

## Case Studies

The world tries to make a claim on our children. It assumes that it has the right to do so. As a result, often while they are still teenagers, our children are called on to make some very mature decisions. Everything they know about the Bible, and everything they have learned at home and in Sunday school, is put to the test.

Here is the experience of a Christadelphian young person, a high schooler who had to deal with repeated calls from a military recruiter. He tells the story in his own words.<sup>1</sup>

Four questions have been added the end. Read the story and answer the questions.

### **This Young Person Took a Stand Case Study in Religious Conscience**

#### First call at approximately 16½ years of age

- Recruiter Future occupation?  
Student Attending a technical/vocational school for carpentry.
- Recruiter Are you interested in a military career?  
Student No.
- Recruiter Asked if I was involved in school activities, if I did any sports or anything.  
Student I am on the volleyball team. (I think he wanted to know if I played contact sports such as football or hockey.)
- (End of phone conversation.)

#### Second call before 17<sup>th</sup> birthday

- Recruiter Identified himself. Spoke to me with familiarity, using my first name. Established common ground, graduated from the same high school. Asked about my life goals.
- Student Spoke of vocational training and desire to continue in occupation.
- (Casual conversation.)

- Recruiter Have you considered military service after high school?  
Student No, I would not go into the military.  
Recruiter Why not?  
Student We are COs.

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<sup>1</sup> Submitted on behalf of the young person by Paul Haughton, Cranston, Rhode Island Ecclesia. Used with permission.

Recruiter     What is a CO?  
Student        I told him. (He knew what a CO is. I think he wanted to hear me say it.)

Recruiter     Oh yeah, why?  
Student        Because of religion. We don't fight.

Recruiter     If a robber entered your house would you defend your parents?  
Student        (Uncertain how to answer.) I spoke of restraining the intruder. I said of course I wouldn't kill him.

Recruiter     How firm are your beliefs?  
Student        Firm.

Recruiter     How far would you go to seek exemption?  
Student        I am serious about conscientious exemption. I would do whatever is necessary to get exemption. Our religion does not vote, we believe that God is in control.

Recruiter     What is your religion?  
Student        Christadelphian.

Recruiter     What is that?  
Student        (Answer.)

(Attitude change by the recruiter: put-down, demeaning tone.)

Recruiter     We will take note of your position for the records and will not call again.  
                  (End of phone conversation.)

### Questions

- 1 – Is playing contact sports consistent with conscientious objection to military service? What do you think?
- 2 – Is a military recruiter likely to view contact sports as consistent with conscientious objection to military service? Please explain.
- 3 – How would you answer the question raised by the military recruiter: "If a robber entered your house, would you defend your parents?"
- 4 – How would you respond if anyone "put you down" and became "demeaning" to you?