

# WHO WOULD JESUS KILL?

WAR, PEACE,  
AND THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

MARK J. ALLMAN

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There are many I would like to thank for making this book possible. First my wife, Emily, whose support has made all of my professional endeavors possible. Your sacrifices have made my successes achievable. I am forever grateful.

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Finally I dedicate this book to my children, Ezekiel (Zeke) and Agnes. May you never know a world at war and may you always be instruments of God's peace.

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*Speech at Clermont (cont.)*

by all the soldiers of God: 'It is the will of God! It is the will of God!' [*Deus vult! Deus vult!*]

"And we neither command nor advise that the old or those incapable of bearing arms, undertake this journey. Nor ought women to set out at all without their husbands, or brother, or legal guardians. For such are more of a hindrance than aid, more of a burden than an advantage. Let the rich aid the needy and according to their wealth let them take with them experienced soldiers. The priests and other clerks, whether secular or regulars are not to go without the consent of their bishop; for this journey would profit them nothing if they went without permission. Also, it is not fitting that laymen

should enter upon the pilgrimage without the blessing of their priests.

"Whoever, therefore, shall determine upon this holy pilgrimage, and shall make his vow to God to that effect, and shall offer himself to him for sacrifice, as a living victim, holy and acceptable to God, shall wear the sign of the cross of the Lord on his forehead or on his breast. When, indeed, he shall return from his journey, having fulfilled his vow, let him place the cross on his back between his shoulders. Thus shall ye, indeed, by this twofold action, fulfill the precept of the Lord, as lie commands in the Gospel, 'he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.'<sup>24</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Religion and war have always been strange bedfellows. The three Abrahamic faiths have so much in common. All three profess belief in a single God; all three share a common origin and sacred texts; and the ethics of all three are similar. Yet tragically they also share centuries of violence, which might too easily be explained by the old adage, "No one fights like family." But my own experience also teaches that no one loves or forgives like family, either. Hans Küng, a Catholic theologian and advocate for interreligious

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## FOREWORD

One of the highlights of the Christian liturgical year for me has always been gathering with friends, family, and others at a late Christmas Eve service to glorify God and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. With the passing of time, however, this experience has become rather bittersweet. On the one hand, echoing the heavenly host that appeared to the shepherds some two thousand years ago, we proclaim, “peace on earth, good will toward all” (Luke 2:14). Yet a quick glance at the news, with its graphic images of suffering, displaced, and dying men, women, and children due to war and conflict in places such as Kenya, Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Darfur region of Sudan—not to mention the terrorist attacks and loss of innocent lives on September 11, 2001, events tattooed onto our minds since that now infamous date—obviously reveals an excruciating absence of peace in the world for all too many people.

Nevertheless Catholics and other Christians continue to worship each week in sanctuaries where we experience in the here and now a foretaste of the peace of Christ. In the liturgy, people from all nations and backgrounds gather and unite in prayer for God’s peaceable kingdom to come and God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, and for God to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. At the Catholic Mass, after everyone recites the Lord’s Prayer, the priest adds, “Deliver

us, Lord, from every evil, and grant us peace in our day.” At this point, he says, “The peace of the Lord be with you always,” and the congregation responds, “And also with you.” This is followed by everyone’s exchanging with one another a sign of peace. Not simply a hello or a greeting, this gesture is a visible symbol of our reconciliation with God and one another. There is peace among us. Indeed the United States Catholic bishops “encourage every Catholic to make the sign of peace at Mass an authentic sign of our reconciliation with God and with one another. This sign of peace is also a visible expression of our commitment to work for peace as a Christian community.”<sup>1</sup> After this gesture of peace and before receiving the Eucharist, the assembly sings the *Agnus Dei*, praying that the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, will “grant us peace.” That word keeps coming up.

Moreover when receiving the Body of Christ in Communion, Catholics profess that we, in turn, become his body. To paraphrase Augustine, we are what we eat. In his *Confessions*, Augustine writes that he heard God’s voice, saying, “Grow and you shall feed on me. But you shall not change me into your own substance, as you do with the food of your body. Instead you shall be changed into me.”<sup>2</sup> Christ is our peace, and we are called to embody and practice that peace. Indeed the peace we experience during worship is not supposed to be left behind the stained glass windows of the church building. At the conclusion of the Mass, during the dismissal, the priest blesses us and usually says, “The Mass is ended, go in peace to love and serve the Lord,” to which we enthusiastically respond, “Thanks be to God.” We now get to share that peace through love and service to others outside the church doors. This, though, is easier said than done. The chasm between what we experience during the liturgy and what we encounter in the world is stark and deep.

More specifically, when we go forth from worship and attempt to pass Christ’s peace on to a planet where peace is often absent, the question of *how* to do so comes to the forefront. When conflict erupts, how should Christians respond in a way that is congruent with Christ’s call for love, mercy, and reconciliation?

May Christians ever resort to the use of force, including killing, to restore or establish a just peace? If, for example, an enemy, whom we are called to love, threatens an innocent neighbor, whom we are also commanded to love, what should we Christians do? We know that we ought to do something, but what? What would Jesus have us do? Can we imagine that Jesus would use lethal force to protect someone from an attacker? Or as the title of this important book asks, “Who would Jesus kill?”

That is not merely a theoretical or provocative question. I myself struggled with it when I worked for several years in law enforcement (in corrections while I was a young person in college and in policing some years later) and participated in Army ROTC (during my undergraduate days when I considered a possible career in the military). As a Christian who had attended parochial school and youth group Bible studies while growing up and who regularly attended Mass, I found that I struggled with the question of whether I could use lethal force in the performance of my duties. I hoped to serve others and protect them from harm, but the conflicts and violence that I encountered in the line of duty—and the use of force that might be required to prevent or stop such violence—seemed in tension with the peace of Christ I experienced at church and was called to pass along to the world. Too bad this book was not available back then! It would have helped me sort through these difficult questions.

Now, many years later, I teach my own course on war and peace in the Christian tradition each semester, and I often find myself unsatisfied with the textbooks that are available. I keep trying out new texts (and some old ones) for this class, but I think with *Who Would Jesus Kill?* we finally have one that I will use and keep on using. The fruit of careful research and instructional experience in the college classroom, this text provides a comprehensive yet accessible treatment of the various Christian ethical approaches to peace and war: pacifism, holy war, and just war. A fine appendix also discusses that ethical approaches to peace and war are not the sole domain of Christians but are important considerations in the Jewish and Islamic faith traditions as well.

Easily discernible throughout the book is the author's passion for teaching undergraduates and providing them with the tools and information they need for thinking critically about this timely yet perennial moral issue. I am grateful for this opportunity to introduce the reader to this wonderful book written by my good friend and fellow ethicist Mark Allman.

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1983), no. 295.
- 2 Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (New York: Penguin, 1961), book VII, no. 10.

## INTRODUCTION

War is about killing. One of my greatest frustrations as a professor of war and peace studies is that we often lose sight of this fact. The conversation quickly moves to heady academic discussions. We casually throw around terms and phrases like “casualties,” “collateral damage,” “target,” “troop deployment,” and “engaging the enemy,” which mask the bloody reality of war. When wars are waged, ordinary citizens are turned into killers. In war, men, women, and children are violently killed. I think part of the reason we have trouble keeping the brutality of war fresh in our minds is that violence has become ordinary in our lives. We watch television programs and movies in which violence is a normal theme; we play video games in which decapitations and shooting not only are part of the game but are actually celebrated and rewarded; and for decades our nightly news has been filled with images of war. War and violence have become not only a normal part of our lives, they are actually a form of entertainment.

Christians should be uncomfortable with violence in general and especially with war. The title of this book, *Who Would Jesus Kill?*, is intentionally provocative. When faced with this question, as a Catholic Christian I want to immediately cry out, “No one! Jesus would have nothing to do with violence and killing.” But then why are most of the men and women in our armed services Christian? Why do we have chaplains serving in the military?

How is it that a predominantly Christian nation is also the world's superpower and the only nation ever to resort to nuclear warfare? If it is so obvious that Jesus wouldn't kill anyone, then why are Christians responsible for so much killing?

This book explores the three traditional Christian approaches to war and peace: pacifism, holy war, and the just war theory. But first, we must define *war*.

## WHAT IS WAR?

Language is powerful; it is not morally neutral. This is especially true when it comes to describing and evaluating war. One person's "freedom fighter" is another person's "terrorist," and one nation's "victory over the insurgents" is another nation's "bloodbath." Defining war proves to be especially difficult. We have such terms as "civil war," "cold war," and the "war on terrorism." The word *war* is used with different senses. Sometimes it means armed conflict (for example, armies shooting at each other), and sometimes it is used metaphorically to mean a prolonged and concerted effort to overcome or put an end to something, such as in "the war on drugs" or "the war on crime." I once saw a sign outside a middle school proclaim, "We Declare War on Mathematical Illiteracy!" The popular phrase "the war on terrorism" is still more confusing because it involves military action but is not really a war. Terrorism is not an enemy in the formal sense. It is a way, a technique, a method of fighting. It is not a nation-state or a unified political entity; one cannot really fight a war on terrorism.

Clearly war involves conflict, but not all conflicts are wars. I can have a conflict with my neighbor over her loud music or barking dog, but it's not a war. Typically we reserve the word *war* for conflicts between political groups (for example, states, nations, or organizations with a political agenda). Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) opens his classic work *On War* by stating:

I shall not begin by expounding a pedantic, literary definition of war, but go straight to the heart of the matter, to the duel. War is nothing but a duel on a larger scale. . . . Each tries through

physical force to compel the other to do his will. . . . *War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.*<sup>1</sup>

Clausewitz goes on to connect war to politics:

The reason [people go to war] always lies in some political situation, and the occasion is always due to some political object. War, therefore, is an act of [political] policy. . . . We see, therefore, that war is not merely an act of [political] policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means. What remains peculiar to war is simply the peculiar nature of its means. . . . The political [objective] is the goal, war is the means of reaching it.<sup>2</sup>

Clausewitz is no naïve idealist; he reduces both politics and war to a single motivation—power.

In a similar manner, Brian Orend, a contemporary expert on the ethics of war and peace, also defines war in terms of politics and force:

War should be understood as an *actual, intentional* and *widespread* armed conflict between political communities. Thus, fist-cuffs between individual persons do not count as war, nor does a gang fight, nor does a feud on the order of the Hatfields versus the McCoys. War is a phenomenon which occurs *only* between political communities, defined as those entities which either are states or intend to become states (in order to allow for civil war). Classical war is international war, a war between different states, like the two World Wars. But just as present—and apparently growing in incidence—is war within a state between rival groups or communities, like the American Civil War. I suppose that certain political pressure groups, like terrorist organizations, might also be considered “political communities,” in that they are associations of people with a political purpose and, indeed, many of them aspire to statehood. . . . Indeed I would argue that *all warfare is precisely, and ultimately, about governance*. War is a violent way for determining who gets to say what goes on in a given territory regarding, for example, who gets power, who

gets wealth and resources, whose ideals prevail, who is a member and who is not, what laws get made, what gets taught in schools, where the border rests, how much tax is levied, and so on. War is the ultimate means for deciding these issues if a peaceful process or resolution can't be found.<sup>3</sup>

Although some argue that the idea of war should not be limited to physical combat and should include the threat of violence, Orend dismisses this idea:

The mere *threat* of war and the presence of mutual disdain between political communities do not suffice as indicators of war. The conflict of arms must be actual, and not merely latent, for it to count as war. Further the actual armed conflict must be both intentional and widespread: isolated clashes between rogue officers, or border patrols, do not count as acts of war. The onset of war requires a conscious commitment and a significant mobilization on the part of the belligerent in question. There's no real war, so to speak, until the fighters *intend* to go to war and until they do so with a heavy *quantum* of force.<sup>4</sup>

There is a substantive difference between threatening to use force and actually resorting to violence. Thus we see some key elements to war: political or ideological motivation, use of physical force, and the desire for power.

Michael Walzer, a preeminent scholar on the ethics of war and peace and author of the widely popular *Just and Unjust Wars*, calls war “a form of tyranny.”<sup>5</sup> He stresses that wars are the result of human choice. War is an action that humans choose based on their perception of reality and of the options they have before them. As such, war is a social and historical creation. War is not natural or inevitable:

War is not usefully described as an act of force without some specification of the context in which the act takes place and from which it derives its meaning. . . . [T]he social and historical conditions that “modify” war are not to be considered as accidental or external to war itself for war is a social creation. . . . What is war and what is not war is in fact something that people decide.<sup>6</sup>

Nor is war accidental, says Walzer. Wars are not like hurricanes or earthquakes, acts of destruction that occur in nature; wars are acts of violence perpetrated by individuals acting in the name of states.

The tyranny of war is often described as if war itself were the tyrant, a natural force like a flood or a famine or, personified, a brutal giant stalking its human prey. . . . Wars are not self-starting. They may “break out,” like an accidental fire, under conditions difficult to analyze and where the attribution of responsibility seems impossible. But usually they are more like arson than accident: war has human agents as well as human victims.<sup>7</sup>

The human agency (free choice) involved in warfare leads Walzer to conclude that war is best described as a crime, what the prosecutors at Nuremberg called “crimes against peace” and what international law terms “the crime of aggression.” Wars break out because individuals choose to pursue political goals through force.

For our purposes here, we draw on Clausewitz, Orend, and Walzer and define war as *the freely chosen use of physical and usually deadly force by one political community against another political community to compel the latter to submit to a social, political, economic, or ideological objective*. Of course, there are further distinctions within the category of war itself, such as justified or unjustified war, defensive or offensive war, preventative or preemptive war, and so on. We will address these in due time.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book explores the three major approaches to war and peace within the Christian tradition: pacifism, holy war, and the just war theory. It is helpful to have preliminary definitions of these terms, which we will expand upon later. *Pacifism* can be understood negatively as simply advocating for the absence of war or the threat of war. Framed in more positive terms, it is a commitment to peace grounded in justice and a refusal to resort to violence as a means of settling disputes. *Holy war* refers to war waged either

because God commands it (or at least because people believe that God has commanded it) or for other religious reasons (for example, to defend or spread one's faith). *Just war* refers to a religious or philosophical theory that contends that war, although regrettable, is sometimes warranted, but only if certain criteria are met, such as last resort, just cause, right intention, and if the actual fighting is carried out in an ethical manner (for example, civilian casualties are limited, prisoners of war are treated humanely, and so on). The just war theory is fairly complex and will be explored in depth in chapters 4 and 5.

These three approaches to war and peace are well established within the Christian tradition, and, ironically, they contradict one another. I see these three theologies of war and peace as a continuum, with pacifism occupying the far left, holy war the far right, and just war standing in the middle. As we set out to explore these three positions, I encourage you to think about your own attitude toward war and peace. If you are a Christian, how do you answer the question, "Who would Jesus kill?" Can one rightly claim to be a follower or disciple of Jesus Christ while simultaneously holding that war and violence can sometimes be justified or even commanded by God? If you are not a Christian, how do these Christian theologies of war and peace affect your own personal stance toward war and peace? By way of comparison, an appendix in this book briefly outlines Jewish and Muslim perspectives on war and peace.

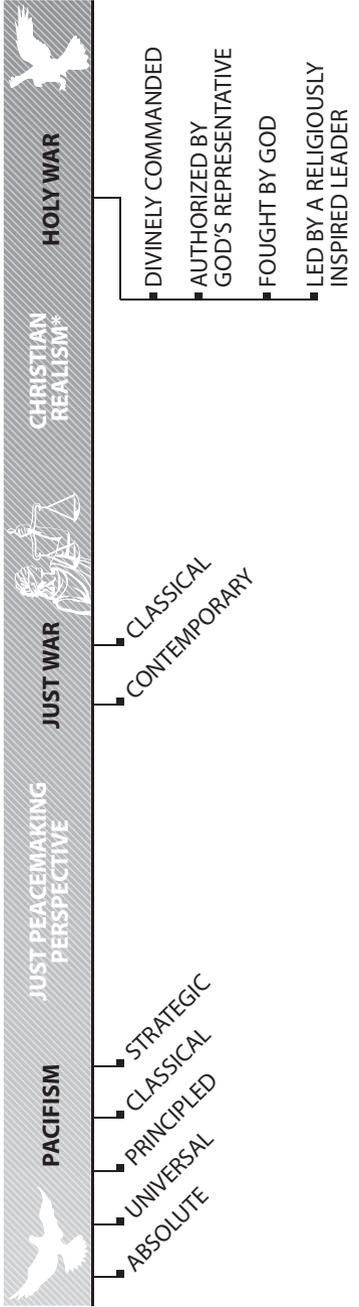
A chart follows this introduction on page 18. The chart graphically represents a range of positions on a continuum of approaches to war and peace. Periodically you will be asked to refer back to this chart to consider where you find yourself on this continuum. I encourage you to consider and reconsider your attitudes, beliefs, commitments, and apprehensions about war and peace as you read. How does encountering the arguments for and against pacifism, holy war, and just war affect your own beliefs, and why? Realize that these are not three distinct "camps." That is why we have placed these approaches on a continuum; a person can occupy the positions in between.

Start this reflection now. Based on what you know now, are you a pacifist, a holy warrior, or a just war theorist? Either actually or mentally place an X on the continuum to mark where you fall today, then track your shifting attitudes toward war and peace as you read. In chapter 1, we will begin with an overview of ethics in general and Christian ethics in particular, to establish the theoretical foundations upon which the more complex arguments about war and peace rest.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, book 1, chapter 1, section 2. English translation, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 75–76, quoted in Gregory Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby, *The Ethics of War: Classical and Contemporary Readings* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 554.
- 2 Clausewitz, book 1, chapter 1, sections 23–24. English translation, Howard and Paret, *On War*, 101–106, quoted in Reichberg, Syse, and Begby, *The Ethics of War*, 555–56.
- 3 Brian Orend, *The Morality of War* (Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview, 2006), 2–3.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 3
- 5 Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic, 1977, 2000), 31.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 24.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 30–31.

## CONTINUUM OF APPROACHES TO WAR AND PEACE



### FURTHER DISTINCTIONS OF PACIFISM

- Separatist
- Politically Engaged

### FURTHER DISTINCTIONS OF HOLY WAR

- Fought to defend religious beliefs and practices
- Fought to spread faith or establish a religious social order
- Fought to punish apostates and heretics
- Fought against external threat or to gain self-mastery

\* **Christian realism** can further distinguish strategic pacifism, Just Peacemaking Perspective, contemporary or classical just war, and holy war. **Political realism** is not religious theory per se, but influential on the Christian tradition. It includes descriptive and prescriptive realism.

## CHAPTER 1

# A Crash Course in Christian Ethics

This is a book on the ethics of war and peace, which is a subcategory of the larger field of ethics. Throughout the book, you will be asked to consider moral questions about issues related to war and peace. For example, is it ever acceptable to use weapons of mass destruction (for example, chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons)? Can armed forces ever intentionally target civilians in the name of the overall good of winning a war? Is there any such thing as military ethics, or is the only objective in war to win “by any means necessary”? Which is worse, to invade a country to protect a persecuted minority group or to stand back and do nothing? Can one claim to be a Christian while at the same time supporting war? Before we can begin to answer these and other such questions, we must first establish *how* one makes a moral decision.

The process is extremely important because the way one goes about making a moral judgment (what you consider relevant or irrelevant and why, whom you consult, what you ignore, the

principles you uphold, and so on) strongly influences the decision. In an ethical decision, as with all decisions, the *why* determines the *what*. In other words, when faced with making a decision (What should I do?), one must first ask *why* do A instead of B, C, or D? What reasons justify one decision or course of action over other options? This chapter takes our moral reflection even deeper and asks, “*How* did you arrive at the *why* that determines the *what*?” The *how* focuses on what ethicists call the *moral* or *ethical method*. A moral or ethical method is the process one goes through to make a moral or ethical decision.

Let’s consider an example. Think of a tough decision you have had to make (for example, where to go to college, whether to break up with a sweetheart, whether to quit or accept a job). Working backward, start with the *what*. What did you decide to do? Now look at *why*. Why did you choose to do what you did? What reasons can you give to justify or defend your action (or inaction)? Finally, consider *how*. How did you make this decision? What process did you engage in, whom did you consult, did any basic principles, commitments, or other factors influence your decision? The *how* is your moral or ethical method, and the *how* precedes the *why* that determines the *what*.

When I present this to my students they often say, “I don’t know why or how I chose to do what I did, I just followed my gut.” But gut feelings or instincts are not automatic; we simply process *why* and *how* very quickly. In this chapter, we slow down the process of moral reflection so we can explore a variety of moral methods (a number of *hows*). Without this foundation in ethics, our debate about the issues surrounding war and peace won’t move beyond the level of emotional reaction.

It is normal to have an emotional reaction when faced with a moral decision, but ethics involves more than just strong feelings. It includes critical thinking and rational argument. For example, do you think the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 was justified? Why? How did you arrive at that conclusion? Do you think the United States’ dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at

the end of World War II was justified? Why? How did you arrive at that decision? War and the conduct of war are always moral and ethical issues. As we discussed in the introduction, wars are not like hurricanes, earthquakes, or other acts of nature. Wars arise out of human choices, and thus we are able to make judgments about their rightness or wrongness. Before addressing the particulars of war and peace ethics, let's establish a foundation in ethics.

Ethics and morality are about making judgments concerning the rightness or wrongness of actions and the standards used in making those judgments. For most, "ethics" and "morals" mean the same thing: right and wrong behavior. This is understandable, considering that the term *moral* comes from the Latin *moralis*, the same root word from which we get the term *mores* (customs). *Ethics* comes from the Latin *ethica* and the Greek *ēthos*, meaning custom or habit. But there is a subtle difference between these terms. Jozef Zalot and Benedict Guevin provide a fairly standard explanation of the difference between the two:

Morality refers to the standards or norms that an individual or group holds concerning good and evil as well as what constitutes right and wrong behavior. It concerns the basic moral principles that are considered beneficial to society. Ethics is the inquiry into, or the investigation of, the subject of morality, or the study of how we are to act in morally good ways.<sup>1</sup>

My own interpretation focuses more on the difference between personal choice and social implications.<sup>2</sup> Morals (and morality) are about right and wrong personal choices and actions. Morality tends to focus on issues of conscience, motive, and interpersonal relationships. Ethics has to do with right and wrong choices and actions within a larger community and systemic patterns of behavior. Hence we often talk about *personal* morality and *social* ethics (for example, sexual morality and business ethics). Obviously ethics and morals are related. The personal choices and actions of an individual affect the larger society, and society has an influence on personal choices, attitudes, and behavior.

Many people are reluctant to judge the ethical behavior or personal morality of others. They don't want to be judgmental or they fear being hypocritical ("Who am I to say what she did was wrong? I've done bad things too!"). But there's a difference between making a judgment and being judgmental. A judgment is a decision or a conclusion. A good or valid judgment is one based on sound reason. We make judgments all the time: what to wear in the morning, what to eat for lunch, what to do when faced with a tough decision, and so on. We could never get through the day without making judgments. Being judgmental, however, refers to entirely condemning or dismissing a person or a group of people for no valid reason. The error of being judgmental is twofold: it fails to distinguish between what a person does in a particular situation and who that individual is as a person, and it renders its conclusion based on invalid reasons.

## CHRISTIAN ETHICS

There is a wide variety of ethical approaches, methods, and theories, each with its own set of principles and strengths and weaknesses. Christian ethics is one approach. Christian ethics looks to the life, teaching, and example of Jesus Christ in forming ethical standards, but that's not all. Christian ethics also looks to other sources. Most Christian denominations (although not all) draw on the same four primary sources when addressing moral and ethical questions:<sup>3</sup>

- **Scripture:** The Bible is the primary source for Christian doctrine and ethics. For many Protestant Christians, the Bible is the sole source of truth (*sola Scriptura*). The three other sources are understood as means through which one comes to a richer understanding of the core biblical truths. For Catholics, by contrast, Scripture and tradition enjoy a complementary relationship.
- **Tradition:** The Bible does not explicitly address every possible moral or ethical issue. How Christians in the past have wrestled with the moral problems of their day is often illuminating to

## SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

“Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing and move towards the same goal. . . . Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles [that is, the bishops] so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound, and spread it abroad by their preaching.” (*Divine Revelation*, no. 9, as quoted in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 80–81)

contemporary moral problems. Tradition refers to the history of how Christians through the centuries have interpreted and adapted the faith to their own particular context. We might call it the wisdom of the ancients.

- **Reason:** As mentioned previously, ethics is more than strong feelings. Ethical reflection involves critical thinking and making defensible judgments (that is, drawing logical conclusions) based on objective facts and on a commitment to sound principles. Christian ethics draws heavily from other ethical methods, especially philosophical ethics.
- **Experience:** Christianity affirms a God that is personally involved in our lives. Personal experiences of God through prayer, contemplation, or examination of one’s conscience are a source for Christian ethics. But Christian ethics is not developed in a vacuum; we consult others, particularly other members of the Christian community. Descriptive accounts of what it means to be human (for example, from psychology, sociology, biology, economics, political science, anthropology, and

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