflection of them, namely ideology (Hare and Joynt, 1982, pp. 36–7). If conventional realists like Morgenthau felt it necessary to distance themselves from Thrasymachus' foolhardiness then it should not diminish a BCC-as-realist claim but rather reinforce the many flavours realism can take as well as the difficulties in putting thinkers and theologies into categories. In other words, although there is conceptual distance between Plato's (Socrates, the BCC, and Morgenthau) 'soft' realism and Thrasymachus' 'hard' realpolitik, both are versions of realism as classically understood.

The *Era of Atomic Power* suggests its task as one that encouraged groups of democratic fellowship that would foster the nuclei of a new Christian social consciousness. Democracy, a concept made effective through its embodiment in institutions, was to be preserved via the fostering of tradition and adapted in order to meet the demands of a post-nuclear society: 'it may be a special function of the church in the present crisis to offer to men a creative interpretation of their political activities, in order that

with the aid of Christian insight they may have a clear understanding of what it is that they are striving, often unconsciously, to embody' (*EAP*, p. 38). This was a field that suited the churches due to their distinctive interests, purposes and inherited opportunities. Yet the report was ultimately concerned with the need to also protect Britain's great power status.

Britain's great power status and responsible citizenship

The *Era of Atomic Power*'s emphasis on 'power' and 'national interest' led to a 'dangerous analogy' (Ormrod, 1987) – the notion that British nuclear renunciation was tantamount to the abdication of great power status. The report sees abnegation as 'equivalent to an attempt, in the naval age, to wage naval war without the use of capital ships' (*EAP*, p. 40). It was the political advantages of the atomic bomb rather than its military utility that was paramount. This was particularly telling in the context of the recent passage of the US Atomic Energy Act of 1946 which, in prohibiting the communication of atomic information to foreign countries including Britain, provided a major stimulus to the idea of an independent British nuclear deterrent at a time when the Americans were the only state who possessed one. In this light it is important to remember that the BCC position was not so different to that of official thinking in Attlee's government or indeed the public at large. Nuclear weapons were needed because a potential adversary might acquire them. But such conclusion effectively sanctioned British participation in the nuclear arms race before it had in fact begun (Kirby, 1993, p. 254). The implication of this was that the right to use atomic weapons was not rejected, but indeed reserved, for the preservation of national interest. A renunciation of the Bomb, and so great power status, would be pointless because it would not bring immunity for Britain from the threat of hostile attack. Unilateral abnegation would mean the surrender to any power that was without scruples and the end of British culture and the system of political and moral ideas it embodied:

> A nation which decided as a deliberate and declared act of national policy in all circumstances to renounce the use of the atomic bomb … would, in fact, be committing itself to a policy of unilateral disarmament which, in any conflict with a power still ready to use the Bomb, would render all other attempts of armament totally useless … The renunciation by Great Britain of the use of the Bomb … does not, of course, mean immunity for Britain from the threat of attack by the atomic bomb. (*EAP*, pp. 40–53)

Although a minority (presumably Stocks, Bell and MacKinnon) on the commission wanted to condemn the American use of the Bomb as 'morally indefensible', a clear majority felt unable to issue unqualified condemnation. The commissioners claimed on one hand that they were not sufficiently in possession of the facts; and on the other hand, that using the Bomb had undoubtedly saved lives by forcing the Japanese to surrender earlier than they wished. Whilst the writers supported the just war limitation that condemned the use of violence in excess of strict military necessity (i.e. questions of proportionality and discrimination), without access to the facts they believed such an assessment was impossible to ascertain. Christians could not form proper judgement on the use of the Bomb unless they lobbied government to obtain the facts upon which a considered judgement could be made. Whilst the report acknowledged that atomic weapons involved a great extension of the practice of indiscriminate massacre and accepted that Total War failed to justify the criteria of just war (i.e. they accepted that the end does not always justify the means), it endorsed 'the argument that on balance the use of the atomic bomb saved hundreds of thousands of lives, both in the forces of the United Nations and in Japan itself, undoubtedly has weight. But it is one of peculiar danger, since it can be used to justify any kind of barbarity' (*EAP*, p. 50). On balance, atomic warfare did not really present a new ethical problem, but rather introduced a new quantitative element into an old problem. For the report (ignoring the carpet bombing of World War II) the problem was that until the advent of the atomic bomb it had been possible to limit aerial attack to precision bombing and so refrain from mass destruction:

> … the decision to introduce atomic warfare … brought into operation a new weapon, the nature of which involved of necessity a great extension of the practice of indiscriminate massacre. The initiative in introducing these new weapons was taken by those who claimed to be the champions of civilisation … What we have to deplore is the steady deterioration of public sensitiveness to the indiscriminate massacre of non-combatants … It is clear insofar as war becomes 'total', in the sense that every means may be adopted that appears conducive to victory, and that the attack is directed not against armies but against nations by methods of mass destruction, the restraints in waging war which have been regarded by the Christian tradition as essential to a 'just' war disappear. The question has to be asked afresh whether the destruction of an entire

population, including the aged and the young, is not an act so absolutely wrong in itself that no Christian can assent to it or share in it. (*EAP*, p. 50)

In implying that the effects of the bombing of Hiroshima were no worse than the obliteration bombing of German cities, the report reveals three attitudes. First, that the writers still supported the idea of just war fighting in a nuclear age. Second, they were ignorant of both the immediate and long-term consequences of radiation and fallout. Finally, atomic weapons were viewed as nothing other than extremely efficient explosives held by a state that inspired confidence.

Although loyalty to Christ was stressed as more important than loyalty to the state, in Augustinian fashion, Christians had specific responsibilities regarding defence. The *Era of Atomic Power* could not endorse a categorical hostility to the Bomb and opposition was viewed as an optional product of individual conscience. The unconditional character of the demand for peace was seen as no less insistent than the Christian responsibility to 'defend the fundamental rights and liberties of men and the institutions through which in our society these are affirmed, protected and developed'. Whilst the report agreed that no Christian should approve of the use of nuclear weapons, it also elevated the need for other this-world responsibility because 'if there is a responsibility of the secular power, which Christians must acknowledge, to defend the right, if necessary by force of arms, this responsibility is not, it may be argued, and cannot be, diminished or altered by technical advances and the introduction of new weapons, even though the resulting problems may be far more acute' (*EAP*, p. 53). Western democratic institutions demanded active support because they amounted to a profoundly significant transcription of Christian insight. Here the report comes closest to a Manichaean better dead than red argument: 'even the chance of preserving for future generations the framework of free and responsible political action may be preferable to surrender to tyranny'. The atomic question was misconceived if attention was focused on the results or ends of war. The true concern was to prevent war:

From this point of view, the important fact is that no effective means has thus far been suggested of deterring a would-be aggressor except the fear of reprisals … the problem with which we have to deal is, at least in principle, not so much the prevention of war in the old sense of a conflict of interests between rival nations, as the provision of effective means of police action to restrain a lawless and anti-social member of

the community of nations from seeking to attain its ends by violence. In that case the weapon of the atomic bomb ought in the future to be used for one purpose, and one purpose alone, to deter by the threat, and if necessary by the execution, of reprisals a nation which attempted to use it for aggressive purposes. If greatly superior power can be concentrated in the hands of the United Nations, or of a group of nations determined, and for that reason alone, this might be expected to act as a sufficient deterrent and thereby prevent the outbreak of war. (*EAP*, p. 56)

In this way the report was ahead of its time in one important respect – it advocated the principle of nuclear weapons being used as a deterrent.

The Era of Atomic Power could ultimately offer no solution to the dilemma between pacifism and the just war. It believed the church unable to pronounce between the two alternatives. Each tradition was seen as an expression of loyalty to one side of Christian political responsibility and the church 'must throw the shield of its protection and sympathy over those who make either choice'. Christian pacifism, nevertheless, was still a claim of moral absolutes unsuitable for mass action. It was the instinctive conviction that Christians cannot have a stake in a conflict in which there was no place left for mercy and where the individual counted for nothing. For those who made this choice the end of citizenship had come. Just war advocates, alternatively, were attempting to discharge the political responsibility which through God's providence people owed to the state. For these the atomic crisis was the crowning reason why citizenship should be affirmed:

> … it is a serious question whether it is right for Christians to weaken the hands of their government by announcing in advance that, if hostilities take place, they will have no part in them. Such an attitude, if adopted on a large scale, might have the effect of encouraging an aggressor and thus of precipitating the catastrophe which it is hoped to avert … If the supreme object of our endeavours is to save humanity from the appalling fate of atomic warfare, to assume the best means of doing so is to renounce in advance the right of defence might well prove to be a serious political miscalculation. (*EAP*, p. 56)

Security considerations were just too important for collective Christian dissent. The individual should keep objections in the private realm and leave defence to those entrusted with the control of state apparatus.

The Era of Atomic Power saw two positive ramifications emerging from the nuclear dilemma. On one hand, the nature of the atomic question

was an overwhelming reason for the churches to do all in their power to further any proposal to eliminate weapons of mass destruction from all states (i.e. non-proliferation and multilateral disarmament). On the other, the crisis was an unavoidable discipline that must be lived with in order to bring people closer to God and 'Only through such a discipline also can we come to understand the dilemma of our whole society, of which the ambiguities of war are only one expression' (*EAP*, p. 57). The report concluded by reminding readers that God had created humanity in order to both discover and transform. Science presented trials and tribulations as well as benefits. Because of this the churches were forced to confront the nature of science in order to fulfil its mission in a scientific and technical society. 'The true temper and proper employment of a Christian', was therefore, 'always to be working like the sea, and purging ignorance out of his understanding and exchanging notions and apprehensions imperfect for more perfect, and forgetting things behind to press forward' (*EAP*, p. 60). Paraphrasing Reinhold Niebuhr (who had sat on both US Federal Council Commissions), the report reminds readers that the humanist movement that began with the Renaissance had a more profound insight into the potential of human existence, individual and collective, than either Roman Catholicism or Protestantism. What was required of the churches in modern times was to synthesise secular insights and the Christian world-view. In other words, a Christian was called to combine an idealism that seeks to transform society with a more hard-headed realism. Such synthesis would allow a Christian to acknowledge with gratitude the powerful support brought by the scientific community to the defence of those human values that Christians were equally concerned to vindicate. In this way 'the most immediate and urgent question raised by the atomic age … is whether man, as he actually is, can be trusted to use wisely the multiplying powers which science is pouring into his hands' (*EAP*, p. 63). At all times Christians must be aware of the wholeness of living and ensure that science did not outstrip moral progress because 'life can be redeemed not by more zealous striving after what *ought* to be, but only by finding a new relation to that which *is*'. In a decidedly Platonic cast of mind, the Bomb ultimately must be lived with as it cannot be ignored or disinvented. A prophetic function on behalf of the church was both unnecessary and unwarranted.

The Church and the Atom

The May 1946 BCC meeting was an eventful one that resolved to send *The Era of Atomic Power* to all its member churches and invite official

consideration. Copies were sent to the US Federal Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches in New Zealand, the National Christian Council of South Africa, the Australian Section of the WCC, the Canadian Committee for the World Council, and the equivalent national councils in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, France, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Bulgaria, and Austria. By October 1946 individual churches had began responding to Oldham's report.

The Quakers were the first with a reply in *The Friend*.[14] Here the Historic Peace Church concluded that the report was anything other than radical. It asked: 'Is the Christian Church really faced with an irresolvable dilemma?' To the Quakers, the BCC had over-emphasised the negative aspects of preventing war. For them there was a clear, constructive option to solving the nuclear problem:

> The true peacemaker should advocate the destruction of all atomic bombs now, and the discontinuance of experiments and processes for producing them, rather than seek to retain them for possible use on future occasions … The impression left on our minds after studying the Report is that the complexities of politics have been allowed to cloud moral and spiritual issues. (*Reply from the Society of Friends*, n.d. pp. 2–3)

At the very least the BCC could have followed the example of the US Federal Council and expressed penitence for the Allied use of the Bomb. To suggest that war could still be limited was 'ludicrously inappropriate to the age of atomic power' as was the suggestion that pacifism amounted to a denial of citizenship. The BCC should not be so dismissive of, but face more squarely, the pacifist option. To develop this last theme the Quakers proposed a conference between the commission and an equivalent amount of Friends to face the task together. The Quakers would have been disappointed but perhaps not surprised when the BCC dismissed their request. The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, alternatively, commended the commission's 'sound thought and fearless judgement' and thought it of first importance for the BCC to produce a positive statement on the constructive purposes to which nuclear energy could be applied (statement dated 2 May 1947). The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, however, was more critical. They found the report 'too deep and too difficult to be of great practical use to the average man. Yet it is practical guidance that is of vital and immediate importance, if disaster is to be averted' (statement n.d.). The

Church of England took their reply to the BCC particularly seriously and aimed to produce the 'other worldly wordiness' which had been called for by *The Era of Atomic Power*.[15]

The Church of England reply was in the form of a report of a commission appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury (Fisher) and York (Garbett[16]) at the request of the Church Assembly and under the chair of the Dean of Winchester (Dr E. G. Selwyn).[17] This commission was tasked to look into the wider moral and theological aspects of atomic war and published on 13 February 1948 under the title *The Church and the Atom*. It is an important contribution because it came at a time when the Cold War was intensifying and confirmed the basic drift of official British church thinking.[18]

For the Church of England 'the principal challenge confronting the civilisation of our day arises from the rapid growth and concentration of political and technological power in the hands of despotic oligarchies'. This fact meant atomic bombs must be judged, as with any other act of mass destruction, by who holds the keys to its power. The Bomb, therefore, was not qualitatively different to any other weapon. Indeed 'the properties of the atomic bomb are such as to expose it to the same objections as poison gas and bacteriological weapons'. Whilst the commission hesitated in defending the use of the Bomb to achieve military objectives in inhabited cities, if that objective could not be attained in any other way 'there is no objection on grounds other than of humanity … in such circumstances the suffering and death caused will not be needless. But in most imaginable situations the charge of inhumanity would lie' (*The Church and the Atom*, pp. 45–110). As Groom (1974) points out, such a doctrine was problematic because a subjective evaluation of such a situation in the fog of war was not likely to err on the side of caution. This approach was as likely to start a series of reprisals or escalation. Nonetheless, the Church of England commission saw itself upholding principles of discrimination and limitation in the context of the just war tradition. As Kirby (1993, p. 258) notes this was a 'significant step' and different to the BCC line that to live with the atomic dilemma and endure its torment was a beneficial discipline.

The Church and the Atom believed that the intention behind bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki was not to destroy, but rather to administer a 'psychological shock' that would force the end of hostilities. The political importance of the Bomb was hence stressed in much the same way the government, followed by the BCC, had done when justifying its decision to manufacture. Here the commission generally supported, and logically developed the BCC deterrent line, declaring that 'today

the possession of atomic weapons is generally necessary for national self-preservation, [and] a government which is responsible for the safety of the community committed to its charge, is entitled to manufacture them and hold them in readiness'. *The Church and the Atom* ends on a more hopeful note when it asked readers to remember that the problem of peace and preventing war was a spiritual rather than political task. There was a duty 'which rests upon the Church and individual Christians alike, of bringing the illumination of the gospel, and the Christian insight into natural law, to the quest for policies which may alleviate, in accordance with reason and justice, the evils that covetousness and the pursuit of false aims have caused' (*The Church and the Atom*, pp. 112–13).

Joe Oldham thought *The Church and the Atom* 'a good piece of work'. In correspondence with the new BCC General Secretary (David Say), Oldham revealed that he was starting to see the nuclear issue in a fresh way. The dilemma had 'ceased to be one of the control of atomic energy and has become absorbed into the larger problem of the relation of Russia and the West' (Oldham to Say, 23 April 1948). For him themes had been touched upon which the BCC should have developed. In this regard the Church of England had succeeded in carrying forward a dialectic: 'I think that with the main criticism of our report, that we treated the dilemma as irresolvable, I am unable to agree. It is all very well to say that the human mind desires serenity. It certainly does, but in some situations it can't have it, and for myself I think that we have just to accept the fact that in the present state of the world there is no clear way out' (Oldham to Say, 20 October 1948). Both reports covered such wide ground, and the issues dealt with so involved and interrelated that they proved not easy to discuss in public. The *Church and the Atom* had not proven any more successful than *The Era of Atomic Power* in overcoming the fundamental division between pacifist and just war thinking. Bishop Bell in particular was exceedingly critical of this. In Tertullianesque terms, Bell thought the proper title of the Anglican contribution should have been 'The Citizen and the Atom' or 'Natural Law and the Atom' and not *The Church and the Atom*. It was Bell's contention that in using natural law, a political statement in its own right, the commission was trying vainly to revive concepts only appropriate to a pre-atomic age if at all.[19]

Towards the end of 1948 Oldham thought the time had come for his commission to be disbanded. While he had also come to the conclusion that questions about atomic bombs raised key theological issues that divided the churches from one another and questioned the major

conflicting schools of theology within and between each individual church, he also thought they raised questions relating to the churches themselves and their competence to deal with technical issues. Oldham saw the recently released Lilienthal Report and the Baruch proposals[20] as 'an act of statesmanship of the highest order which is one of the bright spots in the post-war situation'. He thought that the atomic debate had thus reached a stage at which things must, at least for the present, be allowed to rest. At the November 1948 meeting of the BCC's Executive Committee the Oldham Commission was formally disbanded.

* * *

The earliest moral interventions on questions of atomic morality came from the churches, but not the BCC or the WCC. The BCC's sister organisation, the Federal Council of Churches, appears one step beyond other ethicists in the wake of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The first important contribution was the CJDP's August 1945 *Statement on the Atomic Bomb*. This became the very first official resolution advocating the multilateral control and use of nuclear weapons by the newly established United Nations. Following this was the path-breaking Calhoun Commission report *Atomic Warfare and the Christian Faith* of March 1946. Here the Americans made sharp the argument that atomic warfare was not morally defensible precisely because it could not fulfil the just war requirements that demand proportionality and discrimination. Whilst the Calhoun Commission did not reject just war, it rejected weapons of mass destruction particularly (but by no means exclusively) the atom bomb. This intervention was the first official articulation of nuclear pacifism. Nuclear pacifism threw existing Christian positions on war into a new conceptual space.

The extent to which political crisis had shifted the essential optimism behind ecumenical integration into neo-orthodoxy was particularly apparent in the first British explorations, and comment on, the atom bomb. Archbishop Fisher's anti-pacifist hand was decisive in the forming of the 1945 BCC commission and Oldham himself saw no need to move in a qualitatively different direction. In this way, British contributors to early nuclear debates were resolutely independent of American leads. It is worth recalling, as Kirby (2001a) does, that at this juncture large sections of the British public remained pro-Soviet and there was a mood of antagonism to American-style culture that is difficult to imagine today. By nature Oldham was an observer of rules, content with what Kent suggests (1992) the rewards of a 'club diplomacy' and not

in favour of the type of 'moralising prophecy' promoted by people like Bishop Bell or perhaps even the Americans. He believed it was his task to correlate theology with the best available secular analysis. This meant taking notice of relatively small but influential political, military and scientific elites. To Oldham being realistic was accepting that war could never be abolished and acknowledging that hard power would continue to dominate international affairs. The churches' function was thus to respond to the situation as it appeared by discussing what 'is' and not speculating or advocating action that 'ought to be'. If something is, it must be; if something is so it must be ordained by God. This included living with the nuclear dilemma as a fearful discipline that should ultimately increase rather than undermine long-term security. It also meant entering the nuclear arms race, opposing calls for unilateral renunciation and protecting Britain's perceived great power status. Apparent here are deep-seated instincts about politics and the value of Britain and western democratic culture. As Britain's historic mission was to help guarantee international peace and order, capital weapon systems were the key to securing this. Scientific and technological prowess was the only way to offset an inherent vulnerability stemming from a smaller population. This absolutist interpretation of the British state failed to relativise its interests. In so doing, the BCC elevated national security to ultimate value and produced a strongly anti-pacifist report that supported the idea that Britain should retain the Bomb as a legitimate deterrent. This approach was by no means original and mirrored official British state policy but it was the first moral intervention to equate itself so clearly with nuclear deterrence theory.

5
The Churches and the Thermonuclear Revolution

During the summer of 1948, at the height of the Berlin Blockade, the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches was held in Amsterdam. The task, as Amsterdam understood it, was to discover new ways of responsible Christian citizenship in a world dominated by the nuclear shadow. No answer could be given to the question whether a nuclear war could still be just, but it was felt that 'the churches must continue to hold within their full fellowship' not only pure pacifist and just war arguments, but also embrace 'those who hold that, even though entering a war may be a Christian's duty in particular circumstances, modern warfare, with its mass destruction, can never be an act of justice' (Potter, 1969, p. 113). This reiteration of the 'nuclear pacifist' suggestion first enunciated by the US Federal Council of Churches two years earlier would have a marked impact on church discussions in the decade to come. There were now three interpretations of responsible citizenship (withstanding unconditional loyalty to the state). First, a citizenship that believed war could never be just (pacifism). Second, a citizenship that thought war, even total war fought with nuclear weapons, was sometimes unavoidable (just war). And finally, a new citizenship that felt unable to condemn the possibility of all war fighting yet firmly believed the exercise of nuclear force could never be morally permissible (nuclear pacifism). President Truman's January 1950 announcement that the USA was working on a hydrogen (thermonuclear) or super-bomb[1] served to exacerbate these divisions and, in particular, garner support for nuclear pacifism. It would be the fallout from the American *Bravo* tests at Bikini Atoll on 1 March 1954 that, as Ruston (1989, p. 111) notes, 'marked the true revolution in public consciousness caused by nuclear weapons'.

In its ethical substance, Amsterdam's report, *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, reflected principles established by the 1937 Oxford Conference.

It endeavoured to balance its analysis of East and West by suggesting that the churches reject the ideologies of both and seek to draw people away from the assumption that these extremes were the only alternatives. Although particular 'opposition to a Christian anti-Communist crusade was loudly voiced' (Kirby, 1993, p. 265) in some quarters the chief aim was to facilitate responsible citizenship in a time of crisis. One memorable phrase declared 'man is not made for the state but the state for man':

> Man is created and called to be a free being, responsible to God and his neighbour. Any tendencies in state and society depriving men of the possibility of acting responsibly are a denial of God's intention for man and His work of salvation. A responsible society is one where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it. (*Man's Disorder and God's Design*, 1948, pp. 193–5)

Particularly relevant was the insistence that 'people have freedom to control, to criticise and to change their governments, that power be made responsible by law and tradition, and be distributed as widely as possible through the whole community'. Two years later, the WCC's Executive Committee officially endorsed Amsterdam's movement towards nuclear pacifism by unanimously condemning the hydrogen bomb as 'the latest and most terrible step in the crescendo of warfare that has changed war from a fight between men and nations to a mass murder of human life' (*Statements on Nuclear Weapons*, 1958, p. 1). In April 1950 the British Council of Churches met in Cardiff to give their first opinion on the development of the H-bomb with its 'test of greatness' (Baylis and Stoddart, 2012). A draft statement was prepared urging the government to declare a no-first-use policy for the West in the event of conflict. The Anglican Archbishop of York (Garbett) had been the first figure from within British church circles to adumbrate the idea of NATO no-first-use a month earlier (Thrall, 1972). Joe Oldham was very unhappy about this, for he saw in it the preposterous idea 'that if everyone were good the world would be a better place'. He argued that 'if the churches had nothing to say with a more cutting edge it is better they should remain silent'. For him it was not clear whether such a commitment would make war less or more likely. The truth as Oldham saw it was that Christians were in a dilemma with no real way out: 'the

beginning of any fruitful action is to have the humility to acknowledge the fact, and not to pretend that because we are Christians we have useful advice to give to governments' (Oldham to Say, April 1950). In the event the statement was not taken forward and at Cardiff, while agreeing with the sentiments expressed by the WCC, the Council felt unable to go beyond urging 'governments to enter into negotiations once again for the control of atomic energy'. The BCC issued a seven-point policy arguing that the most meaningful debate over citizenship was still the traditional one between just war and pacifist approaches. It called on British Christians 'to support HM Government and the United Nations in their efforts to uphold the Law of Nations, to resist aggression and to succour its victims' while recognising that 'some, from a no less Christian conviction, cannot support resistance by military action' (*The Churches and the Hydrogen Bomb*, p. 1).

The H-bomb debate begins

Throughout 1952–4 official BCC interest in thermonuclear issues began to subtly change. Three events help explain this: first, on 23 October 1952 the British tested their first atomic bomb in Australia; second, on 5 April 1954 Winston Churchill's Conservative government announced it was planning to develop its own H-bomb;[2] third (also in April) the effects of radiation poisoning caused by the USA's Pacific H-bomb test fallout on a Japanese fishing boat, *Lucky Dragon*, became common knowledge. Most BCC members were aware of the findings of the 1946 Oldham Commission but they also appreciated (in the manner of the 1950 WCC statement) that British Christians were being called to respond afresh to new developments. Indeed there seemed to be at least two contemporary factors that made it desirable for some kind of appraisal. On one hand, there appeared to be a new and real danger, not only from the possible use of the H-bomb, but also from experiments with them for scientific purposes. Even without a deliberate act of war incalculable forces of destruction could be unleashed through an unrestricted arms race and testing of the weapons. On the other hand, many Christians were looking instinctively to the churches for reassurance and a moral lead in uncertain times. In consequence there were fresh calls for the BCC to appoint another special commission, this time to investigate the moral and spiritual issues raised by the hydrogen bomb.

Sir Kenneth Grubb (the new chair of the BCC's International Department) thought the best way forward was for Council to adopt a statement at its spring 1954 Council meeting. A lead could be taken

from the recent UN Association sponsored resolutions calling on the superpowers to halt nuclear proliferation. The churches could thereby endorse a strong British lead in disarmament talks.[3] This meant the WCC's H-bomb statements could be acted on in a non-controversial manner by endorsing the UN Association resolutions and reiterating the BCC's 'conviction that this tragic sickness of the world will not be permanently cured by the devoted labours and good will of peace-loving statesmen alone' (Grubb to Say, 27 April 1954). At the April Council meeting the following was adopted:

> The consciences of men and women have been stirred and shocked by the terrible possibilities revealed by the hydrogen bomb experiments, which re-enforce the urgent need for a process of general disarmament. In this human situation, the churches have a triple task; to call men to repentance; to assure men that God reigns supreme whatever wickedness is planned or wrought; and to witness in daily living to the peace given by God's spirit which nothing can remove or destroy. As a matter of immediate challenge, the Council calls upon all Christian people to pray earnestly for the Conference now in session in Geneva, that under the providence of God, it may relieve the present tensions, secure just settlements and so open the way to the coming of peace for all nations. (*The Churches and the Hydrogen Bomb*, pp. 3–4)

A lack of innovation from the BCC was perhaps not surprising considering wider official Christian attitudes within Britain, especially those of the Anglican hierarchy.

At the May 1954 Convocation, the Bishop of Birmingham (Wilson) tabled a resolution calling on the Church of England to act clearly and loudly. Because Convocation was the Church of England's most authoritative voice, silence could only suggest that it had no mind for weightier matters.[4] Nuclear weapons made it possible, for the first time, to destroy all human life and the church could not simply abstain but must force the pace of debate. However the Dean of Winchester (Selwyn), chair of the Commission that had produced *The Church and the Atom* in 1948, declared unilateral renunciation as neither practicable nor a position the Church of England could accept. The choice was simple. Did the Church 'regard death as the worst of all evils and would they not prefer to live and die under freedom than live under slavery?' Most of the Anglican hierarchy felt bound to concur with Selwyn. Canon Lindsey Dewar (St Albans), also co-author of *The Church and the Atom*, believed

circumstances might arise in which failure to use the Bomb would result in people having to live under a regime where suffering would be greater than any inflicted by weapons. The 'theologically incompetent'[5] Bishop of Winchester (Mervyn Haigh) thought 'it might be better to perish than submit to the parody of civilisation which seems to be the alternative presented from the other side of the Iron Curtain'. The Bishop of Southwell (Barry) argued that the H-bomb raised no new question, whilst the Bishop of Derby (Rawlinson) compared it to a 'hand-grenade'. Even these sentiments did not go far enough for some. An amendment demanding the dropping of the clause that sought a reduction in armaments was moved by yet another co-author of *The Church and the Atom*, the Dean of Chichester (Duncan-Jones), and supported by the Provost of Portsmouth (Goff). Duncan-Jones thought that armaments should not be regarded as a cause of war but rather as an indication of a dangerous situation. The Church of England, consequently, should steer clear of 'political' entanglements and it was not the business of Convocation to call on politicians to do anything in particular.

There were contrary voices. The pacifist Archdeacon of Stoke (Harthill[6]) moved an amendment declaring that the use of the Bomb would be a sin and called on Christians not to co-operate either in its manufacture or use. This would show 'that the Christian faith, unlike Marxian Communism, regards moral law as absolute and not relative to the needs of the state'. Picking up the eschatology of the 1946 Calhoun Commission report *Atomic Warfare and the Christian Faith*, Harthill argued that true evil lay not in being victims to the Bomb but rather in endorsing a nuclear obliteration that would irretrievably 'blacken the souls' of Christians. To him it was preferable to live under a Stalinist regime than be a party to nuclear extermination. The Bishop of Exeter (Mortimer), a former Oxford Professor of Moral Theology and one of the Church of England's more respected theologians, endorsed this line:

> It would be immoral and unchristian if Britain were to use the hydrogen bomb, either offensively or even in retaliation after attack. The Bomb is a weapon of indiscriminate destruction, and those who used it would put themselves on a level with those who, in the days of Old Testament history, massacred their enemies and exterminated men, women and children, regarding themselves as doing the will of God. The hydrogen Bomb is destructive of God's natural creation. It can have no conceivable moral warrant, and it would be directed against the helpless.[7]

Geoffrey Fisher, as Archbishop of Canterbury and President of Convocation, summed up the general mood by nevertheless declaring the Anglican role as simply to present 'the Christian point of view'. Christians should never be afraid to face consequences, however horrific. For Fisher this meant that the Church of England 'could not become a negotiating party in the politics of the matter, nor could it identify itself (except in extreme cases) with any particular solution to the problem'. Fisher became well known for reiterating this 'Christian point of view'. In December 1955, for example, he told the Royal United Services Institution that over the past ten years the Church of England had approved of most steps government had taken (Driver, 1964, p. 198).

The 1954 Church of England Convocation passed the resolution stating that the hydrogen bomb enlarged the evil inherent in war, yet rejected both amendments. The official position was still that ends justify means. New bombs could not be outlawed merely by virtue of their new destructive potential. In essence the Church of England felt that what was important was to trust government intention. To bomb a city for strategic purposes was far less repugnant than government (or anyone else) killing in cold blood. The problem with this, as Groom (1974, p. 198) notes, was that 'the Church of England did not – could not – establish the line between what was permissible in certain circumstance, and what was not permissible'. Yet other clergy did seek to strengthen Convocation's position in more theologically astute ways.

In a June 1954 sermon at St Paul's, the Archdeacon of London (Gibbs-Smith) reiterated the Augustinian idea that Christians could not endorse any position that 'would suffer the blotting out of civilisation or the enslavement of whole countries'. Yet nuclear pacifism was a 'heresy of intent' in a world that had not achieved perfection. If unconventional weapons were an enormous deterrent against armed aggression, the 'horrors of the atom' must be a 'mighty force' on the side of peace and it was simply 'wrong' to deplore the existence of the H-bomb or be embarrassed by possession. Here the Archdeacon takes comfort from both *The Era of Atomic Power* and *The Church and the Atom* theme of possession entailing the most correct ethic of responsibility while ignoring the fact that these very weapons were also the very means of 'blotting out civilisation'. Whilst every effort must be made for the outlawing of *all* weapons of mass destruction (as soon as the international situation allowed) the West faced its greatest challenge to date – the trusteeship of the atom for the sake of all humanity. As Gibbs-Smith saw it: 'there is nothing to be said for unilateral disarmament or unilateral banning of any class of weapon; but gradual world

disarmament by mutual agreement is clearly part of the new morality for which we must strive'. Traditional techniques of diplomacy should be overhauled and 'the new science of International Relations' studied in earnest.[8] Gibbs-Smith concluded that, although all citizens should strive towards transforming state sovereignty (ultimately by the creation of truly global supranational power) it should never be forgotten that it was people – the 'unprincipled and the unconsecrated' in particular – who are dangerous not bombs' (*The Times*, 7 June 1954).

Such an example of the church acting as a fig leaf for government rhetoric was applauded by *The Times* who felt just war principles could still legitimate the use of any weapon of mass destruction. To the writer of the leader of 7 June, the Archdeacon had made two simple but crucial points. First, that the overwhelming authority of Christian opinion throughout the ages had been just war. Second, Christians could not avoid the consequences of using atomic weapons or even thermonuclear devices if necessary. Pacifists were an 'eccentric minority' who rested less on a literal interpretation of Scripture than on a perfectionist view of human nature. The New Testament did not authorise such views: 'to try to support it by Christ's refusal to lead his disciples to the establishment of an earthly kingdom is to ignore the fundamental distinction between the role of the Church and that of the State which Christian thought has always emphasised'. This of course was an Augustinian-sounding take on the matter. To the writer the church was an institution concerned with 'winning and healing souls' and physical coercion – politics – by its very nature was unfitted to these ends. The sovereign state hence:

> … exists for the purpose of maintaining just order in human affairs, or the nearest approach to such an order as human imperfection makes possible. It is entitled and obliged to use physical force, because human sin makes physical force essential to the attainment of its ends. The functions of these two institutions [church and state] are complementary but separate. Their separation, which is unaffected by people belonging to both simultaneously, is essential to Christian teaching. (*The Times*, 7 June 1954)

The Times believed that whilst physical force should not be used for aggressive ends it would be Christian duty to use it for defensive purposes 'so long as no more of it is employed than … strictly necessary'. The writer seems unaware, despite his Augustinian temperament, that

such justification of nuclear means to ends must surely question any just war principle of proportionality:

> Here the point to be emphasised is that the fundamental distinctions are of kind and of intention rather than of degree. The new bombs cannot be outlawed merely by virtue of their devastating power. The shooting of one man in cold blood, as part of a campaign of terror, is far more repugnant to the Christian mind, both in respect of its corrupting effect and of the attitude to human life that it reflects than the destruction of a city for strategic purposes. (*The Times*, 7 June 1954)

For *The Times*, like the Archbishop of Canterbury, Christians must not shrink from their responsibilities as citizens. These responsibilities started from the premises as lain down by Augustine and followed by the Archdeacon and was a task 'that calls for patience and realism as well as faith'. Such sentiments nicely illustrate the gulf between conflicting gospel definitions and interpretations of Christian responsibility even when looking within similar theological outlooks. For the more politically conservative, responses to nuclear matters were dictated – even ordained – by a necessarily close partnership between church and state within the *civitas terrena*. Whilst the functions of the church and state were complementary, they were still separate and distinct. In pluralist fashion, the state was a temporal institution, the church one restricted to spiritual affairs. On this view the state existed to maintain a just order and the church to legitimise what were clear patterns of justice. Such distinctions use a political vocabulary that presupposes a particular concept of state sovereignty allied to a particular ethic of responsibility. The objective reality and realism spoken of are nothing other than distinctive (subjective) ideological constructions. But not all Christians thought secular reality was so unredeemable.

The WCC, Evanston and Bishop Bell

In August 1954 the WCC's Second Assembly was convened at Evanston, Illinois. Although Evanston continued to elaborate Amsterdam's responsible citizenship theme, a strong sense of foreboding pervaded proceedings held at the height of the Cold War in a country now gripped by fear of communism and dominated by McCarthyism. At the time it was considered significant that the event was being held in America,

buttressing the belief that Christian forces were assembling against godless totalitarian evil. It has been noted that 'Evanston 54' drew more reporters than the Democratic convention, the establishment of the United Nations in San Francisco, the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, the funeral of Stalin, the peace conferences in Berlin and Geneva, all Roman Catholic events from the Holy Year to various Marian and Eucharistic congresses, the wars in Korea and Indochina, or the atomic tests in Nevada and the Pacific. President Eisenhower opened proceedings, calling faith 'the mightiest force that man has at his command' (Kirby, 2001a, p. 64).

The Evanston Report argued that 'responsible society is not an alternative social or political system, but a criterion by which we judge all existing social orders and at the same time a standard to guide us in the specific choices we have to make'. The centrality of state sovereignty was affirmed to be in the public interest: 'the state must intervene to prevent any centre of economic or social power which represents partial interest from becoming stronger than itself, the state alone has the power and the authority under God to act as a trustee for society as a whole'. It also warned against 'the danger that the union of political and economic power may result in an all-controlling state' (*The Evanston Report*, 1955, pp. 113 and 116). Although at least one commentator has interpreted this note to be a caution against communism (Wogaman, 1994) it could also be read as a warning against centralising tendencies within liberal democracy. Evanston's emphasis upon the laity not as 'mere fragments' but as the church's representatives 'who manifest in word and action the Lordship of Christ' also leaves room for a bottom-up rather than top-down approach to citizenship. While it may be so, as Hastings (1987) argues, that Evanston succumbed to a 'partisan note of Cold War anti-communism', these sentiments were not carried over into its thermonuclear deliberations. Indeed the eschatological theme of 'Christ, the Hope of the World' challenged the very idea of a nuclear war being just war.

Evanston saw the development of the H-bomb as creating 'an age of fear' with the possibility of 'all-out nuclear warfare' introducing 'a new moral challenge'. True peace could not rest on fear and 'it [was] vain to think the hydrogen bomb or its development has guaranteed peace because men will be afraid to go to war, nor can fear provide an effective restraint against the temptation to use such a decisive weapon either in hope of total victory or in the desperation of total defeat'. The church's foremost responsibility was to bring the transforming power of Christ to bear on sovereign powers. Christians must pray fervently

for peace, repent more earnestly of their individual and collective failures to further world order, and strive more urgently to establish systems of reconciliation. Lofty objectives, so often invented to justify war, could not conceal the truth that war, violence and destruction were inherently evil. Christians must not lend themselves to, but expose, this deceit. It was not enough for the churches just to proclaim war as evil. The Christian approaches to peace (including the third way of nuclear pacifism) must be studied afresh in order to 'seek out, analyse, and help remove the psychological and social, the political and economic causes of war'. If nuclear catastrophe was to be avoided, the WCC believed all Christians must give their energies to securing two crucial conditions:

(1) The prohibition of all weapons of mass destruction; including atomic and hydrogen bombs, with provision for international inspection and control, such as would safeguard the security of all nations, together with the drastic reduction of all other armaments.
   (2) The certain assurance that no country will engage in or support aggressive or subversive acts in other countries. (*WCC Statements on Nuclear Weapons*, 1958, pp. 2 and 3)

In January 1955, Bishop Bell wrote to *The Times* applauding the WCC and calling on Christians to escape just war logic by seeing thermonuclear weapons as a dramatic and new socio-moral issue that could end history. Bell argued that H-bombs were morally indefensible because they: '(1) inflict destruction ... altogether out of proportion to the end desired ...; (2) are incapable of discriminating between military targets and centres of population; and (3) radiation fall-out would diffuse such poison that [paraphrasing Bertrand Russell] a war with hydrogen Bombs might quite possibly put an end to the human race' (*The Times*, 17 January 1955). The true significance of the hydrogen bomb lay, Bell argued, not in a choice between thermonuclear or atomic devices. Rather, it had become a choice between weapons used primarily for offensive purposes, and between those that could be used tactically to repel aggression. The US President and British Prime Minister were urged to prohibit all nuclear weapons precisely because they could only be used for offensive purposes. If prohibition was not possible, at least the West should renounce testing and pledge no-first-use.[9]

Following Bell's widely read appeal the BCC was called to toughen their resolve. The Rev. Dale, for example, wrote to the BCC's General

Secretary (David Say) enclosing his concerns in a pamphlet entitled *Wanted a Church that Offends*. Here the BCC were urged to take a stand against the H-bomb because 'Christian expediency' was leading to moral and political disintegration. Thermonuclear devices had brought two issues to the fore: first that the power of the sovereign state was such that it had become a stultifying factor and a menace. As a consequence it was unthinkable that any political party could now seriously challenge state policy. Second and following this awareness, political responsibility lay with the church to reinvigorate its life and democratic witness by restoring a spiritual awareness of the worth of humanity. Dale saw the Christian church on trial in a way and to a degree it had not been before. It must rise to the challenge because all too often it had spoken either not at all, or with such an uncertain voice, that it failed to carry conviction:

> Much of the church's weakness is due to its hands being tied – by an all too willing subservience to the will and behest of the state and the secular interests it seeks to serve. As a consequence it is powerless to speak that decisive word mankind is waiting to hear. So afraid is it of giving offence, or of appearing to support unpopular views, or of endangering its own security, it refuses to raise its voice in condemnation of what it admits is in complete contradiction to the faith it claims to hold. But surely our Christian faith is not to wait until others pledge themselves to refrain from evil. The church's task is not to follow, but to lead; not to be guided by the standards that commonly govern human conduct, but to set before men's eyes those ideals of divine righteousness in obedience to which alone true peace, happiness and good can be achieved. It is a cause of deep regret that at the present juncture of world events, the church is largely under the domination of a sycophantic leadership that for fear of imperilling its own status and security is more concerned with safeguarding its self-interest than with declaring the counsel of God. (*Wanted a Church that Offends*, p. 2)

The problem was 16 centuries old. The Christian faith had suffered disastrous consequences ever since the Constantinian settlement that meant, for the most part, the church throughout the world approving and justifying the policies pursued by their respective governments. In the contemporary setting this subservience had resulted in colossal rearmament. And the church, even within an ecumenical setting, had grievously failed in the trust committed to it. Say responded defensively

to Dale's articulate paper by reminding him that various statements had been issued, in addition to the BCC being the first body to have commissioned a report with its *Era of Atomic Power* (Say to Dale, 28 February 1955).

At their annual meeting in Northampton, the Federal Council of Free Churches supported the WCC, Bishop Bell and Dale's sentiments by passing a resolution calling for the prohibition of all weapons of mass destruction and a drastic reduction in other armaments.[10] Several delegates felt the Federal Council had not gone far enough with its distinctive non-pacifist tone. Referring to the country's moral atmosphere, Moderator of the Council the Rev. F. P. Copland Simmons concluded that Britain was favourable to a 'great combined attack on the citadel of indifference' (*The Times*, 24 March 1955).

The Archbishop of York

In December 1954 the high Tory Archbishop of York (Cyril Forster Garbett[11]) felt sufficiently perturbed by the omission of any reference to the hydrogen bomb in the Queen's Speech to raise the matter in the House of Lords. Garbett rebutted all Manichaeans with their rigid black-and-white concepts who saw a necessary war of ideology between East and West (*The Times*, 28 February 1953). Garbett saw the international control of nuclear weapons as the most immediate problem. He had little faith in those who said that nuclear weapons were so terrible that they were a deterrent to war. With an implicit swipe at *The Era of Atomic Power* and *The Church and the Atom*, the Archbishop argued that those who held the 'optimistic deterrent view' were failing to appreciate 'the intensity of the hatred which may obsess a nation, and when hatred and fear are combined a nation in danger of defeat which possessed these bombs would, almost inevitably use them' (*Hansard*: House of Lords, vol.190, col.64, 1 December 1954).

Less than four months after these comments, however, the Archbishop turned his views during the March 1955 House of Lords debate on the British decision to build the hydrogen bomb (*Hansard*: House of Lords, vol.191, col.1148, 16 March 1955). He opened by acknowledging that his daily letters and petitions were testimony to the intensity of public reaction. Although the Archbishop detested these 'hateful weapons' he had been forced to question his earlier stance. To Garbett, echoing Oldham's thought in 1950, protests and petitions would not influence those who decided whether the bomb be used or not. No matter how many sermons were preached, or how many MPs were against

nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union 'would continue on their chosen path, regardless of remonstrance and reckless of human life'. The decision as to whether the Bomb was used simply did not rest with the democratic West. Contrary to growing views that Britain should unilaterally renounce the Bomb, the Archbishop offered two ripostes. First against the unilateralists' argument of expediency – namely if Britain renounced the H-bomb she would remain unharmed as a neutral. The Archbishop felt such an argument could not be taken seriously. It would be more likely that the UK would be destroyed by the Soviet Union, or occupied by the US in case the Soviets tried to use Britain as a base. In either scenario, without the H-bomb 'the United Kingdom would soon become a defenceless satellite of one of those two great powers, fearful of incurring the displeasure of either'.

Garbett's second riposte was against the argument that Britain should renounce the Bomb on principle. The Archbishop confessed this to be the far thornier issue. He found himself asking whether: 'it would be better for the nation to die, rather than to save itself by wholesale destruction of its enemies. I will not hide from your Lordships that I feel tremendously the force of this appeal. It is an argument that must appeal to every Christian and make an agonising challenge to conscience'. Nevertheless he could not personally support this approach because he felt that no state could adopt such a position without overwhelming public support. This was not practicable because 'all sections of the public' accepted the idea of a deterrent. The chief justification for making the Bomb must be, therefore, that it would provide a shield beneath which the work of peace-making could continue'. From the pulpit of York Minster, Garbett added weight to these sentiments by warning of the danger of concealing the awful responsibility of the consequences of the Bomb. To use the H-bomb for offensive purposes would be a great sin: the Christian should resolutely refuse to believe that its use was inevitable whilst seeking to conquer the sins which might lead to its use.[12]

Although the Archbishop of York was widely applauded for his support of hydrogen bomb manufacture, he was also attacked. His most notable critic was Donald Soper, who wrote to *The Times* on 25 March 1955: 'the Archbishop's honest and, as he avers, his agonised wrestling with his own conscience will evoke general respect … All the same he is dead wrong … he regards the possession of hydrogen bombs by this country as a shield (sic) behind which peace-making may go on and without which disaster is unavoidable … Dr. Garbett has got his facts wrong and his ethics wrong, and on reflection many … will come to

think that if Christianity has nothing more creative than this to say it has no worth-while contribution to make'. Yet the Archbishop of Canterbury supported his deputy. In March 1955 Fisher went on record to say that the Bomb 'purchased time for peace' and must be manufactured for deterrent purposes (*The Times*, 25 March 1955). His Easter address of 1955 developed this theme. Fisher believed that the hydrogen bomb did not differ in principle from the atom bomb that preceded it, or the cobalt Bomb, 'or any other worse horror that may succeed it'. Weapons made war more hideous but not more evil:

> The Christian must regard this hateful thing without any illusion born of fear or despair. The first duty of the Church and of Christians is to remain unshaken in the hope that fails not … To abolish the Bomb you must agree with others, and others with you, … It is for Christians and Christian Statesmen to bear the burden … and still to be peace-seekers and peace makers. The task is bedevilled by past failures and present collisions dividing the world that we can only expect progress to be by 'here a little and there a little'. (*The Times*, 19 April 1955)

The sermon is interesting for what it suggests but doesn't say, as it is for what it actually does say. On a theological level, Fisher implied that no matter what, the Christian should remain unshaken in the belief that an after-life exists. Concerns of this life are only temporary. On the more overtly political level, Fisher warned against unilateral disarmament and used his moral weight to advocate progressive multilateralism. The sermon condoned the Bomb, as long as it was in Christian (i.e. non-Soviet atheist) hands and gratefully accepted the burden of responsibility on behalf of 'others'. The bomb, as presumably life in general, does not warrant radical change.

The churches and testing

In August 1955, the Central Committee of the WCC meeting in Davos, Switzerland, unanimously adopted a *Statement on Disarmament and Peaceful Change* endorsed by their Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA).[13] Kenneth Grubb's CCIA were now advancing the thesis that the best way to tackle nuclear issues was to consider moral and political factors in tandem with a mathematical and mechanical approach to the reduction of armaments. For the CCIA these factors applied to two indispensable and complementary processes:

first, a process whereby all armaments were progressively reduced under a system of international control; and second, a process of developing and securing international acceptance of methods for peaceful settlement and change. These complementary approaches depended upon the extent to which mutual confidence could be attained, and relied on expanding the areas of agreement established by the 1951 UN Disarmament Commission. This bifurcated approach was the only way the necessary weight could be given to the moral and political factors that were essential ingredients to peace with justice and freedom.

In July 1956 the CCIA's Executive Committee issued a more comprehensive addendum.[14] Here it was urged that nuclear testing should be discontinued under international agreement. The CCIA however questioned whether the unilateral abandoning of tests would serve the interest of peace and security. It was feared that unilateral action could well disrupt the balance of power 'which at present offers a safeguard against war and is the principal means to order among the nations'. All parties must thus cease testing under an agreed formula of cessation, control, and inspection. In this context the churches' role was at all times to 'support measures which will facilitate progress towards disarmament' and 'challenge governments to shape their policies in accordance with the demands of moral authority rather than those of a mere pragmatic expediency' (in WCC, 1958, pp. 7–8). A month later the WCC's Central Committee added their weight to the CCIA's call. The churches were called upon to appeal to both their respective national governments, and the UN to negotiate an agreement for the discontinuance, or limitation and control, of nuclear testing. Necessary sacrifices must be made to move 'cold war' to 'real peace'.[15]

In the light of these developments (and recent H-bomb debates in Parliament) the BCC's International Department met to consider whether it was necessary to prepare a fresh statement. They concluded:

> … any further statement or formal resolution by the Council would surely add little to the solemn words which have been pronounced by leaders of church and state and might even detract from their gravity. When all has been said that can be said, the Christian man or woman must settle his own attitude before God, bearing in mind that he is not to fear them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. 'Rather fear him, which is able to destroy soul and body in hell'.[16]

This latest BCC approach repeated the argument that to oppose the H-bomb was a matter for individual, not collective conscience before

God. Despite this, individual BCC members were now regularly passing resolutions that viewed with deep concern the government's decision to manufacture thermonuclear weapons.[17] Not only were people thinking it was their Christian duty to speak out against the H-bomb but specific, localised protests against the H-bomb were taking shape.

Canon Collins, for instance, rejected the manufacture of thermo-nuclear devices from St Paul's pulpit in early January 1956. He argued that there were certain things a Christian could not stand for and the manufacture of hydrogen bombs was one of them. For Collins it was inconceivable how any member of the church, particularly the Archbishop of Canterbury, could suppose that the making and testing of atom or hydrogen bombs was consistent with the gospel. Moreover 'led by the majority of our church authorities, we Christians are so feeble that we find ourselves accepting such things as consistent with our Christian convictions' (*The Times*, 2 January 1956). The prominent Christian Socialist Canon Stanley Evans likewise described the church's failure to make a stand against nuclear weapons as a paralysis gripping contemporary Christian morality and an abdication of its right to moral leadership (Ormrod, 1987).

In spring 1957 Britain's Free Church Federal Council, a constituent Assembly of the BCC, called upon government to abandon its forthcoming testing programme (*The Times*, 28 March 1957). Letters from the public were now pouring into the BCC offices demanding support and action against the government's plans to test an H-bomb on Christmas Island in May.[18] At this time the BCC received an invitation from the National Christian Council of Japan to join their agitation against tests. Bishop Bell in particular saw the necessity of the BCC giving its support to the Japanese bearing in mind Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the radiation poisoning suffered by the crew of the *Lucky Dragon* after the US H-bomb test and constant nuclear experiments in the Pacific.[19] Bell thought 'it would be a terrible pity if the BCC were to appear as though they were just apologists for the British government … Not only the Japanese, but the other churches in Asia will be looking very closely at what the BCC says for it is a real challenge' (Bell to Slack, 27 March 1957). The Japanese resolved to call upon all Christian agencies to 'create public opinion in all countries concerned for the discontinuance of such experiments'.[20] A Japanese Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was in the process of being set up and they wanted to invite a BCC representative to a World Conference against A and H-bombs to be held in Tokyo in August. The specific problems of radioactive contamination, international law, and general

issues on nuclear weapons and disarmament, were to be discussed here. Bishop Bell and his secretary Pitt-Watson shared in negotiations that led to the Japanese request being favourably received by Council. Following this, a mood developed in which it was felt that the Council could now go much further than it had gone before. Although BCC officials were very concerned about getting out of touch with their constituency, it was now fairly clear that every test explosion that was carried out increased the hazard to the health or heredity of humanity. A pat response would be unsatisfactory. Under such pressure the BCC Assembly took the radical step of opposing H-bomb tests. At the April 1957 BCC Assembly Bishop Bell, seconded by Dr John Pitt-Watson, moved a Private Member's Resolution. The resolution declared:

> The British Council of Churches
>   (i) records the profound concern felt by Christian people in Britain at the continuing experimental explosions of nuclear weapons, and at the grave danger which they may involve, by the increase of world radiation, for humanity as a whole;
>   (ii) deplores the decision of Her Majesty's Government to carry out a number of nuclear test explosions, in the megaton range, in the near future;
>   (iii) appeals to Her Majesty's Government, and to the governments of the USA and the USSR, to make a new and determined effort to secure a general nuclear control agreement as soon as possible, and in the meantime jointly to pledge themselves from any further tests of hydrogen Bombs. (*The Churches and the Hydrogen Bomb* n.d.)

Although the resolution states that the BCC 'deplored the tests' this is not necessarily borne out in the closeness of the vote (39 to 32).[21] In the circumstances the International Department regretted that this resolution had been passed without their own consideration (Keighley to Buzzard, 2 October 1957). What is perhaps more significant is that the BCC voted against the advice of their President, the Archbishop of Canterbury.[22] Ormrod (1987) describes this resolution as representing the peak of official church opposition up to the 1958 formation of CND. Driver (1964) sees the vote as an intellectual 'weathercock' with which to judge the gale now blowing in favour of anti-nuclear opinion. Groom (1974) is probably more accurate when he concludes it was merely an exception to an 'embarrassed silence'. The closeness of the vote and correspondence received by the BCC reveal the reality.

The BCC vote revealed a considerable division of opinion in the Council and many doubted whether it was wise to advertise such division. Others felt, as the progressive Bishop of Sheffield (Hunter) expressed it, that it was good to let it be known that the BCC thought deeply and cared much. Whilst some members supported the BCC resolution others were shocked and disappointed that the voting had been so close. Much correspondence bristles with anger and indignation.[23] Constituent churches were kept busy passing resolutions expressing their alarm that the BCC should be so divided on the question of testing. Whilst many individual churches were grateful that 39 members voted in favour of discontinuing the tests, others were convinced that untold harm had been done by the action of the 32 members who voted in favour of their continuation. Appeals were sent to the BCC to review the position so that 'we can give a lead to mankind to renounce what could easily destroy civilisation if allowed to continue'.[24] Besides Bell's Private Member's Bill, the Free Church Federal Council, the UN Association, the Labour Party, the Liberal Party, and the Quakers were just some of the organisations that called on the government to abandon or suspend tests. Throughout 1957 individual churches were galvanised into issuing public condemnations. The Methodist Church, for example, issued a statement rejecting the notion of just nuclear war because the weapons did not allow war to be waged with a hope of achieving honourable victory and 'its method was not legitimate or in accordance with either man's nature as a rational being or Christian principles' (Groom, 1974, p. 201).

The BCC and the peace movement

In 1954 Canon Collins' Christian Action had discussed their role in the anti-nuclear debate and decided to limit their energies to trying to persuade the churches to treat the matter as one for serious consideration. An abortive attempt was made to create a national campaign against the H-bomb. Sponsored by a group of Labour MPs including Fenner Brockway and Tony Benn, Canon Collins, Dr Soper, and a collection of local pacifist groups, Christians and humanitarians came together to form the Hydrogen Bomb National Campaign (Driver, 1964; Duff, 1971 and Taylor, 1988). Although this only lasted a short while it served as an important precursor for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Collins withdrew his support a few days after its inaugural Albert Hall rally of 30 April 1954. Although his decision upset many activists, for

Collins the campaign had risen before its time. In his autobiography, Collins (1966) gives three reasons why later peace campaigns proved more successful in firing public imagination. First, public disquiet over the Suez crisis of 1956 made activism respectable. Second, successful British H-bomb tests on Christmas Island encouraged widespread anti-nuclear participation. Finally the 1955 crisis within the Labour Party when Aneurin Bevan challenged his own leader in a defence debate and was threatened with expulsion from the party and Sir Richard Acland (an Anglican radical) resigned his Gravesend seat with a view to fighting a by-election on the H-bomb issue. These three events made people ready to respond positively to anti-nuclear movements. From 1955 small groups of both absolute and nuclear pacifists had been organising themselves into local groups. These 'Peace Groups' looked to the BCC for encouragement and co-operation, and began asking in what ways the churches were taking a stand on the specific matter of the H-bomb. The BCC responded by producing a collection of BCC/WCC statements and resolutions in a pamphlet (*The Churches and the Hydrogen Bomb*) in September 1955. Specific requests for help were also 'flooding in' to the BCC. Max Parker, the General Secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR), wrote to the new BCC General Secretary Kenneth Slack, recording gratitude for the lead taken by the BCC in its decision regarding the H-bomb tests.[25] The FoR felt able to support such Christian leadership and were sure only good would result from the BCC.

One of the more organised approaches against the British H-bomb tests came from the Golders Green Co-operative Women's Guild led by Gertrude Fishwick, ex-suffragette and member of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship. In February 1957 this small band of radicals had set up the National Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons Tests (NCANWT). This body soon attracted support and sponsorship from Bishop Bell, the Rev. George MacLeod, and Dr Soper. When NCANWT began to gain mass support, people like Canon Collins felt the time had come to organise a national campaign for unilateral nuclear disarmament (Taylor, 1988). Arthur Goss, the chair of NCANWT, wrote to secretary Slack requesting BCC support. Whilst Goss regretted the failure to stop the British H-bomb tests in May, he wanted to know whether the BCC supported an international agreement to end all further tests and whether they would join the NCANWT and other like-minded organisations in united action (Goss to Slack, 7 August 1957). Slack replied that the BCC could not support the work of NCANWT or any similar organisation as they had in fact only ever passed one resolution critical of nuclear policy.[26]

The officers of the International Department shared Slack's opinion. The National Peace Council (NPC) also approached the BCC suggesting some kind of inter-organisational approach to the nuclear issue (memo dated 19 November 1957). Whilst Alan Keighley, DIA secretary, was all for co-operation at a staff level with organisations such as NCANWT and the NPC, the consensus was that the department should be an independent body advising the churches through the BCC and not an inter-organisational group. The only co-operating body acceptable to these officers (i.e. Slack, Keighley, and the new DIA Chair Robert Mackie) was Kenneth Grubb's CCIA office in London. Mackie in par-ticular continued to stress the importance of avoiding having the International Department regarded as a peace organisation and doubted whether such organisations could really understand the angle of the churches. By the end of summer 1957, the DIA were called to study the disarmament situation afresh in the light of what became known as the Yale resolutions. These statements passed by the CCIA Executive, and the Central Committee of the WCC at their 5 August meetings in New Haven, Connecticut, stand out as some of the most suggestive of the whole Cold War period.[27]

The CCIA Executive Committee resolution, *Atomic Tests and Disarmament*, was concerned that the hazards to health from weapons testing were not being taken seriously. Not only were all people world-wide affected to some degree by radioactive fallout but, and more wor-ryingly, the effect upon generations yet unborn was unknown. The need to stop testing was therefore first order priority. But this should also be considered in the wider context of disarmament. First, because the main concern must always be the prevention of war itself 'for the evil of war is an offence to the spiritual nature of man'. Second, because the objectives of a strategy to combat the menace of atomic war must be seen as interrelated and interdependent. Key objectives should be: (1) an immediate international agreement to stop nuclear testing; (2) the halting of weapon production; (3) the reduction of existing armaments (with provision made for warning against surprise attacks); and (4) the encouragement of peaceful uses of atomic energy, peaceful settlement and peaceful change. Finally, if persistent efforts at international gov-ernmental negotiation did not bring sufficient agreement on any of the interrelated objectives, reasonable risks should be taken to advance the objectives which must continue to stand as interdependent.

The WCC Central Committee resolution *Tests of Nuclear Weapons*, whilst appreciating the wider context as set out by the CCIA, went further than ever in emphasising the moral principles surrounding the

need to secure a test ban. Its most significant section is worth repeating verbatim:

> Governments conducting tests should forego them, at least for a trial period, either together or individually in the hope that others will do the same, so that new confidence may be born, and foundations be laid for reliable agreements. We are bound to ask whether any nation is justified in continuing the testing of nuclear weapons while the magnitude of the dangers is so little known and while effective means of protection against these dangers is lacking. We must ask ourselves whether any nation is justified in deciding on its own responsibility to conduct such tests when people of other nations in all parts of the world who have not agreed may have to bear the consequences. Therefore we call upon each nation conducting tests to give full recognition to this moral responsibility as well as to considerations of national defence and international security. (WCC, 1958, pp. 12–13)

The significance of Yale was that both the CCIA and in particular the WCC now felt unable to rule out the need for forms of unconditional and unilateral action.

* * *

This chapter has shown that the development of thermonuclear weapons in the years 1950–57 raised new ethical questions for Christians. The rationale for keeping or renouncing nuclear weapons was not the same as when a western monopoly existed before 1949. This was especially so following the *Lucky Dragon* fallout when more became known about the harmful effects of radiation. For the most part, however, the attitudes of the BCC and its member churches towards the development of thermonuclear devices were as divided as their attitudes to atomic weapons. Such an attitude prevailed despite many within and without the churches feeling that Christians were morally obliged to take a definite stand against nuclear weapons. As Driver (1964) notes there was a persistent feeling that protests against the use or possession of nuclear weapons, or any other weapons of mass destruction, ought to be a function – perhaps chief function – of the Christian church. Yet the BCC stance encouraged British Christians to accept nuclear devices by stressing an 'optimistic deterrent view' and upholding the idea they 'purchased time for peace'. In March 1950 the Archbishop of York was

the first figure from within the British churches to link the concept of deterrence with the idea of no-first-use.

Although the British churches were the only forum really debating nuclear morality, they could recommend neither progressive policy nor draw decisive conclusions in the early years of thermonuclear weapons. Not only were they unable to communicate the widely held fear aroused by H-bomb testing (save for Bishop Bell's controversial Private Member Resolution of April 1957), they failed to respond to the moral questions raised by the incipient anti-nuclear movement. The development of the H-bomb had, however, intensified discussion. Whereas differences of opinion between Christian pacifists and just war advocates were continuing to structure the terms in which debate was articulated within the churches, thermonuclear developments had put increasing strain on the *ad bellum* demand for conflict to be determined by 'legitimate' authority. For many post-war Christians involved in the campaign against nuclear weapons, individual activism (i.e. outside their constituent churches) had become a vital part of a wider political agenda. A stand against nuclear weaponry was to agitate for democratic liberties. It was an attack on an elitist and unrepresentative war-culture that produced technologies of mass destruction without consultation.

A coherent Christian anti-nuclear perspective began to show signs of winning greater support if it could successfully engage dialogue on two main levels: first, by communicating the idea that the nuclear age demanded new Christian thinking about the citizen's democratic responsibilities in an *ad bellum* sense; and second, by claiming that the just war synthesis between force, political expediency, and morality in an *in bello* sense was rendered obsolete in the nuclear era. This priority was not met with much sympathy in the larger peace movement. To most peace activists outside the churches, the old debate between pacifism and just war was not only invalidated but also irrelevant. Yet differences of opinion between Christian pacifists and just war advocates would continue to have a significant impact on the debate in the churches. This was particularly so following the Yale statements by the WCC and CCIA which did not rule out unilateral action. This in turn opened up the possibilities for a greater acceptance of a third way Christian responsibility between absolutism and post-nuclear just war. It is the impact and ramifications of this on the British churches that we now turn to consider.

Part III
Power and Justice

6
The Moral Aspects of Deterrence

The failure to secure a British H-bomb test ban brought the BCC specific problems. First, its officers were aware that many Christians felt that nuclear, and in particular thermonuclear weapons, were uniquely abhorrent. This sense was only exacerbated once western nuclear strategy was considered. Second, they nonetheless felt unable to disavow nuclear weapons and resort to renunciation or 'third way' nuclear pacifism. At this juncture Rear Admiral Sir Anthony Buzzard offered his expertise to the BCC. For the first time discussion moved from generalised ends-type analysis to concerted deliberation over specific nuclear means. To understand the impact of Admiral Buzzard's thinking on the churches, it is necessary to locate his thinking in the wider strategic environment. In 1952 Britain became the first western government to base its national security planning almost entirely on a declaratory policy of nuclear deterrence. Out of the Korean War rearmament experience, the conclusion was drawn that the continuation of large, balanced and well-equipped conventional forces was not compatible with the requirements of a healthy economy (Pierre, 1972). In spring 1952 Prime Minister Churchill directed his Chiefs of Staff to undertake a fundamental defence review taking into account the state of the economy, the role of nuclear weapons, and the need for reduced conventional ground forces. The resulting 'Global Strategy Paper' determined the evolution of a New Look doctrine (Clark and Wheeler, 1989). Its central thesis was that nuclear weapons had revolutionised the character of war. Any violation of the international status quo would be punished by the maximum means available, an instantaneous massive retaliation, not only at the local point of conflict but at the heart of Russia itself. From this time British policy began to move in the direction that would culminate in Duncan Sandys' infamous 1957 White Paper *Defence: Outline of Future Policy*.

For Churchill, the New Look confirmed his long-held belief that only the deterrent character of nuclear weapons had avoided a third world war (an assumption that the previous Attlee administration had not fully accepted) and that the long-range bomber had become the supreme expression of military power. In early 1953 Sir John Slessor, Chair of the Chiefs of Staff, declared: 'the aim of western policy is not primarily to be ready to win a war with the world in ruins – though we must be as ready as possible to do that … It is the prevention of war. The bomber holds out to us the greatest, perhaps the only hope of that. It is the great deterrent' (Slessor, 1957, p. 123). In the United States, the Global Strategy Paper helped originate the policy of the Eisenhower Presidency. New Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the former Chair of the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace (CJDP), unveiled the American version in January 1954. This formulation was a far more precise and dogmatic representation of the same policies pursued in Whitehall over the past two years. Dulles announced the intention of the US to place its military dependence 'primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our choosing', thereby gaining 'more basic security at less cost' (*The New York Times*, 13 January 1954). As described by the Pentagon's public relations people it was 'fewer conventional forces, more atomic firepower, less cost' (Ambrose, 1984). In the slogan of the time: 'more bang for the buck'. The rationale, as in Britain, was largely economic. Yet Dulles justified his policy in religious terms.

Manichaean moralism and the New Look

To John Foster Dulles, the good Christian internationalist, the western world was the repository of Christian values. These values were personified and embodied in the liberal-democratic state. The Cold War had become to him not so much a confrontation between traditional powers but one between different belief-systems (Arend, 1988). Ideological diplomacy by definition made international order impossible because communism as such constituted 'the archenemy and seat of all evil' and 'the headquarters of the last remaining wickedness in the world'. Here moral politics, as Herbert Butterfield (1953, pp. 19–25 and 124) noted, 'amounted to the notion that the West must do everything that needs to be done to insure the survival of itself, its friends, and its principles'. But this approach was more Manichaean than Augustinian. In other words, Dulles saw the world as fundamentally an arena in which the forces of good and evil were continuously at war. To Dulles, Truman's previous policy of 'containment' had been immoral. An overtly

Christian and tactical foreign policy was required. He explained this in a 1957 *Foreign Affairs* essay:

> Because of our religious beliefs we attach exceptional importance to freedom. We believe in the sanctity of the human personality, in the inalienable rights with which men are endowed by their Creator and in the right to have governments of their own choosing … We are as a nation unsympathetic to systems and governments that deny human freedom and seek to mould all men to a preconceived pattern and to use them as tools to aggrandise the state. (Dulles, 1957, p. 42)

The novelty of notions of 'liberation' and 'roll back' from 'Communist enslavement' brought applause from many in the churches and the political right. Nevertheless, for all his talk of freedom Dulles' approach made no significant departure from previous Cold War policies of containment. Rather he set to institutionalise containment by setting military strategy within a theological discourse. As Vice President Richard Nixon explained in March 1954, thanks to Dulles 'no longer would the Communists nibble the West to death all over the world in little wars' (in Tindall and Shi, 1984, p. 845). In November 1954 Field Marshal Montgomery, NATO's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, made it clear that the West were basing all their 'operational planning on using atomic and thermonuclear weapons … it is no longer "they may possibly be used". It is very definitely "They will be used, if we are attacked"' (Groom, 1974, p. 66). This amounted to the first public declaration of a NATO first-use policy (Ruston, 1989). The scientists had boosted this last possibility by saying it was possible, thanks to testing, to alter the character of nuclear weapons:

> Recent tests point to the possibility of possessing nuclear weapons the destructiveness and radiation effects of which can be confined substantially to predetermined targets. In the future it may thus be feasible to place less reliance upon deterrence of vast retaliatory power. It may be possible to defend countries by nuclear weapons so mobile, or so placed, and to make military invasion with conventional forces a hazardous attempt. (Dulles, 1957, p. 32)

In December 1954 NATO integrated tactical (i.e. battlefield) nuclear weapons into strategic planning. There were now three main levels of western armament: first, conventional (i.e. non-nuclear weapons); second, tactical atomic (i.e. smaller yield or theatre atomic

weapons whose effects it was thought could be confined to within several miles); third, the H-bomb (i.e. the thermonuclear 'civilisation destroyer'). Both the USA (6 November 1952) and the Soviet Union (29 August 1953) had exploded hydrogen bombs by this point. Two disparate conclusions were drawn from this in Britain. On one hand it no longer seemed reasonable to assume, as some had, that damage from nuclear weapons could be limited and that their use would not necessarily prove decisive. On the other, the H-bomb was seen to be an equaliser or leveller that put a smaller state possessing them at less of a disadvantage when compared with a superpower (Pierre, 1972). In March 1955 the government announced that Britain was to manufacture its own thermonuclear device and develop an *independent* nuclear force. To Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, the H-bomb would preserve Britain's standing as a great power and give Britain the 'quills of a porcupine' that would prove 'deadly against any power' (Eden, 1960, p. 368).

From this perspective, Minister of Defence Duncan Sandys' 1957 White Paper *Defence: Outline of Future Policy* simply placed contemporary strategic developments into a formulation that more strongly than ever reflected the British state's public willingness to rely on the first-use of nuclear weapons in response to direct Soviet aggression.[1] The announced intentions to end conscription, to reduce the size of the armed forces from 690,000 to 375,000, further reliance on ballistic missiles, and an increased influence over military policy-making by the government were what gave the 1957 statement its cutting edge (Pierre, 1972). *Defence: Outline of Future Policy* emphasised that 'scientific advances must fundamentally alter the whole basis of military planning' and that 'the time has come to revise not merely the size, but the whole character of the defence plan'. In the context of recent scientific advances, 'the only existing safeguard against major aggression is the power to threaten retaliation with nuclear weapons' which means Britain 'must possess an appreciable element of nuclear deterrent power of her own'. Central to this was the perception that without a strong economy 'military power cannot in the long run be supported' and that major savings in defence expenditure would have to be secured. Even after the necessary reduction in armed forces personnel and the curtailing of expenditure, the government was confident 'that Britain could discharge her overseas responsibilities and make an effective contribution to the defence of the free world with armed forces smaller than they are at present' (Cmnd.124, *Defence: Outline of Future Policy*, paras.3-6,14,15 and 40).

Four points should be understood if the significance of the New Look is to be comprehended. First, although the American economic, strategic and political predicament was analogous to that of Britain in no way did the British state capitulate to US foreign policy requirements. Huntington writes:

> Changes in American military policy often came two or three years after changes in British military policy. The New Look originated with Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff in 1951 and 1952; it became American policy in 1953 and 1954 … While the wealthier country was able to develop new weapons earlier than the poorer one, nonetheless the poorer one, largely because of its more limited resources often was first in adjusting its military policy to the new technological developments. (1961, p. 118)

Second, the New Look was an attempt to maintain a premier league military capability with the minimum of expenditure. The decisions of the period were above all 'motivated by notions of economy and prestige' (Groom, 1974). Third, the utility and credibility of massive retaliation needs to be judged within the context of NATO security planning as a whole. Military force was conceived as effectively independent of diplomatic policy – there was no 'balance of options'. Finally, the government saw Bomber Command as a supplement to, not substitute for, the United States Strategic Air Command. Yet the highly classified nature of all information pertaining to defence policy meant the absence of serious intercourse between state officials, freelance strategic thinkers, academics and the public. This was particularly so from 1952 up to the public declaration of the 1957 White Paper. Because all ideas had been generated independently of public debate, state policy did not abide by democratic principles of accountability and transparency.

During 1954, alternative strategic approaches to 'all or nothing' policy had begun appearing in academic journals such as *World Politics, International Affairs*, and *Foreign Affairs*. A small circle of well-known defence and security commentators including Sir Anthony Buzzard, Capt. Basil Liddell Hart, and Professor Patrick Blackett came to the forefront of an attempt to alter the whole basis of Anglo-American nuclear strategy.[2] Here the posture of 'limited war' (or 'graduated deterrence'[3]) was created as a practicable yet moral alternative to massive retaliation. For Rear Admiral Buzzard, former Director of Naval Intelligence and Director of Vickers-Armstrong (a major partner

for the Ministry of Supply), this was nothing short of the pioneering of a more flexible range of military options between surrender and outright thermonuclear holocaust.[4] To further this agenda Sir Anthony helped organise a 'Conference on Limiting War' in autumn 1956. Here Bishop Bell introduced Buzzard to Kenneth Grubb and Buzzard then approached Kenneth Slack to see if the BBC could recommend a list of ecclesiastics who might be interested in discussing New Look policies. As a committed Anglican, Buzzard thought it important to include a wide selection of church thinking to discuss distinctions between tactical and strategic uses of nuclear weapons. Alan Booth, the incipient London Secretary of the CCIA and consultant to the DIA, was particularly enthusiastic. The resulting 'Conference on Limiting War' was held in Brighton on 20 January 1957 with Buzzard chairing and Booth serving as conference secretary. The venture included many Christians, British, American, and Commonwealth, interested in the ethics of nuclear defence. Afterwards the participants formed themselves into the 'Brighton Conference Association' that would later become the influential International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).[5]

At their September 1957 meeting the International Department decided that the issues raised by massive retaliation and challenged by the Brighton Conference Association demanded official investigation. Yet the issues raised by the CCIA and the WCC at Yale were at least as momentous. This was particularly so considering that the Yale statements seemed to call for a form of unilateral nuclear *disarmament*, whereas the developing limited war thesis was urging a change in strategies of nuclear *defence*. As such these resolutions demanded an official response that could be debated before the whole Council at their forthcoming annual meeting. It was agreed that, as a first step, the Yale approach be communicated to Prime Minister Macmillan in order to gauge government attitudes. Macmillan's reply came via his secretary P. F. de Zulueta.

The Prime Minister read with great interest the statements on disarmament and nuclear weapons made at Yale. He was 'greatly encouraged by the thoughtful and sincere study of the problem which these bodies have made' and could agree with all objectives described and in particular on the vital interrelationship between them. Macmillan felt that the current proposals for partial disarmament, which the British government had joined in sponsoring through the August Disarmament Sub-Committee, suggested a plan that could be put into effect with a minimum of delay.[6] To Macmillan this plan was

founded on the same principles of progressive, controlled and secure disarmament advocated at Yale. In one key matter, however, the Prime Minister could not agree with the views expressed. While he acknowledged that many different and sincere views were held about the question of suspending nuclear tests, he was nonetheless convinced that to unilaterally suspend tests in present circumstances would not assist the cause of peace. Suspension would not prevent the stockpiling of more nuclear weapons by those countries that already had them. This could only be prevented by a multilateral agreement to end the production of fissile material. The Prime Minister concluded that unconditional suspension of tests was, in the circumstances, a risk that couldn't be justified.[7]

In the light of Macmillan's rejection of Yale, the DIA decided that their next step should be to discuss the statements with WCC Central Committee members who were also members of the BCC. The idea here was that the BCC could respond to Yale with an official resolution that could either reject or endorse their sentiments. Before passing a resolution they thought it advisable to invite the opinion of a speaker of high calibre who was familiar with the atmosphere in which decisions on defence and disarmament were taken. The debate over whom to ask was largely determined by the impact of Henry Kissinger's new book *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (1957).

Kissinger's book has been described as the catalyst that initiated the so-called 'golden age' of strategic thought.[8] It was a book in which Kissinger aligned himself with Admiral Buzzard's credo that avoidance of war meant increasing emphasis on tactical weapons – graduated deterrence at acceptable cost – and the negotiation of limitations in the conduct of war. He explored issues of all-out and limited war and declared that the doctrine of massive retaliation was dangerously dated now the Soviets had built their own bomb. Kissinger argued: (1) that the West's attitude to war was rigid in contrast to the flexibility of Soviet theory and practice; (2) that the British should declare, along with the Americans, a distinction between tactical and strategic nuclear weapons making. This would make available small atomic weapons for the use of NATO fighting forces in the field and acknowledge that thermonuclear strategic weapons were irrelevant in the conduct of foreign policy in peripheral areas; (3) he called for the appropriate conventional forces to be made available with which to fight local wars; and (4) that tactical nuclear weapons were an appropriate response for this purpose. As Gordon Dean wrote in his introduction, the West should be 'unwilling to accept gradual Russian enslavement of other peoples

around the world, which we know will eventually lead to our own enslavement, we are forced to adopt a posture that, despite Russian military capabilities and despite their long-free intentions, freedom shall be preserved to us' (Kissinger, 1957, p. vii). Kissinger urged that the West be willing to find the moral certainty to act without the support of extremism and run risks without a guarantee of success. He suggested NATO's absolute dependence on the means and strategy of massive retaliation was ultimately a weak one precisely because it went against the grain of western Christendom. And that the West and the Soviets, though ideological adversaries, could still act as potential partners in the preservation of a mutually acceptable status quo (Howard, 1989a). From this Kissinger could conclude that because all real threats were existential, unilateralists or neutralists operated in fact to support the Soviet Union.

The DIA's CCIA consultant, Alan Booth, felt Kissinger's book was 'required reading for anyone seriously concerned with international peace' and confessed to 'have not hit on any similar *magnum opus* on the subject for many years'. Booth wrote to the International Department's secretary (Alan Keighley) enclosing a paper summarising half a dozen thoughts derived from his reflections on Kissinger. Booth felt it particularly necessary to find common ground between BCC concerns and the Brighton Conference Association. He hoped the DIA would consider convening a small standing group (perhaps meeting bi-monthly, drawn from the Brighton Conference) to advise on strategic matters. For Booth there was 'urgent need for Christian opinion to be technically informed and our present set of contacts may give us the chance to get the kind of advice we most need' (Booth to Keighley, 1 October 1957). Booth's paper sought to review the debate on strategy that had drawn the Brighton Conference together. This line of thinking had developed widely since the Conference and had produced a fairly extensive literature. It included not only Kissinger's book but articles by James King of the US Army's Operations Research Office in *Army* (August 1957) and *The New Republic* (July 1957), plus Dulles' essay in *Foreign Affairs* (October 1957). Extensive reviews of Kissinger had appeared in *The Times, The Manchester Guardian, The Economist, The Observer, The Daily Telegraph* (September 1957) and such interest had shown 'the line along which some positive thinking can be fruitfully done on the question of war in the nuclear age'. The ramifications of the debate were political, moral and technical. They were also relevant to the churches. While civilians were preoccupied with stopping a drift toward atomic war,

the armed forces and politicians were increasingly concerned that diplomacy and military pressure was inhibited by the 'shadow of the Great Deterrent'. Paralysis had therefore set in between the choice of small enlargements of Soviet domination and suicidal war. For Booth such considerations raised the question of whether Christians were too inclined to concern themselves primarily with the question of peace. In this, Booth asked, are Christians 'not simply adopting the position of a war-weary mankind which wants to be left in peace?' He felt it instructive to reflect how little the Bible concerned itself with peace as an end in itself: 'classical Christian thinking has emphasised rather Order and Justice, and has not flinched from the thought that the exercise of power and force is necessary to secure these two ends' (Untitled Paper, Booth, 1957 p. 3).

For Booth, thinking about 'peace' alone was the bane of a sentimental generation that looked for easy solutions. Since there was no possibility of establishing in the near future an international authority to enforce order, justice and the conditions of freedom, Christians 'must learn to live in a disorderly situation and extract from it what remains available for the creation of a sound world society'. This had to be a familiar task for Christians whose security did not lie within history. In the face of such insecurity two policies should be endorsed by the BCC. First, it should help the public recognise that both superpowers were capable of mutual destruction of 'apocalyptic proportions' and so urge policy-makers to put aside any thought of total victory or unconditional surrender. Co-existence could be the only alternative to co-destruction. Second, Christians must acknowledge that apart from all-out confrontation there were many areas that existed where the Soviets could seek local advantages: 'Here the necessity is to produce local balances of power, to prevent anarchic action and compel the submission of conflicts to the procedures of diplomacy'. In the creation of such local balances of power the limited war school of thought could be asserted. With these policies British Christian opinion could, and should, be able to find common concern with the Brighton Conference Association.

Notwithstanding the Prime Minister's rejection of Yale, the impact of Kissinger's book, and Booth's paper, Admiral Buzzard was not the automatic first choice as BCC speaker at their October Assembly. It was hoped the ecumenical insider Sir Thomas Taylor would agree to speak on disarmament issues but, because of his chairing of the WCC group with this concern, he declined the invitation.[9] Thanks in no small part to Booth's enthusiasm, the person chosen to represent 'the point of

view of one familiar with the outlook of those responsible for decisions on national defence' was Anthony Buzzard.

Admiral Buzzard's council address

On 29 October 1957 the British Council of Churches met for their annual Assembly at Leeds. Each department was asked to present a report and forward resolutions it hoped Council to pass. At the spring meeting the Council had passed the controversial Private Member's resolution moved by Bishop Bell. The texts that needed urgent consideration were the Yale statements made by the CCIA and Central Committee of the WCC that opened the possibility for a Christian endorsement of unilateral disarmament and hence the new 'third way' nuclear citizenship. Alan Keighley, as DIA secretary, was faced with the question of what line the International Department should recommend. It was Keighley's intention 'to avoid a snap resolution, and to try to get the Council to face the realities of the situation as well as the moralities of it' (Keighley to Buzzard, 2 October 1957). It was henceforth decided that a generalised discussion would take place on the basis of Admiral Buzzard's talk. Those members of the WCC Central Committee and the International Department who were present could then decide what statement the Council should adopt. Keighley requested Sir Anthony to speak for 20 minutes and discuss two issues: first, something of the atmosphere in which defence decisions had to be taken; second, a word pointing out the possibility that 'atomic war of any kind need not lead to use of the Great Deterrent'. Granted the existence of H-bombs, 'how could Christians learn to carry on the business of running the world as before, under its shadow?' Buzzard began his address by stating his case:

> As a very ordinary Churchman, who happens to have been closely connected with defence policy, I have often been struck by the gap that exists between church opinion on this matter, and the policies evolved by the experts in Whitehall. The reason for this gap is, I suppose, that the church sets its sights on the ultimate ideal, with the result that it is sometimes accused of having its feet off the ground, whereas Whitehall is mainly concerned with what action is immediately practicable, and all too often assumes that moral considerations cannot apply when dealing with communists and war. That there is a demand for this gap to be filled is, I think, clear from the tremendously strong public feelings which are aroused on such occasions

as the recent Labour Party debate[10] on the H-bomb. (Buzzard to Council, 29 October 1957, p. 1)

Buzzard was not about to suggest what should be done to help bridge this problem of middle axioms in the realm of Christian ethics. Rather he wanted to propose four concrete steps that would bring the churches nearer to Whitehall. These steps would not only help close the gap between the sacred and the secular, but help clear the current impasse in disarmament talks. Indeed, all proposals could be taken without Soviet agreement, and – with one minor exception – were complementary to the Yale Summer statements, and the current western disarmament proposals.[11]

Buzzard's first proposal was the formulation of a set of moral principles that the world's politicians could use when framing defence policies. These were centred on a modernised version of the just war and involved restating old principles in a post-nuclear setting. These principles were:

> Fighting can only be legally justified if the cause is a really just one, such as defence against blatant aggression, or the removal of some intolerable basic injustice. It can only be justified if all other means of removing that cause have been tried first to the limit. In carrying out that fighting, only the minimum force necessary must be used. The destruction wrought must be limited so as never to become disproportionate to the issue at stake. The weapons used must always be reasonably controlled, and reasonably discriminate, as between armed forces and civilians, and as between combatants and neutrals. (Buzzard to Council, 29 October 1957, p. 2)

These just war principles would first be codified by international lawyers and the communists and uncommitted countries would then be invited to say whether (or not) they were in agreement. For Buzzard this first step would help the West regain a vital sense of direction with which to face subsequent disarmament talks.

Buzzard's second proposal concerned ways 'to stop the present vicious circle in the arms race, in which mutual fear is countered by arms, which is then countered by more fear, and then more arms'. The key to this lay in an honest appraisal of the massive retaliation strategy and an awareness of power balancing. This was the best hope for peace until a 'World government and Police Force' could be realised. In practice it meant accepting that (notwithstanding the Soviets' recent

lead in system technology as demonstrated by the launch of *Sputnik I*[12])
the West had not a balance but rather a great superiority over the
Soviets in terms of massive retaliation capabilities. This was particularly
true considering the United States possessed more nuclear weapons,
better delivery techniques, and above all, a tremendous geographical
advantage. Even though the Soviets were well capable of catching up
in weapons and techniques, geographical advantage would always
allow the United States to deliver weapons from bases three times
as close to the Soviet Union, as Soviet bases could be to US targets.
Apart from these relative considerations, the power of thermonuclear
weapons was such that a saturation point had been reached in which
relative factors were no longer significant. The mere existence of the
hydrogen bomb was 'making *total war* utterly repugnant' (Italics added.
Buzzard to Council, 29 October 1957, p. 2). Buzzard suggested that the
West acknowledge that they were no longer interested in a neck-and-
neck race in thermonuclear weapons, but only intended maintaining
sufficient numbers to deter any potential aggression. In other words,
the West should openly accept the stalemate or balance of power in
terms of strategic thermonuclear weapons. Following this admission
it would be possible for Britain to 'renounce unilaterally her intention
of ever again fighting a total global war to its logical conclusion'. Total
war using strategic nuclear weapons was thus incompatible with the
requirements of just war: 'such a disaster could never be in proportion
to any issue at stake, and it could never be the lesser of two evils,
since it would virtually mean the destruction of the human race'. The
maintenance of sufficient power to make total war pointless would
permit urgent financial savings to be made, not only in H-bombs, but
also in the other preparations necessary to wage total war.

The third proposal advocated by Buzzard concerned the balance of
power in regard to local limited war. Unlike the global balance, he
believed that here the Soviets enjoyed great superiority on account of
their inherent strength in conventional forces. This superiority was
due not only to vast reserves of personnel, but also to inherent factors
such as the communication lines with which geopolitics had blessed
them, and to the initiative which they held 'as dictators and potential
aggressors' enabling them to mobilise and redeploy their forces much
more quickly and secretly than the West could. If there was to be a
local balance of power, the West were faced with having to initiate at
least a limited atomic war in retaliation for a serious local aggression by
conventional forces. For Buzzard this, despite Bishop Bell's recent plea
for a no-first-use policy, was a fundamental factor from which the West

were simply unable to escape. Another fundamental factor was that the West were more likely to deter, or repel, serious conventional aggression with limited atomic war even if it meant the Soviets responding in kind. This was so because limited atomic war would favour the defender of a territory more than the attacker. Tactical nuclear devices allowed a given front to be defended with far fewer forces and enabled effective retaliation to be much swifter and thus made a rapid fait accompli by the aggressor much more difficult. This made a Soviet invasion less politically profitable as it meant they either faced a first crucial atomic blow, or they initiated nuclear aggression, which for a limited local issue was likely to bring much more harm than good. Although this was not a desirable state of affairs, it was nevertheless a policy of limiting nuclear war to which Buzzard felt the USA was now committing itself to instead of its massive retaliation strategy. Whilst Buzzard accepted that the very idea of condoning any form of nuclear action sounded outrageous he wasn't convinced there was a better alternative. Britain only had three possible alternatives to limited war: first, to continue on its existing path and endorse a massive retaliation strategy – the 'all or nothing' option. Second, invest in many more conventional forces – the expensive and hence unrealistic option. Finally, the passive resistance option – the logical development of which was that the West should give up its intention to fight any war. Because there was no prospect of a western government ever taking responsibility for this it was as unrealistic as 'option two'. The practicable choice was henceforth between massive retaliation ('abandoning the local balance of power and admitting that we cannot deal with communism without threatening genocide') or limited war – a *via media* between realpolitik extremes (Buzzard to Council, 29 October 1957, p. 3).

There were of course outstanding issues to be resolved. On one hand, Christians needed to ask themselves whether or not nuclear war could be sufficiently limited in proportion to the issues likely to be at stake. Could tactical limited war be controlled and made discriminate? Could it be prevented from escalating to total thermonuclear war? On the other hand, Christians needed to be aware that the armed forces were particularly against the idea of limited war because they believed hands would be tied in advance if the West indicated the sort of limitations it might adopt in a particular situation. On this view the use of H-bombs could not be precluded if the old military principle of economy of force was to be relied on. Buzzard felt that proper adherence to the just war principles of proportionality and discrimination raised issues that were not so difficult to overcome. Limitations could be made practicable

after preparation and considerable modifications to military practice. Of course hostilities would have to be localised, weapons restricted by size and radioactive fallout, and targets kept away from centres of population. Above all war aims would have to be strictly limited. For Buzzard in this last point lay 'the key to the whole problem. We must surely give up all ideas of unconditional surrender, or indeed of victory as such, and only aim at a return to negotiations on the basis of the minimum conditions required to remove the original injustice'. Limitations such as these needed to be worked out and aired in general terms so the world could be conditioned to them beforehand. Only then did they stand a good chance of being effective as a local deterrent. This was necessary because the Soviets, despite their propaganda, were just as anxious to conform to reasonable limitations if only for the sole reason that it was in their self-interest to do so. Reason was the way to override the mutual terror of total thermonuclear war.

Buzzard's fourth and final proposal involved the facing of one more disagreeable fact. In one area, the German or Central Front in Western Europe, it was considered militarily impractical to stop all-out Soviet aggression even using limited atomic weapons. To maintain the local balance of power in this area it was necessary to retain the right to initiate the use of the H-bomb. Whilst a major local aggression was extremely unlikely, there was still the possibility that the threat would arise unintentionally as a result of some smaller conflict:

> To tolerate any longer than absolutely necessary this situation, in which we may have to be the first to use the H-bomb, is utterly repugnant by any moral or legal standards. Nor is it expedient, if we want to deal with communism without destroying all, and if we want to negotiate the reunification of Germany from a position of realistic power balance. (Buzzard to Council, 29 October 1957, p. 5)

To escape this predicament required action. First, the transfer to Germany of some of the economic resources wasted in trying to overweight an already saturated global balance of power. (This would be achieved by Buzzard's second proposal to halt the thermonuclear arms race.) Second, persuading the western public that it was absolutely vital and advantageous to divert the resources needed for the local balance of power in Germany. This task could be made possible by distinguishing limited war from massive retaliation and making the preparations for tactical atomic war seem worthwhile. The Sandys White Paper had made both these considerations harder to achieve.

In conclusion Buzzard submitted his four steps and hoped they were acceptable to the church, Whitehall and Washington. He noted that support for some of them had been growing and felt nothing more ambitious could be acceptable at present. Buzzard maintained that nothing less would meet the present urgent situation. What was needed, if limited war was to serve as a credible nuclear just war strategy, was not only the restoration of local balances of power but equally as important a campaign that could convince the world that limited atomic warfare could be strictly contained and that it did not need to degenerate into total thermonuclear confrontation. Buzzard was pleased that Secretary Dulles was beginning to endorse this approach but aware that 'as yet, NATO policy does not seem to have begun to move in that direction, and in this country the recent White Paper[13] and subsequent government statements have left the country in disunity and confusion on this point'. There was therefore much convincing to be done which is where the churches came in.

By any standards Buzzard made a dramatic impact. To many in Council his speech reminded them that Christians were involved in secular decisions as well as sacred thinking. Following the speech the BCC General Assembly resolved to welcome the initiative of the International Department in inviting Sir Anthony Buzzard to address it, and expressed its appreciation of his contribution to thinking on nuclear weapons. The BCC then dramatically passed a Private Member's resolution moved by Kenneth Grubb that resolved:

> That the Council further requests the International Department to set up a special group from its own membership and from people related to defence policy which would give continuous study to the moral aspects of the disarmament problem and of defence policy in the light of nuclear armament, with a view to advising the Council from time to time on these matters.[14]

This certainly raised eyebrows. The DIA chair Robert Mackie strenuously denied that the motion indicated that in any way the BCC had adopted the Buzzard thesis on defence and rejected the Yale sentiments on disarmament (Mackie to Bell, 15 November 1957). Yet Buzzard's address had the effect of creating a lack of discussion time that meant the Yale suggestions could not be adequately dealt with. An additional resolution simply welcomed the Yale statements noting that the Council 'was impressed by the consensus of ecumenical opinion expressed in these resolutions'.[15] This is particularly noteworthy considering the 'third way' significance of Yale.

Opposition to Buzzard

Those BCC representatives who had served on the WCC Central Committee at Yale were particularly disappointed with Buzzard's address. The British press had generally failed to report that the WCC was urging governments to stop nuclear weapons testing or that this policy was welcomed by the BCC and had been communicated to the Prime Minister. But the press could hardly be blamed. As the Rev. Dr Eric Baker, a Methodist WCC representative and General Secretary of the National Peace Council (NPC) pointed out, the effect of Sir Anthony 'was to divert attention from the real issue created by the Yale resolutions, which in consequence were never properly debated by the Council' (Baker to Keighley, October 1957).[16] Another Methodist minister and author, John Vincent, wrote to Keighley questioning the legitimacy of the BCC having a study group looking into a matter upon which the WCC thought that there was only one thing to say: 'leave it alone'.[17] For Vincent it seemed the DIA's commitment to Buzzard's line at least implied a criticism of the WCC call for unilateral action. To him the possibility of nuclear defence was simply absurd and 'that the church of all folk should toy with the idea is, to my mind, very serious'. To add insult to injury the BCC had gone on to set up a group to give continuous study to the moral aspects of the problem. While this group may not have been 'officially' committed to Buzzard's views, its very existence would suggest that little notice need be taken of Yale's call for the abandonment of tests. Indeed its existence implied that there was something further and more particular to be said on nuclear defence from the Christian point of view as strategic thinking altered. Until the gap in Christian ethics between outright condemnation and occasional use of nuclear weapons was bridged (and Buzzard was aware that he was not bridging it), for Vincent the churches should have only one thing to say about nuclear weapons: abandon them and adopt 'third way' nuclear pacifism. Buzzard's alternative was not so much 'limited disarmament but complete armament with nuclear war as a deterrent' (Vincent to Keighley, 4 November 1957). Vincent's reasoning did little to impress Keighley. To him Vincent's argument rested on several erroneous premises. First, that once the WCC had spoken its message remained permanently relevant. Second, that when the WCC said something all the BCC should do was accept it. Finally, that the WCC Central Committee had really considered the issues represented by the limited war alternative. Vincent's third point was therefore simply not true, nor could he accept either of the other two arguments:

> When the church in these days wants to say something about industry, it normally consults those who know something about industry, before doing it – it has learned better than to pontificate *in vacuo*. Similarly in education and other fields – why not in peace and war, i.e. defence, upon which the churches are liable to pronounce more often than on any other subject. Pace Eric Baker [NPC General Secretary], a considerable number at the Council meeting saw what we were trying to do. I will not discuss strategy with you except to say that you are seriously out of line with a good many people who know what they are talking about. (Keighley to Vincent, 7 November 1957)

Baker and Vincent were not the only people bothered by 'Buzzard's bombshell'. Charles Judd, the Director General of the UN Association of Great Britain and Ireland, began a series of lively letters with Keighley by inquiring whether or not Buzzard had made the impression that reports in peace circles suggested.

For Judd, although it was a 'great relief' to hear that the BCC approved of the Yale statements which 'clearly go far beyond any plea for a restraint of the legal principles of a just war', he requested information on the discussion that followed Buzzard's speech to see if it might cast some light on the inwardness of the decision that followed (i.e. the setting up of a special group). Speaking for himself (as an Association they had not studied Buzzard's proposals) he was 'completely unable to believe that – if once the great powers were involved in war – they would be able to limit themselves to the use of weapons of a certain size. All history suggests the contrary. With whatever good intentions (or wise intentions of self-interest) they started, one nation would always feel obliged to throw in everything it had in its armoury in order to avoid defeat or because it believed (perhaps quite wrongly) that the other side was about to overthrow all such restraints' (Judd to Keighley, 5 November 1957). Keighley was irritated by Judd's criticism. The BCC was only trying to understand what was going on and the issues involved in the real world by discussions with experts. The invitation to Admiral Buzzard was an attempt to begin a process whereby this deficiency could be overcome. It was clear that a great many people, including many Christians, were so 'bemused by the spectre of the hydrogen bomb' that their ability to think clearly had somehow been impaired. Whilst he could well understand the horror caused by any contemplation of what could happen, it would be a clear advantage if the BCC could suggest to Christians that this was not bound to happen and was

not the only kind of war which could happen. The existing paralysis in debate was no good to anyone. In fact it was the Yale statements that were deficient because they tried to survey the whole field of defence rather than singling out one issue. He wondered if it was really true, as Judd had argued, that history suggested that those who go to war 'throw in all they have almost automatically' (Keighley to Judd, 6 November 1957). Judd rose to Keighley's response. He was not in the least puzzled by the fact that in various fields the church had tried to understand what was going on via the use of experts. The more consultation the better; rather what was concerning him was the suggestion that the Council had been so impressed by Buzzard's thesis that minds and consciences were being prepared for a war to be fought with nuclear weapons. This was clearly wrong. First, because once war had started there would be considerable pressure for one or other side to use, for an all-out blow, thermonuclear weapons; second, because military experts would probably admit this; and finally because it seemed to be a betrayal of the Christian faith to set out to condition people's minds to the possibilities of limited nuclear war when the whole effort of the Christian church should surely be to convince every country that they must give the avoidance of war absolute top priority. Judd duly noted that the Yale statements did, as the UN Association had constantly urged, concern itself with the whole problem of disarmament. He agreed that nothing could be gained (and indeed much might be lost) in prohibiting atomic weapons unless it was part of a drastic curtailment of all armaments. Keighley was also quite right to pull him up in his appeal to history – between the wars of extermination there had certainly been more periods of civilised peace when totalitarian wars had not been waged and states had not insisted on unconditional surrender. Did it still follow 'that the chariot, the bow, the cannon, the bombing aeroplane or any other weapon has been deliberately held back by any country when it felt its use would be to its advantage – or, at any rate, that it is possible to think of more than the most infrequent exceptions?' (Judd to Keighley, 8 November 1957).

A second response from Keighley contended that it was quite wrong to hold the impression that the Council had committed itself to Buzzard's thesis. The group had merely been set up to *discuss* the moral aspects with Buzzard and his colleagues. Furthermore, most people would not even share Judd's conviction that a war between the superpowers would inevitably lead to thermonuclear exchange. Different groups of military experts were clearly being consulted. More significantly, however, Keighley strenuously rejected the accusation that the BCC were 'conditioning people's minds to the possibilities of nuclear just war'.

Whilst the Christian position was quite rightly that 'all war is contrary to the spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ' (a lesson the church should never relax from teaching[18]), if the church was to have anything worthwhile to say then 'it must try and say something very practical'. Was it really immoral to gain an ultimate end by a number of steps rather than by one great big and impossible one? To Keighley it seemed that the church was not fulfilling its duty if it simply repeated the mantra that 'all war was contrary to the spirit and teaching of Christ'. What was really needed were some practical steps towards easing tension. This was what the BCC were endeavouring to help achieve. Keighley signed off by concluding: 'I think our difficulty is plainly not understanding the way we each think the church can best act in the present situation. I do not think we have any disagreement as to her ultimate task' (Keighley to Judd, 14 November 1957).

Robert Mackie wrote to Bishop Bell (who had been ill and unable to attend Assembly) informing him of the discussion at the October meeting and of the line being taken. Mackie wanted to say how inexpert he felt with regards to the BCC. He found it quite a different body to the WCC: 'I never know how the discussion is likely to go. Also we meet for such a short time that it is impossible for any issue really to be thrashed out adequately. I am afraid therefore that some people were upset by the handling of the discussion at the last meeting. On the whole, however, I feel that we came out of it a real step forward'. Mackie informed Bell that it was only the lack of discussion time after Buzzard's speech that meant the Yale resolutions were not adequately discussed. He apologised for this, assured Bell no conspiracy was afoot, but felt the BCC had already done what was asked of it by welcoming the resolution and passing it on to government. The real step forward came from Grubb's motion where the International Department was asked to set up a special group of its own members with strategic and political experts (Mackie to Bell, 15 November 1957).

* * *

It was the controversy surrounding the failure to secure a H-bomb test ban, rather than the specific immorality of New Look massive retaliation that brought the BCC to a considered attention of strategic policy. The Council's view since 1946 had given primary attention both to the need to maintain deterrence, and the need to halt nuclear proliferation. This brings into focus the manner with which the BCC approached their task. The International Department was increasingly

relied upon to speak on behalf of the churches. To this extent its officers recognised their potential radically to affect not only the terms with which the nuclear debate was conducted, but perhaps also the attitudes of the individual churches for whom they spoke. It would be difficult to underestimate the department's responsibility on these terms. Yet the impression is that the International Department had begun as an amalgamation of several interests, like the Council as a whole, and had become more cautious with the passage of the Cold War. The Council's officers concluded that a constructive nuclear policy offered the most politically sensitive yet ethical alternative to an unpalatable situation. For these reasons Rear Admiral Sir Anthony Buzzard was invited into BCC circles. A more considered approach from the BCC certainly began with Buzzard presenting his limited war thesis to the Council meeting of October 1957.

Buzzard introduced to the BCC the novel idea that nuclear weapons on their own would not deter but that they could, nonetheless, be part of a Christian just war approach. He advocated both the retention of nuclear weapons and a more credible strategy for their use if deterrence should fail. While Buzzard avowed that a nuclear capability did not necessarily mean nuclear weapons would be used if deterrence failed this, of course, was a matter of political judgement. To counter his proposition with the argument that there was no adequate defence against nuclear weapons was really to miss the point. Buzzard's realism was not separated from the Manichean avocation of massive retaliation through moral evaluation alone but by, and more fundamentally, an understanding of the nature of war itself. To Buzzard acts of thermonuclear or strategic violence simply surpassed the boundaries of war as rational activity. But his de facto claim that a war waged with tactical or non-thermonuclear devices could be rational began with the assumption that the avoidance of nuclear confrontation was not necessarily a top priority. It was tantamount to the demand that in the total war scenario Soviet cities would be held hostage and used as bargaining levers to bring about the termination of conflict (Groom, 1974). Buzzard's speech made a dramatic impact on BCC attitudes. Its main corollary was that the International Department was charged to set up a special group to give continuous study to the moral aspects of the defence and disarmament problem. It also meant that the significance of the Yale resolutions was not properly addressed by the BCC.

7
Strategies for Survival

On 14 November 1957 Robert Mackie, the International Department chair, together with Kenneth Slack (BCC general secretary) and Alan Keighley (DIA secretary) met to discuss the Council's October request that the 'International Department set up a special group from its own membership and from people related to defence policy which would give continuous study to the moral aspects of the disarmament problem and of defence policy in the light of nuclear armament'. Here Mackie entrusted Keighley and Slack with the task of formation. Keighley (who became secretary) and Slack quickly recruited Admiral Buzzard's friend Alan Booth (London Secretary of the CCIA), the experienced Rev. Dr Norman Goodall (Secretary of the Joint Committee of the IMC and the WCC), and Canon Herbert Waddams (General Secretary of the Church of England's Council on Foreign Relations) as a staff team.[1] Buzzard's mission statement had succeeded, as *The Times* (23 October 1957) averred, in having a 'stunning effect' on Council's attitudes. It was the catalyst that turned the BCC to consider views that appreciated 'the complexity of the problems facing those concerned with defence' (DIAM, 10 December 1957). The emergent International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) particularly welcomed the focusing of Christian judgement in this area. From the start Robert Mackie, as chair of the group, keenly felt the need to be mindful of the views of those who thought the BCC had been brought into disrepute by creating a new committee with a remit that put matters of defence before disarmament. A strong statement about the avoidance of war was intended to preface any action: 'I always take this for granted, but now I see that lots of people think you have forgotten if you do not restate it'. The group would consequently aim to build on the Yale statements by endorsing an immediate test ban. This would reflect both the depth of feeling surrounding Admiral Buzzard's paper, and be

an attempt made to remedy the lack of BCC discussion on Yale. Buzzard's call to halt the arms race regarding thermonuclear (i.e. total war) weapons was for him 'his best point' and therefore the most effective way forward. Although Mackie didn't condone the limited war thesis as such, he did think Buzzard's approach useful in discussing how the just war tradition might be upheld in the nuclear age. For Mackie this approach did not preclude contrary points of view. This meant giving some sort of answer to the King-Halls and the Priestleys (i.e. radical unilateralists).[2] Yet such contributions were thought to be compatible with, not mutually exclusive to, Buzzard's limited war thesis. Whilst Mackie believed tension between traditions was not insurmountable it was felt, nonetheless, that the sum of these contributions did raise the key issue as to whether Christians were fated to become 'pacifists or cynics'. To generate answers here would be the 'real job and the place where they should try to help those involved in the defence of our country'. Such a task could not by its nature be carried out in abstract terms and something ought to be said about the strategy of not being engulfed by world communism. Yet the BCC, acting as national representatives of an international ecumenical body, needed to be careful (Mackie to Keighley, 19 November 1957).

Mackie's sensitivities were reaffirmed when the Protestant Churches of Czechoslovakia, like the BCC a WCC Associated Council, passed a resolution in early December 1957 challenging western Christians to join them in the condemnation and rejection of *all* nuclear weapons including their testing (National Conference of Church Workers, 3–4 December 1957). Mackie found it was not just church leaders from behind the Iron Curtain who held such sentiments. The Executive of Manchester, Salford and District Council of Churches (a BCC constituent) drove for similar activism by the British Council. The Executive abhorred war as a means of international policy and called upon Christian people in both East and West to impress upon their states the need to resolve the issues that divided the world by peaceful means. It commended to 'the attention of member churches the urgent and important questions raised by present campaigns for nuclear disarmament and urges Christians to make known a responsible political choice between specific policies leading towards the abolition of weapons of mass destruction'.

Recruitment begins

In accordance with the Assembly's request, and following Mackie's initial thoughts, the study group's staff team began their recruitment drive. Although Slack, Goodall and Waddams were all officers, the

actual task of finding membership fell largely to an inner circle of the two Alans: Keighley and Booth. It was they who determined that a balanced group of five or six people (representing the various schools of strategic thinking) was needed to speak on behalf of those related to defence policy. Admiral Buzzard appears as the first and obvious choice. Sir Anthony suggested that the special group only needed his limited war camp follower Michael Howard, lecturer (later Professor) in War Studies at King's College and himself as defence experts.[3] Buzzard was of the opinion that he and Howard would be the only strategists prepared to be permanent members although others might come to single meetings to act as witnesses. Not surprisingly this made it desirable to have one other permanent member from outside the Admiral's circle. Booth thought that among his correspondents, the only credible possibility was the unavailable Alastair Buchan – defence correspondent at *The Observer* (also a Buzzard sympathiser). Mackie was alarmed that the limited war approach alone was considered sufficient expertise. He had already stressed the need for diversity of view and, although not ruling out Buzzard's thesis, was keen that there should be some expert who disagreed with it. Booth reassured Mackie that Howard was not a 'Buzzardist' but Mackie felt their differences to be slight. Mackie was sure that 'if we can't get that [an opposite view to Buzzard] I'm inclined to soft-pedal. This is not to stop us doing what we are doing but to warn us that we must not appear to have fallen into a trap' (Keighley to Mackie, 27 November 1957). Keighley had, however, succeeded in recruiting the Labour MP Geoffrey de Freitas (an ex-junior defence minister from Attlee's government) and a military writer for *The Economist,* Roy Lewis. This meant for Booth at least, that Mackie's concerns could be satisfied. Mackie was not convinced. For him sufficient ideological balancing could only be achieved if George Bell joined the group. The inclusion of Chichester, although potentially promising in creating a balance with the Buzzardists, was by no means popular with the staff team.

As we have seen in earlier chapters Bishop Bell, whilst not a pacifist, had become a stout advocate of 'third way' nuclear pacifism. Robert Mackie soon found himself under considerable pressure from the Bishop not to let the group even discuss the Buzzard thesis lest it deviate them from pure disarmament arguments. For Bell the real challenge lay not in discovering ways in which Buzzard's thesis could be transformed into a Christian nuclear judgement on defence, but crucially in securing specific policies that would lead to nuclear disarmament. Differences between Buzzard and Bell were qualitative rather than quantitative

and ones not reconciled by easy talk. Buzzard's approach, after all, put defence first and called for multilateral approaches to disarmament as a consequential second. Bell's attitudes were driven by a fear that the churches would end up in a position where they were officially condoning the use of nuclear force. And by his understanding of what had happened when Buzzard's paper had been presented to the BCC in October. The Bishop shared the disappointment of those who thought attention had already been diverted from the Yale suggestions for uni-lateral action. A Quaker delegate from the Council meeting, Margaret Hobling, had reaffirmed Bell's impression by urging the staff team to be cautious in their programme and remember well that there was still some anguish in BCC circles regarding the time already devoted to Buzzard's thesis. Council delegates were particularly disappointed that subsequent constraints had prevented a BCC statement being prepared which could have been forwarded to the British government, independently of the Yale suggestion already submitted (Keighley to Mackie, 27 November 1957). It was Alan Keighley's contention, however, that the Council officers who were present at Yale had spoken to him with a sense of relief that the BCC were no longer talking in general principles, but seeking with the help of the new group to find out what actually was happening:

> Admittedly it [the Yale statement debate] was not a good discussion. I find it very difficult to see how you can get a good discussion on such complex and vital matters in such hurried meetings. My particular disappointment was in the letters I received from Central Committee [i.e. WCC] members. It was pretty clear that few of them saw that voting for the resolution in Yale implied serious consideration of what the churches in this country should do. It confirms me in my opinion that resolutions of that kind have a soporific effect upon the churches, and no effect at all upon the governments. (Keighley to Bell, 4 December 1957)

Those present at the WCC Central Committee had spoken of a long and often difficult discussion that had occurred before their August 1957 resolution. For Keighley it would have been clearly irresponsible of the BCC, without going through a similar exercise, to seek to have anything of its own to add. Keighley's correspondence shows him to be a practical man who wanted to wake the churches from their languor by offering government constructive advice. In this regard Buzzard's proposals not only sought to close the gap between church opinion and the formation

of defence policy, but permitted the churches (by means of the study group) to give serious consideration to defence issues in a way they had not done before. As secretary he saw his task as helping the churches formulate a joint and informed policy on nuclear matters and saw little tension between approaches that put defence first and those more concerned with disarmament.

With regard to Admiral Buzzard's gradualism, Keighley thought that his presence at Council and in the group 'does not of course mean that in any sense we have adopted his thesis'. The time devoted to Buzzard's paper was simply testimony to its intellectual coherence, not its widespread validity. His value was that of a Christian lay member trying to relate religious teaching to the problems with which he was involved. Keighley was well aware that different church leaders were saying different things and thought this made it difficult to help the Council (through the group) speak with considered judgement. This did not mean that Keighley was himself driven to support the limited war line. Like Mackie, Keighley saw distance between Buzzard and Bell as differences of means rather than of ends. It was these considerations that shaped Keighley's attitude to Bell. While Keighley tried to reassure Bell about the group's impartiality towards limited war and gradualist strategy, Alan Booth was more confrontational and rather less diplomatic. Booth saw Bell's very intervention as unwarranted and was convinced it was an attempt to sabotage the group's work before it began. He asked: 'Is he [Bell] trying to sink the ship?' (Booth to Mackie, 4 December 1957). When Sir Kenneth Grubb, chair of the CCIA (who along with Bell and Norman Goodall helped produce *The Era of Atomic Power* in 1946) was recruited, he too buttressed the views of Booth.[4] Grubb used his influence, particularly as ex-chair of the International Department (1947–56), to persuade Mackie not to listen unduly to the Bishop.

Soon after Sir Kenneth Grubb was recruited, Dr Kenneth Johnstone (Chair of the Christian Frontier Council), and the Rev. Edward Rogers (General Secretary of the Methodist Conference's Christian Citizenship Department) were approached and recruited.[5] It was then decided that the group needed a representative theologian to balance the military experts. This posed problems.[6] The first choice was Alec Vidler the respected Cambridge theologian and editor of the Anglican journal *Theology*.[7] When Vidler refused, Professor Alan Richardson was approached; when Richardson declined, an invitation to the Rev. Daniel Jenkins, Chicago Professor of Theology, was forwarded.[8] The group was relieved when Jenkins accepted the invitation, and turned to a Dr Alasdair MacIntyre, a lecturer (later Professor) at Leeds and publisher

of *Marxism and Christianity* (1953) to add necessary philosophical depth and rigour. Although MacIntyre was hesitant for both political and moral reasons – his politics radical and his attitude to nuclear weapons pacifist – he accepted to become Bell's main ally in the group (MacIntyre to Keighley, 19 April 1958).

Keighley and Booth then turned their sights to the recruitment of an expert in international law – a practical necessity if Buzzard's first proposal (the restating of the just war theory) was to be acted upon in a professional manner. Gerald Draper, lecturer at King's College, was approached but rejected overtures with a fierce attack on what he saw as the BCC's subservience to defence following Buzzard's address and the failure to act on the Yale statements. This skirmish is worth outlining as it highlights the general problems the group had in being taken as a serious and 'open minded' concern. Draper sardonically declared that war had been a respectable Christian activity since the conversion of the Emperor Constantine and wondered why nuclear war should present any particular difficulty. He questioned the group's *raison d'être* and doubted that the issues before it really created new problems. For Draper the churches had found little difficulty in anathematising sexual deviation, so let them apply the same logic because 'the history of the church might be the long war on sex and the long peace with war' (Draper to Keighley, 24 January 1958).

The National Peace Council were, however, keen to offer their services. Eric Baker, NPC General Secretary, approached Keighley suggesting that the Group's work would benefit from close contacts, formal or otherwise (Baker to Keighley, 13 January 1958). He wondered whether the group might bring in Kenneth Ingram, a well-known freelance author and respected Anglican lay member. (Ingram, vice-chair of the Peace Council, was a 'third way' nuclear pacifist like Bell and MacIntyre.[9]) Keighley initially seemed quite sympathetic to this suggestion but following consultation with Booth, rejected Baker's overtures.[10] It was argued that as the BCC regarded itself as a consultative body of its member churches, the question of relations with the NPC was a matter for each church to decide for itself (Keighley to Baker, 22 January 1958). Although the stated reasons for refusing the NPC's offer seem reasonable enough, it is also true that Ingram's exclusion served to strengthen the established bias in the group that would allow considerable development of the Buzzard line. By February 1958 the group's officers were at one in agreeing that a sufficiently balanced membership had been achieved. This meant there were 16 group members: Robert Mackie (chair), Bishop Bell, Alan Booth, Admiral Buzzard, Geoffrey

de Freitas MP, Rev. Dr Goodall, Sir Kenneth Grubb, Michael Howard, Rev. Dr Jenkins, Dr Ken Johnstone, Roy Lewis, Alasdair MacIntyre, Rev. Rogers, Canon Waddams, Kenneth Slack and Alan Keighley (secretary). The membership was essentially one of ecumenical insiders and people actively related to the formation of defence (as opposed to disarmament) policy.

Escaping Hiroshima or Belsen

The first meeting of the Study Group on the Moral Aspects of Disarmament was held on 11 December 1957 in the BCC's London headquarters. Robert Mackie reminded the group that its terms of reference were to advise the BCC from time to time, and not produce a single, lengthy report. This initial consultation inclined to suggest that the real problem created by the dilemma of nuclear war was not in determining how evil war was, but rather in how to tackle the injustice that lay behind it. There was consensus on the Augustinian dictum that the realm of war was necessarily the realm of evil and that all war was contrary to the spirit, teaching and purpose of Jesus Christ. The ultimate goal for all Christians was to avoid war and help achieve total disarmament. But in contradistinction to the 'third way', differences between approaches were seen as those of means rather than of ends. This was so because all traditions that began with a presumption against war only disagreed as to whether war should be considered a necessary evil. In short, and not surprisingly, the group could not reach agreement as to whether nuclear weapons were different in kind or degree. Whilst all accepted 'total destruction' was a distinct possibility, lack of agreement as to whether nuclear weapons made the issues qualitatively or quantitatively different made it impossible to demand a radical rethink. It was decided that the group's task best be discharged by rejecting this dilemma between 'Hiroshima or Belsen'. That is, the circumstances in which nuclear war should be endured, and the point at which Christians should think it preferable to submit rather than go to war. The way forward, therefore, was not between Hiroshima or Belsen but rather how justice could be upheld and minor aggression prevented or resisted without the risk of humanity's total destruction. Was war to be viewed as the ultimate evil? Was communism a threat to the soul as well as body? The Soviet challenge was not just a threat of territorial aggression, but one that would result in western Christendom being engulfed by an anti-Christian system and ideology (SGM, 11 December 1957).

Following this somewhat Manichean contextualisation, it was only logical for the group to consider what attitude Christians should hold towards potential aggression. A hysterical competitiveness with the Soviets was clearly wrong and it was agreed that the division between East and West was relative. Echoing George Kennan's Reith Lecture sentiments, the West should also be grateful that the Russians were making progress.[11] Christians must work to enable the conditions in which it was seen as worthwhile to maintain balances of power rather than disrupting them. This task involved taking account of the psychological difficulty of convincing the East that the West had a sincere desire for peace. It also required a modification in the fear and lack of understanding which were prevalent in Christian attitudes towards communism. The problems raised by thinking about the Soviet threat were, nonetheless, still seen in terms of defence rather than arguments for and against disarmament. The consensus accepted that discussions of defence logically preceded discussions of disarmament because the latter was based on the former. It was this approach that was necessary in order to discover a distinctively Christian contribution. But it was also the approach that Bishop Bell had tried hard to prevent. Here the debate could smoothly move beyond disarmament to Buzzard's realist analysis of the strategic implications of the contemporary balance of power. This meant discussing the likely impact of gestures such as the unilateral suspension or cessation of tests. Buzzard and Howard stressed that, in this regard, the government's strategy of massive retaliation was having a detrimental effect on Britain's military credibility. Here the H-bomb was seen as a consequence, not so much morally repugnant, as strategically irresponsible. Policy-makers needed to realise that there was no need, from a strict military point of view, to be always a step ahead of other powers (still less to possess the ultimate deterrent – the H-bomb) in order to be in a position to make major aggression not worthwhile. There was, therefore, no need to continue hydrogen bomb testing because NATO powers could afford to suspend tests (unilaterally if necessary) without losing the power of deterrence. Yet nuclear deterrence would still form the appropriate basis for British defence. The unilateral action advocated here was not the same unilateral action demanded by Bell and MacIntyre. When Buzzard and his supporters talked of 'unilateralism' they didn't mean that just Britain should renounce but rather that the gesture would be a large step that would materially lower tension and provide some ground for hope in particular and specific circumstances.[12] The meeting concluded with the question raised as to what end product was desirable from such discussion. The group's

remit was not to produce a report in order to inform British public, or even Christian opinion. At this time it was felt highly unlikely that the group's discussions would result in producing a sizeable pamphlet. The purpose of the committee was to produce considered judgements on which they could advise the Council from time to time. In this respect the Council was the only audience the group was supposedly concerned with. Nevertheless, it was still necessary to decide how 'considered judgements' be presented to Council frequently enough to ensure that the two bodies did not get out of step. No answer was given to this outstanding logistical problem. At the end of the first meeting Mackie suggested it would be useful to invite Dr Robert Bilheimer, Associate General Secretary of the WCC, to the next meeting in order to outline one possible ecumenical approach to Christian thinking about nuclear weapons.[13] The second meeting of the study group on 17 February 1958 was largely dominated by Bilheimer's contribution.

For Bilheimer the basic problem created by nuclear power was essentially scientific rather than political. Science was an impersonal but dynamic process. Each process was inherently dynamic because each new discovery inevitably led to the next advance. This dynamic was also irreversible – once a scientific or technological discovery was made it could not be ignored. Whilst the impersonal processes of science and technology were neutral they were made ambiguous by the human responses they elicited and all too often these attitudes appeared idolatrous. Because Christians had not established the right relationship with science and technology they had become captive to, rather than controller of, productive forces. For Bilheimer, the appropriate Christian response should be a 'Yes' to science and technology but a 'No' to the idolatry of science and technology. This was because first and foremost scientific and technological processes were indiscriminate. It was this indiscrimination that made total war possible. But the Christian faith was able to counter this with a gospel of discriminateness. The appropriate response was a 'Yes' to the discriminate use of science and technology, but a 'No' to their indiscriminate use. The working out of the appropriate relationship between science and humanity thus raised practical issues. First: nuclear war. Here the Christian was asked to say 'No' to the indiscriminate use of destructive power, but 'Yes' to all efforts towards securing a limitation of indiscriminate power. Such discrimination was particularly relevant to the task of negotiation, to the justification of the use of force, and even the selection of objectives and targets in war. Second: power. Christians were obliged to say 'No' to all forms of centralised power, and 'Yes' to all forms of decentralised power.

This should be a key factor, for example, in Christian attitudes towards the UN and totalitarianism in its various forms. Third: resistance to evil. The Christian should say 'Yes' to the resistance of evil by any discriminate means, but 'No' to the resistance of evil by indiscriminate means. Finally: just society. The Christian was obliged to say 'Yes' to all efforts to create and instigate justice, but 'No' to injustice whatever its form. In sum, the appropriate Christian response to science and technology required the progressive anticipation of human needs but not necessarily the preservation of the status quo.

Bilheimer's paper provoked a lengthy and vigorous, if somewhat unsatisfactory discussion. It is unfortunate that surviving records do not attribute the ensuing debate to particular individuals. Yet the discussion is still revealing as to the drift of opinion and gives indication of the group's true temper. The first issues dealt with concerned the nature of centralised power. It was held that the control of nuclear weapons, which many Christians supported, did indeed imply a form of undemocratic centralised power. The real issue was whether control over a particular concentration of power needed to be centralised or not. In the West the diffusing of political power compensated against a necessary concentration of scientific power. In contradistinction to Bilheimer's Actonian thesis that 'all power corrupts', power in itself was amoral. Corruption only occurred when power was used irresponsibly. Ambiguity was also found in Bilheimer's treatment of science. Indiscriminateness was in reality a personal attribute and one not applicable to science as such. Confusion only lay in the use of science by human agents. This meant political factors were no less important than scientific factors. Whilst the autodynamism of science was not disputed, political factors determined the attitude of those who decided on the uses of science and technology. Of all Bilheimer's theses, it was his interpretation of Christian responsibility that provoked most discussion. What was the correct Christian response? Was there one? Were there not some areas in which a specifically Christian contribution was not required? The key question raised was how Christians could live in a divided world, under the shadow of the H-bomb, while reducing international tension. This was particularly so because a fixation on the H-bomb existed and the H-bomb, although very unlikely to be used, induced a paralysis of thought. While Bilheimer took account of the unity of God, the relevance of his ideas to the whole doctrine of humanity's redemption were not made clear. It was little wonder that Christian moral thinking of this type was indistinguishable from liberal secular morality. A strong and clearly directed Christian contribution

was noticeable by its absence. The most exigent issue was thus how to incorporate the question of Christian responsibility in terms of scientific, technological, and political processes (SGM, 17 February 1958).

Mackie's appeal to his staff team

By the end of February 1958 Robert Mackie was feeling increasingly dissatisfied with his commission. Despite Bilheimer's thoughtful contribution, the resulting discussion had left him feeling unsure of the direction in which the group should be led and both politically and theologically incompetent to guide it. Up to this point the committee's activities had evolved in a vague and uncertain way, acting neither with a sense of unity, nor being driven in a purposeful direction. All that seemed to have been agreed upon was the questionable decision to escape from the so-called Hiroshima–Belsen dichotomy while pursuing Buzzard's thesis. This state of affairs was clearly a product of the imprecise terms of the BCC resolution that had commissioned the group in the first instance. Mackie felt it no longer possible to avoid questioning the usefulness of the group and called for immediate efforts to achieve a clarification of aims. To this end he anxiously wrote to the group's staff team (Slack, Keighley, Booth, Goodall, Waddams) requesting frank comments in order to determine how forthcoming meetings be conducted, and what they should be aiming to achieve (Mackie to Staff Team, 21 February 1958). Mackie found the work hard going and found the group's lack of solidarity a particularly obvious problem.[14] This lack of cohesion presented itself in two main ways: first, members did not know each other's minds, and yet were required to tackle a sensitive subject; and second, resulting analysis was neither directed nor sufficiently deep. Despite this three lines of possible inquiry now presented themselves for more serious discussion.

First, limited war. Buzzard had communicated to Mackie his concern that the profitability of this theme had been somewhat diminished in the eyes of many by the Soviet's 2 February 1958 offer to suspend nuclear tests, if the USA and Britain did likewise.[15] Yet Buzzard was convinced that people were being fooled into thinking that somehow there was now less danger of a nuclear exchange. Not enough consideration was being given to those with a massive retaliation 'trigger-happy' mentality. With this in mind Buzzard suggested the group might pronounce upon two tenable attitudes towards war. The Christian pacifist attitude, defined as acceptable personally but not practical for governments. (No differentiation being made between absolute and nuclear pacifism.)

And the Christian non-pacifist alternative: just war where war is acceptable only where the cause is 'just', aims are limited and where means are proportionate. Buzzard thought that the H-bomb needed much more analysis in this context because it brought to bear new moral factors different in kind and discrimination. For Mackie, Buzzard's ideas of limitation needed further consideration and would benefit by being linked to Bilheimer's ideas of discrimination:

> My mind is yet quite open as to whether the limited warfare theory holds water or not. I suspect the enthusiasm of those who advocate it, but I also suspect the rather quick way in which some people turn it down. There is a real issue here. My trouble is whether it is the actual issue on which we should be concentrating at this moment. My guess is that by the April [1958] Council meeting, Christian opinion will be concerned with politics rather than with armaments. (Mackie to Staff Team, 21 February 1958)

The second possible area for group discussion was East and West relations. Mackie's hunch was that the group should prepare itself with relevant statements as to the course that they believed the government should pursue at summit meetings. Whilst he didn't pretend that any definitive statement could be prepared, he did think that by working ahead the group could develop some leads which could be introduced in a speech at the Council's spring Assembly meeting. Mackie's main fear was that if, as he thought best, only military strategy was dealt with in the next meeting Buzzard, Howard, and Lewis would quickly lose interest. Mackie did not want to lose this 'defence interest'. For Mackie the third area of profitable inquiry for the group could be on deeper eschatological and theological issues. His personal feeling was that the group had too readily escaped from estimating the 'demonic character' of nuclear knowledge. Mackie was also sure that it was pretty useless to indulge in any form of clever conversation without some profound discussion of Biblical realities beforehand. As soon as the group began to discuss the real nature of power in any given situation they immediately found themselves thrown back upon their Christian faith. Here Mackie hoped the theological expertise of the Rev. Dr Norman Goodall and the Rev. Dr Daniel Jenkins could bring forth important points to bear:

> There is a sense in which more reflective Christians can help the rest of us greatly. On the other hand, we verge for a time on the suggestion that Christian theology is a body of knowledge and principles,

which can be referred to without the individual on every occasion being personally engaged. I think personally that some disservice has been done by people who have suggested that the nuclear age brings new moral problems. That seems to me nonsense. The moral problems are those we find in the Bible, but they have been given a new and difficult setting. There is sometimes a suggestion that those of us who are not pacifists, can be wafted into a pacifist position by nuclear energy without having to make the essential personal decisions required. This curious hesitation of the Christian church in face of new factors seems to me to weaken its influence greatly. Is there any hope of our picking out a few fundamental considerations, which seem unusually apposite at this particular moment of history, but are not new theological solutions of a new problem? (Mackie to Staff Team, 21 February 1958)

Mackie's plea for guidance met with various suggestions from his staff team. Canon Waddams believed that the problems raised by the group were essentially philosophical ones concerning the nature of guidance and revelation. Although Christians were well prepared to tackle political problems if they chose to (because their faith made them realistic) this still did not mean that one Christian method could or should be utilised. For Waddams there was only one important question for British Christians to pursue: deciding on the appropriate but general attitude of Britain to international affairs.[16] It was guidance on this matter that was most likely to prevent war and ensure peace. The legitimacy of pacifist or non-pacifist witness was not the issue. Whether a specifically Christian judgement could be brought to bear on this was simply too difficult a question to answer. Waddams' clear exposition of the Oldham middle axioms approach to Christian social ethics suggested that no ecclesiastical organisation could, or should, attempt to provide specific answers. Because of this the Canon felt the group incapable of reaching any decisive answer vis-à-vis the Buzzard hypothesis. The group's main task should consequently be to encourage Christian citizens to discuss the issues and contribute in only a general sense to the debate. In short, Waddams thought the question of authority, who speaks for whom, was uppermost here:

… it would be quite wrong for the churches as such, whether individually or through the BCC or its International Department, to try to answer the question definitely because by doing so they would imply a claim to special guidance and knowledge which they have

not in fact got. I find myself driven to the inexorable conclusion that the most which such a group as ourselves could or ought to do is to set out clearly and succinctly the problems about which the discussion ought to take place, and to recommend Christians to make their own contributions to this discussion in whatever way is available to them. (Waddams to Mackie, 24 February 1958)

As General Secretary of the Church of England's Council on Foreign Relations, Waddams was only too aware of the nature of the nuclear dilemma. His approach stands in contrast with the attitude of the group's most reluctant officer, Norman Goodall, who despite his reservations had a clear direction for Mackie.

For Goodall it was essential first and foremost to determine how the group saw its task in the wider setting. Clarifying this would involve understanding the government position, Christian thinking, and what the BCC may wish to have said. Knowledge of these issues would make it easier to reach agreement over future direction. Once attitudes were clarified there were several practical steps, not necessarily mutually exclusive, that could be taken. First, the Group could press the BCC to pass a resolution urging the government to take a particular view. This was the situation, as Goodall understood it, most likely at present. Second, they could bring forward a statement (about 1000 words long) that might help enlighten Christian public opinion as to what the Council thought individual churches should be doing in the present climate. Third, the group could accept Buzzard's approach. This would involve the presentation of a thesis. Such a presentation should be by someone who knew the BCC and thereby had a realistic understanding of the possible lines the Council might take. This would have the added benefit of focusing discussion and preventing someone from 'leading off' on a different agenda. Goodall's fourth and final recommendation was for the group to discuss why some defence experts still thought massive retaliation and the case for the Great Deterrent still valid. This would essentially involve a discussion of the government's view as outlined in the latest White Paper: *Report on Defence: Britain's Contribution to Peace and Security* (Cmnd. 363, 1958).[17]

This final suggestion had become particularly relevant and immediate. George Brown, the Opposition spokesperson on defence, had just delivered an important indictment of Conservative policy in the Commons.[18] Brown had complained that the government had no military means for dealing with anything between a border incident and all-out thermonuclear war. In effect the British state was relying too

much on the H-bomb. Brown's response was to call for the immediate development of tactical nuclear weapons to remedy the situation. A sentiment *The Manchester Guardian* (27 February 1958), for example, thought was a 'grave mistake' for the Labour Party to encourage. What Goodall thought could be done here was a clear response from the group that would involve various political, moral and theological arguments (Goodall to Mackie, 26 February 1958).

A way forward

As a consequence of Mackie's appeal certain decisions were made. Mackie rejected Canon Waddams' call to rely on middle axioms and not produce nuclear policy. Anthony Buzzard was then asked to write a paper elaborating what was involved in maintaining the balance of power, the possible consequences of a British unilateral suspension or cessation of tests, and to discuss the specifics of a nuclear just war. Here Goodall's suggestions could be accounted for. Finally, Alan Booth was asked to develop a paper outlining the main issues at stake in the East–West conflict.

Admiral Buzzard's task was accomplished and presented as a short paper, 'Notes on Western Defence and Disarmament Policy', at the third meeting of the study group on 5 March 1958. He suggested several areas of discussion relevant to the concern of the churches. These were the means with which the West would wage war, the ways in which war could be avoided, and the potential for unilateral action. For Buzzard the West talked of modern war far too easily. It was important not to forget that war should only be considered as a last resort – as an action to uphold justice. If war was engaged, the means utilised should always be proportionate to the ends sought. It was necessary, therefore, to remember that former conceptions of victory were now no longer tenable – the invention of nuclear weapons meant there must be a readiness to return to negotiation at all times. The inescapable conclusion of this was the need to develop ways in which the West could avoid the possibility of nuclear genocide when dealing with a limited issue. Such a scenario nonetheless presented certain possibilities for unilateral action. It was necessary for the West to accept the stalemate on the level of total war and relax the race for H-bombs. This meant accepting the adequacy of the present deterrent. From there it was possible to conclude that H-bomb tests were not essential for the development of tactical nuclear weapons. The West, Britain specifically, with the support of the churches should thus call for the unilateral suspension of

hydrogen bomb testing. The West could then state that it would never be the first to use H-bombs. This amounted to the churches calling for the adoption of a no-first-use policy for strategic weapons.

The paper on East–West relations written by Booth began with the assertion that the conflict between East and West was irreconcilable.[19] This was because both liberal democracy and communism were political systems that demanded total victory. Victory was not necessarily to be envisaged in military terms but it was necessarily a spiritual and ideological war: 'It is true to say that the East/West conflict, in God's sight, is a conflict of greys, not of black and white … The issue we seek is one in which both sides, no doubt in varying degrees, allow themselves to be changed creatively by their impact on one another'. Even though the conflict was without an absolute significance this did not mean that it was without any significance. The task of Christians was to expose the pride and self-righteousness that led states to describe their enemies in wholly negative terms. The West was morally predisposed to recognise the partnership of the East in working out human destiny. What was needed was not just time for repentance, but a resolute refusal to surrender those good gifts that have been entrusted to western societies. Liberal democracy must refine, under communist criticism, an understanding of what the West was charged to preserve. A consequence of this would be the development, in western public psyche, of a steadfast willingness to resist invasion and destruction. Total surrender to the West's enemies, total capitulation to the communist way of thinking, could never be envisaged. The constant witness of the church, however, was needed to guard against the temptation to absolutise the conflict. The church was vital in reminding people that God was judge of all states and content with none. The significance of this was that first, militarily speaking, Booth saw a Christian obligation to ensure the communist world was not destroyed ('We are responsible for our enemy's welfare'). Second, as far as Booth understood providence, the West had a responsibility to preserve those 'good gifts' God had given it. This meant not letting the West be destroyed wantonly by states that did not share the same values. In essence the West and the Christian churches should 'aim to parley':

> But the parley is not simply about a *modus vivendi* – it must by one means or another be directed towards humanity's common problems: the problems of emerging industrial societies; the sharing of riches of skill, knowledge and wealth with underdeveloped countries; and the means of enabling man to live as man in highly organised societies. (Booth, *East/West – A Theological Comment*)

Booth expanded these most Augustinian-like themes in a comprehensive letter to Ray Stagles, a peace activist and nuclear pacifist, who had called on the study group to have the courage to locate their attitude to the H-bomb on two levels: on one hand by supporting calls for the abolition of the Bomb as 'absolute principle'; and on the other, to see its abolition as a practical 'first step' towards global disarmament. In the first instance Booth rejected the implication that the acceptance of the H-bomb as a deterrent implied envisaging an occasion when it should be used. Whilst Booth accepted there was no conceivable situation in which use of it could be justified, he nevertheless felt that seeing the argument in terms of pure 'human cost' was spurious:

> The continuance of human history is not a prime priority is it? Some of the noblest acts of men have meant the acceptance of death and destruction rather than the betrayal of a principle. So we must not make mere continuance of life on this planet a sole consideration. Is resistance to communism worse than surrender? Is vast destruction worse than the domination of minds and spirits by a political machine and view capable of shutting out man's true humanity? (Booth to Stagles, 31 January 1958)

Despite such a seemingly cavalier disregard Booth, on one level, was not trying to be 'practicable'. He was not interested in assessing what action public opinion could be persuaded to accept but thinking of what the group, as Christian representatives, should be condoning or condemning. Yet the logic of his argument moved him away from 'absolute principles' towards calculations of consequences. Booth believed that a church that abandoned concern for defence must be prepared to face the consequences and surrender to communism. For him this was unacceptable. Nevertheless 'enough is plenty, you cannot kill a nation deader than dead' and in this regard stopping H-bomb tests and refusing to participate in an endless arms race was a policy worth pursuing, although he sympathised with technical objections – the need for better bombs, better systems of delivery, etc.: 'The logic is sound, but the race is endless. That is why I think there is a chance to call a halt'. This letter gives us a good insight into Booth's view on the purpose of the churches, and the study group, in this debate. For Booth the church's task was clear. He complains bitterly of ecclesiastical authorities always 'scolding the state' with their 'Jesus fetish' and offering no constructive alternative. What Booth wanted to determine was did the church really mean business? He was critical in two ways: the first over the

'cheapness' of church action. For him resolutions and speeches 'cost' nothing. When the German church took a stand against Hitler, it was costly – and so it was heard. In short: 'If it is really going to proclaim God's word of judgement and start men on a new way, what money, time and imagination does it offer?' The problem with contemporary Christian thinking was that the time devoted to arms racing and nuclear warfare was infinitesimal compared to the time given by journalists, the armed services and politicians. Because politicians were only too aware of how little time the churches were giving to the matters they pronounced upon, they were ignored. The group's task, therefore, must be to restore professional credibility. Busy schedules were not an excuse for insufficient analysis. The point for Booth was that 'if you have not the time, you must keep quiet, and if you feel bound to speak you must talk sense. It is tempting to try to side-step this costly business by being "prophetic", but it is phoney prophecy'. To Booth unilateralism was costly, too costly because it would be tantamount to inviting Soviet occupation. The 'third way' had thus emerged from a minimum of study. Booth's avowed aim was for the group to be both considered and constructive regarding defence. This meant freeing the churches from the dilemma posed by Hiroshima and Belsen. Although the communists should be resisted because there was little alternative (save occupation) he wanted to find 'safeguards' to prevent a nuclear exchange as quickly as possible. In this sense he was willing to bet hydrogen bombs would not be used, except as a result of miscalculations. The appropriate attitude for the West to take was thus: 'keep it [the H-bomb] and let it cancel itself out – but try to stop any further development of it'. The West could afford limited unilateral action here; even more, the UK could.

Booth thought the West needed to ensure the global military stalemate, the balance of power, but in a way that reduced reliance on nuclear weapons. For him this meant increasing defence budgets and reintroducing conscription. This was important because the government saw nuclear weapons as the essential means with which to pay for their pledge to end conscription: 'somehow the West has to escape from preoccupation with its own standard of living and be prepared to resume the hard road of helping the rest of mankind much more effectively'. This last argument would figure strongly in subsequent group discussions. Booth's sincerity comes through. He believed passionately that the church needed to respond ecumenically to secular issues in a serious, professional, and considered way: 'The odd speech or resolution is not enough – it needs something more resolute, corporate, and substantial … somehow we have got to get round the elevation

of amateurish opinion to false importance by the device of labelling it "Christian"' (Booth to Stagles, 31 January 1958). For him, the Buzzard thesis and a nuclear just war was a natural way to forward such an approach.

* * *

This chapter has shown that as a direct corollary of Admiral Buzzard's paper delivered to Council in October 1957, a Study Group on the Moral Aspects of Disarmament was formed. Whereas Robert Mackie, as chair, desired an even-handed or ideologically balanced approach, the study group was dominated by representatives of the realist 'if you want peace, prepare for war' perspective. The Priestleys, King-Halls, or the 'third wayers' were not really accounted for. The nature of the eventual BCC contribution should come as little surprise once the powerfully articulated preferences of those selected to serve are considered.[20] The fact that the study group was generally unsympathetic to 'if you want peace, prepare for peace'[21] idealism, meant that a realist approach was inevitable. This is notwithstanding the sense that Mackie and group secretary Keighley (who became converted to Buzzard's position) were not particularly driven to support Buzzard at first. It was their neutrality, and not just Buzzard's coherence, which resulted in the adoption of a just war approach to deterrence and a multilateralist approach to disarmament. Bringing Bishop Bell and Alasdair MacIntyre into the group to represent peace activism created no serious challenge to the Buzzardist hegemony. In this sense perhaps it was wise to have a vocal and passionate unilateralist like Bell as an 'insider' rather than 'outsider' to discussions. Such an approach was akin to that of a Prime Minister including a tiresome back-bencher in government in order to ensure their silence while placating potentially divisive sectional interests.

   The inclusion of Bell and MacIntyre into the study group produced an initial lack of agreement on whether a specifically Christian contribution could be made. The common denominator in the group's thinking was an agreement in favour of the broad desirability of peace – anything that reduced Cold War tension and made war less likely. Any agreement beyond this proved difficult. Here Alan Booth appeared as a vitally important contributor to the group's thinking, second in importance only to Buzzard. It was Booth who became largely responsible for the clarification of policy and process in the group. He believed passionately that the church needed to respond in an ecumenical fashion to the issues in a serious, considered way. The group's task was to restore

professional credibility to the church in a world in which it was deemed unprofessional or irrelevant. Booth was responsible for the idea that there had hitherto been a frequent failure on the part of Christians to sit down humbly before the facts and to consider them realistically. His contribution as an 'ecumenical insider' (which of course Buzzard wasn't) led the study group to endorse the idea that nuclear weapons could be controlled within a realist-type understanding of international affairs. The extent to which this approach would be affected by the birth of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and mass acceptance of 'third way' Christian responsibility is discussed in Chapter 8.

8
Redacting Just War

1957 was a significant year for the British nuclear deterrence debate. Christopher Driver (1964) recalls four events that precipitated the emergence of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). First, the Labour Party Conference where Nye Bevan denounced unilateral nuclear reunciation as tantamount to 'sending a Foreign Secretary naked into the conference chamber'. Second, J. B. Priestley's *New Statesman* riposte to Bevan which argued that Britain's nuclear policy negated democratic politics by placing crucial decisions beyond ordinary citizens. Third, George Kennan's Reith Lectures because for most people outside the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) they were the first indication that there was a considered alternative to massive retaliation. Finally, the launching of *Sputnik I* that demonstrated, because the Soviets had the system technology to launch intercontinental ballistic missiles, the West had lost its technological lead over the Soviet Union on which its concept of deterrence rested. To these events of note may be added the Yale statements by the CCIA and the WCC. This latter was the most important for the churches because it amounted to official ecumenical endorsement for 'third way' (i.e. nuclear pacifist) engagement. Against this background the British Council of Churches had formed a study group to consider the moral aspects of defence. On 17 February 1958, 5000 people crowded into Central Hall Westminster to listen to speakers including Canon Collins, J. B. Priestley, Sir Stephen King-Hall, Bertrand Russell and A. J. P. Taylor denounce government defence strategy. CND was born as a moral crusade. Its distinctive symbol, a circle enclosing the semaphore signals for N(uclear) and D(isarmament), became an important legacy for protest movements throughout the world.[1] The Campaign's main tactic was the mass demonstration.[2] Here a diverse assortment of Christians, leftists, anarchists, pacifists and liberals

marched under the CND banner. All were united by a sense of moral outrage against the Bomb, a conviction that Britain was on the road to physical and spiritual destruction, and the hope (ultimately misplaced) that if their voices were heard, they could redirect foreign and military policy, strengthen Britain's future, and save the earth (Veldman, 1994). Their aim initially was the simple demand: 'Ban the Bomb'.[3] The British state was called to do this immediately and unilaterally in order to set moral example. CND was not an absolute pacifist organisation (although absolutists supported it) but rather the first *nuclear pacifist* mass movement. A history of CND is not appropriate, but recognition of the Campaign's impact on church thinking is central.[4]

Frank Myers (1965) categorised CND as a 'collective enterprise to establish a new order of life'. The Campaign called on people to make a careful distinction between notions of human control and human responsibility. On the one hand, it was an expression of the feeling that, in an age of mass destruction, political power was too concentrated and humanity faced Armageddon as a result of unresponsive political decision-making processes; on the other, a large-scale public response to a sense of despair brought about by nuclear armaments. This distinct linking of security with democracy challenged the notion that the state could sacrifice the life of society in defence of its apparatuses. As Parkin (1968, pp. 3 and 5) observed, CND was 'a capsule statement of a distinctive moral and political outlook' and so 'served as a rallying point for groups and individuals opposed to certain features of British society which were independent of the issue of the bomb'. This approach questioned not only the level of confidence that should be placed in traditional politics, but argued that the important issue to be faced was not one of military but rather human security. Ultimately, the CND's vision encompassed a critical appraisal of civic responsibility and political institutions both western and Soviet.[5]

From this perspective, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was protest for greater democracy. It aimed not so much to persuade the political establishment of the desirability of its demands but rather persuade civil society of the need for change. By demanding an increased role for social movements in the formulation of state policy the organisation saw itself building an alternative dynamic and one that would operate outside the cycle of established responses, both East and West. To CND the roots of the arms race, and by implication the solution to Cold War confrontation, were not to be found in the interaction of mutual threat but through the instigation of fundamental change. This was simply not something that was or could be requested of government. It

meant accepting that change could only be brought through exerting pressure. This mobilisation of populist social forms saw itself as an alternative to a system based on states that competed internationally, while suppressing national popular aspirations. The movement was a reaction against the process of bargaining itself, realpolitik definitions of politics as force, and a challenge to Christian ideas of political responsibility. Its subversive 'theology of hope' constituted a most important divide between the CND's revolutionary, non-contingent renunciation and the BCC's conditioning for limited use and progressive disarmament.

For many concerned Christians the traditional debate between pacifists (those who absolutely oppose war) and *pacificists* (the rest) was invalidated with the formation of CND. It had become nonsensical to suggest the use of nuclear weapons could be a proportionate means of defence if the result would be national suicide. Margaret Thrall (1966) argued the moral justification for any form of non-pacifism simply disappeared in this desperate context. In previous chapters it was shown that the tension between pacifists and just war theorists had to date been the dominant feature in debates within the churches, and one largely untroubled by the introduction of thermonuclear devices. Pure pacifists like Dr Donald Soper, the Revd Dr George MacLeod, and Canon Charles Raven, although respected for encouraging and promoting pacifism in their respective churches, had been marginalised by their opposition to Hitler. Pacifist societies such as the Anglican Peace Fellowship and the Fellowship of Reconciliation were now also officially withholding their support on the grounds that if CND were successful it might encourage outbreaks of conventional warfare. Nuclear (non-absolutist) pacifism had nonetheless suggested itself to be a far more productive platform from which to galvanise Christian support ever since it was first enunciated by the US Calhoun Commission in 1946. Yet it was not until the formation of CND as a mass movement that nuclear pacifism was truly envisioned in the minds of so many. Canon John Collins, as first chair of CND, was perhaps the most famous and representative of the new 'third way' breed of activist. Although Collins' lack of pacifism would alienate him from some absolutists, his approach typified the CND line:

> I say that I am not an absolute pacifist; but where nuclear, biological, or any other indiscriminate or mass-destructive weapons are concerned, I have never doubted, certainly since 1945, that their manufacture, let alone the threat to use them or their actual use, is not only wholly contrary to the Christian conscience, but also something to be actively opposed by every Christian. (Collins, 1966, p. 277)

This 'diet' pacifism captured the spirit of the times. It argued that some modern weapons were so horrific that their use was not compatible with the requirements of justice. Collins saw his ministry as one that brought together pacifists and nuclear pacifists into a mutual rejection of just war waged with nuclear weapons. To him the hitherto ineffectiveness of pacifist social movements could be seen in terms of three persistent problems: the widespread notion that pacifists had enfeebled resistance to fascism; the divisions between peace organisations; and prior to 1958 and CND, the failure to appreciate that Hiroshima demanded a radical change of approach to the whole question of both defence and disarmament. The problems facing Christian anti-nuclear campaigners were henceforth: first, to communicate that the just war was redundant in a nuclear context; second, that nuclear renunciation was the way forward for responsible Christian citizenship; and finally to mobilise support around these core themes. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament brought a solution to these problems.

The impact of CND on the BCC

CND speakers achieved gratifying effect by ridiculing the behaviour of the churches who were still largely arguing about the moral problems raised by defence rather than disarmament. This ridicule was only to be expected since not all Campaigners were Christians, or all Christians Campaigners.[6] But the formation of CND demanded a clear choice to be made. As Driver (1964, p. 77) argues: 'For CND, it was a question of choosing which type of moral revulsion one preferred: against the genocide implications of all-out nuclear war, against the sacrifice of future generations' health in return for the present expediency of nuclear testing, or more generally against the assumption, implicit in the [Sandys] White Paper and the reasoning of some of the new generation of defence experts, that moral considerations of any kind were irrelevant to the formation of a nation's 'policy for survival'. Not all Christians saw the choice in these terms. CND's formation in reality gave them four choices: first, Christians could support government massive retaliation strategy; second, they could commit themselves to the absolute pacifist corner. Third, Buzzard's limited war could be supported. This meant, in effect, putting deterrence first and calling for multilateral approaches to disarmament as a consequential second. And finally they could support CND whose non-contingent opposition to nuclear weapons put disarmament first with a call for immediate unilateral action.

For many British Christians the serious choice, following the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, became one between nuclear pacifism and nuclear just war. Whereas many individual Christians who supported massive retaliation were primarily motivated by abject fear of the Soviet Union, a more considered articulation of the 'defence first' approach was represented by the BCC's ever-increasing interest in Buzzard's limited war thesis. Many of the more Manichean Christians, in this way, also found themselves able to support Buzzard without compromising their hostility to communism. CND, alternatively, asserted the impropriety of nuclear deterrence. 'Bluff and deterrence' were necessary aspects of the Buzzardist thesis – psychological weapons whose effectiveness depended on their credibility (that is, on the effect they produced in the mind of an enemy). This is a main reason why Canon Collins was so disparaging of church leaders such as Archbishop Fisher who uncritically accepted deterrence and helped reinforce the notion that it was fear that made the world go round. Campaigners saw deterrence theory as not only morally unacceptable but essentially diametrically opposed to their belief in unconditional renunciation. This commitment raised practical as well as moral questions that exposed the Campaign to counter-attacks.

The principal form of these counter-attacks was based on Buzzard's thesis. Campaigners found it difficult to rebut the limited war approach on the strategists' ground because it demanded more vigorous and intellectual cohesion than the movement possessed. But this was not really the point. The principal objection was always the moral incompatibility of nuclear pacifism with deterrence, limited war or any form of gradual disarmament. You were either for or against the Bomb. If you were unconditionally against its use, you renounced it and embraced unilateralism as a consequence. For Campaigners it was illogical to suggest you could be a nuclear (or H-bomb) pacifist and then call for a gradualist approach to ensure its renunciation as the Buzzardists argued. For them nuclear pacifism (as a programme for action) could only be compatible with a unilateralist commitment to disarmament. To threaten to destroy, to keep the deterrent albeit in limited form, still allowed the possibility of actually using the weapons. The only safe and logical course of political action was to call for renunciation even if the hope proved impossible to realise. You had to be a Campaigner, or have faith in modernising the just war doctrine. You were either for nuclear defence, or for nuclear disarmament. People could not have it both ways. This was not a distinction the BCC study group felt able to accept. My principal contention is that CND helped institutionalise the main

division in the churches as one between 'third way' nuclear pacifism and nuclear just war fighting. This tended to be articulated in terms of a debate between disarmament and defence. Rather than revolutionising church thinking, CND intensified, polarised and codified divisions first intimated by the Americans in the Calhoun Commission 12 years previously. Although the formation of the Campaign did not create a new situation, it did offer a more coherent challenge than ever to notions of just nuclear war based on deterrence. The arrival of CND enforces the contention that the church had moved from one divided by pacifist and just war approaches to defence, to one essentially animated by multi-lateralist and unilateralist approaches to disarmament. Bishop Bell and Alasdair MacIntyre gave notice of this subtle yet significant shift away from forms of defence to ways of disarmament.

In April 1958, shortly before the Study Group on the Moral Aspects of Disarmament's fourth meeting, Alasdair MacIntyre tendered his resignation. In May Bishop Bell resigned. Both determined to give time and attention to CND. The group had reinforced MacIntyre's and Bell's belief that their own standpoints on the need for nuclear renunciation were too far away from that of the committee's preoccupation with nuclear deterrence. It was precisely this fear that had made MacIntyre hesitate in agreeing to join the group in the first place. MacIntyre now wanted to give all his time to CND:

> My own feeling is that the issue as to whether to support or not to support the campaign is as simple as the moral issue over the abolition of slavery and that all other discussion on this topic has become trivial and irrelevant … I am afraid that I still feel the work of the committee is largely irrelevant to the important issues and that it would be unfair to you as well as a waste of time for me to reconsider my resignation. (MacIntyre to Keighley, 19 April 1958)

Bell reinforced such opinion. While Bell had suffered from several enforced absences from the group's discussions due to health reasons, it was clear both he and MacIntyre represented the minority view. It was a case of numbers *and* politics. No matter how forcefully MacIntyre and Bell presented their approach, the consensus was firmly in favour of, not the renunciation of nuclear weapons, but limiting their use in Buzzard's sense (Bell to Keighley, 28 May 1958). Bishop Bell and MacIntyre represented a stout defence of the nuclear pacifist and 'third way' approach to Christian citizenship. The birth of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was

thus changing things both theoretically and practically for the group. CND offered a clear focus and home for those unconditionally opposed to nuclear weapons. For Bell and MacIntyre the only policy to advocate was one where the churches concentrated the whole of their energies on advocating unilateral disarmament policies. Differences could not be reconciled through discussion and conciliation. The CND argument turned on a different interpretation of 'facts' and conceptions of 'power' within international relations. Margaret Thrall nicely summed up this new reality:

> The actual facts of the present situation i.e. the component elements of the balance of terror, the pacifist [both nuclear and absolutist] would claim to take very seriously indeed, and would maintain that only a quite radical change in our whole way of thinking is adequate to deal with them. What the Christian pacifist refuses to accept is that such a change of outlook is totally impossible, that we are so deeply enslaved by our present political circumstances that we cannot break free of them to shape our future history in accordance with the Christian ethic. He cannot believe that man is enslaved against his will to political forces beyond his control. The Christian believes that man has been freed by Christ from all powers in the world which might otherwise rigidly determine and control his history. (1966, p. 344)

The BCC committee felt unable to accept this. Following Buzzard they essentially offered a modified government approach. Progress in disarmament was likely to come by an incremental piece by piece process. This enunciation of gradualism meant that if war broke out, after a certain amount of disarmament had taken place, then it would to that extent have to be restricted. This was principally the limited war thesis. The CND's alternative policy was for the churches to press purely for nuclear disarmament. This, as Keighley represented it, was unacceptable because it was just as much an 'all or nothing' policy as massive retaliation. The CND approach was thus 'a counsel of despair' and 'surely we have to repeat again and again what we believe as Christians to help to find ways in which the nations can begin to obey that judgement. Does that not in fact mean trying to rule out certain forms of armament while others are retained?' (Keighley to Bell, 4 December 1957). But it was not just Bell and MacIntyre who were critical of the church for its inability to stand together. As CND established itself as a mass movement, ecclesiastical bodies passed various resolutions in response.

Christians, as much as anyone read the newspapers and a look at any one of the 65 letters published by *The Times* alone between 27 February and 27 March 1958 testify the depth of feeling.[7] In time all the main churches took a position on the nuclear defence versus disarmament issue. The numerically most important BCC member churches were Anglican, Church of Scotland and Methodist.

The Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion was divided. Although commentators such as Owen Chadwick (1991) assert that Lambeth united in asking the government to abolish nuclear weapons, this does not provide a complete picture. *The Times* (26 August 1958) reported that while there was no difference of opinion in any other respect, nuclear weapons were the one subject that caused division. Some delegates supported CND's nuclear pacifism, while others thought the use of nuclear weapons was preferable to political enslavement by the communists. There was no agreement on the renunciation of the use of nuclear weapons. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland likewise rejected the call for Britain to unilaterally disarm. While Bishop Bell's old friend John Pitt-Watson and moderator of assembly supported nuclear pacifism, the church expressed the opinion that not until there was some positive act of policy could the race in nuclear weapons be halted. A multilateral approach to disarmament was favoured. The Kirk's preference for 'realistic deterrence' was clearly stated on grounds political and theological (*The Times*, 28 May 1957). Smaller ecclesiastical bodies were saying similar things. The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, for example, passed a resolution calling for the end to nuclear testing but expressed no opinion on the rights and wrongs of manufacturing nuclear weapons or using them as instruments of deterrence (*The Times*, 25 May 1957).

For the Methodists in conference at Grimsby there was confusion over the voting relating to the resolutions dealing with nuclear weapons. Despite a long tradition of leftist inclination in political matters, a strongly worded amendment calling for the unconditional and unilateral renunciation of the production and use of nuclear weapons was defeated (*The Grimsby Evening Telegraph*, 15 April 1958). With one hand the Methodists declared:

> The dreadful devastation caused by such weapons and the possibly more dreadful consequent and persistent effects of radio-active contamination, make it extremely doubtful if a war so waged could achieve a good outweighing the evil it would involve. If the result of such a war is to make the world a desert and call it peace, it can no longer be

presumed that there is a reasonable hope of victory for justice. Nor can it be argued that the extinction of a nation or a continent is in accordance with man's nature as a rational being or with Christian moral principles. (Methodist Church Declarations, 1959, p. 44–5)

Here the Methodists, via reference to *in bello* principles of restraint, concluded that nuclear weapons were incompatible with just war requirements. They resolved that the H-bomb did not allow war to be waged with any hope of achieving victory for justice as 'its method was not legitimate or in accordance with either man's nature as a rational being, or Christian principles and international agreements'. Nevertheless with the other hand, and although the Conference went on record against the H-bomb, their declaration also argued that 'the conditions of "just warfare" could be observed if the combatants agreed to wage war with a limited range of graduated and controllable nuclear weapons'. As Groom (1974) recognises, this was just the sort of advice Admiral Buzzard was giving to the BCC.

The gradualist response

In April 1958, one month after the CND's inaugural meeting, the DIA secretary prepared a paper for the BCC study group (SGM, 18 April 1958). Alan Keighley presented the issues as a stark choice between 'gradualism and unilateralism'. This discussion paper, the first coherent articulation of the multilateralist approach to nuclear disarmament by a staff team member, represented a decisive move against the unilateralist rationale. It also shows that CND's intervention posed a challenge and a key focus for debate.

Keighley argued the Council must immediately seek ways to convince Christians of the need to understand better the complicated issues involved in disarmament talks. This involved supporting government efforts to find, in concert with other governments, means of relaxing East–West tensions. Although CND was urging that all thoughts of nuclear war should immediately be renounced, in the present climate this intent would be more surely achieved by a gradual and multilateral approach. The Council's ultimate objective must be to teach that no war can be just except in the relative sense as the lesser of two evils. Warfare waged by the most destructive strategic weapons (i.e. the H-bomb but not the smaller, less powerful tactical weapons) must be viewed as unrelated to any conceivably legitimate war. This meant developing the Labour Party's approach and demanding 'as a matter

of utmost urgency an alternative to the strategic nuclear deterrent [i.e. H-bombs] as a basis for the national defence policy'. Buzzard's limited war could then be offered as the Christian alternative to the existing policy of massive retaliation. It was thus appropriate for the BCC to issue a statement that pointed out the practical consequences of unilateral renunciation. First, it must be recognised that the real issue was not abolition but control. It was regulation that would ensure no country could use these weapons. It was not enough for a Christian to simply declare nuclear weapons abhorrent. Responsible citizenship could only be affirmed if Christians sought to contribute to their management. This was a crucial point and CND were wrong because their 'third way' failed to combine moral fervour with responsible citizenship. No advantage could be gained by CND's 'hysterical outburst'. What was needed was a greater understanding of the difficulties in which prime ministers and governments are placed. The second point that people needed to recognise was that CND's call was in practice tantamount to absolute pacifism. If CND's principal objection was a moral one there could be no question of sheltering Britain behind the nuclear shield of the United States. Unilateralism of this order also implied that the British should submit to a lower standard of living in order to permit a vast increase in expenditure on conventional arms. This surely could not be made acceptable. The Council should therefore counter CND by affirming that there was no adequate way of defending Britain other than the threat of nuclear retaliation. In short, the BCC should make clear that nuclear pacifism was qualitatively no different to absolute pacifism in an empirical real world sense.

In spring 1958 the various strands of thought pursued by the study group and developed mainly by Mackie, Booth and Keighley (under the shadow of Buzzard) began to coalesce. The last action taken by the BCC was the communication of the Yale statements to Prime Minister Macmillan back in October 1957. It was time to decide what official action could now be urged. Two separate developments presented opportunities. The first of these was the Soviets' 2 February offer to suspend nuclear tests. The second was an address made by the Director of the CCIA Dr Frederick Nolde in April that argued that the West must seek agreement on a date after which nuclear testing should cease. Ecumenical bodies, like the US Federal Council of Churches and their BCC counterparts, were being urged to take supporting action to this end. Mackie felt it important to give the Council a verbal indication of this and some of the other topics that had occupied the group's attention. Sir Kenneth Grubb, however, was prepared to move another

Private Member's motion.[8] The following was subsequently presented as an official BCC resolution at the Council's spring Assembly on 22 April:

> The Council welcomes the Prime Minister's statement on April 1st that it is the policy of Her Majesty's Government to negotiate a disarmament agreement which will provide for the ending or suspension of tests under proper conditions. We therefore urge Her Majesty's Government, in co-operation with the government of the United States, to give a positive answer to the recent Russian initiative by agreeing to an immediate temporary suspension of nuclear tests so as to re-open the way for negotiations to progressive and controlled disarmament. (Supplement to *The Churches and the Hydrogen Bomb*)

The resolution was duly passed to the Prime Minister. Once more his reply came via his secretary. Harold Macmillan doubted the wisdom of the suspension of British tests. The government feared that such a step, in the present climate, would increase and not lessen the danger of war. The position of the government, which had frequently been explained in the House of Commons and elsewhere, was that unilateral declarations of intention to suspend tests were of little value and that the suspension of tests should not be considered in isolation from other aspects of disarmament. What was needed in this field, as in other disarmament matters, was an international agreement including adequate measures of inspection. Macmillan's government asserted that the only way to prevent proliferation was to stop the production of fissile material, under international control, as proposed by the UN in its November 1957 vote (de Zulueta to Keighley, 9 May 1958). The study group were disappointed with such a reaction. It was not their intention to criticise government or become embroiled in argument. Kenneth Slack wrote back to Macmillan apologising and pointing out that the BCC took particular care not to advocate anything more than a *temporary* suspension of tests (Slack to de Zuletta, 12 May 1958).

Soon after Macmillan received notice of the BCC's spring resolution, the WCC published *Christians and the Prevention of War in an Atomic Age*. The authors of this report, led by Dr Robert Bilheimer and Sir Thomas Taylor (including Sir Anthony), were drawn from several countries and denominations and had been working for three years on its proposals. Although there were some reservations of assent and emphasis, the WCC was at one when they announced:

> We are agreed on one point, this is that Christians should openly declare that the all-out use of these weapons should never be resorted

to. Moreover, that Christians must oppose all policies which give evidence of leading to all-out war. Finally, if all-out war should occur, Christians should urge a cease-fire, if necessary, on the enemy's terms, and resort to non-violent resistance. We purposely refrain from defining the stage at which all-out war may be reached. (WCC [1958], Section 66)

Paul Ramsey made the document the subject of a chapter in his key book *War and the Christian Conscience* (1961 p. 114). He writes: 'in a curious way this document stands squarely within the tradition of just war theory, and yet not so squarely there, because of an unsureness and ambiguity introduced throughout, I can only say, by the Calvinistic impulse to transform the world gone to seed in an inarticulate pacifism that has in mind at every point the final and complete prevention of war. It stands squarely within the modern Protestant movement to "renounce" war altogether (whatever that may mean), yet not so squarely there because of the lingering force exerted by the rightfulness under certain circumstances of the just or limited war'. This secular-sacred characterisation is helpful. The WCC was coming out strongly against massive retaliation but, like the BCC, felt unable to embrace CND-type renunciation despite earlier pronouncements at Yale. The alternative strategy for defence was indeed a form of just war: the 'discipline' of possessing nuclear armaments but using them in a proportionate way. These findings allowed room for a version of the very approach Admiral Buzzard was recommending. But if total war broke out despite these safeguards (and assuming there still was humanity) it advocated an unconditional ceasefire and King-Hall (1958) type pacifism.

Mackie read the WCC document and was impressed (SGM, 30 May 1958). The problem in formulating new policy was that Mackie felt there was little meeting of minds between empiricists (the practical or technical) and the theological. Mackie was of the opinion that the highlighting of this unresolved tension needed urgent review. Kenneth Grubb agreed and pointed out that they should seek to enunciate principles by which Christians would be helped to formulate or criticise policy, even though the BCC themselves should not itself attempt to formulate that policy. He also felt that the BCC were failing in their duties because the current debate on disarmament was not really reflected in the DIA's work, only in the group. Grubb was not sure how this could be remedied without producing a detailed study document. Mackie brought his thoughts, and Grubb's concerns, before the study group on 30 May 1958. It was here that Mackie suggested they produce their own pamphlet. It was

envisioned that this would explain why the issue between pacifism and just war approaches was now irrelevant. This would aim to create a new balance between the secular and the sacred without resorting to nuclear pacifism. The plan was met with approval.

In June 1956 Philip Noel-Baker, Labour MP for Derby-South and an important writer associated with disarmament problems since the League of Nations, published his book *The Arms Race – A Programme for World Disarmament*.[9] Booth and Grubb thought this volume would be a worthy discussion point with which to begin the projected pamphlet (Booth to Keighley, 12 June 1958). Noel-Baker's book was an attempt to put disarmament and arms control into a wider theoretical setting. This approach was unusual because, as Groom (1974, p. 357) notes, 'the traditional so-called empirical approach held sway, with its *melange* of unstated theoretical assumptions and lack of hard data'. Booth persuaded Noel-Baker to produce a memorandum that summarised his book. His thesis amounted to the proposal that attempts by the nuclear powers to reach partial disarmament schemes should be abandoned in favour of a more ambitious disarmament conference in which all the states of the world worked out a total scheme. This was another version of the multilateralist approach and one vindicated by the group's final report.

Drafting the report

As the study group proceeded with their report, two further resolutions by the CCIA and WCC in the summer of 1958 served to influence thinking. Before these statements are considered it is worth noting that disarmament efforts at this time were mainly geared to halting the testing of nuclear devices. Motives were twofold: first, to stop the release of radiation, a worldwide health hazard; and second, to discourage proliferation. This first motive had, however, lost weight as soon as the ability to test explosions underground was developed. Two important developments in 1958 were thus encouraging the course of church thinking. First, a conference of technical experts concluded that underground nuclear explosions could be detected by seismic devices (UN document A/3897, 21 August 1958). Second, the three nuclear powers (USA, UK, Soviet Union) announced separately that they would suspend tests while attempting to negotiate a comprehensive test ban.[10] In August the CCIA announced that they were concerned about a lack of progress here. Although recent developments afforded ground for hope, many problems remained. The conference of technicians, by reaching agreement on the detection of tests, had made clear advances that

might be applied to such fields as cessation of production. The CCIA felt the Soviets' 2 February offer to suspend tests, albeit conditionally, must be judged by its contribution to mutual trust and sound agreement. This was particularly so because armament control involved teams of inspectors and there was a need to understand one another better. The WCC meanwhile welcomed efforts that governments producing nuclear weapons had taken as a first step towards bringing testing under international control. They urged that these efforts should be the beginning of attempts to halt the production of nuclear weapons and reduce existing armaments. Like the CCIA, the WCC appealed to the churches to help prepare the way for an 'open society' where people from East and West could meet freely and learn to trust one another.

By July 1958 the BCC study group had concentrated their efforts by setting up a specialised drafting sub-committee. They had been greatly encouraged by the prospect of a conference between the powers concerning the suspension of nuclear tests that gave weight to multi-lateralism. This sub-committee became responsible for the mechanics of drafting chapters and sending them to the larger group for critical comment. It was originally made up by the five most influential group members: Robert Mackie, Alan Booth, Admiral Buzzard, Alan Keighley and Edward Rogers. Analysis of the relevant primary sources shows that only Mackie, Booth, Buzzard and Rogers were responsible for the actual writing of the chapters. It was these who were largely responsible for the final product and would consequently determine the character of the report. Booth figures as much as Buzzard in the writing process. Chapters were completed and a draft available for discussion by the end of September 1958. Once the chapters had been written the sub-committee retired to Westminster College Cambridge (26–27 September) where an intensive residential weekend served to highlight problems. When Keighley was unable to attend Kenneth Slack was asked to join the drafting sub-committee. The first chapter (written by Mackie) threw open the moral issues by discussing the situation that faced those in authority. The second chapter (Booth in collaboration with Buzzard) aimed to discuss these issues in greater detail. The third chapter (Booth and Rogers) made recommendations in light of previous discussion. Chapter 4 (Booth and Buzzard) presented the contemporary dilemma of defence and disarmament. An appendix (Booth and Buzzard) gave factual information about nuclear weapons and their effects.

It was not just the BCC that were wrestling with the distinction between nuclear pacifism and the idea of a just nuclear war. The Swiss Churches, for example, had divided on the question of nuclear armament

in a similar way to the British. A Christian study conference in the United States however had taken a firm line against nuclear just war. This particularly interested Mackie as it seemed that nuclear pacifism and unilateral arguments for disarmament had become a convincing argument among American Christians. For his own part Mackie could not sympathise with the American refusal to discuss limited war, since it seemed to him a practical step between total war and the absence of hostility (Mackie to Keighley, 10 December 1958). To Mackie nuclear weapons were like any other necessary compromise in international relations. For unilateralists it was seen to be missing the point if deterrence theory was discussed. The second draft of the report was ready by December. The drafting had been hard work. Booth's work had been heavily criticised by Keighley (Keighley to Booth, 17 December 1958). Norman Goodall was also troubled by Booth's approach and complained that Buzzard's way was only one approach and Booth should heed this (Goodall to Slack, 17 December 1958). Despite the drafting committee agreeing at Cambridge something to the contrary, Booth had put the whole report's argument in one of his chapters. This was a problem because it appeared that a fait accompli was being attempted. In other words, there could be little justification for the BCC issuing a pamphlet that made clear final recommendations before an examination of the moral issues. It would have proved disastrous if the pamphlet was issued and even one Council member attempted to disavow it. Any publicity that came from this would certainly have been of the wrong kind. A particular facet of Keighley's general criticism was the sure way Buzzard's ideas had permeated discussions from an early stage. Although all for the discussion of Buzzard's views, Keighley doubted whether they should be so intrusive. He supported an overt discussion of Buzzard's theme but felt the drafts had not gone far enough in isolating the moral issues at stake (Keighley to Mackie, 19 December 1958). Additions and alterations of emphasis to the drafts continued throughout December 1958. Kenneth Slack considered the draft pamphlet extremely important but increasingly controversial. Because the reference terms of the group were to advise the Council, he requested that it should not be available for general distribution before the BCC could discuss it. For this to be achieved it was decided that final copy should be at the printers by the third week in February. The pamphlet was set to be published before the spring meeting of the Council (SGM, 18 December 1958).

On 22 April 1959, the completed manuscript was presented by Mackie to the Council for consideration at its half-yearly meeting in London.

Five thousand copies were printed. (By September 1959, 4000 of these had been sold or distributed to BCC and WCC associated councils and churches, government representatives, IISS analysts, and various individuals.) The long-awaited pamphlet had taken a lengthy (considering the Oldham report had taken only three weekends) 11 months to produce. At the Council meeting the following resolution was passed: 'The Council receives the pamphlet entitled *Christians and Atomic War* and authorises its publication, commending it for careful study of the issues raised, in the interest of an informed Christian opinion capable of influencing public policy' (File ID/19/59).

Christians and Atomic War

Christians and Atomic War: A Discussion of the Moral Aspects of Defence and Disarmament in the Nuclear Age (1959, BCC) was the completed study of the Moral Aspects of Disarmament Study Group. The document was not meant to be accepted as Council policy but rather commended to the churches for study. (For clarity I illustrate which individuals authored which chapter. This is not indicated in the published document.) The pamphlet begins with Robert Mackie arguing that its purpose was in finding a pragmatic approach to defence and disarmament in the nuclear age. In forming opinions and making recommendations the group were applying themselves to the world as it 'is' and not as it 'could' or 'ought' to be. Christians should not divorce their responsibility for defence from practical consideration of the likely consequences of a particular course of disarmament:

> This pamphlet is offered as a contribution to Christian thinking on the disarmament problem and defence policy in the nuclear age. It is designed to encourage responsible reflection and political action by individuals. This is the necessary basis of responsible statements by church groups, whether local or national. The pamphlet starts with the fact of power in the relationship between nations, and particularly with the political and military decisions which Britain must take in its own defence, and in the interests of the wider policies with which it is in sympathy, and the nations with which it is allied. (*Christians and Atomic War* [hereafter CAW], p. 1)

Many lines of discussion sprang from the reception of the BCC's 1946 Oldham report and other approaches were possible: (1) absolute pacifism; (2) that which considers disarmament without considering defence

(i.e. nuclear pacifism); and (3) that which seeks to resolve outstanding questions which cause international tension (i.e. a Kantian-type idealism). Nuclear pacifists believed that by considering defence before disarmament the real pressure for disarmament was lost. The group had to disagree. Collectively they felt there was more value in studying defence first, not only because of the moral issues involved, but because any step towards disarmament must involve the lessening of defence measures which were a primary duty of the state. In earlier centuries, Christians may have been able to remain detached from these cruder aspects of political power but weapons were now in existence which, once used, no public opinion could affect. This meant: 'we must now live with the Bomb or with the possibility of it being made' (*CAW*, p. 3). The group consequently saw their contribution as a necessary Christian study on the moral aspects of *defence*. It is significant, given the understanding of the call for unilateralism as democratic protest, that most CND supporters would probably have associated their position not with the 'irresponsibility' of (2) but more as a practical expression of position (3).

The group's duty was to comment on the nature of secular defence policy and assess the implications of the means used to prosecute that policy from the perspective of Christianity. This movement away from middle axioms was justified because 'the whole meaning of "defence" has been altered' and 'the validity of the concept is in question' (*CAW*, p. 4). Questions of defence are not just problems but dilemmas: 'that is, they are not problems for which there are a complete set of answers, problems which can be absolutely solved by any reasoning or any device available to us, problems that have solutions devoid of evil. They are, instead, problems to be suffered with, to be lived with, to be controlled, to be mitigated, to be gradually reduced to some manageable proportions – to be completely overcome, if at all, only in the fullness of time' (*CAW*, p. 4). This realistic attitude was supported by the WCC Evanston Assembly in August 1954 when they argued that 'Christians in all lands must plead with their governments to be patient and persistent in their search for means to limit weapons and advance disarmament'. Disarmament could only come about with such 'patience and persistence'. In a fashion similar to that of the Oldham report, the problems of defence were such that they could only be gradually or incrementally solved. This Platonic flavour requires elaboration.

It is perhaps significant that the pacifist voice on the 1946 Oldham Commission and CND activist, Donald MacKinnon, was particularly critical of Christian Platonism. In his 1968 Gore Memorial lecture (reprinted

in MacKinnon 1969, pp. 12–40), MacKinnon argued that Christianity had been truly damaged by those who inflicted onto theology Plato's flight from the tragic as the ultimate religious category. MacKinnon may well have had the BCC in mind when he decried the way an uncritical trust in God's providential care inevitably leads to a view which sees little else in this-world but political dilemmas – false, 'tragic' or necessary. MacKinnon (1968a, p. 149) pursued this theme in *Borderlands of Theology* when he wrote: 'Too often today we fob off men and women crying out for a world of hope with an academically precise pessimism, which seems to glory less in the cross than in the disintegration of human societies and the coming of despair. We have reached the truly appalling position of pointing to the threat of the atom bomb as evidence of the disorder of our being, and at the same time, like men in a trance, accepting and preparing to follow to the end the way to which such expedients belong, calling it our western way of life'. The very problem with such secularised thinking as Elshtain (1985, p. 51) has argued elsewhere, is that 'locked into dangerously self-confirming ways of thinking, embracing "progress" as a standard of evaluation, we manage to convince ourselves that good will come out of horrendous things; that somehow, in history, the end does justify the means'.

A Christian approach

Chapter 2 of the report, written by Alan Booth and Admiral Buzzard, comprised an overview of the contemporary defence and disarmament situation. Official nuclear policy at the beginning of 1959 was peace by the 'balance of terror'. But Total War was not the main risk facing the world. The chief dilemma was how to prevent small, but carefully prepared outbreaks of violence escalating into nuclear conflict. The chapter goes into great detail outlining the Cold War situation in Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East. The problem was that if the Soviets launched a limited attack (say Berlin, Scandinavia or Turkey) the danger would be that the West's massive retaliation strategy would meet it with thermonuclear war. If the Allies did not use nuclear weapons the Soviets would have succeeded in calling a great bluff. Could the Alliance survive if Allies had to expect each other to commit suicide to defend one frontier? Did this policy not set a premium on each state having its own thermonuclear weapons under independent control? These questions forced the West to review nuclear strategies and seek one that established a reasonable chance of matching smaller outbreaks with a response proportional to threat.

One of the problems facing the West was that some analysts viewed any weakness in resolution to use nuclear weapons as making war more likely, while others increasingly saw an 'all or nothing' policy as either a bluff which events might call, or as a totally irresponsible way of handling thermonuclear power. This last group believed H-bombs should be used to neutralise the enemy: that is to deter the enemy from using them or to bring them to the conference table. They should be used to ensure that if war broke out there was the strongest incentive for the enemy to control and limit its violence since they knew there was no length they could go to without fear of equivalent reprisal. Holders of this limited war approach also wished to see the West escape from any necessity to use such weapons first. The problem was that there must be a means found with which to match the numerical and geographic advantages of the Soviet Union. If the West could not match the Soviets gun for gun it raised the question of smaller nuclear weapons. Such weapons could be shot from guns, dropped from the air, or carried in short-range missiles. NATO tactical plans were based on the assumption that these weapons will be used. Another dilemma that this created, therefore, was: How can the West use them without starting a nuclear war that will not stop short of the H-bomb? A crucial task was that whilst radiation was more limited in the smaller 'clean' versions, 'developments … depend on the ability to conduct further nuclear testing at least on a restricted scale' (*CAW*, p. 9). Although such tactical nuclear weapons were accepted as standard NATO issue their use still required urgent development. It was also necessary to educate people of the need to establish limitations before war, and announce general intentions for the conduct of war itself but: 'at present the West would not hesitate to be the first to use nuclear weapons of smaller size, and against military targets, in order to halt large-scale conventional aggression. And the reason is that the West has at present no practical alternative for discouraging the outbreak of war' (*CAW*, p. 15). The numerical superiority of Soviet conventional forces in Europe had led to a strategy that involved the West being ready to *initiate* total nuclear war. This massive retaliation policy raised serious doubts on both moral and technical grounds.

An alternative limited war strategy would involve counterbalancing Soviet conventional forces by equipping NATO's armies with smaller yield nuclear weapons (i.e. tactical nuclear weapons) that had strictly localised effects with regards to both blast and radiation. This policy, unfortunately, still left the West in the position of having to *initiate* nuclear war in certain circumstances in order to offset the superiority

of Russian conventional forces. The problem was that the Soviet Union also had a tactical nuclear capability and the danger was that, on the outbreak of war, they might try to gain an advantage by 'stepping up the size' of armaments used. Avoiding this scenario clearly meant increasing conventional forces:

> Every move in this direction provides some relief from danger. The tragic and fateful possibility exists, however, that our society is now of a kind which will prefer not to meet the cost of this relief, but to choose to maintain its material living standards instead. In that case we could not blame 'the government' for our predicament. (*CAW*, p. 16)

One of the report's main objectives was thus to show that the possibility of disarmament agreements was substantially affected by the kind of defence preparations adopted. This meant that the West was compelled to offer a 'package deal' on disarmament: i.e. one which exchanged nuclear disarmament for a substantial reduction in the conventional and other armaments of the communist bloc. Yet disarmament could only be seriously considered if it also involved a reliable system of inspection. What this meant was that:

> Somehow, therefore we have to learn to live with nuclear weapons, at least for many years. If we cannot abolish them, we must do everything possible to bring them under control. And if large steps like this prove too difficult, then we should be satisfied initially in taking such small steps as are possible. Hence the need for achieving anything we can in stopping tests, guarding against surprise attack, and preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries. (*CAW*, p. 19)

Booth and Buzzard's chapter argued that there were three conditions that favoured successful disarmament and non-proliferation agreements: first, that the parties involved appreciated the need to reduce the armament load. Increasing costs, apprehension on health grounds regarding fallout from testing, and the apprehension of uncontrollable proliferation of nuclear states all worked favourably to secure this. Second, that there was a rough balance of power on both sides. This meant halting the race in thermonuclear weapons and a closer balancing of nuclear weapons at lower tactical levels. Finally, that there were secure means available to verify disarmament agreements. Systems of inspection and control were fundamental. Buzzard and Booth concluded that Britain

should internationalise its nuclear weapons by placing them in the hands of NATO (*CAW*, p. 21).

Christian political responsibility

Alan Booth and Edward Rogers' Chapter 3 looked at the theological and philosophical implications of the discussion. Here it was reaffirmed that all ideas on defence, whatever their starting point, had their place in forming Christian judgement but:

> … it is part of the secularisation of the times that men think there must be a simple way forward to 'broader sunlit uplands' of historical progress. The Christian, while full of longing and hope, knows that history is not like that. His abiding confidence does not lie in any certainty that history will work itself out to a millennium but rather that it will remain a struggle of good and evil until the day God chooses to complete His purpose and bring all things to their end. (*CAW*, p. 22)

As the Christian seeks their duty in the nuclear age, they will not be surprised to find that there is no way at one stroke to abolish the dangers in which humanity stands. What was needed was a new examination of Christian responsibility: on one hand, by standing back from a close examination of defence problems and looking at them afresh in the larger Christian picture; on the other hand, by looking at actual choices and seeing if it was possible to judge between them in the light of Christian duty because 'a thousand acts of disobedience create a tangle which demands the patience of a thousand acts of faithfulness to begin to unravel. And that requires a close and detailed study of the knot itself, in all its obstinate reality' (*CAW*, pp. 22–23). There were several questions begging here.

The first: Is the issue between the West and Communism an ultimate one? Christians were called to question 'the kind of self-righteousness which proclaims the West–East conflict as simply the confrontation of good and evil'. They must always look beyond conflict to love and reconciliation. What this meant, in terms of defence policy, is that Christians were governed by the necessity to match a resolute defence of the national interest with temperateness and restraint in the means used. The second question: Are western values worth defending? Answering this involved an awareness of the fact that: 'Peace is not simply the absence of armed conflict, but the state of human affairs in which men are enabled to

be true men in their relationship with one another … Dedication to peace involves a constant and costly responsibility for our neighbours, that the life open to them may be of the kind for which they were created. This is the potentiality which is worth defending' (*CAW*, pp. 25–26). The third question: Are power and force proper instruments for states to use in the light of nuclear weapons? This involved facing yet another dilemma – the dilemma in which Christian service begins with a particular witness. In order to behave justly the state must have the right and power of compulsion, not only to restrain the criminal but crucially 'to pursue any coherent policy amidst the clash of a multitude of wills' (*CAW*, p. 26). It was vital that such force and compulsion be tempered by necessity. The problem remained, however, that the realm of international relations was necessarily anarchical and there was no sign of the rule of law being enforced by international government. But the just war thankfully offered a humane alternative with which to temper excessive use of force. Bearing this in mind, the authors felt a need to look again at the practical situation disclosed earlier and ask whether Christian insight could suggest right choices in terms of defence policy.

Limited war as just war

The strategy of massive retaliation dictated that it was the West that was threatening to be the first to use nuclear weapons. Because thermonuclear weapons represented the use of force and destruction out of all proportion to any human ends they might serve, a first Christian duty was to work for policies to get the West out of this position. The possession of thermonuclear weapons could only be justified if it was the sole practical means of inhibiting adversaries from using them. Until a system was devised to put this power out of the reach of international conflict then it had to be the 'bitterest problem', because for it to work either side had to believe that retaliation was a danger to be reckoned with. This problem could not be resolved by reasoning alone 'to avoid the dilemma of having to initiate the use of these weapons, as at present, the West would need to increase manpower and equipment for conventional forces very considerably' (*CAW*, p. 27). Another step in the process of control seemed clear. It was not necessary to surpass the enemy in 'frightfulness' in order to prevent them from using nuclear weapons; it was necessary rather to face them with the certainty of severe retaliation to make the adventure too costly. People should bear in mind 'it is not his [i.e. the enemy's] destruction that Christians seek, but a restraint upon his power

to destroy' (*CAW*, p. 27). It remained technically necessary, however, to ensure nuclear retaliation could take place for this was preferable to guaranteeing to match the utmost the enemy could do. The road leading away from the West's reliance on H-bombs would involve reliance on A-bombs. This was not desirable but it was an inescapable stage on the way to reducing the danger of massive retaliation. The objective must be to escape, if possible, from this necessity also. Two obstacles lay in the way. First, the fact that building up conventional forces to hold situations previously defended by nuclear weapons would cost money. Because of this 'it is a proper duty of Christians to help our society to see the hard choice with which it is presented, that if it wants to escape present dangers it will be expensive' (*CAW*, p. 28). Second, escaping from the overreliance on nuclear weapons called for a more co-ordinated defence effort by the West. This was no easy task:

> Here Christians, for whom patriotism ought to be ennobled by a larger view of mankind, have witness to give to a God who raises up nations and brings them down, and who is surely calling us to-day to adventure in wider loyalties than those of the nation states of recent centuries. The traditional pattern of national sovereignty is under judgement and an attempt to cling to it may well be one of the reasons for our present dangers. (*CAW*, p. 29)

Christians should continue to internationalise and serve as a stabilising influence that ensured a conflict 'begun with rifles' did not extend to a thermonuclear exchange. Military operations must not be directed to force unconditional surrender, but simply to secure the enemy's adherence to a 'just pattern of international behaviour'. Another way to inhibit the rapid spread of hostilities would be to make the military and psychological preparations necessary to reduce danger because 'if the public and the enemy know that a policy exists to limit rigidly the military response to an attack, and keep it proportionate to the threat offered, there is less chance that misunderstanding or panic will provoke an unintentional catastrophe' (*CAW*, pp. 29–30). The existence of such standing orders, if they were known, would be a strong incentive for the enemy to also exercise restraint. Restraint was the key Christian objective.

Christians and Atomic War had so far focused on the discrimination Christians could bring to bear on public policy. This raised the question of how the churches should be orchestrating debate. For the authors the characteristic contribution of the church was to exhibit a new order. Such a vision of Christendom worked by precept and example, by the

kind of people it nourished. It had several dimensions. Christians 'ought to be able to go on thinking clearly and wisely when others around them greatly need that service. As a stabilising factor in the community they will have a role to play not less important because it is so hidden in the daily round' (*CAW*, p. 30). In the second place the church was, or should be, the open society par excellence: the people who acknowledged the partial and corrupted nature of all achievements. In this way 'the worship and prayer of the church … [should serve as] the prophylactic of mankind against the disease of political fanaticism' (*CAW*, p. 31). Third, the church's own peace should be exhibited. It should be a place where people looked for a unity 'over-arching the political curtains of the day'. With this final point it is possible to condense the report's basic findings.

(A) General Recommendations:

(1) The debate on the nuclear situation should be open and the public should be treated as responsible citizens and given 'access to the facts'.

(2) Defence and disarmament should be treated as complementary, not competing, aspects of state policy. Governmental machinery should be designed accordingly. The danger in pursuing a deterrence policy too narrowly, and out of relation to other aspects of foreign policy was that 'in considering defence before disarmament the real pressure for disarmament may be lost' (*CAW*, p. 31).

(3) Every effort must be made to get the West out of a position in which it may be tempted to use nuclear weapons first.

(B) Policy Recommendations:

(1) 'The first duty here is to accept the fact that the race for supremacy in total war is vain' (*CAW*, p. 32). This acknowledgement would make it easier to agree upon the cessation of thermonuclear tests and limit the proliferation of nuclear powers.

(2) Britain should be particularly aware of not clinging to her 'special relationship' with the USA. She should watch that her own development of the H-bomb was not dictated by a misguided ambition to hold a special place in the sharing of defence secrets. The acceptance of an appropriate role in NATO suggested a switch of resources from total war capabilities to those forms of lesser armaments (i.e. conventional weapons) that would allow Britain to meet threats both soberly and rationally.

(3) The stability of deterrence depends on balancing military power so the government should work for a greater balance vis-à-vis lower levels of armaments. Costs cannot be allowed to rise without limit

but 'if our western society faces a choice between comfortable living standards plus nuclear defence, and reduced living standards plus less risky armament, then the Christian has a duty to make his voice heard' (*CAW*, p. 33).

(4) The British government should marry firmness with restraint in the exercise of international affairs. If war occurred the main objective must be to halt aggression and restore the status quo as the basis of negotiation.

(5) Hostilities should never be entered into without a public announcement of limited objectives. There should be a clear public statement of the limits that the West proposes to observe in waging war 'so long as, at each stage, the enemy also observes them'.

(6) Britain should give a lead in international affairs by offering to co-ordinate her defence programme more closely with NATO. The government should be willing to abate its claim to national sovereignty, both towards her allies and towards the Soviets, with regard to an international system of control and inspection.

(C) Recommendations for the Individual Christian:

(1) The call to service is one calling which Christians must face and not evade. The 'pamphlet may be judged as supplying some of the facts on which [such] a responsible decision rests' (*CAW*, p. 35).

(2) In the event of war it the Christian's duty and privilege 'to give succour to their fellows and seek to preserve such shreds of humanity as survive' (*CAW*, p. 35).

(3) Christians have the task of working for the development of the 'open society' which their country claims to defend with arms – this included resisting encroachments prompted by a narrow concept of defence, to enlarge the area of justice and to subject power in society to the rule of law.

(4) Christians needed to face the nuclear issue with: 'the absence of panic, the hard discipline of facing facts however grim with an honest gaze, and freedom from narrow and unworthy passions – and all this in a temper of unyielding concern for human welfare' (*CAW*, pp. 35–6).

* * *

This chapter began by suggesting that the formation of CND in 1958 did not create a new situation for the British churches; rather it intensified and polarised divisions that had already found expression throughout the early years of the Cold War period. Yet the CND view was univocal

in its simplicity: the Bomb must be banned, it must be banned now. Bishop Bell and Alasdair MacIntyre's resignation from the BCC study group giving 'continuous study to the moral aspects of the disarmament problem and of defence' symbolised a demarcated battle line. The clearest statement of the Council's attitude came with their 1959 report *Christians and Atomic War*. Their response was to construct a modern theoretical framework in which the use of nuclear weapons was subject to ethical calculation – their starting point the rejuvenation of just war. But the report was completed against a background of, not only a mass anti-nuclear movement, but also increasing concerns regarding the viability of just war notions in the nuclear context. Despite these facts, however, the Council line had not changed significantly from the conclusion first drawn by the Oldham Commission 13 years previously: the Bomb was to be lived with.

Christians and Atomic War shows that in the late 1950s the BCC was agitated most with the fact that the West was intending, if war came, to use nuclear weapons first. The study group believed that Britain could escape from this moral predicament by transferring its nuclear armoury from national to international control. In this way the concept of deterrence could be underwritten by international law. The CND view that the supreme ethical requirement was to prevent massive retaliation by abolishing nuclear weapons in the first place did not carry weight. Rather, the report relied on accepted methods of diplomacy and argued that the ultimate aim of all states should be to abolish nuclear weapons through multilateral effort. As long as the state came out in favour of the ultimate aim of abolition and the intermediate aim of collective control, the BCC believed Britain should retain nuclear weapons as a contribution to western deterrence and be prepared to use them if deterrence should fail. Its conclusions were cautious; its recommendations for action multilateral, incremental and gradualist. *Christians and Atomic War* was the first British church report to attempt to move the debate in Christian ethics away from middle axioms to a consideration of the means with which Christian policy should be formulated in specific terms.

9
Conclusion

> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.
>
> <div align="right">Romans 12:2</div>

The World Council and the British Council of Churches were both products of an optimistic world-view that aimed to establish a spiritual and material reformation. If liberal internationalism is accepted as part of the process of globalisation, then the ecumenical movement was a representative aspect of that process. The intention was to strike God back into social life and counter post-Enlightenment interpretations of historical progress. The starting point was the rediscovery of a moral message for a modern secular society in which Christians found themselves increasingly isolated. Ecumenism, at least in theory, advanced new Christian attitudes to political sovereignty and citizenship. The churches effectively hoped to fuse national identities and supplant them with a stronger sense of Christendom. Such 'culture-transforming' agency appears more about the churches responding to a fear of growing social isolation in a wider post-Christian context. In 1945 the BCC became the principal, the only truly interdenominational, body dealing with political issues for the British Christian community. Although the birth of the BCC was grounded in a liberal-idealist political theology, it came to fruition precisely when nineteenth century progressivism was rejected in a retreat to orthodoxy. Economic depression, the rise of fascism and Stalinism, the failure of the League of Nations, two world wars, and finally the spectre of nuclear annihilation served to undermine Christian faith in progress through

international affairs. These events together provoked a neo-orthodox protest within the churches and the revival of a more traditional and conservative Augustinian political theology. Fears over the direction of the ecumenical project in a world of Cold War confrontation led figures like Canon John Collins, George Bell, Victor Gollancz, and Roger Wilson to set up 'Christian Action' (CA) in December 1946. Here Christian Action saw itself marshalling a post-war revival in a more counter-cultural direction than was being achieved through the BCC (Hastings 1987).

The extent to which political crisis had shifted ecumenism's optimistic vision of revitalised Christendom was particularly apparent in the Oldham Commission report of May 1946. *The Era of Atomic Power* subscribed to a nuclearised and confrontational view of the international environment where Britain was forced to live with the discipline of the atomic dilemma. The authors were against calls to renounce nuclear weapons and keenly concerned with protecting Britain's great power status through the purchase of an independent nuclear device. Such concomitant elevation of national security to absolute value supported the idea that Britain should utilise the Bomb both as deterrent and status symbol. Although this 'trophy weapon' approach mirrored official government thinking, it also failed to relativise the interests of the British state in a developing context of international nuclear arms-racing. It was significant as the first moral intervention to equate itself with nuclear deterrence theory. But the challenge of nuclear weapons lay in the reality that they created a radical new prospect in warfare: the possibility that human beings themselves might put an end to human history. The BCC's sister organisation, the US Federal Council of Churches, appeared to grasp this eschatological nettle more readily in their innovative *Atomic Warfare and the Christian Faith* report of March 1946. Following Hiroshima, the Americans made clear the argument that atomic possession was not morally defensible precisely because use could not fulfil just war requirements for proportionality and discrimination. Like the Oldham report, the Calhoun Commission report was analytically and theologically neo-orthodox but, unlike the BCC it met squarely the challenge of a threat that could one day wipe out humanity. This intervention, particularly significant at a time of western monopoly, was the first official articulation of nuclear pacifism. Its call for denuclearisation appears a plausible response to the dangers of nuclear proliferation.

The Era of Atomic Power and the 1948 Church of England contribution *The Church and the Atom* recognised that the appropriate Christian

response to nuclear issues rested on combining realistic faith with active citizenship. But these reports saw no novel ethical or spiritual implication inherent in atomic possession. The basic built-in impulse, their decision not to see any qualitative differences in the issues raised by the Bomb, coupled with an optimistic faith in the human ability to master nuclear situations, seems curiously more idealistic than realistic, passive than active. The commissions were content to turn to middle axioms and pay attention to the preservation of order rather than the radically volatile means with which western security concerns were now articulated. Their theology of national self-idealisation rested on the assumption that western Christendom embodied just, predictable and legitimate authority. It made Britain and its allies capable controllers of nuclear destiny. Such aggrandisement of the balance and processes of western democracy resulted in a refusal to condemn Hiroshima or the continued retention and development of the Bomb. At the very least this demonstrates, when compared and contrasted with the Calhoun Commission, that even a shared (neo-orthodox) theology can cut various ways politically.

The development and deployment of thermonuclear weapons in the years 1950–57 raised a fresh set of ethical questions for Christians. The rationale for keeping or renouncing nuclear weapons was now no longer the same as when a western monopoly existed before 1949. Yet the attitudes of the BCC and its member churches towards the development of thermonuclear devices were as divided as their attitudes to atomic weapons. Although the British churches were the only forum really debating nuclear morality they struggled to draw imaginative recommendations. Such an attitude prevailed despite many within and without the churches feeling that Christians were morally obliged to take a definite stand against the great dangers inherent in nuclear weapons. As Driver (1964) notes there was a persistent feeling that protests against the use or possession of nuclear weapon sought to be a function – perhaps chief function – of the Christian church. In March 1950 the Church of England Archbishop of York (Garbett) became the first figure from within the British churches to link the concept of deterrence with the idea of no-first-use as an attempt to assuage moral concerns over their possession. But the BCC stance was conditioning Christians to accept nuclear devices by stressing an optimistic deterrent view and upholding the idea they purchased time for peace in a Cold War context. The development of the H-bomb however encouraged vigorous debate. Although significant differences of opinion between Christian pacifists and just war advocates were continuing to dominate

church thinking, thermonuclear developments were putting predictable strain not only on just war demands for proportionality/discrimination but also legitimate authority. For many post-war Christians involved in the growing campaigns against nuclear possession, individual activism outside their constituent churches became a vital part of a broader social and civil democracy movement. A coherent Christian anti-nuclear perspective, animated by a new political awareness, began to show signs of winning greater support if it could successfully engage dialogue on two main levels: first, by communicating the idea that the dangers of the nuclear age demanded new Christian thinking about the citizen's civic responsibilities. And second, by claiming that the just war synthesis between moral necessity and political expediency was rendered obsolete as a direct consequence. This priority was not met with much sympathy in the larger peace movement. To most peace activists outside the churches the old debate between pacifism and just war was not only invalidated but irrelevant. Yet the 1957 Yale statements by the WCC and CCIA did not rule out unilateral denuclearisation. In turn Yale opened up the possibilities for a greater acceptance of a 'third way' approach to Christian nuclear citizenship.

It was the controversy surrounding the failure to secure an H-bomb test ban, rather than the immorality of NATO's New Look massive retaliation, which brought the BCC to a considered attention of deterrence strategy. From 1946 and up to 1957 the BCC view had given primary attention to the need to maintain the 'Great Deterrent', and the need to prevent nuclear proliferation. The BCC was keenly aware that many Christians felt that nuclear and in particular thermonuclear weapons were immoral. This sense was exacerbated when considered from the perspective of Britain's nuclear strategy as outlined in Duncan Sandys' 1957 White Paper *Defence: Outline of Future Policy*. Yet on the other hand, the Council's officers felt unable to disavow nuclear possession and condone nuclear abstention. This brings into focus the particular manner in which the BCC approached their task. The International Department was expected to speak on behalf of the churches. But as the issue became overtly controversial and more intuitively moral the official BCC line was one of 'embarrassed silence'. Such silence in itself was political; dead air is often the claim of those in favour of doing nothing. This maintenance arguably allowed the western nuclear state a free hand in determining essential norms: moral, civic and strategic. Official BCC policy seemed uncomfortable with the political ramifications of Yale's anti-nuclear or 'third way' stance. For the BCC to condemn nuclear war as a legitimate means with which to conduct foreign policy was to question the nuclear

status quo. To this extent its officers recognised their potential to affect not only the terms with which the nuclear debate was conducted, but perhaps also the attitudes of the individual churches for whom they spoke. It would be difficult to underestimate the department's authority on these terms. Yet the impression is that the International Department had begun as an amalgamation of several interests, like the Council as a whole, and had become more reticent with the passage of the Cold War. This verdict is endorsed by the BCC 'insider' Kenneth Grubb (1971, p. 199) when he noted: 'In the ecumenical movement one meets too many clever men, and too few brave ones; and too much action but too little prayer. This is often the case in gatherings or organisations of religious and intellectual folk'. The Council's officers concluded that a military-thinking nuclear policy offered the most politically sensitive but ethically aware alternative to reckless massive retaliation. For these reasons Rear Admiral Sir Anthony Buzzard was invited into BCC circles. A more militarily aware if not politically astute approach from the BCC began here.

Sir Anthony can be remembered as a norm entrepreneur whose role was to make the idea of nuclear use more tolerable. He introduced the novel idea that nuclear weapons in themselves would not deter but that a thought-out and credible war-fighting plan could be harnessed as part of a Christian just war approach. The crux of the nuclear dilemma, for Buzzard, was essentially one in which Christians were called to resist growing nuclear stigmatisation (the 'nuclear taboo') by addressing just war principles of intentionality and the possibility of victory. His limited war approach advocated both the retention of nuclear weapons and a more proportionate strategy for their use if deterrence should fail. While Buzzard avowed that a nuclear capability did not necessarily mean nuclear weapons would be used this, of course, was not a call the churches would or could make. Here the Buzzardist faith in war plans and civilian control seems oddly naive: Was it realistic to expect that in the 'fog of war' a suitable political control could be levied on the military? Would a demand for 'access to the facts' succeed when so much policy-making in this area was technical and secret? Buzzard introduced a military logic that was plainly at odds with the political reality. His 'realism' was not separated from the government's more self-righteous Manichean avocation of massive retaliation through moral evaluation but by, and more fundamentally, an understanding of the nature of war itself. To Buzzard acts of megaton violence simply surpassed the boundaries of war as rational activity. His claim that a war waged with tactical (i.e. non-thermonuclear) devices could be rational began with

the assumption that the western state should not, and did not necessarily need to limit itself by trying to avoid nuclear confrontation. Nuclear weapons need not change the rules of deterrence and could also be a way of waging rather than preventing war. In fact the whole point of so-called 'mini-nukes' is that they were designed to be more usable and thus their development arguably increased the risk that they would be used. The limited war strategy was tantamount to the demand that in a total war scenario Soviet cities would be held hostage or used as bargaining levers to bring about the termination of conflict (Groom, 1974). Buzzard's conviction about the need to limit strategic nuclear devices appears to be a function of his belief that war was not only controllable but, given the nature of international affairs, also unavoidable. For him disarmament and defence were ultimately aspects of the same problem because, following classical realist dictum, if peace is desired a state must prepare for war. To counter his proposition with the argument that there was no adequate defence against nuclear assault was really to miss his point. From whichever way you may look at the limited war approach it cannot be seen as a way of protecting civilians and non-combatants Buzzard subsumed distinctions of discrimination under questions of proportionality.

The main result of Buzzard's introduction to BCC circles was that the International Department set up a special group to give continuous study to the moral aspects of defence and disarmament. This meant the significance of the 1957 Yale resolutions was not properly considered. From such angle the formation of CND in 1958 'did not create a new situation for the churches'; rather as Driver (1964, p. 198) correctly argues, it 'only intensified and polarised reactions which had already found expression'. CND's birth was symbolic of a wider social disengagement and cultural fragmentation that would be more keenly expressed throughout the 1960s. But it also proved to be an agency for a progressive and informal ecumenism in which an unstructured and largely implicit theological message was important. Campaigners felt that no gain from the use of nuclear weapons could possibly justify the annihilation it would bring. The intention was not to pull the Establishment down but transform and make it more accountable to deeper and wider expectations of moral practice. Issues of meaning were: (1) questions of the justified and unjustified level of force; and (2) questions that asked in whose interests, and for what reason, nuclear power was exercised. CND aimed to persuade and motivate action with the knowledge that real progress could come through more imaginative normative engagement. To borrow Taylor's expression, they offered a remodelled 'social imaginary' rather than an articulated social theory. That is to say they ultimately imagined their

moral surroundings and ethical responsibilities differently. CND's formation was also based on the presupposition that the advent of the nuclear age made the traditional terms of the debate between pacifism and just war otiose. They politicised nuclear weapons by seeing their very existence as reason for proper political passion, confrontation and division. To Campaigners, the Buzzardist approach was no different to massive retaliation doctrine. For them the defence of gradualism in disarmament talks only resulted in the loss of real pressure for disarmament. The principal objection of CND was always the moral incompatibility of nuclear pacifism with multilateralism or any form of progressive disarmament. You were either for or against the Bomb. If you were unconditionally against its use for defence and deterrence purposes, you renounced it and embraced unilateralist approaches to disarmament ultimately as a means to bring about multilateral disarmament. For Campaigners it was illogical to suggest you were a nuclear (or H-bomb) pacifist and then call for progressive disarmament to ensure its renunciation as the Buzzardists argued. The ethical judgement of the CND thus began from a very different conception of moral order to that pursued by the BCC. They rallied against the very tendency, exemplified by deterrence strategies, to conduct the nuclear debate in terms of rational means–end calculations. Limited war was understood as a response to questions about the defence of human life and history that the CND thought it immoral to risk. As a consequence of the formation of the CND, the debate in the churches gradually shifted from one that considered the probity of pacifism and just war into one that shifted with a sense of clear intensity into one concerned with the righteousness of gradualist multilateralist vis-à-vis non-contingent unilateralist approaches to disarmament. Its formation brought home the sense that abstract discussions of the rights and wrongs of violence vis-à-vis non-violence were rendered wholly irrelevant when faced with the risk of nuclear apocalypse. CND was important because it served to institutionalise the sense that a main issue for Christians was no longer between pacifism and just war as policies of prudence, but really between support for progressive disarmament or unconditional unilateralism as moral imperative.

The BCC working group believed that the churches needed to respond in ecumenical fashion to the serious issues raised by CND. The group saw their task as one that would reconnect the churches to a world in which it was increasingly deemed irrelevant. This was a clear sign that the BCC refused to see their word confined to the private sphere. Deterrence debates became cultural markers that allowed politically assertive Christians to reformulate and recast a threatened social

standing. Nonetheless the BCC were attempting to depoliticise nuclear weapons with an unconditional demand to normalise or conventionalise their use. Growing public opposition to nuclear weapons made it useful for British policy elites to have this pillar. The clearest statement of BCC support for government nuclear policy came in the 1959 report *Christians and Atomic War*. Like the previous Oldham report, this study subscribed to a violent culture of deterrence.[1] The BCC's avowed intention was to construct a modern theoretical framework in which the use of nuclear weapons was subject to moral calculation. The question rose: What is the Christian purpose? What is the Christian end? Although their starting point was the just war tradition, the Council was unwilling to challenge the conclusion first drawn by *The Era of Atomic Power* 13 years previously: the Bomb was to be lived with. But by urging Christians to learn to live with the Bomb the BCC counselled, as MacKinnon (1968b, p. 25) puts it 'not an effort at radical understanding, aimed at eliminating the appalling distortion of human achievement, seemingly built into the fabric of our world, but an acceptance of what it was alleged could not be changed'. This eschatological and teleological weakness is a key to its normative significance. Indeed a consequence of this preference for 'suffering rather than cure' was an inability to project any positive conception of common good as an appropriate collective goal for survival. The report anticipated not so much the abolition of nuclear war, but rather its final catastrophic arrival. Kierkegaard would describe such readiness to accept violence as the 'political suspension of the ethical'. These two dimensions – vision and validation – are important and cannot be ignored if ethics are to be seen not as something applied to politics, but rather politics as a special sphere of ethics with its own particular ends and means. The BCC vision seems ultimately more reminiscent of Thrasymachus than Augustine in that it supported the reality of a world separate from the ability of human agency to ever affect it. The BCC refusal to abandon this conceptual separation of fact from value can be considered a failure that effectively assigned greater ultimacy to the state than society.

Christians and Atomic War shows that in the late 1950s the BCC was agitated most with the fact that the West was intending, if war came, to use nuclear weapons first. Public opinion was overwhelmingly against such first use (Tannenwald, 2007). The study group believed that Britain could escape from this moral predicament by transferring its nuclear armoury and responsibilities to NATO. The CND view that the supreme ethical requirement was to prevent massive retaliation by non-contingent denuclearisation did not carry weight. Rather, the

report relied on accepted methods of diplomacy and argued that the ultimate aim of all states should be to abolish nuclear weapons through multilateral effort. By rejecting calls for unilateralism the BCC conditioned Christian support for progressive disarmament and helped rejuvenate just war theory for the nuclear age. The pamphlet was offered as a contribution to Christian thinking. It was designed to encourage responsible reflection and active citizenship by Christian individuals and churches. Yet for all its talk of participation the report demanded very little action. The BCC's promotion of limited war was an essentially descriptive and negative act that showed a frightening confidence in rational decision-making Britain's ability to defend itself with nuclear means. It promoted an illusory theology of deterrence where all that was required from a citizen was a fundamental support for the state and an optimistic belief in its ability to secure disarmament by negotiation. There was very little hope, very little imagination and an overly negative reading of the human ability to shape its world. Christian responsibility was to be kept alive by calling for restraint in face of the harshness of realpolitik personified by the policy of massive retaliation. This bleak view on the possibility for change and transformation, though it acknowledged Christian ideals by calling for moderation in the conduct of international affairs, provided justification for acts of massive nuclear violence. For all its talk of realism the BCC presented a vision strangely emptied of religious and theological content. *Christians and Atomic War* was the first British ecumenical report to move the debate in Christian ethics away from middle axioms to a consideration of the means with which a Christian policy should be formulated. But in so doing it was also an ethic of ends that overrode any deontological concern for the morality of deterrence.

* * *

It is said that the late 1940s and 1950s was an intensively religious time, and that its religion was Christianity; yet the question of the social status of Christian ideas is not easily answered by reference to the pre-eminence of the churches or even by reference to the pre-eminence of theology within the life of the churches. The aim of this book has been to isolate the theoretical and practical contribution of a Christian thinking that gave spiritual or religious succour to nuclear deterrence and nuclear war-fighting policies. The debate is intrinsically interesting because it gives an ideational sense of how the BCC saw themselves in a particular time and context. The churches were writing at the height of the Cold War confrontation between East and West, a

time when huge arsenals of nuclear weapons were being steadily accu-
mulated. It is my contention that the purpose of their theorising – what
the churches were trying to do – was to find a way of squaring a realistic
conception of international relations with a growing acceptance that
nuclear weapons potentially changed everything. The undercurrent to
this was a desire to achieve relevancy in a secular world that challenged
their relevancy. This understanding did not happen overnight but was
the process of a series of steady deliberations that led the churches
to make a messy move from a generalised middle axiom on nuclear
ethics towards the endorsement of a quite specific nuclear strategy. But
the practical and theoretical significance of the BCC approach lay not
in its self-proclaimed orthodoxy but rather in a mysterious absence
of orthodoxy. The BCC expressed and encouraged in secular terms a
basically technical political engagement where perhaps one would have
expected a resolutely theological one. Three substantive conclusions are
made on the basis of this focus. First, security issues drive secularisation
but this very tendency means the diversification of Christian possibil-
ity, not necessarily its absence. Second, the distinctiveness of the BCC
contribution lay in its conditioning role for nuclear deterrence theory.
Finally, discussions of just war should not be separated from the fact
that they involve qualitative judgements about the moral character of
the power applying force. There are a number of points here.

　The above has shown that positions in the debates over nuclear
ethics reflect different Christian approaches to the process of acquiring
knowledge about the ethics of force, as well as various views on
how Christians should constitute their role as responsible citizens.
The imperative to effect change within earthly institutions is the
most straightforward reading of Christ's legacy. But differences in
interpretation allow support for the state's use of political violence as
one legitimate Christian response and opposition as another. These
positions are political as much as they are theological. Here truth is a
matter of engagement and taking sides radically subjective. In different
discourses there would be plenty of passionate debate, some creativity,
but no objectively agreed answers. While there is no Christian consensus
there has tended to be two main alternatives: a counter-cultural pacifism
that historically tends to subsume or evade politics; and a culture-
making alternative in which the theology of St Augustine often figures.
This last position is often disparaged by progressives and a key reason
for this is that Augustine's positions are easily manipulated to justify the
use of violence rather than guiding its avoidance. This is particularly
so if one attempts to read him politically by de-Christianising his

theology or over-emphasising his pessimism and denigrating his 'other directedness'. There is certainly a clear contrast in Augustinian orthodoxy between what should be desirable and what could be actual Christian citizenship. Augustine's very willingness to engage with the world-as-is has led him to be accused as the founder of an apostate or compromise Christianity and the 'great seculariser' even before the term existed. Yet if there is a Christian responsibility to remake the world, any day-to-day social intervention is by definition always post-Christian. In our current context I have argued that the BCC produced a secular narrative on nuclear deterrence but one sold in sacred or Augustinian terms. By this I mean their approach was essentially secular, not because it was politically accommodating but because their 'otherworldly worldliness' was largely emptied of theological content. This brings forward conclusion about the presentation rather than the motivation of the BCC approach. The BCC entered the deterrence debates by secularising their theology, while CND responded by theologising what was secular. This in turn suggests a useful distinction can be made between implicit religious discourses and explicit belief and commitment. If such conversation is muted, rather than theologically vocal, there seems to be inevitable erosion of the distinction between sacred and secular.

The BCC saw just war as the most accurate expression of the ethics of international force. They helped maintain a confrontational theory of international relations by subscribing to a particular conception of western order, national interest, and Christian political responsibility. Since states have always been in conflict, the best to hope for was diplomatic compromise. In the late 1950s the BCC applied these socially constructed beliefs in order to oppose, in specific terms, massive retaliation strategy. However their posture of graduated deterrence did not advocate a change in foreign policy practice, but rather a change in defence norms. The BCC were concerned not so much with the dangers of nuclear weapons but in advocating a realistic policy in which the use of nuclear devices could be seen as a rational defence option. Such conceptualisation was intimately linked to the notion that an unacceptable degree of freedom would result from a Soviet invasion of the West. Whilst the concept of survival lay at the heart of the BCC's policy recommendations, the concept was understood not in universal terms. It was seen more as the nation's specific survival as a sovereign state. In other words, it was a normative judgement on western moral order, liberal democratic values, and the adversarial view of Cold War struggles. The chief beneficiary of BCC just war reasoning were those in favour of

theories of deterrence. By urging an Augustinian ethic of responsibility the BCC provided a realist set of answers to what they saw as the recurrent and ultimately insoluble moral dilemmas of statecraft. In the calculation of policy the pragmatism of utilitarian calculation prevailed. The BCC presupposed a system composed of states, acting as unitary actors, who needed to maximise their power vis-à-vis other states in an anarchic international system. The Soviet Union, as the main state with substantial military capabilities opposed to western values, was assumed to be expansionist. Although all-out nuclear war over communist domination was never foreground, national suicide appears preferable to national capitulation. In this way the need to make national inter-est the exclusive goal of foreign policy was an ideological judgement. Just war was intended to provide an appropriate basis for retrospective censure and punishment if the Soviet Union violated the terms on which the established status quo was built. This explains the BCC formulation of the necessity for western counterbalancing measures in the international system.

The BCC approach was expressed in immanent terms shorn of transcendental content. That is to say, their analysis saw nuclear truth within the existing strategic culture of international relations. Christian CNDers, conversely, emphasised the power of transcendence – the sense that there is always something possible other than the here and now. Just as Augustine questioned the idea that human agency was the means with which to create a better world, the BCC concluded that demands for nuclear abolition were utopian cravings. Given a world of deep-seated conflict, even a radical act of unilateral renunciation could not break the continuous cycle of power, politics, and violence. To this end pacifism in both its absolute and 'third way' forms was rejected and the relative justice of a just war deterrent tied to progressive rather than unilateral disengagement advocated. Limited war acted as an opiate of the people directing the public away from CND's anti-nuclear sensibilities. So far so Augustinian, but was it theological folly for Christian Campaigners to imagine a world where nuclear weapons could be abolished? CND undoubtedly helped advance theological thinking because it produced a space to 'unthink' the necessity of nuclear violence by prioritising peace. Such an assertive vision is useful because, as Milbank (2006, p. 416) argues, it 'expose[s] the manner in which the assumption of an inhibition of an always prior violence helps to preserve violence in motion'. From another perspective, the CND scheme indicated there was a way to act in a disordered world that assumed the priority of nuclear non-violence. A Christian would call

such peaceable reconciliation the 'forgiveness of sins'. This Christian realism was utterly at variance with the BCC's curious form of worldly political realism. CND, like the peace movement in general, were conceptually critical of notions of nuclear sovereignty because they recognised not political reality but moreso wishful thinking. In this regard and in a rather contradictory fashion, the BCC's interventions ironically appear more idealistic than realistic.

In the years 1945–59 British churches showed an overconfidence in the just war tradition's ability to face the spectre of nuclearisation. By understanding its criteria in statist, utilitarian and positivistic fashion they substituted imaginative theorising for a reified narrative. Rather than the just war being understood simply in terms of a moral expression of how to deter nuclear violence and disorder, its significance lay in the way it was used to recast moral evaluations of the viability of western civilisation in the guise of national interest. This emphasises that discussions of just war cannot be separated from qualitative judgements about the character of the state. Attitudes to war are grounded in ethico-political assumptions regarding legitimate authority, the right of the state to determine policy, and individual and collective political responsibility. The British nuclear experience suggests ideational factors have played as an important role in policy-making and operational planning as material factors: perhaps the former factors are even more important than the latter. Indeed the ideas and beliefs of a relatively small political, military, and scientific elite have been of critical importance (Baylis and Stoddart, 2012). If this is so, the role of Christianity even in 'post-Christian' contexts should not be ignored.

Prime Minister Macmillan's 1962 decision to move to the submarine-based Polaris ballistic missile system effectively settled the nature of Britain's defence for the next half century. As Tannenwald argues in *Nuclear Taboo* (2007) the 1960s–1980s period consolidated and institionalised the idea of non-use. But this is not to say that it settled questions over the morality of nuclear strategy or how 'murderous intent' and the cycle of fear and mistrust it foments can in fact actually be construed as a policy of non-use. NATO's current strategy of flexible response is not so very different from Buzzard's limited war in that it depends on the early, and possibly first, uses of tactical nuclear weapons. The late 1970s and early 1980s saw the churches assuming more critical position in debates over Britain's independent strategic nuclear targeting as the 'deterrence frame of mind' became entrenched (Stoddart and Baylis, 2012). The interesting picture here is how, the further from the 1960s 'secularisation decade' you look, the more confrontational

the churches became, particularly under Prime Minister Thatcher and her 'politicisation of peace' (Elford, 1985). Whether this was a question of theology changing the politics or politics changing the theology remains to be explored. To fully appreciate the significance, and the limitations, of nuclear deterrence and its relevance to modern just war theory the conversation is usefully placed in this wider setting. But what does this wider setting say about the role of the churches in public affairs? If anything it suggests the variable nature of the churches, the variable willingness of the churches to confront material interests, and the variable tendency of the churches in condoning structures of fear and/or hope. It also involves coming to terms more fully with the complexities of secular/sacred markings if we are to further add understanding to secularisation/post-secularisation debates.

Notes

1 Introduction

1. The key texts are Tannenwald (2007) and T. V. Paul's *The Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).
2. Since 1990 the BCC has been known as 'The Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland' (CCBI) – the name change coinciding with the incorporation of the Roman Catholic Church.
3. Stuart Croft (1994, p. 228) notes the 1980s as the only other time the British security consensus collapsed.

2 Presumptions against War

1. This period is often known by the 'Ante-Nicene' descriptor and is taken to refer to the church 'before Nicaea', i.e. the First Council of Nicaea in AD 325. Christianity was adopted as the official Roman religion in AD 380.
2. Similar sentiments can be found among the beatitudes: 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth … Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God' (Matt. 5:5, 9). Throughout this book all classical texts will be referenced, not by page number, but in the standard form of Chapter; Book and Chapter; or Book, Chapter, and Verse as appropriate.
3. Italics added.
4. The most important of these, nearly one century after it was first written, is still C. John Cadoux's *The Early Christian Attitude to War* (1919). Cadoux, Bainton and Hornus all wrote with strong pacifist leanings. Hornus was originally published in French as *Evangileet Labarum* (1960). To be fair, Bainton did modify his claim and conceded different levels of commitment among early Christians.
5. Also see John Helgeland (1974), James Childress (1984) and George Kertesz (1989) for similar argument. It is noteworthy that *Militia Christi* (originally published in German by von Harnack in 1905) was written by a future speech-writer for Kaiser Wilhelm II.
6. e.g. Rom. 12:1–7, and I Peter 2:17. But compare these to (e.g.) Rom. 12:2 or Eph. 6:12.
7. The thirteenth and fourteenth canons state: 'Of a prince or a soldier, that they be not received (to the Church) indiscriminately' and 'That a Nazarene may not become a soldier unless by order' (*Canons of the Church of Alexandria*, 1896).
8. Several cases are recorded of converted soldiers suffering martyrdom because of their unwillingness to renounce their allegiance to Christ. For example, see Sydney D. Bailey (1987, p. 9).
9. Ronald Santoni (1991, pp. 84, 83), for example, describes Augustine as 'the pivotal thinker in Christianity's move from its early pacifism' and one who

'served to nurture and perpetrate the institution of war'. (Santoni defines the Christian's renunciation of violence and refusal to serve in the army as the acceptance of 'a form of pacifism' and although this is a contentious definition the essential thrust of his argument stands (see Gorry, 2011a)). Elsewhere Jenny Teichman (1986, p. 47) deplores the 'heavy blows' dealt to the 'quasi-pacifist aspects of Christianity', while James Turner Johnson (1981, p. xxiv) agrees that it was Augustine who 'recast Roman (and Hebraic) ideas on war into a Christian mould while erecting a systematic moral justification for Christian participation in violence'. Robert Holmes (1989, pp. 117, 153, 166) simply sees him as 'Christianity's principal philosopher of war' who 'turn[ed] Christ's teaching on its head' while putting it on a 'warlike footing'.

10. Augustine 1961, III.8. C.f. Weber: 'The Sermon on the Mount says "resist no evil". In opposition, the State asserts: "You *shall* help right to triumph by the use of *force*, otherwise you too may be responsible for injustice". Where this factor is absent, the "state" is also absent; the "anarchism" of the pacifist will have then come to life' (in Gerth and C. Wright Mills [eds], 1991, p. 334).

3 Prophecy and Diplomacy at a New Frontier

1. This organisation would later put its considerable resources (money, publishing) at the disposal of all sections of the peace movement (Ceadel, 1980).

2. Here I am primarily interested in developments in Britain. It is worth noting that the establishment of the first genuinely national Protestant council – the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (1908) – actually preceded the Edinburgh Conference by two years. J. H. or Joe Oldham (1874–1969) later became secretary to the Edinburgh Missionary Conference continuation committee, and then of the International Missionary Council (1921–38) before taking the vice-presidency of the newly formed BCC (1944–46).

3. Hastings also attests to the 'quite extraordinary importance' of the SCM in the birth of ecumenism (1987, pp. 86–99). Up to the 1960s the SCM enjoyed considerable influence in university circles and attracted a number of able clerics who went on to influential academic and administrative posts. The theologically liberal, and somewhat politically progressive, ethos of this organisation played a significant part in crystallising the thinking of many church leaders of the day (Medhurst and Moyser, 1982).

4. The IMC managed to sustain this separate identity until it was merged with the World Council of Churches in 1961.

5. Originally instigated as a series of Anglo-German exchanges in 1908–09, in 1910 this organisation morphed into the 'Associated Council of Churches in the British and German Empires for Fostering Friendly Relations between the Two Peoples', before being initiated as the World Alliance in 1914. It held two war-time Peace Conferences – Berne 1915, Uppsala 1917 – although these were only attended by delegations from neutral countries. Although the American and British contingents proved the most active, there were World Alliance branches in over 30 countries including most European

countries. By 1920 its name had officially changed yet again to the 'World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches' but its old name was still used at times, especially when referring to the international alliance. See Ceadel (2000) and Gorman (2010).

6. In 1913 the Quakers extended their influence particularly in the north of England when they established the Northern Friends Peace Board.

7. The steel baron Andrew Carnegie had a social conscience that was very weak in dealing with the 'sins' of capitalism but made him a great financial supporter of libraries and schools. He gave money to official policy-orientated peace agencies, particularly the Church Peace Union (later the Council on Religion and International Affairs) and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Theodore Olson's 1962 PhD (p. 10) reveals that although neither of these organisations was government sponsored they maintained close relations with the US Administration.

8. Rowan Williams reveals the name to be deeply misleading. Although Christian Socialists reacted strongly against the worst excesses of nineteenth century laissez-faire capitalism and supported co-operative labour and workers' associations of a trade union kind, its leaders like F. D. Maurice and J. M. Ludlow were basically conservative monarchists with a markedly hierarchical, indeed state-centred view of society (Williams in Nicholls and Williams 1984, p. 18). An observation that surely echoes Marx's dismissal: 'Christian Socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat' (Section III of *The Communist Manifesto* in McLellan [ed.], 1977, p. 239).

9. At the beginning of the twentieth century social gospel preachers were confident that a new era of social Christianity was about to begin, transforming the raw reality of industrialism and ushering in an era of international peace. Here Walter Rauschenbusch's manifesto *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907) presupposed that progressive politics reflected Christ's ethical values and rallied liberal Protestants to the task of 'Christianising the social order'. Augustinian realism argues that the ethics of Jesus cannot provide meaningful social ethics.

10. The indomitable Bell (1883–1958) largely figures in this book as both Founding Father of the ecumenical movement and prophetic voice keen on reconciling the Christian faith to public life. In 1925 he became Dean of Canterbury Cathedral, and from 1929 a particularly vocal Bishop of Chichester until his death in 1958. Bell became the prime 'peace activist' (but never pacifist) voice on both the Commissions that led to the 1946 BCC report *The Era of Atomic Power* and the 1959 report *Christians and Atomic War*. The classic biography is provided by Ronald Jasper (1967) and a useful recent collection of essays by Chandler (2012).

11. Hastings reports that it was in fact Oldham who pointed out to Randall Davidson (Archbishop of Canterbury) that there was no reference to freedom of conscience or religion in the League of Nations convent. Randall subsequently wrote to Lord Robert Cecil (Britain's League representative) in Paris to insure it was inserted 'in the nick of time' in Article 22 on the Mandated Territories (1987, p. 95).

12. 'The Message of the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work, Stockholm, 19–30 August, 1925' in Turnbull (ed.) 1954, pp. 2–4.

13. William Temple (1881–1944), like Oldham, was a ceaseless worker for Protestant internationalism. He had attended the Edinburgh Conference as a spokesperson for the SCM and believed that unity would bring the churches a greater voice in international affairs. He was eventually the first official leader of the World Council of Churches, Archbishop of Canterbury (1942–44) and a passionate advocate of Christians working on the side of greater social equality. Kent's 1992 biography is very good in detailing the social activity of 'The People's Archbishop'. Hastings concludes that it would be entirely naive to point to the moderately radical opinions of either Temple or indeed Bell, as proof that the Church of England had then a left-wing rather than right-wing slant (1987, p. 253).

14. Charles E. Raven, Anglican priest, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge (later vice-chancellor) and 'Christian Communist' become particularly active in peace societies (especially the Fellowship of Reconciliation) after his conversion to pacifism in 1930. He authored several influential books (e.g. Raven, 1938 and 1951).

15. The titles of the published documents are testimony to the breadth of subjects covered including: *The Nature of God and his Purpose for the World; International Relations; Christianity and War; Industry and Property, Politics and Citizenship; The Social Function of the Church*; and *Historical Illustrations of the Social Effects of Christianity*.

16. Italics added. COPEC Commission Report: *Christianity and War* (Vol. VIII) 1924, p. 23.

17. The founder members of this Council included not only Methodists and Congregationalists, but also Quakers, Unitarians, and the FoR.

18. In 1939 the PPU would secure 136,000 signatures to their declaration 'I renounce war and will never sanction another'. Taylor and Pritchard argue that by the 1950s the PPU had come to represent the individualistic and rather 'conservative' wing of the pacifist movement (1980, p. 16).

19. The international lawyer John Foster Dulles, son of a minister, became President Eisenhower's controversial Secretary of State between 1953 and 1959. His 'New Look' concept of massive retaliation would have a huge impact on later BCC thinking. See Chapters 6–8.

20. Temple, then Archbishop of York, allegedly greeted Reinhold Niebuhr with the words: 'At last I've met the troubler of my peace' (Scott, 1963, pp. 29–30). A sentiment doubtlessly shared by many of Christendom's idealists. Temple, it should be noted, moved in basic position from a relatively Hegelian idealism to a relatively Augustinian (i.e. Niebuhrian) outlook (c.f. Preston, 1981) in his later years. A useful comparison of the political theologies of Temple and Niebuhr is presented by Suggate (1981).

21. For detailed analysis on the demise of idealism and the reassertion of Augustinian realism see Epp's 'Power Politics', (PhD Thesis, Queen's at Kingston, 1990). Also Smith (1986, pp. 54–67) for a summary of the main outlines of 1920s–40s idealism that usefully locates the realist reaction of the 1950s.

22. For Dulles' role in the CJDP see Arend, 1988, pp. 11–17.

23. Nolde and the CCIA would make a substantial and significant contribution to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted at the Paris meeting of the UN General Assembly, December 1948. See Grubb, 1971.

24. For an evaluation of the methods and effectiveness of the WCC and CCIA as non-governmental organisations see Hudson, 1977. Also see Grubb, 1971 for a frank and engaging personal account.

25. See Epp, 'Power Politics', (PhD Thesis, Queen's at Kingston, 1990) for an excellent discussion of the intellectual currents and debates fostered at this time.

26. Oldham's Moot would sit in a retreat setting for several long weekends every year until 1947, see Mullins and Jacobs, 2006; Steele and Taylor, 2009.

27. Articles of Amalgamation, BCC Constitution, aims and basis, Standing Orders, Policy Documents, Annual Reports, and Minutes of the First meetings. To my knowledge the only attempt at a history of the BCC (and this from an ecclesiastical perspective) is Payne, 1972.

28. Article VI of BCC *Constitution and Rules* n.d., p. 5.

29. Article IX, *Constitution and Rules* n.d., p. 7.

30. 'Confidential Working Paper on the Future of the International Department', dated January 1963.

31. Adopted by the BCC in April 1951. In 1960 this plan was replaced by a four-point statement of action entitled 'A Pattern of International Action'.

32. A useful consideration of the various motives, styles and intended audience for Christian documentary engagement in the socio-political realm is provided by Anthony Dyson in Bauckham and Elford (eds), 1989, pp. 95–114.

33. Peter Hinchliff's very 'Augustinian' article 'Can the Church "Do" Politics?' (1981) questions the extents to which institutional organs such as the BCC really represent the church. He suggests that it is in fact impossible for church leaders to speak for the church in any real sense and the debate over whether the church 'ought' or 'should' be involved in politics is misconceived. Hinchliff's conclusion is that the church cannot go into politics in any way at all – except that it can and should make political *statements*, which will inevitably be chiefly negative and critical about moral ideals. Similarly Christians cannot go into politics either. They are there already and even political apathy will have political consequences. The assumption that the churches' structures and ideas are largely determined by the particular societies within which they are placed forms the basis for Robin Gill's 'Prophecy in a Socially Determined Church' (1979). This interesting 'cultural' study however, also contains the error that no theologian before Constantine and the new-found relation of church and state 'was ever anything but a pacifist' (Gill, 1979, p. 27).

34. See Mascall (1971) for the organisational weaknesses to which ecclesiastical assemblies are subject; and Ridley (1978) for a consideration of the 'time-factor' that prevents church assemblies from dealing satisfactorily with controversial issues.

4 Christians in the Atomic Age

1. Cadoux argued that pacifists should 'admit that it is better that [the war against fascism] should be victoriously carried through than that it should be discontinued before the undertaking is completed' (1940, p. 216).

2. For detail of Bell's war-time protests against obliteration bombing and his heroic support for Bonhoeffer and the anti-Nazi German Confessing Church see Chandler (1995 and 2012) and Carey (1995).

3. A full and comprehensive treatment of British atomic policy-making is found in, for example, Gowing (1974); Groom (1974) and Clark and Wheeler (1989).

4. In 1948 Patrick Blackett was awarded a Nobel Prize. In 1958 he became a founding member of the Institute for Strategic Studies.

5. An example of one such passing reference is in *Hansard*: House of Commons, Vol. 450, col. 2118, 12 May 1948.

6. Fisher had replaced William Temple, who died suddenly in 1944 after only 30 months of office.

7. On this exchange also see Kirby, 1993, p. 255.

8. Victor Gollancz knew Fisher very well from his days, after the First World War, as teacher at Repton independent school in Derbyshire under the Headship of Fisher. Gollancz's writings are full of barbed criticisms of both Fisher's conservatism and what he saw as bellicose attitudes. See Gollancz (1958) and the many references in Dudley Edwards' (1987) excellent biography.

9. MacKinnon, a well-known pacifist, counter-cultural critic, and Marxist sympathiser, went on to join Bell as a notable supporter of CND after its 1958 formation.

10. Norman Goodall would also serve on the BCC Group that produced the 1959 report *Christians and Atomic War*. Kenneth Grubb would serve on the BCC Groups that produced the 1959 report *Christians and Atomic War*, and the 1961 report *The Valley of Decision*. See Chapters 6–8 for more information.

11. Pitt-Watson would serve as vice-president of the BCC 1954–56.

12. For critiques see Ormrod (1987) and Kirby (1993), also William Johnston's 'The Churches' Role in the Nuclear Debate' in Davis ed. (1986).

13. Plato, 1941, Book I Chap. 3; c.f. Augustine's discussion (1972, Book XIX Chap. 21).

14. *The Friend*, 2 August 1946. This was later published in pamphlet form as *The Era of Atomic Power: Reply to the British Council of Churches from the Society of Friends*. Quotations are taken from this pamphlet.

15. i.e. a position that ignores neither Christianity's spiritual and moral resources, nor the worldly events that challenge them. See Elford (1985, pp. 178 and 180).

16. See Kirby (1998) for a political study of the life of Cyril Forster Garbett.

17. The Enabling Act of 1919 set up the National Assembly (always called the Church Assembly) as the successor to the Representative Church Council. It had three Houses (Bishops, Clergy and Laity). In 1969 the Synodical Government Measure reconstituted the Church Assembly into the present-day General Synod.

18. Wight (1949); Thrall (1972); MacKinnon (1968a); Groom (1974); Elford (1985); Ormrod (1987) and Kirby (1993) all offer reviews. Martin Wight's *International Affairs* review is particularly noteworthy because it highlights the ways in which ecclesiastical thinking was being given a hearing in contemporary International Relations (IR) circles. Elford and Kirby are by

far the most detailed and both cover the report's acceptance debate in the Church Assembly where opinions were evenly divided. Kirby also puts the report in the context of the Church of England's Cold War debate. Although Groom is also informative, care should be taken for Groom wrongly suggests that this Church of England publication is in fact a BCC publication.

19. On this see the excellent discussion by Kirby (1993).
20. The first official Western approach to disarmament and arms control. The main thrust of the Baruch proposals was to keep atomic bombs out of the hands of sovereign states by placing them under the supervision of a supranational body. For detail see, for example, Noel-Baker (1958) and Mandelbaum (1979).

5   The Churches and the Thermonuclear Revolution

1. The Church of England's 1982 report, *The Church and the Bomb*, contains a sophisticated discussion of the processes and differences between nuclear fission (i.e. the A-bomb) and thermonuclear fusion (i.e. the H-bomb).
2. The decision was not clearly enunciated until the 1955 *Statement on Defence* White Paper.
3. From June 1946 the West had adhered to the same disarmament objectives expressed through the Baruch Plan proposals. These objectives were reiterated in the Anglo-French Memorandum of 1954. Here a Draft Disarmament Treaty was prepared by the UN Disarmament Commission and submitted by it to the UN Security Council, to the UN General Assembly, and to a World Disarmament Conference in Geneva. This treaty advocated (a) the total prohibition of the use and manufacture of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction of every type, together with the conversion of existing stocks of nuclear weapons for peaceful purposes; and (b) major reductions in all armed forces and conventional armaments. In the Disarmament Sub-Committee of the UN (i.e. Britain, the US, the Soviet Union, France, and Canada) Western delegates pressed these objectives until May 1955. The Soviets, however, professed great scepticism about the sincerity of the West in proposing the total abolition of nuclear weapons including existing stocks. Noel-Baker (1958) provides a comprehensive survey of these proposals.
4. The Convocation of Canterbury (established 1852) is the more important of the two Synods (the other being York, established in 1851) in the Church of England. Resolutions were introduced to the 'joint Synod' by two speakers and then referred to the 'Lower House' (House of Laity) and 'Upper House' (House of Bishops) for consideration. See Moyser (ed.) 1985 for history and detail.
5. C.f. Chapter Four.
6. Another 1948 Commission server, but unlike the above, Harthill was responsible for the 'minority pacifist note' carried at the end of *The Church and the Atom*, pp. 114–18.
7. All Convocation quotations taken from *The Times*, 13 May 1954.

8. By 1954 the more notable signposts in the development of the academic discipline (from both sides of the Atlantic) included: Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1st ed. 1932); E. H. Carr's *Twenty Years Crisis* (1939); Martin Wight's *Power Politics* (1945); Hans Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* (1st ed. 1948); John Herz's *Political Realism and Political Idealism* (1951); George F. Kennan's *American Diplomacy* (1952); and Herbert Butterfield's *Christianity, Diplomacy, and War* (1953).

9. Bell had been converted to Garbett's no-first-use strategy in December 1950.

10. The Free Church Federal Council (a constituent assembly of the BCC) represented 23,000 churches in March 1955, compared to, for example, the 17,000 churches in the Church of England. Source: *The Times*, 24 March 1955.

11. Margaret Thrall (1972) considers Archbishop Garbett's views in some detail and concludes that he was one leading cleric who stands out for his strenuous attempts to ensure that the British government was doing something about the control of atomic weapons. For an examination of Garbett's role in the Cold War period also see Kirby (1999).

12. Interestingly in his last published book, *World Problems of Today* (1955), Garbett was arguing that 'it is now doubtful if the traditional definition of a "Just War" is valid in the nuclear age' (pp. 101–2). See Kirby (1993), p. 275.

13. Copy of statement in WCC, 1958, pp. 4–7.

14. The July 1956 CCIA Executive Committee can be found in WCC, 1958.

15. The statement of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting at Galyateto, Hungary, is found on pp. 8–9 of WCC, 1958.

16. The Department met on 19 April 1955. The statement drafted by the Department for consideration by Council was entitled: *The Hydrogen Bomb and Nuclear Fission*, BCC n.d. but 1955.

17. For example, Loughton Union Church passed a resolution on 13 April 1955 expressing their concern. Copies of this resolution were sent to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Winston Churchill.

18. For example, Mary Bubb from Oxford wrote to Slack on 22 March 1957, appalled by the absence of moral guidance from the main religious bodies, believing the tests could still be stopped she pleaded with the BCC to speak up. A letter from Hull and District Council of Churches (associated to the BCC) Executive Committee, 23 March 1957, asked what action the BCC had taken, if any, and what action Council proposed taking to try to stop the British tests in the Pacific in May 1957. A postcard received from the Bristol Diocesan Youth Chaplain (Bernard Brown), dated 28 March 1957, asked what the BCC was doing about the new H-bomb tests: 'In view of the recently released facts about the radiation already caused, is there any hope of the Church making effective protest?'

19. Britain had exploded its first A-bomb (October 1952), the US its first H-bomb (November 1952), and Britain was preparing to drop its first H-bomb (May 1957) in the Pacific region. Dombey and Grove (1992) convincingly argue that the subsequent British tests on 15 and 31 May were actually a thermonuclear bluff. Their argument suggests that the first British explosions were actually based on 'boosted fission designs' and not on the fusion

process. They conclude that the tests had as much to do with public relations, especially relations with the US, as with constructing an authentic hydrogen bomb. If so the deception was remarkably successful.

20. Resolution passed by the Japanese Council at its Annual Meeting in Tokyo 5–6 March 1957, requesting the cessation of atom and hydrogen bomb (remembering British government tests on Christmas Island) experiments. Letter to Bell from Dr Michio Kozaki, chair of Japanese Council, details this. Bell repeats Kozaki's message to Slack in a letter dated 21 March 1957.

21. Voting was by individuals sitting in assembly and not by church representation.

22. Ormrod (1987) notes the Archbishop as Chair of the BCC; the Archbishop was in fact the BCC's President.

23. e.g. Butt to Slack 8 April 1957; Bubb to Slack, 16 April 1957 *The Manchester Guardian* 11 April 1957. A letter from Colchester Council of Churches to Slack (5 April 1957) gives unanimous support for the BCC resolution. But this was an exception to a general rule.

24. See for example, resolution passed by Cefn Mawr Methodist Circuit 15 April 1957.

25. Parker to Slack 6 May 1957. Dr Say had retired as BCC General Secretary after seven years' service. He would later become Bishop of Rochester. Say's replacement, Kenneth Slack, previously Minister of St James's Presbyterian Church, Edgware, became Say's successor on 6 June 1955. Slack would serve as General Secretary until 1965, when he became Moderator of the United Reformed Church.

26. An interesting series of letters make Slack's attitude clear. A letter from Peggy Duff (NCANWT organising secretary) to Slack, 15 October 1957, requests a meeting between the BCC and NCANWT to discuss certain aspects of their campaign against nuclear weapons. A meeting was scheduled for 1 November 1957 but no record has been left of its detail. In reply to a letter from Lincoln and District Branch of NCANWT (17 May 1957) in which, as the NCANWT saw it, the BCC supported their work, and so requesting the address of the nearest BCC representative, Slack wrote back (20 May 1957) noting that the BCC did not support the aims of NCANWT.

27. Copies of the CCIA and WCC Central Committee statements are found in WCC (1958), pp. 9–13.

6 The Moral Aspects of Deterrence

1. Navias, 1991, p. 1. Navias' discussion of the Sandys White Paper (particularly pp. 134–87) is probably the most comprehensive account available based on primary sources.

2. Garnett's 'British Strategic Thought' in Baylis (ed.) 1977, pp. 156–7 and Howard, 1970, pp. 154–83 provides an introduction to this debate.

3. Caution is advised when associating Buzzard with the limited war position because, in academic strategic studies, he is usually associated with the posture of 'graduated deterrence' (e.g. Clark and Wheeler, 1989); Navias (1991). This is to distance Buzzard's position from that of Liddell Hart's limited war (which suggested Buzzard underrated the capabilities of conventional

forces). In this book, however, Buzzard's contribution is always referred to as limited war for this is the term he used when addressing BCC circles, perhaps for its more overtly 'moral' undertone.

4. e.g. Buzzard (1956) and Buzzard, Slessor and Lowenthal (1956). Clark and Wheeler (1989), using information gleaned from the Public Records Office, examine Buzzard's importance as Director of Naval Intelligence in the years 1951 to his retirement in 1954. This perspective considers his criticisms of British nuclear strategy from within the framework of bureaucratic struggles within Whitehall. Clark and Wheeler conclude: 'Buzzard's ideas were certainly a "tour de force", but his ideas were too heretical to the Chiefs of Staff' (p. 188).

5. On 28 November 1958, after a donation from the American Ford Foundation, the Brighton Conference Association was converted into the Institute for the Study of International Security, afterwards dropped in favour of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), with its own permanent staff and handsome central London headquarters. Kenneth Grubb was elected as Chair of its Executive Committee, Goold-Adams as vice-chair and Lord Salter as honorary treasurer. Its Council included many of the personalities considered in this book including Professor Blackett, Alan Booth, Anthony Buzzard, Basil Liddell Hart, Denis Healey, Michael Howard and Canon Waddams. In 1959 the Institute founded its own periodical, tellingly entitled *Survival*. For its first 30 years the IISS was funded by either the Ford or Rockefeller Foundations (i.e. American money). An overview of the history of this important organisation that draws out its significance for the study and practice of IR in Britain is provided by Howard (1989b). On the Brighton Conference see Grubb 1971, pp. 194–97.

6. i.e. the 1957 Geneva Conference.

7. Kenneth Slack wrote to the Prime Minister on 11 November; the PM's reply is dated 20 November. DIAM, 10 December 1957.

8. See John Garnet's introduction (1970), p. 24. Garnet notes this 'Golden Age' probably concluded in the early 1960s with Robert McNamara's famous policy statements.

9. Sir Thomas (along with Dr Robert S. Bilheimer who is introduced in the next chapter) chaired a 19-member international commission appointed in 1955 by the WCC to study the nuclear dilemma. The document they prepared was received by the WCC Central Committee on 27 August 1958 and published as *Christians and the Prevention of War in an Atomic Age – A Theological Discussion*.

10. Buzzard refers to the 1957 Labour Party's October Conference in Brighton where Nye Bevan, archetypal hero of the left, denounced nuclear unilateralism as tantamount to 'sending a Foreign Secretary naked into the conference chamber'. For detail of Bevan's speech see Groom (1974), pp. 300–5; and the sympathetic but aggrieved analysis by Foot (1975), pp. 547–83.

11. Buzzard is building on notions related to the western 'Package Plan' of 1957. This plan was announced on 29 August 1957 and included: (a) the suspension of nuclear tests, under a system to be devised; (b) the 'cutting-off' of new production of fissile material for military use; (c) the 'equitable transfer' of all fissile material from existing weapons stocks to peaceful use. At first

sight these proposals seemed a reasonable advance, indeed they might well have proved to be, but the Soviets turned them down for the following reasons: (a) whilst they accepted the suspension of tests and a system of control posts on Soviet soil, they felt suspension should not be made conditional on acceptance of 'cut-off', indeed they refused to accept cut-off unless an agreement for the total abolition of stocks was reached; (b) the Soviets argued that 'cut-off' by itself was meaningless, because the USA had already enough nuclear weapons to blow the world up several times over. (Here the Soviets made a legitimate point.); (c) they could not agree to 'equitable transfers' because the US coupled the proposal with a declaration to the effect that the US must retain a substantial part of her nuclear stocks, and must be free to place nuclear warheads on the territories of allies and to train allies' troops in their use. The basis of 'equitable transfer' proposed was finally 53 kg transferred by US for every 47 kg transferred by the Soviet Union. Matters were not made any better when afterwards, President Eisenhower told the American people that US stocks were far greater in quantity and quality than those of the Soviet Union. It was estimated that US stocks were three times as great as Russian stocks. This meant that if the Soviet Union accepted the proposals, Soviet stocks would approach nil and US stocks would be two-thirds of their existing levels. In reality it could not be hoped the Soviets would ever accept this plan, or anything like it. See Noel-Baker 1958, pp. 24–7, 220–1.

12. *Sputnik* proved the Soviets had the ability to launch intercontinental ballistic missiles. For detail see Denis Healey's article 'Sputnik and Western Defence' in the April 1958 edition of *International Affairs*. Groom (1974) pp. 253–66, details the effect of *Sputnik* on the development of Western weaponry.

13. i.e. the 1957 White Paper, *Defence: Outline of Future Policy*, Cmnd. 124.

14. Copy of resolution taken from the July 1958 supplement to the BCC's *The Churches and the Hydrogen Bomb*, n.d. but 1955.

15. Section (iii) of BCC's October 1957 resolution. Resolution contained in a supplement to *The Churches and the Hydrogen Bomb*, n.d. but 1955.

16. C.f. *The Methodist Recorder*, 31 October 1957.

17. John J. (later Dr) Vincent would become Vice-President of CND's North-West Region and a firm opponent of BCC multilateralism. In 1962 he published *Christ in a Nuclear World,* a particularly strong criticism of the theology and politics of the BCC.

18. Here Keighley refers to the *pacificist*-sounding declaration of the COPEC movement made in April 1924.

7 Strategies for Survival

1. Although Goodall had served on the BCC commission that produced *The Era of Atomic Power* (in addition to actually being chair of the DIA 1945–46), he only reluctantly accepted the invitation because he felt 'completely at a loss to bring to the group any fresh light on this baffling business'. Goodall to Keighley, 21 November 1957. Such reluctance, as will be shown, was by no means atypical.

2. In April 1957 Commander Sir Stephen King-Hall had called for the instiga-
   tion of a Royal Commission to study the possibilities of unarmed resistance
   as national policy. King-Hall, a retired naval officer and former independ-
   ent National MP, was the publisher of a somewhat idiosyncratic but widely
   read *Newsletter*. He was also a nuclear pacifist who believed the possibility of
   nuclear obliteration now made armed defence redundant. King-Hall would
   later summarise his beliefs in *Defence in the Nuclear Age* (1958). Mackie was
   also clearly aware of J. B. Priestley's recent 'Britain and the Nuclear Bombs',
   written for *New Statesman* (2 November 1957). J. B. Priestley's article is often
   cited as a major catalyst for the emergence of CND: e.g. Driver (1964); Groom
   (1974); and Taylor (1988).

3. Howard was about to become particularly well known in British strategic-
   political circles thanks to an influential book, *Disengagement in Europe*
   (1958), which called on the Soviet and Western powers to 'disengage'
   foreign troops from both Eastern Europe and Germany. Howard's own view
   was 'that the Russian leaders have abandoned none of their belief in the
   historic mission of communism to conquer the world and in their personal
   responsibility to ensure that it does. But it is a conquest of which in the long
   run they feel certain and for which they are prepared to wait … A relaxa-
   tion of military precautions would be permissible if it led to compensating
   economic or political advantages, but it remains essential to retain some
   degree of "deterrence" to discourage Russian leaders from taking unwise
   risks. It is in this context that the question of "disengagement" must be
   examined' (1958), pp. 22–4. To Howard such a policy of 'disengagement'
   would serve as a form of arms control while avoiding the sensitivity of the
   test ban issue.

4. Bell, Grubb and Goodall would be the only three group members with experi-
   ence of the first BCC report. Bell would eventually resign from the Buzzard
   group, Goodall was reluctant to join in the first place, whilst Grubb went on
   to serve on the 1961 BCC Commission that produced *The Valley of Decision*.
   It is worth noting that Grubb as chair of the CCIA, and Alan Booth as CCIA
   London Secretary, shared a close working relationship.

5. Johnstone would go on help produce the BCC's 1961 *Valley of Decision* and
   1963 *British Nuclear Deterrent* reports. Rogers would also serve in the BCC
   working group that produced the *British Nuclear Deterrent*.

6. The commission that prepared *The Era of Atomic Power* report included not
   one but three academic theologians/philosophers (i.e. Dr Newton Flew,
   Donald Mackinnon, and Professor Ritchie). This helps explain differences
   in tone between the first (and eventually) second BCC contributions. The
   former was speculative, the latter technical.

7. Edwin Robertson contends that Vidler's keen mind penetrated so many
   discussions on peace, justice, nuclear weapons, the welfare state, etc. in the
   1950s and 1960s that if he were not present at an important discussion you
   needed to ask why (1989, p. 463).

8. Jenkins, a close friend of Booth, became an important advocate of the limited
   war approach through his articles in the journal *Theology* (e.g. June 1961).

9. In 1937 Ingram had published *Christianity – Right or Left*? in which he
   argued that the churches had no alternative but to choose the hard left in
   the struggles between communism and fascism.

10. Keighley had pencilled 'Ingram: free-lance author, political interests, independent means, leftist, travelled, balanced judgement' on a letter sent by Baker to Keighley, 13 January 1958.

11. i.e. *Russia, the Atom and the West* where Kennan targeted Manichean moralism, the worth of nuclear weapons, the logic of the arms race, and offered a new perspective on the Cold War and the role of the West therein. Kennan, the United States Ambassador to Moscow from 1952 to 1953, was a devout Christian and active producer of 'Christian realist' contributions to international politics. He favoured diplomacy instead of balance of power politics and serves as a good example of how subscription to realism does not necessarily lead to similar conclusions about nuclear policy. Indeed, Kennan acknowledged the obsolescence of the nation-state as guarantor of survival and gave new life to Kantian universalism. Besides *Russia, the Atom and the West* (published by OUP in 1958) his most significant contribution was *Foreign Policy and Christian Conscience* (Philadelphia: Peace Education Programme, American Friends Service Committee, 1959). See Hare and Joynt (1982), pp. 42–6 for a discussion of Kennan's moral realism and his eventual support for a nuclear just war theory.

12. It was this approach that would form the basis of the Church of England's controversial 1982 report *The Church and the Bomb*.

13. Dr Bilheimer was the driving force behind the WCC report *Christians and the Prevention of War in an Atomic Age* (WCC Press, 1958). Although this report was the result of an international commission appointed in 1955, Bilheimer was given major credit for its authorship. This study served as an important precursor to the group's eventual *Christians and Atomic War* (1959).

14. This lack of solidarity would disappear as a problem after MacIntyre and Bell resigned from the committee in April and May 1958 respectively. This fact also questions *The Christian World*'s assertion (30 April 1959) that Goodall was the only orthodox pacifist in the Group. If Goodall was a pacifist, little in the eventual 1959 *Christians and Atomic War* report or group discussions suggests his influence.

15. Buzzard's fears had been verbally communicated to Mackie who subsequently passed them on to his 'staff team' in the letter dated 21 February 1958. Groom (1974), pp. 359–60 details attitudes to the Soviet offer to suspend tests.

16. During World War II, Waddams worked for the Religions Division of the Ministry of Information co-ordinating a co-operative relationship between the churches and state. In a confidential memorandum in 1944 he had argued: 'Our experience in this war has conclusively shown how closely political objectives are related to religious beliefs. For purposes of work the two may be separated, but they must go hand in hand and must not be allowed to be contradictory in any particular. The religious and the political must be two aspects of the same activity'. See Kirby, 1993, p. 251.

17. For commentary see Groom (1974) and Navias (1991).

18. Brown actually made his attack in the Commons on the same day Goodall wrote to Mackie. Brown complained: 'The White Paper provides for nothing but conventional troops, conventional weapons and a thermo-nuclear weapon … If we do not provide for tactical atomic weapons and for large-scale forces … then, in fact, we have nothing with which to meet the

in-between areas at all'. *Hansard*: House of Commons, Vol. 583, Col. 410, 26 February 1958, George Brown.

19. Booth's paper *East/West – A Theological Comment* was written in December 1957 and can be found attached to a letter to Keighley dated 20 December 1957. Many of Booth's ideas expressed here prefigure his later publication *Christians and Power Politics* (Booth, 1961) that was so favourably received by journals of international politics. For detail of this reception see Roger 'Power Politics in the *Civitas Terrena*' (PhD Thesis, Queen's, 1990), pp. 287–8.

20. C.f. Anthony Dyson's 'Styles of Documentary Engagement' in Bauckham and Elford (eds), 1989, pp. 95–114.

21. The phrase is Professor Rotblat's. Cited in *The Coventry Evening Telegraph* 11 November 1997.

8   Redacting Just War

1. According to Frank Myers' 'British Peace Politics' (PhD Thesis, Columbia, 1965), the symbol's resemblance to the semaphore signals was purely coincidental. The intention of the symbol's creator, Gerald Holtom, was to depict a drooping cross as a sign of his despair at the failure of the churches to speak out against nuclear weapons (p. 107).

2. The famous marches to the Nuclear Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston were, for example, said to represent the 'greatest movement in this island since the days of the Chartists'. The first March over the 1958 Easter Weekend was a great success with 3000–5000 people at the opening rally in Trafalgar Square, 500–700 hard-core marchers and 5000–10,000 at the closing rally. See Driver (1964), p. 59.

3. This book covers the period prior to Labour's 1959 General Election defeat. After 1959, CND's programme changed beyond unilateralism by calling for the British withdrawal from NATO. At the same time the movement changed its primary tactic to the infiltration of the Labour Party. When this tactic failed CND modified their goals to make them more 'realistic'. At this point the movement lost its 'anti-political' quality and became a conventional pressure group. See Myers, 'British Peace Politics' (PhD Thesis, Columbia, 1965).

4. If a conventional history is required, these are not in short supply. Try for example: Driver (1964); Parkin (1968); Taylor (1988).

5. A complementary discussion of the peace movement's role in 'Rethinking Cold War History' is provided by Mary Kaldor in Booth (ed.) 1991, pp. 313–31.

6. A fact illustrated by the CND Executive where Arthur Goss, Canon Collins and Sir Richard Acland were the only members known to be active Christians.

7. Reprinted as *The Nuclear Dilemma*, The Times Publishing Co., 1958.

8. There is some confusion over whether Grubb's resolution was actually passed in *full concurrence* of both the DIA and its surrogate study group. Keighley to Slack (25 April 1958) argues that in no way was it moved on behalf of the group. Keighley to Gordon Evans, UNA, (19 May 1958) suggests it was passed in full concurrence of both bodies.

9. The enormous significance of this text in the development of strategic thinking is explored by Hedley Bull in his essay 'Disarmament and the International System' in Garnett ed. (1970), pp. 136–48.

10. This moratorium continued until 1961 when first the Soviets and then the US resumed testing.

9 Conclusion

1. There are several differences in the composition of the two groups who wrote the two BCC reports in 1946 and 1959. First, the 1959 report was not authored by any women; second, the 1946 report had three theologians/philosophers, the 1959 report one; and third, whereas the 1946 report had no politicians or technical experts, the 1959 report had one MP and two technical experts. These differences, quite naturally, are reflected in the style of the reports: the former being more philosophical, the later heralding the much more technical BCC approach to defence influenced by Buzzard.

Bibliography

The BCC archives utilised in the writing of this book are to be found in the Church of England Record Centre, Galleywall Road, London SE16. At the time of writing they were not catalogued (although in the process of being so). Minutes, letters and pamphlets and other records were kept in 'Boxes' relating to years. This bibliography is split into three: Section 1 gives full details of all official (church and government) sources consulted or referred to. Section 2 lists unpublished sources (i.e. useful PhD's). And Section 3 provides details of all books and articles noted in the text or footnotes of this study. This last section also includes suggestions for further reading.

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