

WAR, THE PROFESSION OF ARMS AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

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In this paper are presented the following issues: some aspects of the teaching of Jesus; the Early Church; Constantine, Ambrose, Augustine and the formulation of the "Just War" Theory; military ethics today; symptoms of moral deterioration in situations of conflict; root causes relating to the fragmentation of moral authority; the importance of Story and Community – the Christian Community; the importance of Story and Community - the Military Community and indwelling a "Story".

Introduction

If a Christian serves in the Armed Forces, he or she can expect people to ask, "Why did you join the military? Was it part of the family tradition? Was it because it offered a spirit of adventure including excitement and danger? Was it because you felt that by doing so you were helping to make the world a safer place? Or was it simply the best job offer at the time?" However, often someone will ask; "how is your chosen career or vocation consistent with Christian discipleship." They ask this question because they are aware of some aspects of the teaching of Jesus.

This is certainly an important question for any Christian serving in the Armed Forces.

"Can I be a Christian and consider the Armed Forces as a career? Can my vocation be to serve as a sailor, soldier or airman?" Had a Christian posed that question to his fellow disciples in the early days of the Christian Church he would