

Tape #5, Behold the Lamb

The aberration of the Lamb of God at Nark does not represent anything new in the Christian church. It of course goes back as we said biblically to the gospel of John, and by his very words Lamb of God. And the entire gospel's identification of Jesus is the suffering servant of Israel. One who suffers innocently, responds to evil with good and somehow God works through that to save. The aberration, if you will, is an emphasis sent by God to remind people of something that's missing. Missing in their lives, missing in their culture, missing in their church, missing in the church universal, the Lamb of God. It seems to me personally, and I would be willing to discuss this with anyone, but there is no more critical problem facing not just the Irish church, but the universal church, not just the Catholic church, but the Protestant church and the Orthodox church. There is no more serious problem facing the church today than whether it will publicly, openly again become our community of the Lamb of God. Our community of Lambs of God. The present situation, of course, is chaos and utter disaster as it presently exists. Where ever one looks in the world, whatever denomination one looks at, Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox, one perceives churches not made up of Lambs of God, but wolves tearing each other apart. And those who are not involved in it directly are by their silence justifying it. For silence gives consent. There is no more critical question than whether the church is under a divine mandate from Jesus, nothing short of that, which means a divine mandate from God to be a fold or a flock of lambs in a world of wolves.

In the beginning that is the way it was. An for centuries that is the way it was. The Lamb of God represents nothing new in Christian history. It represents the first three centuries of Christianity. It represents original Christianity. In the beginning, in original Christianity, the Christianity known by the apostles and disciples after Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven and the Holy Spirit came upon the church original Christianity. A Christianity of Stephen and of Saul, the Christianity was extended out generation after generation after that was a Christianity of communities of Lambs of God in the model of the Lamb of God. It was a Christianity that rejected violence and cruelty and enmity, hate. Rejected them totally. They had no place in the community. You could not be a member of a community and practice them because they were not the mind of the Lamb of God. They were not the mind of Christ. And of course they were not the activities of Christ. For almost 300 years the church refused, as a community, to engage in homicidal violence and enmity and cruelty and torture and basically hurt. The church suffered violence, it suffered cruelty, it suffered enmity, people hating it. And of course, Christians were tortured. But there is no record in the first 300 years of Christianity of any mother or father of the church suggesting that this is the way Christians can live or justifying it. Christians did it of course because they are human. Christians killed, Christians were cruel, Christians hated, but it was universally recognized as sin. It was not justified, and therein lies the great difference. People sin and ask God's forgiveness. They did not sin and call it good. They knew when they broke with the spirit of the Lamb of God that their task was to go back and reconcile themselves with the Lamb of God, and not to make believe that violence and homicide and cruelty and torture were consistent with the Lamb of God.

If Jesus taught that his community was supposed to be a fold of sheep, a fold of the Lamb of God, Lambs of God, and the church would be under divine mandate to built itself that way in each individual Christian regardless of what anyone else did would under a divine mandate to

follow Jesus and live that way. No Christian then could justify killing people for any reason, being cruel to people for any reason, being unkind to people for any reason, torturing people for any reason, or remaining silent when other Christians did it because silence not only gives consent, silence motivates other people to do things. For evil to continue all that is necessary is for the good to remain silent. And so we are confronted today with the situation that I would like to describe historically to you. And maybe in seeing the full span of the history of the problem, maybe an ideal will come to you and maybe you'll be able to see something new that God wants in your own life.

Original Christianity rejected violence, homicide, cruelty, torture, unheard of. In the beginning these were not just sins. In the beginning these activities were excommunicable offenses that you could never get back into the church after doing. A person who killed was excommunicated permanently for any reason. It was so far outside of the mind of the Lamb of God, the behavior of the Lamb of God that it was intolerable for the community. The only other two sins that where excommunication was automatic and permanent were apostasy and adultery. There was no coming back. Now whether you agree or disagree with the idea of excommunication, the lack of forgiveness on the community's part in terms of, in light of Jesus' teachings to forgive, it nevertheless shows how clear the community was that these three activities. Apostasy, adultery and homicide had no place in the Christian community. Not in the community of the Lamb of God. And this is the way it continues through the first 300 years of Christianity. Three hundred years that were not peaceful years for the church. Three hundred years of serious Roman persecution where men, women and children who were Christians were literally thrown to the lions, and that's no joke, burned in oil, and that's no joke, starved to death, tortured, enslaved, just for being Christian. And there is not a single word during that period of time that Christian's can respond in any other way than the way that Jesus, the Lamb of God responded. They were to return good for evil. Not just to the pagan, but among themselves also. One of the fathers of the church, Tertullian, summed it up when he said, when Christ disarmed Peter, meaning the guard in Yosemite put up your sword. He said when Christ disarmed Peter Christ disarmed all Christians. That's about 215 A.D.

Along about the same time we have what in theology is the most important document in the early church outside of the New Testament. It's something called the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, and in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus is a statement of the rules that govern the church at that time, that's why it's so important, it comes from Rome. And while there was no central authority as we know it, nevertheless the church in Rome was still kind of the norm that people looked. And in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus it says, for example, in the section related to the catechumens, you know even before you become a Christian, just prepare you to become a Christian, it says if you want to enter the catechumen and you are a pimp, that is a person that sells men and women for sexual purposes, you must give up pimping to enter the catechumen. That makes total sense. Who can say they are even serious following Jesus or wanting to follow Jesus if they don't want to give up that kind of activity. You're just not serious about entering. But two sections later it says, if you are in the military and you want to become a Christian you must inform your military superiors that will no longer kill. If they will not accept that you must resign. If you are not in the military you may not join. Killing was as far out, for any reason, legal or illegal, was as far outside the mind of Christ the mind of the Lamb of God as pimping. That's 215 A.D., 200 years after Jesus.

When the Roman emperor about 245 A.D. complained to one of the fathers of church origin that here you are, you Christians you're living in the empire and you're not going out there and defending it, meaning treading against with barbarians. Origen pointed out to the emperor that the Christians not only go to the people in the empire, the Christians go out to the barbarians to take care of them and then he said, we do more to protect the empire by our good works to your enemy and by our prayers for you and your enemy than you do with your armies. It was a totally different consciousness of what the Christian community was in the midst of the larger world. It played a political role, but it was a political role on its own terms. It brought peace among people, which is what politics is all about, but it brought peace the way Jesus brought peace. Not by the gun and the sword, but by prayer and mercy and kindness. It brought peace, not like the imperial lion of Rome but like the Lamb of God brings peace.

And so it went on for approximately 300 years. The critical point that people talk about when everything changed in the church is 313 A.D. Now just to be clear, never in history does anything happen just at one moment in time. It takes decades of leading up to something, but we pick a date because on a particular time that kind of summarizes what was going on and things become different after that in a way that's clear. But there's all kinds of things going on prior to that moment. In 311 A.D., two years before, in 311 A.D. you could not be a member of the fighting Roman army and be a Christian. It was forbidden. By 416 A.D., 105 years later you could not be a member of the fighting Roman army unless you were a Christian. Theodosius the second issued a proclamation, the emperor, that only Christians could kill in the Roman army in 416. In 105 years everything was turned upside on its head. What happened? The critical point that begins the process at least historically as we talk about it from the Christian community moving away from its understanding of itself as being a community of disciples of the Lamb of God, of being a community of Lambs of God, of being a community that totally relies on the Father's protection and does not depend on the protection of evil. The critical moment begins in 311 A.D. when the emperor Constantine is trying to become the sole emperor of Rome, when Constantine is trying to become the sole emperor of Rome. He's at a battle called Melvian bridge on October 28 & 29 in 311 A.D. It's a difficult battle, he's not sure he's going to win it. It's for the empire. Constantine is a pagan, he worships the sun. He sees in the sky, so he says, a cross and under it he sees the words in this sign thou shall conquer. Now any sane person would read that is, here in the symbol what is the meaning behind the symbol? Just like the cross that appeared here at Nark. The cross is the symbol of the Lamb of God incarnate, become flesh. The innocent one who suffered and died did not return evil for evil, but lived in the spirit of God entrusted in the Father and then God worked a resurrection. But Constantine didn't read it that way. Being a pagan full of superstition, worshiping the sun and any god he could get anything from, and that's the truth, what he did was, for the first time in the history of humanity, that night he had his soldiers paint the cross on all the armor, all the swords, all the horses, and for the first time in the history of the world on October 28 & 29, 311 A.D. the cross of Jesus Christ was used as a ensign to lead people into the mass slaughter of war and it has not stopped since to this very hour at this very second all over the world. Constantine won the battle, he became emperor, and in 313 he recognized the church for the first time in the Roman empire as a legal entity.

Now you may ask, why did Constantine recognize the church, he's a pagan? And the answer is because Constantine was also a brilliant man. He saw that 300 years of persecuting the church,

300 years of the church responding like the non-violent Lamb of God, responding to evil with good, had not resulted in the destruction of the church. What it resulted in was the church had now become, by Constantine's time the largest religion in the empire without resorting to arms at all. And so Constantine's thought was, stop fighting them. Bring them in, give them some of the goodies of the empire, they'll begin to see things our way. And so in 313 he legalized Christianity. He even went beyond that. He began to give Christians public buildings in pagan temples. He'd send his soldiers out to confiscate pagan temples and give them to the Christians. Before this Christianity was a non-temple religion, that is Christians celebrated the Eucharist, they'll pray anyplace. Why? Because Christ was risen, where two or more are gathered in my name, I'm there. You can be in a little room and if there are two or more praying in the name of Jesus, if they are celebrating the Eucharist, the priests, God's there. You didn't need a big structure. But Constantine began to give the big structures, but they were confiscated by the Roman army. These people did not give them voluntarily. So Christianity begins for the first time to live off the fruits of violence.

And after a period of time there occurs the kind of conversation in the Roman senate, after 40 years or so that in your parliament would occur or my parliament would occur. And the senators are saying look, here we are giving this Christian community these wonderful palaces and churches and all this land, we're protecting them with our military, and here they are inside these churches and look what they're doing. They are saying killing is wrong. They are saying torture is wrong. They're saying cruelty is wrong. All the things we are doing to protect them, they're saying – now look, they've got to make up their mind, these Christians. If they want our temples and they want our protection, they've got to stop putting us down in other words. And so the issue is joined and for the first time in the history of the church in 368 A.D., 368 A.D., for the first time someone offers a just war theory. A theory that justifies killing in the Christian community first appeared in 368 A.D. more than 300 years after Jesus. Never before did it exist.

Saint Ambrose was the author of the first just war theory. A certain amount of history on St. Ambrose is important, and I'll tell it to you as hard as it is to tell it to you. St. Ambrose is a miracle embraced in the church. St. Ambrose belonged, it was head of the wealthiest family in Milan, the wealthiest family in Italy for all practical purposes. Milan was where all the wealth was, Rome was just where the politicians were that wealth owned. Ambrose headed that family. He was a pagan. In this time people went through the catechumen, it took them not nine months, but years to go through the catechumen, 7, 8, 10 years to become a Christian. It wasn't a matter of learning ideas, it was a matter of living a life. Ambrose went through the catechumen, baptism, confirmation, reception to the Eucharist, ordination to the diaconate, ordination to the priesthood, ordination to the episcopate to be a bishop, in eight days and wrote the first just war theory. The problem is not Ambrose. St. Ambrose is saved. The problem is that could never have happened unless something had wrong in the church prior to that. It is the church that allowed that to happen. Ambrose himself, after he becomes bishop says he knows nothing about Christianity and has to learn. St. Augustine, a St. Ambrose student, and St. Augustine writes the formal just war theory that everyone uses right up to this day in Christianity for the most part. But even St. Augustine says in his just war theory, he does not say this is a theory to justify war. Augustine explicitly says, if war is ever to be justified these are the conditions that have to be met. Everyone single one of them that Augustine lays out. I know and know one else who is a student of history knows any war that has ever been fought at any place at any time that has ever

med the standards of the just war theory as proclaimed by St. Augustine. Never, it can't be done because war's aren't fought that way. But once Augustine wrote it, it's not that it was taught to people. Think to yourself. How many of you in grammar school, in high school, ever learned the just war theory? No one. Not here, not in the United States, not in England, not anywhere in the history of Christianity. It just sat out there as kind of a theory that allowed people to go to war when the local emperor called them war, or whoever it was, but no one was ever taught it. Because once it's taught, it can never be applied because no war can ever be fought according to it. But after Augustine writes it, everything begins to deteriorate rapidly.

A couple of hundred years after Augustine, in a ?????????? in Ave, France, there is a cannon that says priest, because of their position in the church, cannot use spears anymore, they can only use clubs. Several hundred years later we have the terrible reality of the crusade. Where plenary indulgences are employed for killing a Muslim. We have now turned Christianity 180 degrees upside down. We are now assuring people that they will go to heaven for killing people. Kind of like Humanev did during the Iraqi war, he gave the Iraqis this little gold key, if I give the Iranians a little gold key and tell them if they died wearing this key killing an Iranian they'd go right to Ala. Same thing. Totally upside down, from Jesus to victim who suffers and returns evil for good from the Lamb of God, all of a sudden we are now going to heaven not that way, we're going to heaven by killing people. Killing under plenary indulgence. That's a fact. And once it was seen how good plenary indulgences worked for killing, people, Muslims outside the church then there were applied inside the church. The entire community in Arlee, France, Christian community, was wiped out under plenary indulgence. That is heretics and Jews began to be killed and people got plenary indulgences for doing it. The inquisition that burned Jews and heretics at the stake, an inquisition was a big religious affair, it wasn't just taking someone out and killing them, it was a big religious affair and when people came to an inquisition, providing they went to confession and communion they were granted a plenary indulgence to watch Jews and other Christians burn at the stake.

The first inquisition was 1248, the last was 1828, 600 years of that.

Side A ends and B begins.

This is the community of the Lamb of God, but this is our history. Then we come to the reformation, and we may ask in terms of just not to be offensive, but to tell the truth. What reformation, who's kidding who? Who is kidding whom in all this ectaminical talk about reformation? What was reformed and who were the reformers?

Luther referred to the Pope at that time, who was Julius the second, he referred to it as a cruel animal. And remember what we are talking about here continually is how far the community has gone from the community of the Lamb of God. Luther referred to the Pope as a cruel animal. That may be blasphemous, but it's true. Julius II was the last Pope ever to lead an army into battle. He liked to kill. At least this much can be said, unlike modern politicians who sit in their air-conditioned offices and send other women's and men's children and sons and daughters out to be killed, at least he took the risk. He actually did the killing. He led the army into battle. On the other hand Luther, when he split with the Catholic church, and the people who were supporting him were the wealthy land owners of northern Germany, land owners that made their

wealth on centuries of oppression, where people live like dogs day in and day out, decade in and decade out as basically slaves for these people, peasants. When at the time of Luther there was an uprising of these peasants Luther wrote, a prince today can gain heaven more assuredly by killing a peasant than by prayer.

Calvin, well we know what Calvin did. Calvin carried on a slaughter against Catholics for their belief in the Eucharist, mass murders. And Henry VIII, a reformer? A murder like all the others. What reformation? These are killers. These are not people living in the mind and the heart of the Lamb of God, of Jesus Christ. They destroyed and divided the church, but we see how far the community has come from the original 300 years, from the gospel community of returning good for evil, of loving your enemies, of dying rather than killing, of refusing to be cruel and to torture. And just to close out this little history I like to, we could on indefinitely in there's written on it if you'd like to read about it. But just to close it out, it seems to me that the symbolic anyway, low point of this whole process that's called Constantinian Christianity, that kind of Christianity that changed the church from being a community of the non-violent Lamb of God to being a community involved in killing and cruelty and capital punishment and torture. It seems to me the symbolic low point of that occurs on August 9, 1945. On August 9, 1945 an entirely Christian plane crew, bomber crew, takes off from Tinian Island in the south Pacific with the blessing of the Catholic and the Protestant chaplain. Their mission is to drop the second of the atomic bombs on a place called Kokora, Japan. They get over Kokora, Japan and they have orders that the bomb can only be dropped on visual sighting, but Kokora if fogged in. They can't see what's below. Then in the mystery of evil and God and good, something strange happens. One of the engines on the plane, it's called the boxcar that's carrying the bomb, simply stops working. So instead of having 3 and 4 engines, they have 3. So instead of waiting over Kokora they immediately go on to the secondary target which is Nagasaki. They get over Nagasaki and they have absolute orders to drop this bomb only on visual sighting, but Nagasaki is fogged in and they can't see what's below them. Then the bombardier, who's been trained to read the landmarks of Kokora and Nagasaki for weeks, there's a space in the clouds and he sees the landmark that tells them they are directly over Nagasaki. When the clouds open just a speck, according to the logs of the boxcar, the plane, what he saw below him was the largest landmark in Nagasaki, which was the Nagasaki, Euro-commie Catholic Cathedral, the largest church in all of Japan. Knowing where he was he tells the captain, who was a Catholic man of the plane. The captain says drop the bomb and using Saint Mary's Cathedral in Nagasaki as the landmark, the second atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki.

Why this is important in terms of the history of violent, non-lamb like, that kind of Christianity that has walked away from the land of God is this. Nagasaki is Japanese Catholicism. It is the center of Christianity in Japan. Less than one percent of the population in Japan is Christian, was Christian and the vast majority were concentrated in Nagasaki. On August 15, 1849 when St. Francis Xavier landed in Japan he landed in a place called Cogoshima, six kilometers from Nagasaki. He went to Nagasaki. He established the first church in Nagasaki, the first Christian community was in Nagasaki. Nagasaki is Japanese Christianity, and an entirely Christian bomb crew wipes it out in nine seconds. And to this very day the captain of that plane is in the Boston – because he comes from Boston – is in the Boston papers every August 9th saying he'd do it again, and not a soul in the church says you can't do it again.

Let me tell you something about Japanese Christianity that's very, very important to all of this and you'll see the power of evil working. But if we can read the signs of times right, we can see the power of God trying to speak to the church and speak to our own life. St. Francis Xavier found the Nagasaki in 1549. He's a genius at missionary work. He leaves a community after a few months functioning in a way that it can build itself. It grows, it converts, it builds itself. It becomes a vibrant community doing good things, living the Christian life in the middle of Buddhists and Shinto Japan. By its example and by its teaching and so forth it becomes to attract large, large numbers of converts far outside Nagasaki. But then something terrible happens. And the terrible thing that happens is this. But the Portuguese and the Spaniards begin the use the church as a mechanism for conquering Japan like the Spanish and Portuguese and so forth did in Latin and South America. They begin to use the church as a way of changing allegiance from the local political leaders to allegiance to Portugal and to Spain. The Japanese people are far more organized than the people of Latin America and South America were. They see what's happening. Step two, the Portuguese bring gunpowder to Japan. In ten years the Japanese have better weapons than the Portuguese have, but it wasn't there before the Christians brought it. One thing leads to another and when the Japanese' various governments begin to see that the church is now in cahoots with the Portuguese government, they say out. All Europeans out of Japan and they say anyone who is a Christian either has to leave to stop practicing Christianity. If you refuse to do either, you'll die.

And so we have the persecution of the Japanese martyrs. Those Christians who we celebrate on February 6th every year with Paul Meke. Those Christians who were genuinely Christians, who were not in alliance and intrigued with Portuguese entrepreneurism and politicians and sea captains, but were genuinely Christians would not give up the faith and they died. Paul Meke, who ceases, and the 26 martyrs who ceases February 6th of every year, Paul Meke was – well what took place there was, 24 Japanese Christians – and the deaths were terrible. They boiled Christians in oil and they boiled them in water. It was just terrible reality. But Paul Meke and, 24 Christians along with Paul Meke they were captured, if you will, in a non-central section of Japan and then they were marched down to where? Kind of in a public mocking display, they were marched all the way down to where you would think they would be, Nagasaki, in a mocking kind of trial. Two more were picked up along the way so it's 26 altogether. And then when they got to Nagasaki, as kind of a mocking exhibition, what took place was, they said if that's your God, pointing to the crucifix, well fine, you die like your God and then crucified all 26 of them simultaneously. And on the command from the Japanese commander, a spear was put into the side of all 26 simultaneously on the hill in Nagasaki. The church was destroyed there and every European was out of Japan, and there was no Christianity known to the Japanese government or anyone for 200 years.

In 1855, 200 years now without Christianity in Japan, an American captain comes there with a gunboat and he opens up an island on the coast of Japan that can be used for trading. First time a non-Japanese has been there for 200 years. That's in 1855. Gradually the Japanese make an accommodation with the Europeans and Americans for trade purposes. And they allow the Europeans and Americans to come on to the Japanese mainland, where? At Nagasaki, but only there, and they allow them to build a church, but only for Europeans and Americans, not for Japanese in any way, shape or form. And the church is there and the priest that is the pastor of it is a Father Pettigone, a priest from France. On St. Patrick's night in 1865, March 17, 1865

there's a knock at the door of the church and there are five women at the door. And they ask to come in and they come in, and they ask the priest three questions. They ask, are you from Rome? And he says yes. He's stunned. Japanese people don't talk to Europeans, period, and they're asking questions out of nowhere, are you from Rome? They ask is he celibate, and he says yes. They ask where is the statue of the Mother of God, or the altar of the Mother of God? So he takes them around inside the church and shows them the little altar that they have there. And they prostrate themselves and so forth, and then they get up and they reveal to Father Pettigone thousands upon thousands of Japanese Christians who have lived in catacombs for 200 years. Lived so perfectly that they have the liturgical days down precisely, right to the day. They have the exact day when the various feasts are. They of course could have no math, but everyone is baptized and everyone knows the faith, everyone has learned the truth of the faith. Tens of thousands – the Japanese government didn't know, no one else knew.

The minute news of this gets out, the Japanese government starts another persecution. But it ends quickly. Remember where all this is taking place, it's Nagasaki. But it ends quickly because of European press and everything else in commerce. In 1894, for the first time in close to 300 years the Japanese government allows a church to be built in Japan by Christians. And where do they pick the build a church, the hill of Nagasaki where the church was, where it was destroyed, where the martyrs were killed, where St. Francis and from 1894 to 1917 without an ounce of help from the government or form anything else they built the largest church in all the orient and in 1917 it was dedicated St. Mary's Cathedral. That church was a ground zero, a mocking of the dropping of the atomic bomb on the community of Japan. It's wrong, it's obviously wrong. The community has lost it's – there is no more important problem that the church has to deal with than whether it is going to return to be the community of the Lambs of God. Not just in American and not just in Ireland, not just in Croatia and the Ukraine or France or all over, but as a symbol there couldn't be a more powerful symbol. The Christian community that struggles for 200 years in catacombs to live, 20 years trying to build a church in its faith, and that church is used by fellow Christians as a mocking to annihilate them. No Jews involved, no Muslims, no atheists, all Christian as it is all over the world to this very hour.

When the Lamb appeared at Nark, the Lamb is a call to return to the source, to return to the truth of the gospel, to return to the tradition that is authentic, to return individually and to return communally. That tradition hasn't existed in a country or in a church for all practical purposes for 1700 years, since Constantine. But God comes here as the Lamb of God, it seems incontestable that what is being asked is to become a community of Lambs of God, to walk away from being the other kind of community, to bear witness to the world on how the church should be.