ETHICS POSITION PAPER

WEAPONS

In a world where war and conflict is an everyday occurrence and the incredible suffering of it invades our homes every time we turn on the television, what are we to make of it as Christians?

The issue of weapons is a pertinent one today. The media seems to be full of stories of turmoil in the Middle East, unrest in Sudan and ongoing problems in Afghanistan. As Christian investors we have an obligation to respond to this crisis through our ethical framework and responsible investment strategy.

"THEY WILL BEAT THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES AND THEIR SPEARS INTO PRUNING HOOKS. NATION WILL NOT TAKE UP SWORD AGAINST NATION, NOR WILL THEY TRAIN FOR WAR ANYMORE."

MICAH 4:3

BRIEF BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

The bible has very little to directly say about the use of weapons. It does however discuss warfare and how conflict in general should be viewed by us as Christians. At Christian Super we recognize that weapons have other uses besides warfare, such as recreational (e.g. hunting) and preventative means (e.g. policing), but due to the fact the major and most controversial use of weaponry is for conflict we believe an analysis of what the bible has to say on the issue of warfare should be our focus when analyzing the issue of weapons.

At first glance, the scriptures appear to paint quite an inconsistent view on the use of weapons and warfare. On one hand, the Old Testament seems to present a view that warfare can be quite justified. Joel 3:8 states "Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, "I am strong!"". (See also Judges 20:48, Joshua 6:21). These verses suggest that if warfare is undertaken in God's name then it can be a legitimate means of exerting authority. Romans 13:1-6 is another passage commonly used to show the divine authority of the state in engaging in warfare. The passage suggests that the 'authorities that exist have been established by God' and that these authorities should be feared because they are an 'agent of wrath to bring punishment to the wrongdoer'. These verses have been used in the past as a powerful argument in justifying war. It must however be considered whether this is the complete view the bible presents.

The first step to understanding the Old Testament descriptions of warfare is to realize the role of Israel in God's plan. At no other point in the Bible besides God's involvement with Israel is warfare or fighting condoned in such ways. This fact suggests that the battles and destruction were unique to the nation of Israel and the purposes they had in reclaiming the Promised Land and ridding themselves of sin.

Micah 4:3 continues the image of Joel and suggests that this fighting will ultimately come to an end, "They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore." This image speaks of the end times when earth finally reaches a state of peace.

In this light, we have the figure of Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Peace'. Matthew 5:38-40 says 'You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well'. This pacifism finds an excellent example in Acts 7:59-60 where Stephen prays for the forgiveness of those stoning him. This image contrasts the Old Testament warfare to underline God's plan and the perfect existence that is to come.

CHURCH THROUGH THE AGES

Church history is riddled with different interpretations of this tension between the peaceful Jesus and Israel's military conquests. The generally accepted thought on the topic is found in the Catholic Church's Just War principles. This theory was developed over centuries in the Catholic Church through notable figures such as Augustine and Aquinas. It holds that a conflict can be justified provided it follows certain conditions, articulated through two basic sets of criteria, Jus ad bellum or 'the right to war' and Jus in bello or 'conduct during war'.

Right to War Criteria	
Just Cause	The reason must be just and therefore should not consist of merely punishment or economic or political gain
Comparative Justice	The injustice on one side must significantly outweigh the injustice of the other
Legitimate Authority	Only recognized public authorities may wage war
Proportionality	Anticipated benefits must be proportional to the evil or harm committed
Probability of Success	Engaging in warfare must not be futile
Last Resort	Force may only be used after all alternatives have been exhausted
Right Intention	Force must only be used for a just cause and only for that purpose

Conduct During War Criteria	
Distinction	A distinction must be made between combatants and non-combatants
Military Necessity	Minimum force must be used
Proportionality	The force used must be proportional to the wrongdoing

Due to the now diverse nature of the church, there are few specific trends in the views and opinions of Christian groups. While there are still some conservative groups, most groups follow, either explicitly or implicitly, the Just War principles.

OUR STANCE

At Christian Super we do not intend to reach a definitive judgment on whether war or involvement in it is acceptable as Christians. However, we do believe that the biblical perspectives on weapons and warfare found above must guide our investment behaviour and thinking.

At this point it is important to make distinctions between the various forms of weaponry and their potential uses. Different weapons inherently have intentions attached to them. For example, nuclear weapons are designed to inflict damage on an immense scale, a much different purpose to that of a hand gun. Consequently three criteria, based on the Just War criteria outlined above can be used to distinguish between the evil of different weapons.

- Indiscriminate design
- Proportionality
- Inhumane or Cruel weapons

Using these criteria Christian Super has identified two problematic categories of weapons. The first, atomic, biological and chemical weapons are inhumane, indiscriminate and indefensible because they not only kill but they attack the community's basic means of life. In addition to these, we reject land mines and cluster munitions as inhumane and indiscriminate, due to the long term effects on the land that they have.

WHAT IS CS DOING?

At Christian Super we have excluded from investment any company with direct involvement in the inhumane and indiscriminate categories of weapons identified above. For companies with involvement with other weaponry we will accept a revenue contribution of no more than 5%. This exclusion will effectively rule out all major manufacturers and distributors while allowing for periphery involvement.

Helpdesk contact details

P 1300 360 907 (local call cost)

F 1300 367 828 (local call cost)

E helpdesk@christiansuper.com.au

M Christian Super
PO Box 3035
Rhodes NSW 2138 AUSTRALIA

W www.christiansuper.com.au

Christian Super
ABN 66 628 776 348
SFN 1242 009 45 SPIN CHR0001AU

Trustee
Christian Super Pty Limited
AFSL No. 244117 ABN 68 065 040 619
RSE License No. L0000918
RSE Registration No. R1004137

GENERAL ADVICE DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this fact sheet is general in nature and does not take into account any personal objectives, financial situation or needs of any person. You should consider the appropriateness of the information having regard to your own objectives, financial situation and needs and obtain professional financial advice prior to making any decision.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

It is strongly recommended that you seek professional financial planning advice from a licensed financial adviser. Christian Super can connect you with a Financial Planner for financial advice consistent with Christian principles. Please call Christian Super on 1300 360 907.