

### **3—Religious Self-Deception: How Evil Becomes Good**

#### **Side 1**

There is a story about three theologians that went to a theology conference, a Catholic theologian, Protestant theologian and an Orthodox theologian, and they decided to go together to the conference. So they went and everything was very nice and they all discussed theological issues and presented their views and so forth and so on. But when they get out of the conference they came to the car and they looked in the window and there were the keys in the ignition. They tried the doors and the doors were locked. So then they began to discuss what to do. And, as theologians would, they discussed it in detail au nauseum. Now the Catholic theologian said, now the way we've got to do this is we just break the windows, we right in there and we take those keys. Well, that was fine, but it was the Protestant theologian's car and he said, I don't want my windows broken. It's going to cost me money and so forth and so on. His point of view on it was that what they should do is they should try to go someplace and get a coat hanger and then slip in kind of in between the two windows and pull up the lock and then open the door from the inside and get the keys. Now the Orthodox theologian said no, no, no, all we have to do is just find a gas station and they know how to do this stuff, and they got a locksmith and we'll look in the telephone book. Anyway they started arguing with each other, defending their own point of view as to how to do it. The argument went on and on and on and got more and more heated and more and more philosophical and everything else. Finally, one of them said to the other, I don't know how we are going to decide this, we've been arguing here for a half hour. All I know, he says, is we've got to get those keys and get in that car because look at the sky. It's about to rain and the roof is down on the car.

Now there is a way that our own self-interests can obscure the obvious. We have an interest in defending a point of view and it can become so powerful that we can't see what is right there in front of us. It makes no difference how intelligent we are, it has nothing to do with that at all. It has to do with dynamics of pride, of having to be right, of not being willing to say we are wrong. So we put all our energy, all our concentration, all our effort into it being this way and defending it this way when right out there is something that is self evident, it's clear. It's not. There is something to be seen that we are not taking into account. So we are, it seems to me, we are in that situation when we are talking about the nonviolence of Jesus, both in his person and with his message. There is no doubt whatsoever that Jesus was nonviolent and that his teachings are nonviolent, that he teaches a way of nonviolent love of friend and enemies.

As I quoted in the first time we were together at the first retreat, the scripture scholar, John L. Mackenzie, if we cannot know from the New Testament that Jesus rejected violence we can know nothing of his personal message. It is the clearest of teachings. We can know nothing about Jesus if we cannot know he rejected violence. It's that clear, and of course it's all summed up in the incredible, simple self-evident symbol of the Lamb of God. Jesus is not a fire-breathing dragon. He's not some kind of grotesque creature clawing other people. Those aren't symbols of Jesus. It's the Lamb of God.

What's at stake here is a very, very serious problem in terms of truth. It's a problem because truth makes a difference in reality. It makes the total difference. If I have a sick person in front of

me and this person, let's say what they need is a nitro glycerin pill or they'll die of a heart attack, and I'm all concerned and I'm full of compassion and so forth, but I know nothing about medicine and I say, well they need something and I give them an arsenic pill. They are dead. There is an objective truth that has to be taken account of here. There is something objectively going on that requires a response. The definition of truth, philosophically is, truth is the conformity of mind to reality. Truth is the conformity of mind to reality. The more the mind is in conformity with what is real, the more the person is participating or in possession of the truth. What that in fact means is, the falsehood or a lie is by definition illusion. It is non-reality. To participate in a lie is to participate in what does not exist. We use up our lives for something that is objectively a phantasm, a phantom, a non-reality. The philosophical definition of a lie, and I know you will appreciate this, the philosophical definition of a lie is, the misplacing of the ontological imperative. Now that if doesn't excite you, the ontological imperative is, I S, it is the misplacing of the word is. When we misplace where the word is goes in a sentence, we tell a falsehood. So, for example, if someone says to me, what direction is it from Dublin to Paris and I say well let me see, go west. West is the direction to go if you want to go to Paris. I've misplaced the is. I put the is not with what is real, but what is illusionary. If you want to go to Paris you have to go east. So, also, in everything that we do. This is the way to Paris. When it is west, it is not the way to Paris. It's misplacing the is.

Now we understand that human beings are gregarious. We must live together. There is no such thing as a self-made man or woman, that's utterly illusionary. Every human being is dependent from the crib on a network that goes into the thousands and tens of thousands and sometimes millions. For these lights to be on in here today there are thousands upon thousands of people that have to be working. We are all, we are totally interdependent independent entities. The notion that we are self-made and that we're in- this is nonsense. That being the case, that we are gregarious, we can see what the problem is with the lie—the untruth, the illusion. If I ask you a question, or we come to an agreement, and then you give me an illusionary and untruthful, a false answer—we've got trouble on our hands on a small scale. If it happens too much, we've got big trouble on our hands. For example, if someone stops you in the street, and they say to you out here, and, and, and, they say which way should I go to Dublin? And you tell them, oh, you go southwest. Well, they're dependent upon you for directions, as in other situations you're dependent upon other people for truthful answers. Now once people stop telling each other the truth, all kinds of terrible things happen, internally and societally. Because you can no longer trust that what people are saying is in fact what the reality is.

Now, there is an intimate relationship between truth and meaning. A relationship that cannot be broken. Since truth is what is real, the very structure of the human being requires that to do something, for that human being to do something meaningful, they have to participate in what they consider the real. When they participate in what is untrue or illusionary or false, it comes out as meaningless activity for them. There is an intimate connection between truth and meaning. Living the real and meaning. Now, once again, if, if I continually lie to you, and tell you that something is real that is not real that is not real, that is illusionary, and therefore you, you lose, use your life up in terms of what doesn't have existence—too much of this will cause chaos in society. Suppose, for example, you and I agree to build a bridge, and I say okay, I'll go over the side of the river and I'll start building, you say yeah, I'll start building over here. And I go over there and I start building halfway out, and so forth and so on, and I get halfway out and I look

and there's no bridge—the other half isn't there, it's never been started. You never intended to build it. When I went over the other side to start building, you left. Well how much of that could human beings tolerate?

Said another way, said another way, there is probably no greater cause of violence in the world than the lie. Than the lie. Because when you make me use up my time continually for something that I find out is illusionary, you've put me in terms of using my life, in terms of using it up for what is meaningless and worthless. And a society can't function too long with people on a grand scale living in that experience, let alone get things done. And so, in the first world today, which is our world—United States, Ireland, England, France, Japan, and so forth and so on—there is come what is to be called mobile truth—mobile truth. Mobile truth is that phenomena when people move from institution to institution, and simply adopt the truth of the institution, without any reference to whether it's objectively true or not, just that they're in this institution now, this is what this institution says, they'll say it and they'll believe it. For example, the fellow sells, you know, the fellow sells cars, and he sells, and he sells Ford cars. And he says how good Ford cars are and how wonderful they are, how bad General Motors cars are, and so forth and so on, and they're really good and so forth, and General Motors are really terrible, and he get fired by Ford and he goes over to General Motors, gets a job selling and he says how wonderful General Motors cars are, how bad Ford cars and so forth and so on. That people's sense of truth is not determined by what is objectively there, but by what is expedient to them at the moment in terms of their survival. Hence they will say what has to be said in order to get by in the moment. This of course is not just something that goes on in terms of car dealers.

Now here's the problem. When a society begins and people begin to function on the basis of people just kind of saying, oh they didn't really that, meaning they're not telling the truth, trust breaks down between people. And the only trust, the only alternative to trust between people is that people have to have a way of coercing others into doing what they want. The more the trust breaks down, the more violence enters into the society. But worse, the more everyone becomes involved with being unconcerned about truth. Just unconcerned about it. Truth doesn't mean anything anymore. What is absolutely essential for meaningful human existence no longer has any meaning. Cardinal Newman—I used to teach a work by him—but anyway, in that work he, this is back when I taught university, in that work he, he said something like let Heaven and Earth fall before I lie—let Heaven and Earth fall before I lie. And, and the students would say, come on—a little lie, what's a little lie? The guy's overdoing it, a religious fanatic, you know—let Heaven and Earth fall before I lie. Now, of course, he was talking on one level about what, what happens between human beings when one human being says to another, what is, what is the way to, to, to, to, to uh, to go from, from, from Anooth to Dublin, and someone says go southwest. There's something really bad going on there—something that is not human, and carried out far enough, it causes all kinds of trouble beyond itself. But that is not primarily what Newman was talking about. What Newman was talking about was fundamentally what examination of conscious is supposed to be all about. Examination of conscious before God and preparation in our case as being Catholic, the sacrament of reconciliation, is not in the first instance primarily about a laundry list of sins. It's about something else altogether. What Newman was talking about was this—every human being who lives, makes no difference how intelligent they are or how unintelligent they are, what culture they come from or what language they speak, male or female, religion, it makes no difference whatsoever—every human

being who exists thinks logically. If I want to get from here to there, I choose, I think well here are the steps I have to logically take to get from here to there. If I want to write on the board here, I say well the steps are- I have to pick up the pen and walk and so forth and so on. We think logically.

However, logic is just a set of principles that govern thought. The critical element is what are we thinking about—and this is what Newman is talking about. Every human being who lives, starts his or her thinking with what are called self-evident first premises. Truths, self-evident first truths—truths that are true, not because they can be proven, but because they are evidently true to me, to the self. That's where all thinking begins, with self-evident first principles or truths. No one outside myself can say they're untrue—they are true to me. They can't be proved to be untrue, because they are self-evident to me as true. And that's where every human being starts to think with his or her own notion of truth. Then, then we apply the rules of logic. And the premises plus the logic produce the conclusions. And then we can make our conclusions operational, and we can even get statistics on how well we're doing. And from this point, from the logic point on down, it can all be checked by someone outside of ourselves. Someone can say there's faulty logic at that point. Someone can say, these conclusions that you've reached cannot be reached in terms of this logic and this premise. People can say, this, these are your conclusions but look, you are not making these operational over here. And of course people can point out the flaws in your statistical analysis. Everything after the self-evident moment of thinking can be checked by someone outside yourself. This you are alone with. And here's what Newman meant when he said—let Heaven and Earth fall before I lie. What happens to the human being if he or she lies to him or herself at this point—at the point of what is self-evident to them? If they tell themselves that something is true that is untrue? Note, they can apply impeccable logic to it. They can reach conclusions that the logic and the premise will absolutely verify. They can make it operational, and they can even get statistics on it. The only problem is, they have started in the beginning by saying something is that they know is not. By saying something is reality that's illusion, by saying something that's true is untrue.

And you see what happens. What happens is, it is literally possible in history, the personal history of the individual and the collective history of the society, to build a world on a lie—to build a world on an illusion. You can construct—Alice Huxley refers to it as the construction of madness in reason's mask. It is absolutely possible, and yet in the end it has to prove destructive—why? Because it is not real—it will eventually come up against reality, and it will come up against it in a cataclysmic way, in a destructive way.

The reason I'm mentioning all this, is because of what is obvious in terms of what we're doing. The Gospels are blindingly clear on the teachings of Jesus—Jesus teaches a way of non-violent love of friends and enemies, and Jesus as a person lives it very, very clearly, there is no question about it. No one even fights that anymore. And He calls His followers to—we are called to love as He loved, we are called to follow Him. Yet we are in a state where we have about 95% of the Christians at least—Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant—who are willing to say that they are following Jesus, who want to follow Jesus, who accept baptism, who even pray—and they'll simply ignore or put in it's place something else in terms of Jesus' teachings of non-violent love of friends and enemies. That is—we have about 95% of the Christian population that will kill

people and think they're following Jesus. Even though it is explicitly contrary to what Jesus taught and what Jesus lived.

What has taken place, and I want to be clear, what has taken place is that people, mind you, people actually believe this. I myself came out of sixteen consecutive years of Catholic education, from elementary school all the way through college, and walked right into signing up for the United States Marine Corps to fly planes. Without a thought that there was anything wrong. My entire structure of Catholic education, which would have been no different if it were Protestant or Orthodox, said it was—there wasn't a problem in the world, in terms of going out and killing people who were the enemies of the United States and following Jesus. It never entered my mind. But what's at stake here is this—is that if this is wrong, if where I start is wrong, everything will fall into place, but it will fall into place in terms of untruth.

Now, this process is known in secular thought as the process of religious self-deception. The person deceiving himself or herself about the fundamental truths of their religion. In philosophical language, it's called bad faith—which doesn't mean Christian faith is good and Buddhist faith is bad—it means the person deceiving him or herself, in terms of what are the basic truths of their faith.

## Side 2

In scripture, it's called the sin against the Holy Spirit, the unpardonable sin. Why? Because if we lie to ourselves here, we will build a whole world, we will build a whole world. If we call evil good at this level, if we call what is objectively evil good here, we will build a whole world to justify it. One does not ask forgiveness for doing good. God forgives everything, all we have to do is ask. God's forgiveness is infinite, there is no immorality, there is no sin that God doesn't forgive and will forgive like that—God's mercy is infinite, total. The only condition on forgiveness is that we ask to be forgiven. But once we call evil good, we no longer ask for forgiveness. We build worlds out of it, and we call those worlds good—even if the fruits are producing disaster for us. We continue to call them good.

The first World War was a horrendous phenomena. If you've ever seen the pictures of it and so forth and so on, people not understanding the work—generals not understanding the workings of modern weapons, and soldiers getting up, both sides, getting up out of fox holes and trenches and so forth, and coming across flat fields, and being killed to the tune by the machine guns now, they were fighting as if they were still fighting with rifles, and being killed to the tune of 50, 60, 70 thousand a day—all sides, all sides in the war were Christian, and all sides justified what they're people were doing. Gandhi in the middle of the First World War said, "I know I am walking on eggs, but I am certain that European Christianity does not understand the Asiatic Jesus." "I know I am walking on eggs, but I am certain European Christianity does not understand the Asiatic Jesus." And I will say today, there is no possibility that the Christians of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia understand the—Jesus. They are functioning in a world of total falsehood in terms of the Gospel—as was England, and America, and so forth, in terms of the Iraqi business, or the second World War, and so forth and so on. Mass murder, under the name of Jesus. Yes, under the name of Jesus—why? Because—not one on the main line churches says—

Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant—that if someone goes out a flies over Iraq, and napalms whatever they napalm there, they have to go back and go to confession before they can be in communion with the Church. It's all legitimized, and it's all legitimized on the basis of something that's been called good that is evil at the beginning.

For example, the just war theory—it is a logical masterpiece. No one pays any attention to it, but it's a logical masterpiece. You can't find—it is perfect, and it's, you know, and you can look at it, and then it's made operational, people get their statistics and on and on and on. It's a logical masterpiece. There's only one problem—it's something Jesus never taught, and it depends for it's operation on doing all kinds of things that Jesus forbid. That is, you can't do it and love as Christ loved—it's self-evident. Except no one looks there. Everyone looks beyond the first step. About 20 years ago when the United States started killing people again in the electric chair, the first man killed was a man by the name of Gary Gilmore. And he had killed people, and he was to be executed I guess by a firing squad at that time, he was to be executed by a firing squad. And I was in the house of an Irish Catholic lady, she's about 70 years old, friend, life-long friend, and the news came over the radio that Gary Gilmore was dead. And, and she said, she said, well thank God they got rid of that hangman. And I said that's really not the way the Christian should look at this, and she said, "he killed people, and it says right there in the Bible, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." I said, okay, it says that, but let's take a look at it. So I went and I got the Bible that was in the house, I took it out to Matthew 5, and so forth and so, I said—here is says, Jesus says right there—you've heard it said in old, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, but I say to you turn the other cheek, walk the extra mile, ?????????? love your enemies. And she says to me—this exact words, never forget them—she says to me—don't start reading the Gospel to me or I'll have no religion at all. Now, admit, at least, someone 20 years ago who is 70 years old, would have been brought up in the Church of, starting about 1900 and coming forward—and have very little acquaintance with, with, with, with scripture of any kind, for that matter. But what she understood was, what she understood was that if she ever start looking, a lot of things that she thought were good would come out evil. And she said it—don't!

Clarence Jordan who was a Baptist minister in the United States during the second, well, before the second World War, during the second World War—but he founded an integrated community in southwest Georgia, which was Nazi America in the 19, in the 1940's. And black people just disappeared—just disappeared. No one cared or anything else—lynched, burned, everything—no one cared. And Jordan founded this integrated community, farming community, black and white people, and all kinds of problems occurred. But anyway, one Sunday he brought—he was an elder in the Baptist Church, and he was a minister, by it, in the church, and he, he had a bachelor's degree in agriculture, and a PhD in Greek—he knew what he was doing. And of course, his teachings, he believed in non-violence and everything else. So he brings the black man to Baptist church on Sunday, and that afternoon, he gets the notice that he's been excommunicated from the Baptist church. So he knows he has a right to a hearing before the other elders, so he goes into the hearing, and he comes in the next day, you know, and he comes in with the, with the Bible. And he puts it in front of the chief elder, and he says now you tell me what I did wrong by, by, by bringing this black man to the church. And so the chief elder opens it up and he kind of looks, and browses through it for 2, 3 minutes, and then he hands it to the second in charge. And the second in charge looks at it, and he—you know, so forth and so on, oh yeah, hands it, it gets handed down to the, all seven anyway over a period of time, no one's

saying a word, just kind of browsing through the pages. Finally, the seventh guy takes it, just closes the book and he says, Clarence, he said, we don't care what it says in the Bible, we don't want any niggers in the church. That's pretty much what the lady was saying in Boston, who said don't, don't have, start reading the gospel to me. And that's pretty much what the church is doing in general, in terms of violence and homicide and destruction justified under the name of Jesus. It's saying, we don't care what Jesus says, we're gonna do it our way. And of course, we're reaping the fruits of it all over the world. America and Ireland, Latin America, South America, Africa, Russia, Ukraine—ceaseless—Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia—and it, no, no one, no one even thinks it's going to get better. And it's all justified.

The logical schemes, the papers that are written, the books that are written justifying it—magnificent in terms of their intellectual work. The only problem is, they're starting with untruth, calling evil good. Saying that something can be done by a Christian to totally following Jesus every minute of his or her life, that Jesus could never do—attack in a spirit of hate, vengeance, homicide another human being. And this didn't just, you see, think about this—they get, the statistics are given, you know. Eighty-nine percent of the Catholics in, or Christians, 89% of the Christians in the United States during the Iraqi war approved of it. The Catholic churches in the area that I was, the symbol for winning over the Iraqis and so forth and so on was a yellow ribbon—there were, I am not, I am not exaggerating, I'm telling you truth—yellow ribbons around pulpits in churches, they were on crosses, they were on altars, they were on pews, they were on stations of the cross—they were all over the place. Symbols of victory over the Iraqis—homicidal victory over the Iraqis, mass homicide over the Iraqis. And the priests and the bishops and the ??????? and the statistics were out—88% or something like that of the Christians in the United States approved of the Iraqi war. I just confirm what Dan Berrigan said a few years ago—in matters of religion, statistics is the last ???????? of the infirm mind. Makes no difference how many people approved it—the issue is what did Jesus say. Makes no difference whatsoever - it's not a numbers game. Truth doesn't rely on how many people say yes or no to it. There was one time when everyone in the world thought the world was flat—didn't make the world flat. But this business of self-deception, and that's where I want to raise here now, is a very, very tricky sort of thing. And that paper that I handed out to you earlier, we'll take a look at now. Because what I want to point is, as clear as it is logically, that we lie to ourselves about what is self-evident, and then we can build whole worlds that make sense—the only problem is, they are built on unreality, personally or collectively, and they will meet reality and there will be destruction. That's clear enough schematically, but the actual operation of the religious self-deception—bad faith, or the sin against the Holy Spirit—is something very, very—very, very subtle. So I put together three little—several definitions here of what self-deception, or the self-deceiver, and I just thought I'd go over with, over them with you for a second, and we can take a look at each one of them, and you can get a feel for what this is all about.

The self-deceiver, the first one, the self-deceiver is one who resolutely refuses to look at his or her beliefs, because they know very well they won't see what they want to see. That's the woman in Boston. Don't start reading me the Gospel, or I've no religion. I, I'm just not gonna look. Because I, if I start looking, I know I won't see what I want to see. A very, very subtle, tricky motivation. How about the second one? The self-deceived, the self-deception is to intentionally persuade oneself to believe what one knows it not true—to intentionally oneself to believe what one knows is not true. I see this in terms of those people that on the one hand

support violent revolution in the name of Christianity. And try to make Jesus a zealot and a supporter of violent revolution on behalf of the poor—there is no such Jesus around. Jesus lived in the midst of people who lived on the margins of destitution His whole life. Those are the people He preached to 95% of the time. And His preachings are entirely preachings of non-violent love of friends and enemies—to the poor, as well as to the rich. And so, the effort to work at saying Jesus is violent revolutionary—and yet there's the document in front of you, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—no possibility. But it's intentionally to persuade oneself, that this is how it is.

Then on the other side, we have the just war people. The chief of chaplains during the Vietnam War in the United States, who was subsequently rewarded with a cardinalship, wrote a book justify what Thomas Merton called an overwhelming atrocity, the Vietnam War—a war that we know now, where one child out, where one child out of two who was born between 1965 and 1974, born, never reached the age of 5—they were killed in some form or another. A war that we know that all kinds of things took place in terms of deception, in terms of mass murder, and here was the chief of chaplains writing, persuading himself and persuading others, that this was something that was consistent with following Jesus.

Three—the self-deceiver is one who lies with sincerity, who convinces himself or herself of what they even they know is not so, sincerity is no test of truth. The Nazis were—no one was more sincere than Nazis. The truth is what is objectively there—what does Jesus teach and what does He act, ask of His followers. The same thing is also true about longevity. Longevity is no test of truth. Society, individually, a society individually a person or collectively societies, can follow a truth, can follow an untruth, for centuries. For example, the burning of Jews and heretics at the stake went on for 600 years. The first, ??????, the first burning of a heretic, that we know of, occurred in 1248 in **Troyae**, France—and the last one occurred in August of 1828, in Valencia. Six hundred years of burning heretics at the stake and justified, longevity has nothing to do with truth. Burning heretics at the stake is nothing that Jesus would do—it was wrong in 1248, it was wrong in 1828, it was wrong for 600 years in between, and it was wrong because it was inconsistent with loving as Christ loved, seeking first the kingdom of God.

The next—the self-deceiver is one who feels there is nothing to be seen because he know very well, or she knows very well, there is something unbearably distressing to be seen. How many times had it occurred, over the years, that people have told me that they have tried to put retreats or workshops together on Christian non-violence, you know, and they could hardly get a soul from the parish. They couldn't get the priest, they couldn't get the brothers, they couldn't get the sisters, they couldn't get the laity, you know. And the answer is always, ah, there's nothing there, always the same answer, there's nothing there, I know that stuff, that's, that's Quaker stuff, you know, that's naivety, that's unreality—there's nothing to be seen, because they know very well that there's something unbearably distressing to be seen. Specifically, the logic of their life is based on an untruth, and a great deal would have to change if they could not employ coercion and violence and hurt to get done what they want to get done—in fear.

So let's just look at one more. Self-deception is making oneself believe or forget something of critical importance, which points overwhelmingly to conclusions opposite to the ones adopted by the self-deceiver. In other words, it is critically important that Jesus was non-violent. It is



critically important that He taught a way of non-violence, of friends and enemies. It is critically important that original Christianity was non-violent. Stephen, Paul, and so forth and so on, those are critical matters, so we won't even look at that. It's critically important that the cross itself is the presentation of a man in an ultimate crisis, being attacked by violence and responding non-violently to it. The cross is a symbol of non-violent love. It is not the sword. It is not a symbol of revenge. It's returning good for evil, not hurt for hurt. Father, forgive them, and so forth, for they know not what they do. These are matters of critical importance that are simply ignored or forgotten—and hence, evil is called good.

Now what I want to point out here is this—it is one thing, and follow this very, very carefully—it's really important for examination of conscience on this matter, and for helping people do it. It is one thing to call evil good up here, and then to build a whole world around it, and when people do these sorts of things, you know, error likes company—there's always other people around to join with, who help you call evil good because they want to call evil good. But here's the point—what happens, what happens when someone is born into this kind of community or family, or with that kind of parent that is calling evil good? When a child is born and nurtured from childhood on forward, believing that something that is evil is good? He or she is not in the same position as the person who in the beginning called evil good—they can't even see it's not good, for the most part. On August 6, 1987, I was at Medjugorje with, with ?????????? who was the Catholic chaplain for the Hiroshima/Nagasaki bomb crew. And we're saying the station of the cross on morning of August 6, 1987, along side—going up crucifix. And about 8:13 in the morning, which is time of the dropping of the Hiroshima bomb, we stopped just for a moment of silence. And at 8:13 when, I counted kind of, you know, 8:11, 8:12—and at 8:13 there was silence, and all of a sudden this army chaplain of 20 years, he would have been about 30 years old at that time, or a little more—all of sudden, he burst into tears. And with kind of a choking, tear—crying, almost wailing kind of feel- uh, emotion, he kept saying over and over again, how did I miss? How did I miss it? Meaning, how did he miss the fact that he was part of the process that told people that it was consistent with following Jesus, with following, with doing what God wanted them to do as Christians, to go out and bomb people and kill people. How did he miss it? Well one of the things that's clear is, one of the great helps of missing it is that the community he was born into was not telling the truth from the cradle on forward. And so he was nurtured in it, as I was. Quite frankly non-violence was a non-thought, growing up—it wasn't even an issue in the Christian life, the Irish Catholic life of Boston—wasn't even there, wasn't even a thought.

And so we come to this—I thought I'd read you this, and this is about the problem that we're talking about. It was written by a Jesuit, 1945—Claude **Hidehaus**. He says, “There is nothing that so damns a person as holding or expressing, from holding expressing intelligent opinion, as to be labeled imprudent by the self-constituted prudent of this world. Now since their prudence consists in following the majority, it seems fair to ask why it is not prudent or virtuous for a Christian to practice cannibalism wherever that practice is customary. Perchance, if a group of Christian teachers were to settle among cannibals, and perhaps give them a few recipes to make their diet a little more eloquent, and, elegant and nutritious, the cannibals would show their gratitude by giving the Christian missionaries money for a nice school with a cross on top of it. Then the cannibal visitors to the school might discover that the Christian teachers have private convictions about cannibalism, but were much too realistic to be dogmatic about them when talking to cannibals. Cannibal ladies would be charmed by such tact and fine manners on the part

of the Christian teachers. The Christian teachers would be invited to dine at the best cannibal family dinners, and presently every cannibal who amounted to anything in this world would conclude that such Christian teachers, with such wisdom and prudence, tact, and ????????, while having their heads in Heaven no doubt have their feet on the ground, and were just the people to make acceptable Christian ladies and gentlemen out of their little cannibal kids. Then if only the teachers were prudent enough to gloss over the delicate subject of cannibalism in religion class, if only the schools newspaper would not be so imprudent as to question the morality of cannibalism. If only the faculty advisor would prudently overlook it, and concentrate instead on cannibal music and dance. If only a prudent theologian could be found who would discover in a worm-eaten tomb, a third subdistinction by which under certain circumstances and with proper safeguards, and for the common good a prudently regulated cannibalism might be allowed, if it only remained for someone to decide by virtue of his authority, and until further notice, that cannibalism must now be practiced at all school functions. And from then on, if just the right mixture of prudence and cannibalism could be maintained, such a school would prosper. And still teach the catechism. Little cannibal students would become, would, little cannibal students, and big cannibal money would roll in. The football team would tour the country, and probably win the all cannibal bowl. Outstanding cannibal alumni, alumni, would have which point to their pride to their human skin diplomas on the wall, and members of the faculty would even be recited to say grace at cannibal meals. Think of the good such a school might do if it were just prudent enough, it might convert the whole world to cannibal Christianity—and what a blessing that would be. For in that case, the pagan cannibals would become Christian cannibals and instead of performing what's, what once were obscene rites before hideous idols, they would piously and of course chastely practice cannibalism in refined Christian churches.”

I think it's clear that that's what happened with Constantinian Christianity. We taught everything for the last 1700 years, but the non-violent love of friends and enemies that Jesus taught and lived, and it's coming back to us in spades today. And there is no choice but to go back to the beginning and name evil correctly, as evil. Because an unnamed evil will repeat itself indefinitely and with zeal into the future. Homicidal violence is not of God, it is not of Jesus. Never, ever.