Christian Just War Theory: The Logic of Deceit

(Rev.) Emmanuel Charles McCarthy

Christian Just War Theory: The Logic of Deceit

(Rev.) Emmanuel Charles McCarthy

revised 02.14.03

For Printed Copies or Additional Information Contact:
John J. Carmody • 167 Fairhill Drive
Center for Christian Nonviolence • Wilmington, DE 19808-4312
Phone: 302-235-2925 • Fax: 302-235-2926
E-Mail: jjcarmody@comcast.net

Ireland
Trinity Media Trust • 8 Moneynoe Park, Enniskillen
Fermanagh, N. Ireland BT74 4ER
Phone: 011 44 2866323489 • Local: 028 66323489
E-Mail: BVMG@aol.com

CONTENTS

Dedication

Prologue

1 Vested Hokum: Christian Just War Theories

The First Casualty of War 1.1
Overriding Jesus 1.3
The Obscenity of the Abstract 1.4
A Lethal Mirage 1.5
Follow Me 1.6
Upside-Down Cross 1.7

2 The King and I: Reality Reviewed and Redeemed

Pure Logic 2.1
Realism 2.2
More Pure Logic and Realism 2.2
Self-Understanding 2.3
Nonviolent Monotheism as Threat 2.6
What Kind of God Is God? 2.7
Jesus as Absolute Crisis 2.7
A Transfer of Allegiance 2.8

3 Is Natural Law Christian Just War Theory Spiritual Quicksand?

Theories of Justified Homicide 3.2
Sustaining Utter Inconsistency 3.3
The Protection of Being—Losing by Saving 3.4
The Desire to Be Rather Than Not to Be 3.5
The Way to Be Rather Than Not to Be 3.6
The Burden of Proclaiming Nonviolence 3.7
The Most Fundamental Truth of Natural Law 3.8
Infidelity and Radical Irrationality 3.9
The Survival of Love and the Beloved 3.10
The Choice Between Nonviolence and Nonexistence 3.11

4 How Unnatural Is Natural Law Christian Just War Theory?

The Moral Price of Making the Concrete Abstract 4.1
Allowing the Eye to See and the Ear to Hear 4.3
Is the Will to Kill Intrinsic to the Human Condition? 4.4
The Natural Order That God Forbids Us to Disturb 4.5
Consequences of Conformity to the Just War Ethic 4.6
Military Training: The Decisive Spiritual Death Blow 4.8
The Premeditated Perversion of the Human Heart 4.10
The Pandemic of War and the Just War Placebo 4.11

5 Violent Monotheism: Truth or Falsehood

Cannot Serve Two Masters 5.2
The Martyr 5.3
The Gospel 5.3
When 5.4
The Enemy 5.5
Worship 5.6
Other Divine Exceptions 5.7
Institutional Christianity 5.7
Distrusting Jesus 5.8
Hopping Christians 5.9
"X" or Not "X" 5.10

Epilogue

Biography

DEDICATION

To those countless millions of Christian men and women who killed and were killed, who maimed and were maimed in war over the last 1700 years, and who were denied knowledge of the Nonviolent Jesus of the Gospel and His Way of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies by their bishops, priests and ministers.

PROLOGUE

The secondary purpose of this little book is to critique the Christian Just War Theory (CJWT). Its primary purpose is to invalidate CJWT forever.

Just War Theories have been around for about 2000 years. However, they did not infect Christianity until three hundred years after Jesus' Resurrection. St. Ambrose and St. Augustine were their original carriers into the Church. However, in fairness it must be acknowledged that by the time these two politically powerful bishops released the perpetually mutating moral virus of CJWT into the Christian community, the Church by its choices in favor of acquiring wealth and political power had lost just about all of the spiritual immune system that protected it from the moral pathogen of righteous homicidal violence. Over the last 1700 years no effective method has been found to restore the Church's spiritual immune system against the disease of holy homicide. If anything, the Church's immune system against this spiritual Black Plague has, by the Third Millennium, completely collapsed. Today, no form of homicidal violence and no amount of homicidal violence is beyond the Church's ability to tolerate and justify.

The five essays in this book are concerned with the phenomena of Christian Just War Theories, not with Just/Unjust War Theories in general. They are ordered with a logic in mind that is the fruit of teaching this subject for thirty-five years. While each essay is understandable in itself, accepting the order in which they are presented should enhance the degree of understanding of each and all. While none of these reflections is more difficult to read than the editorial page of a newspaper, all should be read with a pencil or pen in hand. I hope it is not evidence of a deficiency in humility to suggest that this is a book where the old dictum, *Studium sine stilo somnium est,* "To study without a pencil is sleep," seems apropos.

The hope then of this little book is that it can serve as a partial but effective antidote for the catastrophic spiritual malaise of divinely supported homicidal violence that has metastasized throughout the entire catholic Church. The only complete cure, of course, is for the Church to unreservedly embrace the truth of the Message of the Nonviolent Jesus Christ. Hopefully this book, by exposing the intellectual and moral vacuousness of CJWT, will bring the hour of that embrace closer.

Vested Hokum: Christian Just War Theories

The thing about logic is that it works perfectly whether or not it has any relationship to reality outside the mind. For example, consider the following: *All apples are oranges. All oranges are poisonous. Therefore all apples are poisonous.* The logic is impeccable. However, it is the logic of non-reality.

Exquisite logic alone cannot impart moral authenticity. What it can do is fashion an artificial aura of objectivity around a moral position. I say "artificial aura" because while it may be maintained that the rules of logic are objective, the application of these rules to human reality is subjective. What this means in terms of Just War Theories is that a just war is just in the eyes of the beholder. What is perceived as a just war from a Chicago sports bar or from the senior executive offices of a multi-national corporation in Dallas, may be viewed as an appalling evil in the eye of a mother in Baghdad or Kabul whose child's face has been grotesquely disfigured by metal from a supposedly errant smart-bomb. Cardinals, bishops, priests, ministers and laity on all sides in all wars have been in disagreement with each other on the justness of each and every war. This should be prima facie evidence for any right thinking Christian to conclude that the Christian Just War Theory is a logical shell game where "the fix is in" on behalf of the locals' homicide.

The First Casualty of War

The late Catholic Biblical Scholar, Rev. John L. McKenzie, describes the Christian Just War Theory as "a piece of phony morality." Rarely do Christians who espouse it discuss publicly the gossamer presuppositions on which it is constructed. For example, if, as is universally acknowledged, "Truth is the first casualty of war," if politicians, government functionaries and military officials ceaselessly lie during a war, how can a Christian determine what the facts are in order to properly apply the Just War Standards? How? How can he or she know if just means are being employed, if the cause is just, if continuance of the war is just, if the criterion of pro-

portionality is being adhered to, if non-combatant immunity is being honored? How?

If "Truth is the first casualty of war," how can a person even know if the war is justly instituted, which is a requirement of the Christian Just War Theory? The Tonkin Gulf resolution, which is the law that brought death to tens of thousands of Americans and millions of Vietnamese, as well as the physical and/or psychological maiming of millions of other human beings, was procured by a Lyndon Johnson lie, by an event that never happened. In fact a history book, so large that the whole world could not contain it, could be written about wars initiated and justified, *jus ad bellum,* on the basis of non-events—lies. If "Truth is the first causality of war" the Christian Just War Theory is fatally flawed because it is morally impossible to apply.

If "Truth is the first causality of war" the Christian Just War Theory is fatally flawed because it is morally impossible to apply.

To contend that a presumption of veracity should be granted to a government's statements about its war is to argue that "all apples are oranges," is to argue contrary to the documented reality of interminable duplicity by power politicians and military leaders at war. It is to play the intellectual and moral ostrich in the face of murder. It is to ground a Christian moral theory of mass homicide in the flimflam of concocted falsehoods and of unverifiable claims. It is to patently concede that the activities of war, *jus in bello,* cannot be continuously scrutinized and authentically monitored for their moral acceptability—a necessary requirement in all Christian Just War Theories. The fact is Christian Just War Theory is now and always has been a fanciful theo-logical "house of cards," that has always been and will continue to be blown down by every political wolf that huffs and puffs the mantras of erotic nationalism. What is tragic and pathetic is that Christian leaders continue to make-believe that the "house of cards" is as solid as a rock spiritually.

The fact is Christian Just War Theory is now and always has been a fanciful theo-logical "house of cards," that has always been and will continue to be blown down by every political wolf that huffs and puffs the mantras of erotic nationalism.

It is this calculated inattention to reality, to mendacity, to glaring absurdity, to unwanted truth, that is the hallmark of that form of Christianity that self-reverentially identifies itself as "realistic" and therefore in its eyes is morally authorized to adopt one form or another of a Just War Theory as a way of overriding the expressed teachings of the "unrealistic" Jesus. Fifty-two million people die in World War II. Forty-eight percent of them are civilians. However, the American Catholic Hierarchy, the Japanese Catholic Hierarchy, the Italian Catholic Hierarchy, the

English Catholic Hierarchy, the German Catholic Hierarchy, etc., miss it. Yet, noncombatant immunity from being killed is an irremovable standard of the Just War Theory. The "realistic" overseers of most of the other Churches experience a similar failure of elementary perception during World War II and during every other war of the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries.

This obliviousness to the obvious is part and parcel of Just War Christianity for 1600 years. Christian Just War Theory is a ruse by which Christians in the pulpit and in the pew try to salve their consciences for not having enough faith in the nonviolent Jesus to follow Him and His Way of Nonviolent Love. The Christian Just War Theory might better be designated the Christian Just War Caper, an artful dodge whereby Christians try to fool themselves and the whole human community by morally rubber-stamping homicide in the name of Jesus on behalf of their particular kingdom.

JUST WAR THEORY IS A RUSE BY WHICH CHRISTIANS...TRY TO SALVE THEIR CONSCIENCES FOR NOT HAVING ENOUGH FAITH IN THE NONVIOLENT JESUS TO FOLLOW HIM AND HIS WAY OF NONVIOLENT LOVE

Christian Just War Theory is a "mental mirror game," where one baroque logical mirror is placed before another baroque logical mirror with the net result being a dazzling display of logic, that appears to be clear and of infinite depth. The only catch is, it is all done with mirrors reflecting each other. Its depth is illusionary. It reflects almost nothing of the reality of war and it reflects absolutely nothing of the Jesus of the Gospels.

Overriding Jesus

What is extraordinary in all of this is that a moral theory—that is originally composed by a pagan (CICERO, D. 43 B.C.), that has nothing to do with anything Jesus ever said or did, that is wide-open to indefinite interpretation, that is built on a logical artifice blind to the actualities of war and that has no way to validate the truthfulness of the facts it is utilizing—has always been able to trump Jesus' explicit teaching of nonviolent love. It is mind-boggling that Christians could possibly think that Cicero's "house of cards" as "baptized" by Augustine could supplant or surpass the will of God as revealed by Jesus in the Gospels. One would think from these overrides of Jesus' teaching that Cicero and/or Augustine is "the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God" (MT 16:17). Is there not more than a hint of creeping idolatry in Christian Just War Theories—a mere human understanding superceding the infallible teaching of God Incarnate? Is there not more than a whiff of Gnosticism here—an illuminati who claim knowledge of a divine truth, which overrides the expressed teachings of Jesus? St. Paul warns his fellow Christians: "Make sure that no one traps you and deprives you of your freedom by some secondhand, empty, rational philosophy based on the principles of this world, instead of on Christ" (COL 2:8). St. Paul's "beware" is at least as pertinent in 2003 A.D., as it was in 62 A.D.

Since the Catholic Bishops of the United States published their high profile pastoral letter on war and peace, *The Challenge of Peace,* in May of 1983, the United States Government has been involved in, and Christians working for the U.S. Government have been involved in, six openly undeclared wars and many more quasi-clandestine wars. Not one of these forays into mass homicidal violence has been declared unjust by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops according to its own published set of Just War Standards—let alone been prohibited to Catholics because of being self-evidently incompatible with following the Nonviolent Jesus. To the best of my knowledge no other mainline or evangelical church in the U.S. has done much better over this period of time. It is precisely this procrustean quality of Christian Just War Theories—bring your war to us and we'll fit it in—that makes them so appealing to Christians. This procrustean quality is also what makes them moral bunko-operations.

It is precisely this procrustean quality of Christian Just War Theories—bring your war to us and we'll fit it in—that makes them so appealing to Christians. This procrustean quality is also what makes them moral bunko-operations.

The Obscenity of the Abstract

There is something obscene about prelates of distinction, who live gilded lives, sitting around discussing and voting on whether it is "okay" to drop bombs on other human beings. There is something more than unwholesome going on when these men present themselves as official teachers of what Jesus taught.

At the beginning of the Twentieth Century the philosopher, Nikolai Berdyaev, observes that, "The greatest sin of this age is making the concrete abstract." It has been noted in several places that while Pope John Paul II always opposed abortion, his soul became a furnace of zeal in opposition to it when he saw the documentary, *The Silent Scream,* which shows a child in utero in the process of being legally and logically aborted. The child's struggle for life, his efforts to protect himself from invasive forces, his responses to sharp, intense, unanticipated pain, his frantic attempts to live even as life is being ripped from him are vividly illuminated for the eye to see and for the heart to know. If only the religious aristocracy of institutional Christianity would allow itself a comparable experience of empathy for those who suffer and die as the result of this aristocracy becoming a cog in the state's war machine, it

If only the religious aristocracy of institutional Christianity would allow itself a comparable experience of empathy for those who suffer and die as the result of this aristocracy becoming a cog in the state's war machine, it might be able to throw off the chains of fear that bind it to that power represented by Just Homicide Theories.

might be able to throw off the chains of fear that bind it to that power represented by Just Homicide Theories. I am sure the knowledge of truth acquired through empathy would compel almost all Christians to embark upon what the Second Vatican Council rightly asked the Church and Church leaders to do forty years ago: "To undertake an evaluation of war with an entirely new attitude." Empathy, as opposed to mere detached abstract awareness, has an enormous capacity for catalyzing metanoia—a change of mind, "an entirely new attitude." This is why governments at war never allow their own citizens avenues by which they can empathize with the agony and anguish of the men, women and children on the "other side."

If Christian leaders and Christian congregations would enter into whatever "education in empathy" is necessary to achieve that level of awareness for all victims of war—the deserving and the undeserving, military and civilian—that John Paul II achieved for the unborn by viewing *The Silent Scream,* then I am confident that their newly acquired knowledge of reality would gracefully empower them to let go of the hokum of a never ending array of impotent and farcical Just War Theories. An "education in empathy" would unveil the truth hidden since Augustine, namely, that the principal function of these theories is to make the concrete abstract by camouflaging unspeakable misery in the guise of unbiased syllogisms.

A Lethal Mirage

Christian Just Homicide Theories in general, and Christian Just War Theories in particular, are incurably infected with dishonesty. They are the products of a level of disregard for knowable reality which, if adopted by General Motors or Microsoft, would have us all still riding in buggies and counting on our fingers. Christian Just War Theories are an evasion of the ethics of Calvary. Simple Christians are aware that Jesus' teachings of nonviolent love of friends and enemies are easy to understand but hard to live. They also know that Christ-God in His infinite mercy always forgives any failure in living according to His teachings, if we but ask. However, it takes sophisticate theological savvy to arrive at the conclusion that Jesus' teachings of nonviolent love of friends and enemies are not only unclear, confusing, archaic, non-normative and not what He really meant, but are also supportive of homicidal violence! Such thinking is madness clothed in the paraphernalia of scholarship.

Christian Just Homicide Theories in general...are incurably infected with dishonesty. They are the products of a level of disregard for knowable reality which, if adopted by General Motors or Microsoft, would have us all still riding in buggies and counting on our fingers.

Christian Just War Theories are today what they always have been, simply one of the accoutrements of war. They are a normal part of the propaganda process, like martial music and contrived news stories, that nations employ in the process of

prosecuting a war and persuading people to give their children, their money and their lives to the reciprocal butchery of human beings. They are a lethal mirage of Messianic morality. General William Techumseh Sherman is voicing more truth about war than Cicero, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin combined when he says,

> *War is cruel and you cannot refine it…I am tired and sick of war. Its glory is moonshine. It is only those, who have never fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded, who cry aloud for blood, more vengeance, more desolation. War is hell.*

Follow Me

Does the Son of God come down from heaven so His followers can create hell on earth with a clear conscience? Does it not take an elephantine indifference to the Divinity of Jesus to lead people in His name to where Jesus never would have led them? When Jesus says, "Follow Me" He never, never means, "Follow Me" in committing homicidal violence. Never! What does "Follow Me" mean if it does not mean to teach what Jesus taught, to live what Jesus lived, to love as Jesus loved and to die as Jesus died? If Jesus is nonviolent, then to follow Him is to live and die nonviolently. One does not follow Bonnie and Clyde by being nonviolent. So why would one think he or she is following Jesus by planning, engaging in, or justifying homicidal violence? When Jesus says to His disciples, "Pick up your cross and follow Me" (MT 10:39; 16:34; MK 8:34; LK 9:23; JN 12:26), He is talking about picking up the cross as He picked up the cross—nonviolently, returning good for evil, praying for persecutors, loving enemies unto death: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (LK 23:34). There is not an iota of support in the life or teaching of Jesus for suggesting that a Christian can follow Him by picking up the sword—justly or unjustly, legally or illegally, logically or illogically.

When Jesus says, "Follow Me" He never, never means, "Follow Me" in committing homicidal violence. Never! What does "Follow Me" mean if it does not mean to teach what Jesus taught, to live what Jesus lived, to love as Jesus loved and to die as Jesus died?

Insignia of the United States Infantry Training School, Fort Benning, Georgia, worn by all military personnel assigned to the school, including Chaplains.

Upside-Down Cross

The sword is the cross turned upside down. It is the cross turned upside down independent of any reason a person might give for turning it upside down. Christian Just War Theories, as well as Christian Just Capital Punishment Theories, Christian Just Inquisition Theories, Christian Just Abortion Theories, are bottomless wells of reasons for turning the cross upside down. In the process these Christian Just Homicide Theories turn the image of God as revealed by Jesus upside down, the image of Jesus upside down, the self image of the Christian upside down, the image of the Christian community upside down, the image of humanity's relationship with God upside down, and the image of humanity of itself upside down.

The upside-down cross of Christian Just Homicide Theories is the primal and overarching calamity of the Pilgrim Church on earth.

The upside-down cross of Christian Just Homicide Theories is the primal and overarching calamity of the Pilgrim Church on earth. The upside-down cross is about piercing others. However, when Jesus commands, "Pick up your cross and follow Me," He is speaking about being pierced unjustly, not about piercing justly. To follow Jesus and pick up the cross, a person must put down the sword. A right-side-up Church does not proclaim an upside-down cross. Only an upside-down Church proclaims an upside-down cross. Despite centuries of Church witness to the contrary, good vestments and good investments, "secured" by a legion of upside-down crosses, are no substitute for a right-side-up Church proclaiming a right-side-up cross by word and deed. Of course with truth being the first casualty of war, pure logic and cultural realism would have no trouble proving that an upside-down cross is a right-side-up cross or that a right-side-up cross is just so much folly and claptrap.

Proverb:

No matter how far you've gone
Down the wrong road, turn back.

The King and I: Reality Reviewed and Redeemed

No one wants a nonviolent God. No one wants a God of nonviolent love of all people without exception and without condition and without end. Nonviolent monotheism is the black sheep in the family of religions. From the very highest levels of institutional monotheism humanity has heard repeated, almost without ceasing, "I am not a follower of a God who rejects all homicidal violence." The spiritual and political leaders of Judaism, Christianity and Islam are a single choir chanting one refrain perpetually: "Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of Armies (Sabaoth, Host). Hosanna ("Save, we ask")! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the God of Armies! Save, we ask."

Pure Logic

Recently, the God of nonviolent love of all people has taken a beating in the press. From coast to coast newspaper columnists, TV commentators and radio talk show orchestrators are nailing the Nonviolent God to a journalistic cross of ridicule and scorn, as well as anyone who would dare publicly follow such a Deity. Kathleen Parker of the *Orlando Sentinel* is typical of this mocking mentality when she begins her column with the sentence: "The nice thing about pacifists is that there are so few of them." Michael Kelly, writing in the prestigious *Washington Post* under the derogatory heading "Pacifist Claptrap," is a tad more stern with a nonviolent God and the people who obey such a Divinity. He opens his article on the same note as Ms. Parker: "Pacifists are not serious people although they devotedly believe they are." From this beginning Mr. Kelly descends a few octaves to, "Pacifism is inescapably and profoundly immoral." Lower still, he makes his own the thought that, "Pacifism is objectively pro-Fascist." Finally, he fine-tunes his argument, against a nonviolent God and His disciples, down to its base conclusion: "The American pacifists, therefore, are on the side of future mass murders of Americans. They are objectively pro-terrorist." *Newsweek* columnist Jonathan Alter urges pacifists to shut up because "it's kill or be killed." This brings us full circle back to Kathleen Parker, who after

mocking the idea of "20,000 pacifists squatting in the city of Washington, DC" and calling pacifists a "terrorist's dream team" concludes, "Fighting back in this case is an act of pure logic: kill or be killed. It doesn't get any clearer than that."

Realism

On the religious front the PR crucifixion of a nonviolent God and His followers was equally visible. In two recent syndicated columns by Richard McBrien, a liberal Catholic priest and a professor of theology of the University of Notre Dame, nonviolent Christianity was vigorously tarred and feathered. In Rome, Richard Neuhaus, a conservative American Catholic priest with an academic ambience, raised his voice in warning against nonviolence, insisting that the Church must not join, "the chorus of those who say, 'Let's go out and hug a terrorist because he feels unloved.'" The American Catholic Bishops as a body announced publicly that they voted overwhelmingly (167-4) against a God of nonviolent love of friends and enemies and for the war in Afghanistan. A goodly number also gave personal public witness to the same position by such statements as, "God is with us in this mission," and "I respect nonviolence and pacifism but we must have a certain moral realism." So also spoke just about every other institutional leader in Christianity from Billy Graham on down. Most of the heads of the other monotheistic religions in the U.S. did equally well in not mincing words about their rejection of a Nonviolent God and their desire to give spiritual aid and conscience-comfort to the American war effort.

The American Catholic Bishops as a body announced publicly that they voted overwhelmingly (167-4) against a God of nonviolent love of friends and enemies and for the war in Afghanistan. A goodly number also gave personal public witness to the same position...

More Pure Logic and Realism

What is stunning about the latest bombardment of anti-pacifist's journalism and religious PR is the blatant lack of understanding of the subject exhibited by those doing the pillorying. A pacific theist is a person who understands God to be a God who rejects homicidal violence toward any person. He or she also understands that in a moral universe conformity to the Creator's will is the creature's only way to fulfill the destiny for which he or she is created and the only way to unity with the Holy, that is, to holiness. The theistic pacifist is therefore equally confronted with an imperative of pure logic when the option of homicide is his or hers: try to save your life in this world by homicidal violence and lose eternal life, or risk losing your life in this world in the process of fidelity to God's nonviolent will toward all, and save your life in the next. (Eternal life here does not mean simply personal salvation but the eternal salvation of all humanity.) The current media presentations of nonviolence whether made by

A pacific theist is a person who understands God to be a God who rejects homicidal violence toward any person.

bishops, priests, ministers or non-clergy journalists should be rejected out of hand because they are ill-informed communications on a primal form of evil and on an elementary source of human misery—homicidal violence. Unfortunately, they will not be rejected because people are not allowed access, through the ordinary means of mass communication, to the information necessary to discern the spiritual superficiality behind clever rhetoric.

President John F. Kennedy says, "War will exist until that distant day when the conscientious objector enjoys the same reputation and prestige that the warrior does today." Kennedy like all his predecessors and successors in the office of the Presidency has no qualms about killing people. Yet, he knows, that it is only by comprehending the depth and the importance of the awesome realities which the pacifist mind brings to explicit consciousness, that the warrior consciousness can be modified to extinction. War, like capital punishment, like abortion, like inquisitions, like incest, like economic oppression, etc., originates in the human mind and there it must be combated if it is to be eliminated from the human situation, as slavery and human sacrifice have been eradicated as morally justifiable activities.

KENNEDY...HAS NO QUALMS ABOUT KILLING PEOPLE. YET, HE KNOWS, THAT IT IS ONLY BY COMPREHENDING THE DEPTH AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AWESOME REALITIES WHICH THE PACIFIST MIND BRINGS TO EXPLICIT CONSCIOUSNESS, THAT THE WARRIOR CONSCIOUSNESS CAN BE MODIFIED TO EXTINCTION.

I am not fully convinced that the following quote is genuinely the work of the person to whom it is usually attributed, Nazi leader, Hermann Goering. But it does speak a truth:

> *The people can always be brought to do the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism.*

The previously mentioned Ms. Parker is correct when she writes about pacifists, "there are so few of them." However, if there are so few people, who reject homicidal violence as compatible with the will of the Creator and therefore as morally abhorrent, then why worry about them? Why are Mr. Goering, Mr. Kelly, Ms. Parker, Mr. Alter, the Reverends McBrien and Neuhaus, et al., so concerned about so few?

Self-Understanding

Thomas Merton, a year before his strange death in Bangkok in 1968, published a gem of a book on nonviolence entitled *Faith and Violence*. In it he asks the above question and answers it with words that are as on target in 2003 as they were during the heyday of the Vietnam War:

Even though in fact the number of people who are interested enough in nonviolence to dedicate their lives to it is infinitesimally small, they are regarded as a serious and mysterious potential threat to the nation in so far as they bear witness to a radically different way of looking at life…

There exists in the American mind today an image of nonviolence which is largely negative and completely inadequate. Nonviolence is represented at best as an unhealthy kind of idealism, which implicitly becomes subversion and treason by virtue of its effects. This myth is systematically kept in existence by mass media because nonviolence is based on principles which call into question the popular self-understanding of the society in which we live…

The mass media generally assumes in the reader a particular mode of self-understanding which would be too complex to analyze here. Suffice it to say that this mode of self-understanding is a myth rather than a philosophy, a global secular faith which is assumed without question to be the right view of life and of political and social actuality. It is a positivist, pragmatic, fundamentally amoral view of things, completely confident of its own logic, its own superiority (proved by power and affluence), its own mission to judge and direct the rest of the world and to do so by the cheerful assertion of unlimited power. If necessary this world view appeals to a few semi-Christian slogans, as if to point out, in a modest, off-hand way, that the possession of this superiority, this power and this manifest destiny is a warrant of divine and messianic vocation. Any other way of self-understanding is dismissed as heretical. Nonviolence is based on radically different principles which bring it into head-on collision with this mode of self-understanding…

THE MOST CURIOUS THING ABOUT THIS MYTH AND ITS ACCEPTANCE IS THAT NONVIOLENCE, WHICH IS THE ONE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY TODAY THAT APPEALS DIRECTLY TO THE GOSPEL, SHOULD BE REGARDED AS UNCHRISTIAN WHILE RELIANCE ON FORCE AND COOPERATION WITH MASSIVE PROGRAMS OF VIOLENCE IS SOMETIMES SEEN AS AN OBVIOUS AND ELEMENTARY CHRISTIAN DUTY.

Here we come to the heart of the myth. While nonviolence is regarded as somehow sinister, vicious and evil, violence has manifold acceptable forms in which it is not only tolerated but approved…The most curious thing about this myth and its acceptance is that nonviolence, which is the one political philosophy today that appeals directly to the Gospel, should be regarded as unchristian while reliance on force and cooperation with massive programs of violence is sometimes seen as an obvious and elementary Christian duty.

"Self-understanding," there is the crux of the matter! At all cost, the powers of the kingdoms of the world must not permit a self-understanding to seriously arise in the consciousness of the citizenry that would acutely call into question the ways and means of their agenda. Self-understanding necessarily includes God-under-

standing, non-human reality understanding, other-human reality understanding. A new self-understanding would inevitably lead to a new understanding of these other dimensions of human consciousness. Indeed, a new understanding in any one of these areas, for example, a new God-understanding, i.e., a nonviolent God, would alter the understanding of all the others.

In the musical, *The King and I,* Anna, the British teacher of the king's fifty-eight children, shows her students a map of the world and points out the location of their country, Siam. The children instantly become defensive ("We are not that small."), angry, scornful of their teacher and fighting mad. They then proceed to show Anna the map of Siam that they have known from the cradle and that the whole country knows is the true representation of Siam's geographical place in the world. On their culturally accepted map, Siam occupies about half of the content area, with the rest of the countries of the world having to make-do with the remaining half of the planet. The axial issue here, the issue that engenders anger and scorn toward the teacher, is not geography; it is self-understanding and meaning being undermined by new truth.

"Self-understanding," there is the crux of the matter! At all cost, the powers of the kingdoms of the world must not permit a self-understanding to seriously arise in the consciousness of the citizenry that would acutely call into question the ways and means of their agenda.

The climax of the play is reached when the King himself is confronted with a new truth, namely, that it is wrong for a King to kill a re-captured runaway slave. He finds it impossible to integrate this new truth into his old self-understanding of what he is and what a slave is. Because of his personal integrity he can neither deny nor ignore the new truth, but neither will he die to his old nurtured self. The old man and the new truth cannot live in the same person. The tragic conclusion of the play is that the King perishes because he will not relinquish the old self-understanding that has been invalidated by a new awareness.

So, it is not so strange that secular and religious leaders feel so threatened by nonviolent monotheism that they sense the need to mount formidable and clever attacks against it and, if necessary, punish those who espouse it. As noted in the beginning of these reflections, "No one wants a nonviolent God." Kathleen Parker's, "The nice thing about pacifists is that there are so few of them" is a correct quantitative evaluation of the human situation. The lowly position that nonviolent monotheism holds in the polls is the fruit of hard work on behalf of violent monotheism by religious, political, economic, media and educational leaders. It is they who are primarily responsible for consciousness formation and conscience formation in every one of the kingdoms of this world. In nations created by homicidal violence and/or sustained by homicidal violence, it is as normal as breathing for the elites of such

societies to rigorously believe in and to zealously propagate throughout the citizenry a God who endorses homicidal violence. After all without homicidal violence the elites would cease to be elites, the privileged would cease to be privileged, and this is certainly not what the Deity desires! Therefore violent monotheism must be true and must be incessantly proclaimed by hook or by crook from the cradle to the grave. The citizenry of each kingdom must be so hard-wired into violent monotheism and its logical implications that they can never imagine questioning it. Violent monotheism with its eye for eye, life for life, collateral damage for collateral damage is then experienced as "pure logic" in groups founded upon and maintained by homicidal violence.

In nations created...and/or sustained by homicidal violence, it is as normal as breathing for the elites...to rigorously believe in and to zealously propagate throughout the citizenry a God who endorses homicidal violence.

Nonviolent Monotheism as Threat

So, again, no wonder there are so few pacifists and no wonder this is considered a "nice thing" in the media and popular mind. Of what use to a nation-state is a God of nonviolent love? Such a God is the last thing, which a nation-state or any religious or secular subdivision thereof, would be interested in promoting. If God were nonviolent the entire map of human reality would have to be redrawn. The present self-understandings of the violent monotheist, whether patriot or revolutionary, would be as absurd as Siam being half the size of the earth. The values, attitudes, perspectives, ideas of right and wrong, etc., of our violent monotheistic forefathers would have to be jettisoned to make way for the new truth.

Religious, political, economic, media and intellectual elites are no more ready and willing to die to old self-understandings than is the King of Siam. Likewise, the average Joe or Jane is equally unenthusiastic about putting off the old man in order to accept a new truth and to put on a new self-understanding. The fact that there are so few pacifists, so few who believe in a Nonviolent God, is not surprising on a planet where every spec of dirt is controlled by one or another of the 194 violence-based clusters of people called States. That the vast majority of human beings nurtured in such a situation should reject a nonviolent God for a violent God is to be expected. Statistically there are "few pacifists." But statistics are irrelevant to religious truth. Whether this or that particular statistic is a "nice thing" or a "good thing" or an "evil thing" depends upon realities beyond the statistical.

If God were nonviolent the entire map of human reality would have to be redrawn....The values, attitudes, perspectives, ideas of right and wrong, etc., of our violent monotheistic forefathers would have to be jettisoned to make way for the new truth.

What Kind of God is God?

There is absolutely no intrinsic relationship between majority opinion and objective truth. Democracy is merely a method of group decision-making. It has no necessary relationship to truth. The whole world could vote that the earth is flat, as it would have voted 4,000 years ago, but this would not mean the earth is flat. As the late Bishop Fulton J. Sheen says, "Right is right even if no one is right, and wrong is wrong even if everyone is wrong." Whether "a few pacifists" is a "nice thing" depends on the answer to the question,"What kind of God is God and what does God expect of people?"

If God is a violent God then it is a "nice thing" that there are so few people who believe in a Nonviolent God. It is a "nice thing" because "the fewer the better" who believe in a non-reality, an illusion. However, if God is a nonviolent God, then the paucity of human beings adoring Him, petitioning Him, trying to live by His will and asking pardon of Him when they fail, would not be a very "nice thing" at all—would it? In such a situation much of what is considered Holy would in fact be evil, much of what is perceived as worship would be blasphemy.

If God is the kind of God that is nurtured by the 194 nations and their religious affiliates, i.e., a violent God, then our prayer should be, "Thank God" for the "nice thing" of so few pacifists. But, if the Nonviolent Jesus, who teaches as God's will a Way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies, is "the image of the invisible God" (COL 1:15), then Jesus being crucified by state-nurtured and religiously-endorsed homicidal violence on Calvary is the microcosm of humanity being crucified worldwide by state-nurtured and religiously-endorsed homicidal violence. Under these circumstances the prayer that must be raised to God in union with Christ on the cross is either, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (LK 23:34) or else, *"mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa."*

...if the Nonviolent Jesus...is "the image of the invisible God," (COL 1:15) then Jesus being crucified by state-nurtured and religiously-endorsed homicidal violence on Calvary is the microcosm of humanity being crucified...

Jesus as Absolute Crisis

Jesus, the Christ, is the incarnation of nonviolent monotheism par excellence. Therefore, Jesus is an absolute crisis in the idea of God. The renowned Jewish Biblical Scholar, Joseph Klausner, communicates this as succinctly as anyone when he writes in 1921: "There was yet another element in Jesus' idea of God which Judaism could not accept. Jesus tells His disciples to love their enemies, as well as their friends since their Father in heaven makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends his rain upon the righteous and the ungodly…With this Jesus introduces something new into the idea of God…As a sole and self-sufficient national code of teaching Judaism, could by no means agree with it…and such has been

the case with Christianity from the time of Constantine to this present day." Jesus is the fork in the road for a humanity pilgrimaging through time and space. Once encountered, Jesus demands a decision for or against Him because He proclaims a God incompatible with the reigning deity of monotheism and of the world.

Humanity, since evolving from the non-ethical (no knowledge of good and evil,) non-God-aware consciousness of its animal ancestors, has with only a few isolated exceptions worshipped, served, placated and been terrorized by a God or gods of homicidal violence. Why this is so is not known. Perhaps the transition from a fully animal consciousness to a fully human consciousness is as yet incomplete. Perhaps the approximately 10,000 generations that have passed since Homo sapiens came on stage are not enough time for this relatively new species to get beyond imitating and nurturing the violent survival techniques of its pre-human past. Perhaps this inability fosters in a God-aware creature the need to create God in the image and likeness of what the creature is seemingly hermetically trapped in at the moment. Perhaps this inability to thus far break the cycle of imitative violence motivates an ethically conscious creature to call the destruction of its own species good. But again, it is not at all clear how humanity became almost universally committed to a violent theism. What is clear is that Jesus confronts this idea of God head-on and rejects it as emphatically as is humanly possible: He proclaims its opposite unequivocally: "Love your enemies." He refuses to live according to its demands: "Put up your sword." He enters into death not with fangs bared but with love for those with fangs bared: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

...it is not at all clear how humanity became almost universally committed to a violent theism. What is clear is that Jesus confronts this idea of God head on and rejects it as emphatically as is humanly possible: He proclaims its opposite unequivocally: "Love your enemies."

Jesus, the Christ, is the mystery within the mystery of existence which offers to the human being and to humanity a choice to imitate its violent animal ancestors or a choice to imitate its Nonviolent Divine Ancestor. The mystery called Jesus also offers humanity the reason for following Him. Since the individual person and humanity in general cannot serve contradictory Masters, Jesus inherently compels a decision from those who meet Him.

A Transfer of Allegiance

Non-Christians in the first generation of Christianity see this and do not like it. In the Acts of the Apostles (17:6-7) Christians are dragged before the city council with their accusers shouting: "These people who have been turning the whole world upside down have come here now. They have broken every one of Caesar's edicts by claiming that there is another king, Jesus." These alarmed accusers, whatever else

they may be, are people who know an earnest attack on the reigning "mode of self-understanding" when they see it.

Caesar is Tyrannosaurus Rex "made flesh." Christ the King, who is truly human as well as truly Divine, rejects imitating the lethal violence of His animal ancestors. Instead Jesus lives so completely the life of the Father of all (EP 4:6), who lets His sun shine on the good and on the evil and His rain fall upon the righteous and the ungodly (MT 5:45), that He can say, "Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father" (JN 14:9) and "I and The Father are one" (JN 10:30). Original Christianity in transferring its allegiance from Caesar to Christ simultaneously transfers its allegiance from a God—whose will is the human imitation and extension of lethal animal violence—to a God who presents to humanity, through His Nonviolent "Word made flesh," the possibility of imitating Divinity, indeed who presents to humanity the exquisite option of participating in the very life of the Holy One at this moment and forever. This would certainly seem to be a "nice thing" in which more than a "few" might like to participate, if they but knew. At any rate, at least this much should be clear: no person need worry about becoming "pro-Fascist" or "pro-terrorist" if he or she chooses to follow the Nonviolent Jesus through life and through death into Eternity.

ORIGINAL CHRISTIANITY IN TRANSFERRING ITS ALLEGIANCE FROM CAESAR TO CHRIST SIMULTANEOUSLY TRANSFERS ITS ALLEGIANCE FROM A GOD WHOSE WILL IS THE HUMAN IMITATION AND EXTENSION OF LETHAL ANIMAL VIOLENCE, TO A GOD WHO PRESENTS TO HUMANITY, THROUGH HIS NONVIOLENT "WORD MADE FLESH," THE POSSIBILITY OF IMITATING DIVINITY...

Is Natural Law Christian Just War Theory Spiritual Quicksand?

Across the millennia of recorded human consciousness and across a multiplicity of cultures, the idea exists that there is a universal natural moral law applicable to the lives of all people, in all places, and at all times. The process of thought by which people arrive at this idea generally goes something like this: There is an order in nature that human beings can perceive because they are rational beings. That order and the perception of it extend to humanity and its conduct. The Source (God) of the order of nature and the Source of humanity is also the Source of the order of moral conduct—natural law—in human beings. Natural law then is the eternal law implanted by the One "by whom all things are made" in beings endowed with reason and free will. Human beings, to the extent they are free, may participate or refuse to participate in this Divinely sourced order of existence. Different consequences—temporal and eternal—follow for self and community depending upon which choice is made.

THE SOURCE (GOD) OF THE ORDER OF NATURE AND THE SOURCE OF HUMANITY IS ALSO THE SOURCE OF THE ORDER OF MORAL CONDUCT—NATURAL LAW—IN HUMAN BEINGS. NATURAL LAW THEN IS THE ETERNAL LAW IMPLANTED BY THE ONE "BY WHOM ALL THINGS ARE MADE" IN BEINGS ENDOWED WITH REASON AND FREE WILL.

A good example of natural law thinking can be found in the opening lines of the Confucian classic, *The Unvarying Means,* written hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus: "What is ordained in Heaven is called the essential nature of the human being; the following of this essential nature is called the natural law." St. Thomas Aquinas over a millennium and a half after Confucius says that "natural law is nothing other than the participation of the eternal law in rational creatures." Confucius and Aquinas are, however, but two moments in the history of a notion that spans more than twenty-five centuries.

Theories of Justified Homicide

More Christian Churches than are probably willing to admit it base their justification for participating in war and other forms of killing on some natural law philosophy. They refer to it as the Just War Theory or as the right to self-defense by means of homicide.

So, let us first be honest about the relationship between Jesus and all justified homicide theories. These theories, including just war theories, owe nothing to anything Jesus ever taught or did. Jesus taught a way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies—period. Nor can the Just War Theory be found in the Old Testament. The justification for homicide in the Old Testament is that God supposedly commands it either by direct communication, e.g., the genocide of the Amalekites (1 SM 15:1-3) or by communication through the Torah, e.g., the stoning to death of a stubborn and rebellious son (DT 21:20-21). The theory of just war with its criteria of just institution, just cause, just means, proportionality, last resort, non-combatant immunity, etc., is the work of philosophical speculation not revelation in any ordinary sense. It begins in earnest with pagan natural law philosophers, e.g., Cicero, and later is adopted by Christian natural law philosophers. It is a work of human reason. Parenthetically, it should be stated forthrightly that Jesus does not commission His Church to teach philosophy. His great commission is, "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teach them to obey all the commands I gave you**" (MT 28:20).

So, let us first be honest about the relationship between Jesus and all justified homicide theories. These theories, including just war theories, owe nothing to anything Jesus ever taught or did. Jesus taught a way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies—period.

But what a work of human reason natural law Christian just war theories are! There are many of them and they are all literally amazing. Taking care to avoid the maxim—the first casualty of war is always truth—they, step by step, intellectually walk Christians through a logical maze, that may or may not have any relationship to reality. This contortion allows the Baptized, with blinding logical clarity, to arrive at the conclusion that they can do in good conscience what Jesus refused to do and what He taught his disciples to refuse to do. Whether it be the Catholic Thomas Aquinas or the Protestant Paul Ramsey, the power of mind behind each theory and application thereof is breath-taking. The problem is, to use the words of the late Biblical Scholar John L. McKenzie, "Behind all just war ethics one sees the cornered rat with its fangs bared. Did Christ come so we could act like cornered rats?"

It would seem that, at least for the Christian, the debate on whether a disciple of Christ can engage in mass homicide under some philosophical theory of a just war

would be closed. Christ, in fact, did not come so his followers "could act like cornered rats with fangs bared." The picture of Jesus blazing away at other human beings with His UZI submachine gun—the UZI being just a technological extension of bared fangs—is so ludicrous that no one could seriously entertain such an image. Yet, if one is to believe the talk heard from pulpit and pew, at least 95% of Christians believe they can kill in war and still be faithful to Jesus. How is such a bold contradiction between the Master's teaching and the disciples' practice morally possible? How in good conscience is it sustainable?

Sustaining Utter Inconsistency

One way the utter inconsistency between the Jesus of the New Testament and the justification of Christian participation in war is propagated and sustained is by ignorance. Christians—Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant—are not taught the truth about the phenomenon of war by their moral leadership. If a person thinks cocaine is no more destructive than sugar then he or she will have no problem developing an ethic that justifies the sale of cocaine to children. Church leaders who have espoused just war theories have refused to expose beforehand the realities of war to their people. They have, thereby, kept their congregations ignorant and desensitized to the brutal logical, psychological, emotional and spiritual contradictions between The Way Jesus taught and the simplest act of war, e.g., slicing a person's head in half with a battle-axe or sword.

Another way the inconsistency between Jesus and natural law just war theory is obfuscated and thereby sustained in conscience is by "discovering" certain principles of natural law that are then made equal to or superior to the explicit teaching of Jesus. On the surface it would seem to be self evident that if Jesus is God incarnate, the definitive revelation of God's will, the self revelation of God "by whom all things are made" (JN 1:3), then there could be no incompatibility between what Jesus taught and the imprint of God's providential plan on the natural reason of people, to use Thomas Aquinas' understanding of natural law. It would also seem self evident or at least unquestionably reasonable that if the Christian "discovered" natural law principles that were inconsistent with Jesus' teachings, he or she, as creature before Creator, would bow to the wisdom of God incarnate and accept that his or her reasoning process was flawed. But alas, such is not the case where natural law Christian just war theory is concerned. Here the Christian mind saddled, as all minds are, with a minuscule perception of reality, with a history of participation in sin, with disordered desires, with concupiscence, etc., makes itself and its interpretation of the will of God supe-

...IT WOULD SEEM TO BE SELF EVIDENT THAT IF JESUS IS GOD INCARNATE, THE DEFINITIVE REVELATION OF GOD'S WILL, THE SELF REVELATION OF GOD "BY WHOM ALL THINGS ARE MADE" (JN 1:3), THEN THERE COULD BE NO INCOMPATIBILITY BETWEEN WHAT JESUS TAUGHT AND THE IMPRINT OF GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL PLAN ON THE NATURAL REASON OF PEOPLE...

rior to the mind of Christ and to the will of God as revealed by Jesus in the Gospels. Then, based on its interpretation of natural law, it does in the name of God what God incarnate refused to do when He walked on earth, namely, kill other human beings.

The Protection of Being—Losing by Saving

It seems to me that operationally the principle of natural law that is employed by just war moralists to validate the Christian's audacity in overriding Jesus' expressed teaching of nonviolent love of friends and enemies is this: "Survival is the first law of nature." Stated in other words: "The protection of being is a law of being." It is obvious, for example, if a rat's survival is threatened the rat will do all that it needs to do with its bared fangs to assure that it continues to exist. The natural law just warist says that the human being, by Divine design, is granted the same rights as the rat, namely, to do whatever he or she must do to survive. The just warist then goes on to point out that it is God who placed this desire to survive, to protect being, to continue to be rather than not to be in rats and in humans. This right to self defense is not just a law of nature but also designates a rule of conduct that proceeds from human nature as rationally ordained by God. Therefore to live according to it, and if necessary to kill according to it, is to live according to God's plan, that is, the natural law. The just war theory, i.e., the right to lethal self defense, is simply a set of logical standards to determine when survival is actually threatened and what lethal means are in conformity with God's will under what circumstance, e.g., how much collateral damage, that is, how much killing of noncombatants is proper in God's eyes in a particular case. But, the ingrained principle from which all the logical gymnastics of all the Christian just war theories operationally spring is, "Survival is the first law of nature."

It seems to me that operationally the principle of natural law that is employed by just war moralists to validate the Christian's audacity in overriding Jesus' expressed teaching of nonviolent love of friends and enemies is this: "Survival is the first law of nature."

This principle carries within it a great deal of logical elasticity. Without breaking an intellectual sweat, scholars can make it cover a legion of states deemed necessary for human survival, e.g., survival of low gasoline prices, survival of ethnic or national honor, survival of an economic system, survival of some ruling class system, survival of a political system, survival in positions of power and prestige, survival of comfort, survival of the standard of oppression to which one has become habituated, survival of geographical, racial, religious or economic dominance. But, whatever the particulars may be, behind all just war theories lie the desire and law of survival. When survival is threatened, what otherwise would be blatantly evil, e.g., homicide and arson, is called good by natural law just war theory; in other words, vice is virtuized, the diabolical is divinized. And yet…

Jesus says:

> *For anyone who wants to save his or her life will lose it; but anyone who loses his or her life for my sake, and for the sake of the Gospel, will save it (MK 8:35, MT 16:25, LK 9:24, JN 12:25).*

What a statement! What natural law just war philosopher or theologian could believe it? It totally contradicts the just war interpretation of the principle "Survival is the first law of nature." It says, if you try to save yourself by acting like a rat with its fangs bared, if you start destroying others to save your piece of the pie, you will lose everything. It says that it is not survival but destruction that comes from the bared fangs and from the barrel of a gun. It says that to witness to the truth of Jesus and His Gospel of nonviolent love of friends and enemies is the way to save one's life—even if it costs one's life. Who can believe it? Few have! And yet...

Is it not true that even if survival is the first law of nature, survival is precisely what nature cannot deliver? Regardless of how sharp the rats fangs are, regardless of how vicious it is in defending its hole or its garbage, is it not true that it will be destroyed? The rat will disintegrate along with the sun, the planet earth, the North Star, the galaxies, the cockroaches and each human being. Survival may be the first law of nature but there is no possibility of it being fulfilled within nature. Therefore, the rat, with its fangs bared, and the just warist are engaged in a rodently impossible and humanly impossible task—survival. They may with fang-baring or machine-gunning add a cubit of time to their lives—and thereby add an extra day or two at the garbage can or country club—but the United States, France, Russia, China, as well as all the people that populate them will go the way of the dinosaurs and Babylon. And yet...

SURVIVAL MAY BE THE FIRST LAW OF NATURE BUT THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF IT BEING FULFILLED WITHIN NATURE. THEREFORE, THE RAT, WITH ITS FANGS BARED, AND THE JUST WARIST ARE ENGAGED IN A RODENTLY IMPOSSIBLE AND HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE TASK—SURVIVAL. THEY MAY...ADD A CUBIT OF TIME TO THEIR LIVES...

The Desire To Be Rather Than Not To Be

There is deep within people a desire to survive, to be rather than not to be. It can be destroyed but in the beginning it is there. About thirty years ago in his Pulitzer-prize-winning book entitled *The Denial of Death,* Ernest Becker threw the spotlight of intellect on the dynamic of survival in the human situation and revealed as few others have the pressure on person and community that this desire exerts. The average mind is a computer, ceaselessly calculating the probabilities of some form of survival or another in one situation after another. For example, surplus, the hoarding of more than one needs in a world where thousands perish daily because they can not get the raw necessities of life, is driven by the desire to survive—even if being a survivor means others do not survive. The accumulation of surplus then comes from

basically the same place in the psyche as does the willingness to pull the trigger, that is, from the desire to survive. And yet…

Jesus told this parable:

> *There was once a rich man who, having had a good harvest from his land, thought to himself, "What am I to do? I have not enough room to store my crops." Then he said, "This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods in them, and I will say to my soul: My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time." But God said to him, "Fool! This very night the demand will be made for your soul…" (LK 12:16-20).*

So, regardless of what professional economists proclaim, economics is a spiritual reality before all else. The fit do not survive any more than the unfit. The grave is not simply the great leveler of princes and paupers, it is the great attestation that nature cannot fulfill its own first law. The screeching and clamoring on the floor of the stock market and the screeching and clamoring on the battlefield are equally the sound and the fury signifying nothing in the end. And yet,…

The Way To Be Rather Than Not To Be

"To be or not to be" is indeed still the question. Is there a way to be? Is there a way not to be? Is there a way for us to survive individually and communally? Patently, there is no survival in fang-barring just war interpretations of the natural law. However, could it be, that if we followed Jesus and His way of nonviolent love of both friends and enemies as enunciated in the Gospel, our lives would be saved, even if it appeared to our time-bound eyes at the moment that we were losing them? Could it be that our fidelity to Jesus and His Gospel even in the face of bared fangs might be a piece of the leaven by which the whole human dough is raised up—saved? If Jesus is who the Church says He is, these are precisely the consequences of a Christian choosing to follow the Resurrected Jesus and His Gospel teaching of nonviolent love rather than following the way of mere animal longevity. As said earlier, the grave is the testimony that natural law just war survival ethics is a defective interpretation of natural law. But, the open grave of Easter Sunday is incontrovertible proof, to those who have been called to faith in Jesus Christ, that fidelity to the Gospel way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies leads to survival and that this remains so—even when the bared fangs of some theory of justified homicide seem omnipotent—as they did on the Friday before the Day of the Empty Tomb.

Is there a way for us to survive individually and communally?…could it be, that if we followed Jesus and His way of nonviolent love of both friends and enemies as enunciated in the Gospel, our lives would be saved, even if it appeared to our time-bound eyes at the moment that we were losing them?

Christian natural law just war theory validates its existence on the basis that it seeks to save one's life in this world and therefore supposedly is divinely entitled to employ means that are 180 degrees opposite the means taught by Jesus during His public life and employed by Him when His own survival was threatened in Gethsemane and on Calvary. Isn't it time for Churches to candidly confess that just war theory is not a means of survival but is rather the means by which one loses his or her life? Isn't the moment ripe to teach that he or she who lives by just war theory will perish by just war theory? Isn't it time for Christian leadership and laity to summon the courage to proclaim to the world that it is the Risen Jesus Christ who teaches us how to survive not Aristotle, Plato, Cicero or any lesser philosophical, religious or political light?

The Burden of Proclaiming Nonviolence

Of course, if the Churches—Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant—proclaim what Christ proclaimed, they would have to become the first proof of their own proclamation. They would have to withdraw their fangs, cease their violence, stop justifying homicide for their membership—all their membership regardless of their status in the secular community. They would have to rely totally on the faith that God honors fidelity to His way and His way is revealed by the nonviolent Jesus. Is it possible that Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant leadership and Churches do not teach what Jesus taught about violence and enmity because, if they did, the world would demand that they live in the furnace of their own teaching and this demand might reveal—not communities and leaders with the trust in the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—but rather communities and leaders living out of black holes of atheism and agnosticism masquerading as natural law just war theology.

If Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Churches and their leadership believe that Jesus is Lord, what do they have to lose by giving up interpretations of natural law hostile to the way of Christ as revealed in the New Testament? If the Churches follow Jesus and do not survive then Jesus is wrong and Christian Churches have neither reason nor right to be in existence. But, if they follow Jesus and survive, indeed if they flourish, then the world will have received the witness it needs and the motivation it requires to embrace Jesus and His Way. Nonviolence is the missing but indispensable ingredient for genuinely authentic and maximally effective evangelization of the world by the Churches. But, if the Churches spend their time, talent and treasure trying to survive in this world and abandon Jesus and His teachings whenever their own little bailiwicks seem threatened, how can the world possibly accept that Jesus is Lord and that He knows what

If the Churches follow Jesus and do not survive then Jesus is wrong and Christian Churches have neither reason nor right to be in existence. But, if they follow Jesus and survive, indeed if they flourish, then the world will have received the witness it needs and the motivation it requires to embrace Jesus and His Way.

He is talking about when it comes to survival of the individual and humanity. I would ask Christian leadership and laity to give Jesus a chance. Trust in Jesus by trusting He would not lie to us?

Stop hiding bared fangs behind holy pictures, prayer groups, sermons, public cult, stained glass windows, liturgical garb, pious phraseology, "Christian" politics, and just war interpretations of the natural law. You were given eyes to see. Well, see! See that natural law just war theory and natural law just capital punishment theory are as much "the tragic triumph of misperception and misunderstanding" as were natural law just slavery theory and natural law just Inquisition theory. Have the perceptual courage to see through Messiah glasses rather than through fear-filled rat's eyes "the law imprinted on the hearts of people."

The Most Fundamental Truth of Natural Law

You have been given a mind to understand. Well, understand! Understand that the most fundamental truth that the human mind by right reason can derive from natural law is this: "When the will of the Creator (God) is known it must be followed by the creature." This is the moral essence of what it is to be a human being. This is the supreme prescript of the eternal law imprinted in rational beings. No natural law principle, whether it be "survival" or "Do good and avoid evil," can override in priority obedience to the will of the Creator when that will is known. The natural law, which Divine Reason itself implanted in human beings, never permits a person or community to act contrary to the will of God when that will is known. This is an absolutely exceptionless principle according to the dictates of rationality.

The natural law, which Divine Reason itself implanted in human beings, never permits a person or community to act contrary to the will of God when that will is known. This is an absolutely exceptionless principle according to the dictates of rationality.

Jesus' teaching in the Gospels is a precise presentation of this supreme prescript of natural law: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Jesus teaches this unsurpassable principle of the eternal law not just by word but by deed when in the hour of extreme crisis, Gethsemane, He lives, "Your will be done, not mine." However, beyond teaching that "when the will of God is known it must be followed," Jesus explicitly teaches His disciples and through His disciples communicates to the world what the will of the Creator is, namely, it is a will that rejects homicide, retaliation, revenge and enmity; it is a will that calls for a nonviolent love of both friends and enemies, modeled on Jesus Himself (JN 13:34, 15:22; GA 5:1,2).

For the Christian then, natural law points immediately to the revelatory. The primal truth, "When the will of the Creator is known it must be followed," leads the Christian rationally to the obligatoriness of the revelation of God's will in Jesus and

His teachings. This does not mean that reason now has no place in the Christian life. It means rather that the place of reason in the Christian life is to figure out how to implement the teachings of Jesus, not how to modify them or render them nugatory—as nugatory as they are rendered in war whether it is called just or unjust. For the Christian to interpret logical concoctions of the human mind that are blatantly contrary to the teachings of Jesus as being superior to the teachings of Jesus is defiance of the most fundamental truth of natural law: When the will of the Creator is known it must be followed.

Infidelity and Radical Irrationality

Let us be clear why, in the end, Christian justified homicide interpretations of natural law are not only inconsistent with fidelity to the primal prescript of natural law but also why they are radically irrational. Jesus of Nazareth is the Logos (Jn 1:1), which translated from Greek means the Word, Divine Reason, Divine Rationality, "through whom all things have been made" (jn 1:1-14). He is the author of natural law. More, He is the eternal law incarnate. He is the natural law made visible in the flesh. He is the ultimate witness to what it means to live in history according to the eternal law of God. There can not be a contradiction between the teachings of Jesus and the prescriptions of natural law which He created. The Word of God, Jesus, does not give contradictory teachings in the Gospel and in natural law on what is the will of God. If a Christian or a Christian community or anyone else perceives a contradiction between the precepts of natural law and the nonviolent teaching of the nonviolent Jesus in the Gospel, the problem lies in human perceptions and interpretations clouded and colored as they are by egoism, fear, sin and selfishness, and not in inconsistencies in the teaching of the Word of God. The author of the natural law is the author of the Sermon on the Mount. It is the depth of irrationality to suggest that there is a contradiction between "the imprint of God's providential plan on natural reason" and the teachings and life choices of the Nonviolent One who made that imprint, Jesus of Nazareth, the Logos.

The author of the natural law is the author of the Sermon on the Mount. It is the depth of irrationality to suggest that there is a contradiction between "the imprint of God's providential plan on natural reason" and the teachings and life choices of the Nonviolent One who made that imprint, Jesus of Nazareth, the Logos.

It is in God's will, that is, in His Nonviolent Word and His Nonviolent Way, that the path to salvation lies. "[T]he world, with all it craves for, passes away; but anyone who does the will of God remains forever" (1 jn 2:17). It is not in any just homicide interpretation of natural law that Christians will encounter the Resurrection and Life. The promise is that, "Anyone who believes in me, even though he or she dies, will live" (jn 11:25). But, does not a person have to believe Him in order to believe in Him? "I believe in you Jesus but I don't believe You" is theological and

spiritual absurdity. It is more than absurdity, it is toying with ultimate tragedy—the rejection of the salvific mercy of God offered through Jesus Christ. Ponder for a moment what follows.

The Survival of Love and the Beloved

It was said that Johnny Carson was the most viewed person in the history of the world. His program, *The Tonight Show,* appeared five nights a week, fifty-two weeks a year for thirty consecutive years for an hour to an hour and a half on network television. During this entire period he had by far the highest audience rating of any program in his time slot. When Johnny Carson announced he was going to retire, much was made of it in the media. (Carson was by this time an extraordinarily rich and powerful man.) During the last two weeks of his show the greats of the entertainment world came to visit him and to publicly acclaim his talent. At the very end of the final telecast a heart-rending event occurred. After Johnny had left the stage for the last time, after all the credits for producers, lighting director, etc., had rolled by, after the music stopped, with only ten seconds of time remaining, a name was silently written on the television screen—"Rick Carson." Rick Carson was Johnny Carson's son who had died about a year earlier.

That night only seconds after the name appeared and the show went off the air, I recalled a little newspaper memorial I had come across years before written by someone obviously not in Johnny Carson's class but by someone who nevertheless was in Johnny Carson's pain. It read:

A Birthday Remembrance
to my loving son, Richard.
To those of you
who have a son,
Treasure him with care.
You will never know
what agony is
until he is
no longer there.
Until then,
Love, Ma

There is no one reading this essay who does not know the longing, the sorrow, the heartache, and the love behind Johnny Carson concluding thirty years of television by writing his deceased son's name on the screen, or behind Ma writing in a little local newspaper, *"Until Then."* The renowned rabbi, Abraham Heschel, says that, "Concern for immortality arises out of concern over what has happened to those whom we love who have gone before, what will happen to those whom we love who we leave behind." The issue of survival is not exclusively about mere personal perpetual duration. It is about the survival of love and the beloved. It is about eternal

communion with the Source of love for all who have loved, all who were loved, and all who have been created out of love. It is about Johnny Carson being able to cry out "Rick" and Ma being about to cry out "Richard" in that spirit of superabundant joy and exultation in which Mary Magdalen cried out, "Rabboni" upon seeing the Risen Jesus outside the empty tomb. The issue of survival is about the deepest hope and the greatest fear that reside at the heart of the human heart.

The Choice Between Nonviolence and Non-existence

What is it that is at stake in Christian accommodationist's justifications of homicidal violence in the face of Jesus' rejection of homicidal violence? In a word what is at stake is salvation—life eternal in its fullness for one and all. The various Churches' leaderships may believe they cannot afford to jeopardize the survival of their particular Church's power, prestige, property rights, political influence, etc., by proclaiming and by following the nonviolent Jesus of the Gospel and His nonviolent way. They may believe they cannot afford to antagonize their Christian congregations by telling them about violence what Jesus told His disciples about violence two thousand years ago. They may believe like Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor that ordinary "pew-dwellers" have enough problems without burdening them further with this culturally unacceptable and therefore difficult teaching of Jesus.

However, attitudes of this sort serve only to corrupt the morality of the Church as a whole since they encourage doubt about everything the Gospels tell us Jesus taught. The renowned Catholic biblical scholar, the late Rev. John L. McKenzie, says that, "If we cannot know from the New Testament that Jesus rejected violence, then we can know nothing of His person or message. It is the clearest of teachings." The task is to again see clearly what was once seen clearly. What a Christian or a pastor or a Church or a theologian cannot do is make his or her own weakness, fear or disobedience the criterion of truth about the person or teaching of Jesus. As one drop of arsenic can totally contaminate a glass of the finest spring water, so also, one self-servingly bizarre interpretation of Jesus' teachings can totally contaminate the credibility of the most revered interpreter. The patent moral and spiritual grotesqueness of "justified" Christian war, "justified" Christian capital punishment and "justified" Christian abortion is perniciously and relentlessly undermining the perception of the Church as a trustworthy teacher of the way of Jesus, of the way of holiness, of the way to eternal life. Because of all that is at stake, it is critical for Christians and their leaders **to diminish in no way the saving teaching of Jesus.** A return to the obvious is imperative.

The patent moral and spiritual grotesqueness of "justified" Christian war, "justified" Christian capital punishment and "justified" Christian abortion is perniciously and relentlessly undermining the perception of the Church as a trustworthy teacher of the way of Jesus, of the way of holiness, of the way to eternal life.

The desire to be rather than not to be is in us. The question is how to be? What means actually lead to life in all its fullness when the few days of one's temporal existence must be presently lived within a planetary furnace of evil and agony? Amidst the enormity of the incomprehensibility of the mystery of life and death, of time and eternity, the Risen Jesus, who is the Word of God and the very ground of being, tells us how to live today, tomorrow and forever. Most of the non-Christian world overtly and most of the Christian world covertly reject His Way as naive, utopian, unrealistic, simplistic or absurd. Be that as it may, what must be said emphatically is that Jesus understands Himself as teaching The Way of holiness, The Way to eternal life—and that this Way does not include homicidal violence whether that homicidal violence be considered by others legal or illegal, romantic or sordid, justified or unjustified. Unless Jesus' teachings are irrelevant to salvation, redemptive homicidal violence is a catastrophic illusion. Natural law Christian just homicide theory is spiritual quicksand if Jesus knows of what He speaks when He speaks of the will of God, if Jesus is who the New Testament says He is when it calls Him Logos and Lord. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s well-known reflection, "Today the choice is not between violence and nonviolence. Today the choice is between nonviolence and non-existence," is but a paraphrase of the nonviolent teaching of Jesus. Said in the words of the most eminent moral theologian in the Catholic Church in the Twentieth Century, Rev. Bernard Häring: "Nonviolence belongs to the mystery of the Redeemer and redemption. The test is whether one shares in that mystery…Christ has shown that nonviolence is strength. The effectiveness of nonviolence is ultimately the open tomb."

Natural law Christian just homicide theory is spiritual quicksand if Jesus knows of what He speaks when He speaks of the will of God, if Jesus is who the New Testament says He is when it calls Him Logos and Lord.

"Rabboni!" "Rick!" "Richard!"

How Unnatural is Natural Law Christian Just War Theory?

In the depths of his conscience man detects a law which he does not impose on himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience can, when necessary, speak to his heart more specifically: 'do this, shun that.' For man has in his heart a law written by God.

Vatican II—Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 16

In the previous essay, *Is Natural Law Christian Just War Theory Spiritual Quicksand?*, I wrote, "Step by step they [Christian Just War Theories] walk Christians through a logical maze that may or may not have any relationship to reality until the Baptized with blinding logical clarity arrive at the incontestable conclusion that they can do in good conscience what Jesus refused to do and what He taught His disciples to refuse to do." Somewhat later in the same essay I noted that, "One way the utter inconsistency between the Jesus of the New Testament and the justification of Christian participation in war is propagated and sustained is by ignorance. Christians—Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants—are not taught the truth about the realities of war by their spiritual leadership." Lest it be thought that I was being glib about the modus operandi of just war theologians or unfairly severe about the process of nurtured ignorance indulged in by Christian leadership, I was not. The late biblical scholar, Rev. John L. McKenzie, a genuine intellectual, made the point several years before his death that, "Scholars have not studied war in the way that scholars can." If scholars have been remiss in this area, Church leadership, whom Christian communities rely upon for proper moral guidance, has been grossly negligent. In Christianity, cultivated unawareness, intentionally fostered through ecclesiastical and civil structures, is the *sine qua non* of Natural Law Christian Just War Theory and its application. Let me elaborate.

The Moral Price of Making the Concrete Abstract

Almost twenty years ago anti-abortion advocates released a short film, *The Silent*

Scream, which showed the torment that the child in the womb is subjected to when an abortion is performed. Those who justify abortion cried, "Foul!" They vigorously protested that, "This is emotionalism, not truth."

The presupposition on which such a protest rests is that there is something intrinsically contradictory between emotionally based empathy and cognitive truth. Granted emotions can distort but so can logic. However, emotions also have the capacity to enhance the human being's understanding of what is true and what is false. Empathy is derived from the Greek word, "empatheia," which combines "em" (in) with "pathos" (suffering). It is vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts and attitudes of another. "Empathy," as the philosopher-saint, Edith Stein, notes, "is a way of knowing."

"The greatest sin of the age is making the concrete abstract." ...there was something evil about abstractions when they were experienced as the last word on truth, while simultaneously they were hiding the fierce suffering of humanity behind statistics and syllogisms.

In the early part of the 20th century the Russian philosopher, Nikolai Berdyaev, proclaimed, "The greatest sin of the age is making the concrete abstract." In other words, there was something evil about abstractions when they were experienced as the last word on truth, while simultaneously they were hiding the fierce suffering of humanity behind statistics and syllogisms. Howard Zinn in a superb book, *The Politics of History,* addressed this issue:

> *If one of the functions of the scholar is accurate description, then it is impossible to describe a war both unemotionally and accurately at the same time. And if the special competence of the mind is in enabling us to perceive what is outside our own limited experience, that competence is furthered, that perception sharpened, by emotion. A large dose of "emotionalism" in the description of slavery would merely begin to convey accurately to a white college student what slavery was like for the black man.*
>
> *Thus, exactly from the standpoint of what intellect is supposed to do for us–extend the boundaries of our understanding–the 'cool, rational, unemotional' approach fails....War and violence, divested of their brutality by the prosaic quality of the printed page, became tolerable to the young. Reason, to be accurate, must be supplemented by emotion...*

It is precisely at this point where those responsible for moral leadership in the various Christian Churches have failed. They have used human emotions not to disclose truth but to camouflage it. In relationship to war the Church, harkening to the call of its benefactor nation-states, has almost universally directed the emotions of the Baptized not to the concrete sufferings of the victims of war but rather to the abstract glories of nationalism, ethnocentrism, etc. A somewhat typical example of this clever emotional misdirection by Church leaders, which in the end is falsehood

masquerading as religious truth, can be found in the 1944 Lenten Pastoral of Franz Josef Rarkowski, the Catholic Military Bishop of Germany:

> *One must be clear about what this phrase means: to serve God. It would be completely wrong to interpret it as a turning away from the world. In order to serve God and to be able to do everything for God, there is certainly no need to flee from the world. Service to God is performed there, wherever one stands, wherever one has his job to do. It is a matter of seeing God's will and a God-given task in whatever burden is placed upon one and the mastering of that task. In that all of us today, on the battlefront and in the Heimat [home], do our very best in this hour of critical need in the service of our Volk [people]; that each of us serving his Vaterland [fatherland] dedicates his heart, his thoughts, his every power to the service of his Volk; that the soldier loyally and bravely follows the path set before him–therein lies the realization of the principle: "I wish to serve God."...They [the military chaplains] will distribute the Bread of Life among you, and I am certain that the power of the Lord will come over you and will give you the strength to give your best as soldiers of the German army for Führer, Volk, and Vaterland.*

Such talk, which is universally present in mainline and evangelical Christianity, as well as in just about all the other religions of the world, is Novocain for the mind and heroin for the soul. Its purpose is to undermine the faculty of empathy, to short-circuit identification with the concrete misery being perpetrated, to muffle the cries of suffering humanity. Once this level of emotional deafness has been achieved in the Church then Natural Law Christian Just War Theory becomes "self-evidently" natural, rational and Christian. The billions of acts of concrete brutality and horror executed and endured in war no longer "exist." All that "exists" are the feelings of religious patriotism and a scoreboard of abstract statistics on "hits," "kills" and "body counts." This is the sand of empathy-drained untruth on which Natural Law Christian Just War Theory is built today, as it was the sand of empathy-drained untruth on which Natural Law Christian Just Slavery Theory was built yesterday.

In relationship to war the Church, harkening to the call of its benefactor nation-states, has almost universally directed the emotions of the Baptized not to the concrete sufferings of the victims of war but rather to the abstract glories of nationalism, ethnocentrism, etc.

Allowing the Eye to See and the Ear to Hear

Suppose that bishops, ministers, priests, moral theologians and ordinary Christians of every ilk divested themselves of their empathic blinders and ear plugs. What realities would they see and hear that would lead them to reject Natural Law Christian Just War Theory as an authentic expression of "the imprint of God's providential plan on man's natural reason," as an authentic expression of Natural Law?

With blinders and ear plugs discarded, the first act to be observed and heard empathically would of necessity be the primeval act of war: the killing of one human being by another. But one could object, "Certainly in this day of mass media every adult has seen homicide and graphic simulation of homicide thousands of times. War documentaries and war movies blood red with realism abound." Fair enough, but when the blinders and ear plugs are discarded and all the instruments of comprehension which God has given humanity are employed, new and critically determinative verities about homicide would be brought to consciousness—awarenesses that the most vivid documentaries and the most realistic movies do not normally expose. Let me speak of one such awareness, one that reveals Natural Law Christian Just War Theory to be as morally bankrupt as two former Natural Law Christian moral theories: Natural Law Just Inquisition Theory and Natural Law Just Slavery Theory.

WITH BLINDERS AND EAR PLUGS DISCARDED, THE FIRST ACT TO BE OBSERVED AND HEARD EMPATHICALLY WOULD OF NECESSITY BE THE PRIMEVAL ACT OF WAR: THE KILLING OF ONE HUMAN BEING BY ANOTHER.

Is the Will to Kill Intrinsic to the Human Condition?

General S.L.A. Marshall was a U.S. Army historian during World War II. He had a team of historians and other personnel working for him. He and his group interviewed thousands of soldiers in more than four hundred infantry companies in Europe and in the Pacific. They interviewed these soldiers immediately after they had been in close combat with either German or Japanese troops. (Military personnel who could not see those whom they were called upon to kill, that is military personnel engaged in aerial, naval or artillery bombardment operations, were not part of the study.) The soldiers were asked what it was that they did in battle. The answer to this question was consistently the same whether the question was asked in the European or Pacific theatre—and it was startling. Out of every hundred men along the firing line during actual close range homicidal conflict, an average of only 15 to 20 "would take any part with their weapons." This was true whether the battle was for only a few hours or whether it extended over several days. Regardless of the duration of close combat, 80 to 85 percent of the soldiers refused to kill! But, the 80 to 85 percent who did not fire did not run or hide. In many instances they risked their lives to save others, deliver messages, etc.,—*they simply would not fire their guns at the enemy soldiers.*

This mass refusal by soldiers to kill another human being when they could actually see him, even under the immediate threat of death and even after having their consciences all but anesthetized by nationalistic and militaristic propaganda, was not exclusively an American phenomenon. The Germans and the Japanese kept very precise battle records including records of munitions expenditure. Gwynne Dyer in his book, *War,* writing on the S.L.A. Marshall report concluded that if "a higher proportion of Japanese and Germans had been willing to kill, then the volume of

fire they actually managed to produce would have been three, four or five times greater than a similar number of Americans—and it wasn't." Indeed there was ample evidence that Marshall's discovery, namely that most soldiers have a powerful inner resistance to firing their weapons in combat if they can actually see the person they are to kill, was not only applicable to all soldiers on both sides during World War II but was something that had existed throughout military history. As Lt. Col. Dave Grossman relates in his work, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society:*

...AT THE MOMENT OF DECISION, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF SOLDIERS FIND THEMSELVES UNABLE TO KILL A FELLOW HUMAN BEING...

> *There is ample supporting evidence to indicate that Marshall's observations are applicable not only to U.S. soldiers or even to the soldiers on all sides in World War II. Indeed, there are compelling data that indicate that this singular lack of enthusiasm for killing one's fellow man has existed throughout military history.*

A 1986 study by the British Defense Operational Analysis Establishment analyzed 100 Nineteenth and Twentieth Century battles in order to determine why the actual historical casualty rate was far below the reasonably expected kill-potential in these circumstances. Its conclusion was that the "unwillingness to take part [in active combat]" was "the main factor."

Secretly, quietly, at the moment of decision, the overwhelming majority of soldiers find themselves unable to kill a fellow human being if they can see him. The fact that all soldiers, before they reach the battlefield, must undergo the nationalistic and militaristic indoctrination process of military training makes the 80 to 85 percent figure a momentous moral discovery. **It reveals the presence of a God-created, natural, innate, homicide-inhibitor of such enormous power that the threat of death itself can not override it in the vast majority of human beings.** As General Marshall concludes in his book *Men Against Fire:*

> *It is therefore reasonable to believe that the average and healthy individual–the man who can endure the mental and physical stresses of combat–still has such an inner and usually unrealized resistance towards killing a fellow man that he will not of his own volition take life if it is possible to turn away from that responsibility....At this vital point he becomes a conscientious objector.*

The Natural Order that God Forbids Us to Disturb

One would think that such findings would require Christian Church leaders and moral theologians who espouse Natural Law Just War Theory to acknowledge their errors of perception and interpretation of reality and to accept Jesus' teachings of nonviolence as being utterly consistent with Natural Law, "the law placed by God in the heart of each person." St. Augustine defines Natural Law as, "the reason or the will of God who commands us to respect the natural order and forbids us to disturb it." Marshall's studies and many corroborating studies highlight clearly

what the natural order is that is to be respected—what the natural order is that God forbids us to disturb. The Marshall disclosures point directly to nonviolence being, "the eternal law implanted in beings endowed with reason and free will." It is contrary to the evidence to claim that the homicide of war is in conformity with Natural Law.

Again, St. Augustine says the Natural Law "commands us to respect the natural order." This is precisely what Jesus, the nonviolent disciples of Jesus and conscientious objectors do. This is precisely what the just warists do not do! Again, Augustine states that Natural Law "forbids us to disturb" the natural order. This is precisely what the just warists do. This is precisely what Jesus, the nonviolent disciples of Jesus and conscientious objectors do not do. How, in light of the S.L.A. Marshall research, is it possible to continue to reasonably contend that justified homicide is consistent with "the imprint of God's providential plan on man's natural reason?" Marshall's studies and the many follow-up studies on the same matter show that God in His providence has programmed an inhibitor to homicide in human beings. Those who espouse Natural Law Christian Just War Theory argue that it is natural for people to kill other people in order to defend themselves, their property, their political system, their economic system, etc. They are empirically, psychologically and spiritually wrong. The Marshall studies teach us that there is probably no human activity that is more unnatural than killing another human being.

Marshall's studies and many corroborating studies highlight clearly what the natural order is that is to be respected—what the natural order is that God forbids us to disturb. The Marshall disclosures point directly to nonviolence being, "the eternal law implanted in beings endowed with reason and free will."

Consequences of Conformity to the Just War Ethic

Anyone who kills face-to-face in war reaps a bitter harvest. William Manchester, the author, was a Marine in World War II. Writing about the moments after he first killed a Japanese soldier, he says, "I can remember whispering foolishly, 'I'm sorry,' and then just throwing up. I threw up all over myself. It was a betrayal of what I've been taught since a child." Movies and television universally communicate that a person can kill without serious negative consequences if he or she has but "justice" on his or her side—and who doesn't think they have "justice" on their side? But this is radically untrue! Manchester's experience of vomiting after the first time he killed a human being is common. Human slaughter is something so unnatural, so odious to the essential structure of a person that the body itself is traumatized by it. Cells shudder and convulse with the intuitive certainty that something horrible has occurred, that a line has been crossed that must never be crossed. Intentional homicide is not a natural act that becomes good or bad depending on circumstances. The spilling of human blood is intrinsically a patently

unnatural act, blatantly contrary to "the imprint of God's providential plan on man's natural reason." There is no way that anyone can purposely destroy a human life without destroying his or her own life. The inhibition against homicide is so forcefully woven by God into the human being that if it is overridden something terrible happens within the person. The horror of having killed a fellow human being, of having breached a primal taboo, is a horror that Just War Church leaders and Just War theologians, who deal with war only as an unemotional syllogistic abstraction, seem to be conceptually and empathically oblivious to. Hence, it is a horror about which they do not inform those in their spiritual care.

THE HORROR OF HAVING KILLED A FELLOW HUMAN BEING...IS A HORROR THAT JUST WAR CHURCH LEADERS AND JUST WAR THEOLOGIANS, WHO DEAL WITH WAR ONLY AS AN UNEMOTIONAL SYLLOGISTIC ABSTRACTION, SEEM TO BE CONCEPTUALLY AND EMPATHICALLY OBLIVIOUS TO.

After Marshall's research, the U.S. Military decided it was not getting enough "bang for its buck." It proceeded to rethink and retool its entire military training operation. (Later every major military organization on the planet followed suit, thereby implicitly acknowledging the validity of Marshall's results.) Pavlovian and Skinnerian methods of desensitization and deprogramming were introduced. The result was an increase to 55% of those who were willing to kill in close combat in the Korean War and to 90% in the Vietnam War. Lest it be thought that the God-implanted inhibition to killing humans can be subverted with impunity, consider but one fact: Approximately 56,000 American military personnel died in the Vietnam War, but more than that number of Vietnam Veterans have committed suicide since the end of that war. Even after intensified methods of deprogramming and desensitization are employed to break down the natural inhibition to kill, the psychiatric casualty rate of those who kill in face-to-face combat is staggering—and always has been.

...THOUSANDS OF VIETNAM VETERANS, WHO AFTER THE WAR TOOK THEIR LIVES BY THEIR OWN HANDS, WOULD REALLY HAVE APPRECIATED...COMING IN CONTACT WITH A BISHOP, PRIEST, MINISTER OR CHURCH THAT WOULD HAVE TOLD THEM THE TRUTH THAT LAY BEHIND THE...WARNING, "HE WHO LIVES BY THE SWORD WILL PERISH BY THE SWORD."

Now, Jesus may be, as so many Church leaders and Christian moral theologians seem to believe, an unsophisticated Galilean peasant whose moral insights are not up to the complexity of the modern world. However, I would bet that the tens upon tens of thousands of Vietnam Veterans, who after the war took their lives by their own hands, would really have appreciated, before they enlisted or were drafted, coming in contact with a bishop, priest, minister or Church that would have told them the truth that lay behind the Unsophisticated Galilean's warning,

"He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword." I bet they would have been grateful to have heard of Marshall's work and its implications. But such bishops, priests, ministers and Churches were few. So perish the Vietnam Veterans did. Their Christian religious leaders let them walk into, indeed in many instances encouraged them to walk into, a system, namely the military, whose explicit purpose it was to sabotage the program God had placed in their hearts. So without knowing what was happening to them, they were intentionally deprogramed from the way of God's Natural Law and intentionally reprogrammed into the way of justified, emotionally detached, non-empathic homicide, all the while being told by the Franz Joseph Rarkowskis of this world that they were "serving God," were following God's law by obeying orders to kill "Commie gooks." Tragically, after the fact, they learned by bitter experience, that the Rarkowskis did not know of what they were speaking, that the Rarkowskis helped defile them.

Hundreds of years before Jesus, Aesop unearthed the truth of the Natural Law's intrinsic rejection of homicide in his fable of "Jupiter and the Bee":

> *Long, long ago there was an industrious bee who had stored her combs with a bountiful harvest. One day she decided to fly up to heaven to present an offering of honey to Jupiter. The god was so delighted with the bee's gift that he promised her she should have whatever her heart desired.*
>
> *"Oh, great Jupiter, my creator and my master, I beg of thee, give thy servant a sting, so that when anyone approaches my hive to take the honey, I may kill him on the spot."*
>
> *Jupiter was surprised to hear such a bloodthirsty request from such a humble creature. He responded: "Your prayer shall be granted but not exactly in the way you wish. The sting you ask for, you shall have. When anyone comes to take away your honey and you attack him, the wound shall be fatal. However, it shall be fatal to you also, for your life shall go with your sting."*

"He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword" is a truth of the Gospel and a truth of Natural Law. However, perish does not necessarily mean that all of a sudden one will be physically annihilated. There are those who have physical life but live in such a hellish psychological world that they long for death. They have life but have no life. They have perished but they have not stopped breathing yet. Put the stinger into another and you perish! General Marshall's work tells us that the soul knows, even if it was never told or even if it was told something to the contrary, that there is no way to take another's life without taking one's own life—even if the killer is protecting her or his honey. Why won't the spiritual leaders of the mainline and evangelical Churches explain this to those who rely on them for spiritual truth?

Military Training: The Decisive Spiritual Death Blow

But, there is more. A fact of life is that if you do not first have a sword in your heart you will never have one in your hands. Military training is a well planned set of social

and psychological controls meant to corrupt the heart God implanted in the human being, the heart that is intrinsically repulsed by homicide. Military training is the unacknowledged requirement, the unspeakable immoral secret, at the center of Natural Law Christian Just War Theory. It is a system of psychological and sociological techniques whose explicit purpose it is to break down God's implanted barrier to homicide and to place a sword where God never intended a sword to be placed—in the human heart. "The history of warfare," Lt. Col. Grossman says in his book, *On Killing*, "can be seen as a history of increasingly more effective mechanisms for enabling and conditioning men to overcome their innate resistance to killing their fellow human beings." Military training gives men and women what God does not want them to have—a heart for homicide. Military training is the debased and debasing conditioning without which Natural Law Just War Theory cannot operate.

MILITARY TRAINING GIVES MEN AND WOMEN WHAT GOD DOES NOT WANT THEM TO HAVE—A HEART FOR HOMICIDE. MILITARY TRAINING IS THE DEBASED AND DEBASING CONDITIONING WITHOUT WHICH NATURAL LAW JUST WAR THEORY CANNOT OPERATE.

In the interest of invisible truth, time should be taken to point out that the divinely implanted curb against human bloodletting is not only violated by the act of homicide and by military training, but is also undermined by anything else that fosters the desire or willingness to engage in homicidal violence. Therefore movies and literature that glorify homicidal heroism, homicide simulating Nintendo games, and toys explicitly made so that children can play homicide are also contrary to Natural Law since they are "killing-enabling" agents whose use weakens innate checks against destroying humans. To those who say there is no evidence of this and to those who are so brazen as to maintain that playing homicide prevents homicide, I say only this: Then give your children or grandchildren movies that glorify incest, Nintendo-like games that simulate incest, and toys that encourage them to play make-believe incest. Case closed! Movies, games, etc., that exalt homicidal violence are as contrary to Natural Law as games, movies, etc., that extol incest—and you don't toy with the unnatural. In fairness to the military it should be said that by the time it gets its hands on a recruit, his or her parents, Church, and culture have already done a great deal to erase the imprint of God's providential design on his or her heart. They have softened-up the child so

...BY THE TIME IT GETS ITS HANDS ON A RECRUIT, HIS OR HER PARENTS, CHURCH, AND CULTURE HAVE ALREADY DONE A GREAT DEAL TO ERASE THE IMPRINT OF GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL DESIGN ON HIS OR HER HEART. THEY HAVE SOFTENED-UP THE CHILD SO THAT THE MILITARY MAY EFFECTIVELY, EFFICIENTLY AND ECONOMICALLY ADMINISTER THE DECISIVE SPIRITUAL DEATH BLOW: THE INCULCATION OF A WILLINGNESS AND READINESS TO ACTUALLY DO THE UNNATURAL AND BREACH THE DIVINELY INSTILLED CONSTRAINTS AGAINST HUMAN BLOODLETTING.

that the military may effectively, efficiently and economically administer the decisive spiritual death blow: the inculcation of a willingness and readiness to actually do the unnatural and breach the Divinely instilled constraints against human bloodletting.

The unconscionable silence of bishops, priests and ministers on the anti-Gospel and anti-Natural Law dimensions of military training and homicide playing is so pervasive that it has become as normal and as invisible as the air. A rare bishop or priest or minister might say a negative word or two about his or her country's current war or military budget, but those who speak Gospel truth and the truth of Natural Law about the realities of military training and juvenile homicide playing are almost non-existent. The entire multi-million dollar, three years in the making, 1983 pastoral letter on war and peace by the American Catholic bishops speaks not a word to these subjects. Yet, without the sword in the heart, the sword in the hand will never be. The source of the difference between the open hand of hospitality and the closed fist of hostility is not found in the five fingers, but in the mind. Military training and its preconditioning program of juvenile homicide playing are the *sine qua non* of war. The more effective such activity is at unraveling the primal Natural Law prohibition against homicide that God placed in the human heart, the more efficient the military will be at killing, and hence, the more certain it will be of a glorious victory for the home team homicide gang. After all, it is the side that kills and maims most efficiently that wins the war.

The Premeditated Perversion of the Human Heart

So from this day forward, never forget that before the battle-axe splits the skull, that before the flame-thrower burns off the face, that before the machine gun tears the bowels apart and splatters the brains—the battle-axe, the flame-thrower, the machine gun have to be unnaturally placed in the human heart. People are not born with a will to kill other people. A battle-ax, a flame-thrower, a machine gun are no more lethal than a broomstick without the will to kill, without the sword in the heart. But, with the will to kill a broomstick can become lethal. Military training is the final and decisive step in the process of placing a sword in the heart, of creating a heart for homicide, of overriding the Natural Law aversion to killing which God places in the human heart. It is an intentional effort to replace the heart that God put into human beings with its opposite. Military training is the premeditated perversion of the eternal law placed by God in each person—or at least it is an attempt to pervert that law. Without military training, without the intentional corrupting of the human heart of the younger generation by the older generation, war is impossible. The Marshall studies are overwhelming evidence that military train-

Military training is the final and decisive step in the process of placing a sword in the heart, of creating a heart for homicide, of overriding the Natural Law aversion to killing which God places in the human heart.

ing represents an obstinate refusal "to respect the natural order," represents an idolatrous effort to disturb what God "forbids us to disturb." Of course an honest reading and application of Jesus' teachings in the New Testament would incontestably arrive at the same conclusion.

The Pandemic of Violence and the Just War Placebo

In a world where the pandemic of justified homicide is treated with theological placeboes, let us try to fathom, by use of an analogy, the gravity, the unnaturalness and the impossibility of trying to cure or arrest this disease by prescribing that particular placebo known as the Natural Law Christian Just War Theory. We have all seen large propellers on an airplane rotating so rapidly that the human eye cannot detect that they are present. If the revolutions per minute are high enough, the circumference of the area through which the propellers are passing, thousands of times per minute, appears empty and transparently clear. This is, however, a deadly illusion. If one walks into this area, one is ripped to pieces. A legion of people could argue that there is no reason to worry since it is perfectly clear that there is nothing present that could cause injury. However, the concrete reality of individuals being torn apart, one after another, would invalidate all abstract thinking on the subject.

But, what level of self-deception, what level of callous self-righteous folly, what level of atrophied empathy to human misery would it demand in order *to continue* to insist upon the truth of one's abstract conclusion, that "there is nothing present," when person after person walks into the area and is sliced to pieces? This is precisely what Church leaders do when they continue to ignore the fact that there is something blatantly contrary to Natural Law that is required by so-called Natural Law Christian Just War Theory. To actually participate in a war, whether it is named just or unjust, one has to destroy Divinely implanted constraints that are at least as innately powerful as the Divinely implanted constraints against incest. However, no one and no society overrides inherent Natural Law blocks against incest or human bloodletting without being torn to shreds by the invisible propeller of evil that these constraints are meant to protect people from. The theological sugar pill of Natural Law Christian Just War Theory is powerless to combat or to heal the consequences of going where God forbids us to go. If anything, its illusionary spiritual assurances promote the very pandemic it claims to be trying to prevent and cure.

The theological sugar pill of Natural Law Christian Just War Theory is powerless to combat or to heal the consequences of going where God forbids us to go. If anything, its illusionary spiritual assurances promote the very pandemic it claims to be trying to prevent and cure.

Susan O'Neill is a registered nurse and a Vietnam Veteran. Writing in the November, 2002, issue of the *American Journal of Nursing,* she vividly portrays, in language

that the simplest soul can comprehend—the physical and metaphysical unnaturalness of war:

I am reminded lately of the old 1960's slogan of Another Mother for Peace, "War is not healthy for children or other living things." That mantra from a past generation still, to this day, is a no-brainer....

Guns, bombs, landmines, chemical and biological weapons—well, duh, these are obviously unhealthy. I shoot; he dies. We bomb; they go up in smoke. The actual battle fields create casualties; but even after the guns and bombs are quiet there is more suffering. He planted a landmine; 20 years later you step on it and blow up. We defoliated; 10 years later he dies of cancer, and she has a stillborn baby. Clearly unhealthy. And still more: she works in a combat hospital operating room in 1970; now she's awaiting liver transplantation because of hepatitis C.

Not only does war wound our body, it wounds our mind. Let us not forget posttraumatic stress disorder. Definitely unhealthy. Last November, in Washington, DC, I attended a dance for Vietnam veterans and found myself in a huge convention center full of ghosts. Men and women gathered around and told me of nightmares, alcoholism, drug addiction, failed relationships, unresolved rage and guilt, all born in that surreal time spent more than 30 years ago in a combat zone.

"The ultimate deception of evil," says the renowned Jewish theologian, Martin Buber, "is that it leads people to believe that they can control it once they have chosen it." Nowhere is this more true than when a person and by extension when a society chooses homicide. Marshall's studies make visible a powerful restraint-mechanism that communicates to the individual, even under crisis conditions, the warning, "Don't inflict death." Jesus explicitly places an equally chilling caveat before humanity: "Put up your sword, for the one who lives by the sword will perish by the sword." The artistic mind of Aesop unmasked the same truth. Both Natural Law and the Gospel raise a red flag that reads, "Don't kill." They raise it because homicide, being "contrary to the Eternal Law implanted in the human heart," always leads individuals and societies into unexpected, uncontrollable and often irreversible realms of spiritual, psychological and social contamination and defilement. In short it is an iron law of the moral universe that evil, once let loose, has its own propagating energy. Hence, as sure as a farmer must reap corn if he sows corn, the unnatural will beget the unnatural, will beget the unnatural ad nauseam—and possibly ad infinitum.

"The ultimate deception of evil," says the renowned Jewish theologian, Martin Buber, "is that it leads people to believe that they can control it once they have chosen it." Nowhere is this more true than when a person and by extension when a society chooses homicide.

The history of Christian homicidal violence, if examined empathically and studied rigorously "in the way that scholars can study" such matters, will bring to light a

plethora of savage and ruthless behaviors so antagonistic and so contrary to the life envisioned by the Gospel, that only an intrinsically distorted reality could have produced them. Participation in that perverted and perverting reality is what Natural Law Christian Just War Theory condones, spreads and tries to pass off as holy.

Violent Monotheism: Truth or Falsehood

Judaism, Christianity and Islam are monotheistic religions with moral absolutes rooted in an understanding of the nature and will of God as revealed by their founders—Moses, Jesus, Mohammed. Monotheism organically calls forth a "whole heart, whole soul, whole mind, whole strength" commitment from the creature once the nature and will of the Creator is known. In revelatory monotheism, regardless of whether God's revelation or word is spoken through Jesus, Moses, Mohammed, Joseph Smith, Zoroaster or through a designed order initiated in the first nanosecond of the "Big Bang," it is of supreme importance to be sure that the word one is attributing to God is in reality the word of the Creator of "the heavens and the earth." If an erroneous discernment is made on this point one ends up making a "whole heart, whole soul, whole mind, whole strength" commitment to unreality, falsehood, evil and idolatry. An incorrect discernment on this primal issue results in a person living his or her one and only life by the spiritual delusions of another human being.

If an erroneous discernment is made on this point [the word of the Creator] one ends up making a "whole heart, whole soul, whole mind, whole strength" commitment to unreality, falsehood, evil and idolatry.

In Mark Twain's literary classic *Huckleberry Finn,* Huck spends a great deal of time traveling down the Mississippi River with a black slave named Jim. They get to know each other quite well. Indeed, the quality of Jim's character, e.g., his kindness and generosity, impress and somewhat confuse Huck since Jim is a slave. At one moment in their travels Huck encounters a group of white men hunting escaped slaves of whom Jim is one. Since childhood it has been indelibly hammered into Huck's mind and on to his conscience by his culture that God sends any white person to hell who protects a runaway slave. What is Huck to do? He has come to know Jim as a human being rather than as a slave. However, he also has been taught what God's will is and that Huck Finn will be consigned to hell if he does not obey it. It is a terrible thing to fall for a word of God that is not the word of God.

The God of Jesus, the God Jesus reveals, the one and only true God, is not a God who will lead people in victories of homicidal violence over historical enemies.* The true God that Moses and that Mohammed reveal is a God who will lead people in victories of homicidal violence over historical enemies. Moses and Mohammed may not agree on all the details concerning this revelation of God, the "when" and "where" and "for whom" their God will sanction violence, but they are generally in accord with the fundamental truth, that the true God does sanction homicidal violence. So who has the correct vision of "what kind of God God is" and "what God expects of people," Jesus or Moses and Mohammed?

Cannot Serve Two Masters

Either Jesus or Mohammed and Moses are proclaiming a false revelation about God on an issue of primal importance. Either Jesus or Mohammed and Moses are teaching as the will of God what is not the will of God. The clarity of the revelations of each is beyond dispute. Equally beyond dispute is the fact that the revelations of Moses and Mohammed are contrary to the revelation of Jesus on this matter. The one says that there is nothing of God or God's will or God's way in homicidal violence, the other two say that homicidal violence can be consistent with God, his will and his way. One says homicidal violence is objectively evil. The others say it can be objectively good. Whose image of God is consistent with the Reality? Whose is erroneous on a grand scale? Whose "revelation" is revelation? Whose is just an illusionary humanly generated idea of the Deity?

However, to assert in monotheism that God is both violent and nonviolent is to declare that God is violent. It is analogous to the person who says, "I am nonviolent but..." The "but" is the place where violence is chosen and is justified. Nonviolence means there is no "but."

In a polytheistic religion there is no incongruity in asserting that one god is violent and wills homicidal violence by people against people under certain conditions, e.g., to pursue pleasure or justice, and that another god is nonviolent and wills nonviolence unto death. In polytheism, there can be gods that support or oppose incest, just as there can be gods that support or oppose violence.

However, to assert in monotheism that God is both violent and nonviolent is to declare that God is violent. It is analogous to the person who says, "I am nonviolent

*"All the Gospels agree that Jesus refused armed defense. Whether he said what Matthew quoted is really irrelevant ('Put up your sword. He who lives by the sword perishes by the sword' Mt. 26:52). It is a nice quotation, but we do not need it to establish that Jesus was totally opposed to the use of violence for any purpose and therefore I see no necessity to argue this uncontested truth." —Rev. John L. McKenzie, former president of The Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, former president of the Catholic Biblical Association. Taken from *The Civilization of Christianity*, pages 137, 138.

but…" The "but" is the place where violence is chosen and is justified. Nonviolence means there is no "but." Divine Nonviolence means that in the nature, will and way of God there is no "but." Hence, for any morality based on serving God by doing His will on earth as it is done in heaven, it makes all the difference in heaven and on earth whether there is a "but" in the reality and will of the Holy One. In monotheism there cannot be two ultimate moral Masters nor can a person serve two contradictory truths. In the moment of choice he or she must follow one and abandon the other—a person cannot serve both nonviolence and legitimatized violence.

The Martyr

The crowning service a person can perform for his or her Divine Master is to be a martyr in obedience to his or her Master's will. The English word "martyr" is derived etymologically from the Greek word "martys" which means witness. A martyr, then, is a witness unto his or her own death to the true God and His Will. A person can be a martyr on behalf of a God of violence or on behalf of a God of nonviolence. But, she or he cannot serve as a witness for both. To die while killing another human being, believing it to be God's will is martyrdom in submission to a certain kind of God. To die while refusing to kill another because homicide is contrary to the Will of God is also martyrdom, but it is martyrdom in obedience to another kind of God. By necessity one of these forms of martyrdom is objectively not martyrdom at all, but is instead, a waste of life on behalf of an idolatrous illusion. It is pseudo-martyrdom, subjective good intentions in the service of objective untruth and the unholy. The other of these forms of martyrdom is objectively truth and sanctity incarnate. Martyrdom is the triumph of life over death. Pseudo-martyrdom is the triumph of death over life. Which is one and which is the other depends on the kind of God God in fact is.

Something of towering temporal and eternal magnitude is at stake here. Those, who try to conceal this issue or muddle it or avoid it or denigrate its significance, perform no service for God or for humanity. Beside, Moses and Mohammed and Jesus are not cryptic in their revelations concerning God and His Will *vis-à-vis* homicidal violence. They are crystalline—and they radically disagree. The theological, spiritual, moral and practical importance of this incongruity cannot be overstressed because God is the heart of the matter regardless of what the matter is. An erroneous apprehension of His Reality and Will would have consequences so catastrophic that they would reverberate through the galaxies to the threshold of eternity—and possibly beyond that.

The Gospel

The Gospel proclaims that Jesus is not only a great teacher, the Prophet, the Messiah and the Suffering Servant, but is also the Lord, the Alpha and the Omega, the preexistent Word through whom all things were made, the definitive revelation of God, the self revelation of God, the incarnation of God, God! It is also Gospel truth that in all of Jesus' suffering, as in all of his life and ministry, He refuses to defend

himself or others with violence let alone use homicidal violence to punish others, pursue his cause, promote his self-interest or to seek retribution. As the previously footnoted biblical scholar, Rev. John L. McKenzie, states: "No reader of the New Testament, simple or sophisticated, can retain any doubt of Jesus' position toward violence directed to persons, individual or collective, organized or free enterprise: he rejected it totally." Why? The answer to this axial question of Christic morality is precisely stated in the words of the most renowned Catholic moral theologian of the Twentieth Century, Rev. Bernard Haring: "Jesus is nonviolent because God is nonviolent." God acts as God is: "I and the Father are one" (JN 10:30); "Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father" (JN 14:9); "Christ Jesus is the image of the invisible God" (COL 1:15; 2 COR 4:4).

IT IS ALSO GOSPEL TRUTH THAT IN ALL OF JESUS' SUFFERING, AS IN ALL OF HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY, HE REFUSES TO DEFEND HIMSELF OR OTHERS WITH VIOLENCE LET ALONE USE HOMICIDAL VIOLENCE TO PUNISH OTHERS, PURSUE HIS CAUSE, PROMOTE HIS SELF-INTEREST OR TO SEEK RETRIBUTION.

I am certain that Moses and Mohammed because of their zeal for the Holy One and His Will would have taught that God is nonviolent and therefore His ways are ways of nonviolence if they had seen God and His Will to be nonviolent. They did not! Did they not see it because it is not true or did they not see it for some other reason? This is perhaps the most critical spiritual question that humanity and all forms of monotheism must resolve. Either Jesus' revelation is drop dead wrong or Moses and Mohammed are purveyors of gross error regarding God and His will. Who is right? Who is wrong?

When

If God is the kind of God who approves the use of homicidal violence against bad people, or even against good people if the cause is thought good enough (collateral damage, human sacrifice, etc.), if God, in other words, is a violent God, then death for death, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, collateral damage for collateral damage is morally possible or required. Once it is believed God endorses homicidal violence, then the only question left for violent monotheism is, "when" He endorses it. Theologies, sophisticated and simple-minded, complementary and contradictory, abound that designate the "when."

IF GOD IS NONVIOLENT, THEN HOMICIDAL VIOLENCE IS AS ABSENT AS INCEST FROM THE MORAL WILL OF THE DIVINITY, SINCE GOD, HIS WILL AND HIS WAY ARE ABSOLUTELY ONE, ABSOLUTELY SIMPLE, ABSOLUTELY WITHOUT DIVISION.

But, if God is nonviolent, then returning death for death, collateral damage for collateral damage, is morally impossible. If God never smiles on human slaughter, if God never smites the enemy, if monotheism is nonviolent then the issue of "when" never arises and theologies of "when" need never be written—as they were never written during the first three hundred and fifty

years of Christianity. If God is as Jesus images Him, i.e., nonviolent, then homicidal violence is forbidden regardless of whether or not it is defined by human beings as legal or illegal, romantic or sordid, just or unjust, legitimate or illegitimate, necessary or unnecessary, revolutionary or establishmentarian. If God is nonviolent, then homicidal violence is as absent as incest from the moral will of the Divinity, since God, His Will and His Way are absolutely one, absolutely simple, absolutely without division.

The Enemy

Does the omniscient and omnipotent God place anyone on this planet with the right to kill another person? Can the enemy of a state, tribe, religion, economic system or person objectively be the enemy of God? Can it ever be the objective will of God to kill the enemy of a state, tribe, religion, economic system or person? For the kind of God who is violent and therefore has a moral will which contains the possibility of justified violence, the answer is "Yes." For the kind of God revealed by the nonviolent Jesus, for the nonviolent God, who communicates by word and deed a love of enemies even unto one's own death, the answer is "No." In such a Divinity the enemy of a state, religion, etc., is never the enemy of God but is always a daughter or son of Abba—a daughter or son who is to be loved as "God made flesh" reveals that she or he should be loved—now and always.

Does the omniscient and omnipotent God place anyone on this planet with the right to kill another person? ...For the kind of God revealed by the nonviolent Jesus...the answer is "No."

In the world of violent monotheism, regardless of the institutional or theological architecture it assumes, it is inevitable that one person's collateral damage will be another person's beloved daughter or son or spouse or parent or friend, that one person's freedom fighter will be another person's terrorist, that one person's military hero will be another person's mass murderer, that one person's God will be another person's fiend. In the world of nonviolent monotheism such humanly contrived divisions and linguistic delineations are literally non-realities and non-thoughts. Because the nonviolent God made visible in Jesus and with whom Jesus is one (JN 10:30; JN 14:9), i.e., Abba, "causes His sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and His rain to fall on the just and the unjust alike" (MT 5:45; LK 6:35), He can never be experienced as any human being's Nightmare nor can He be conscripted to justify the creation of nightmares for any of His sons and daughters.

In the world of violent monotheism...it is inevitable that one person's collateral damage will be another person's beloved daughter or son or spouse or parent or friend, that one person's freedom fighter will be another person's terrorist, that one person's military hero will be another person's mass murderer, that one person's God will be another person's fiend.

Worship

Do all the monotheistic religions worship the true God? Most Jews and Muslims believe that the worship of Jesus as God is objectively a serious religious error and displeasing to God. To worship Jesus as the incarnate God falls within the cardinal theological sin of Judaism, "foreign worship," and of Islam, "idolatry." "It is the formal recognition and worship as God of an entity that is in fact not God," as Rabbi David Berger states. Now, suppose a man is a monotheist but believes that God approves of or demands incest? If a Jew, Muslim and Christian were to pray with him, would they be praying with someone who believes in the same God that they do? Could a Jew, Muslim or Christian pray with this man without denying his or her own truth, faith and God? Could a Jew, Muslim or Christian bow down and worship a God who was the kind of God who justifies or requires incest? Would they be worshiping as God an entity that in fact was not God? Human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, strive to imitate the Divinity they worship—for in the imitation of the Holy One lies the Way of holiness. Is incest on this Way? Is homicidal violence on this Way? Worship of the unholy is idolatry. Imitation of the unholy is evil.

Concerning God, is the only truth that is significant in order to avoid idolatrous worship acceptance of the idea that God is One? Concerning the worship of God, is any spirit acceptable to worship in—provided only that it is the One God who is being worshipped? Jesus gives Christians concrete direction here. While not condemning all past efforts of human beings to fulfill their innate desire to worship God, He states: "But the hour will come—in fact it is here already—when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; that is the kind of worshipper the Father wants. God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth" (JN 4: 23,24). The Spirit Jesus is speaking of here is His Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Holy, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit with whom He is consubstantial. After Jesus, is not authentic worship for the Christian, worship in the Nonviolent Spirit and the Nonviolent Truth of the Nonviolent Jesus? After Jesus, can a Christian pray:

> *Destructive Daughter of Babel*
> *A blessing on the man who treats you*
> *As you have treated us,*
> *A blessing on him who takes and dashes*
> *Your babies against the rock!*
>
> PSALM 137:8,9

or after Jesus, can a Christian:

> *...slay the idolaters, wherever he finds them.*
> *Arrest them, besiege them, and*
> *lie in ambush everywhere for them.*
>
> KORAN, SURA IX:5

After Jesus, can a Christian pray against enemies? After Jesus, can a Christian pray for victories of homicidal violence over historical enemies? After Jesus, can Christians pray for justice implemented by homicidal violence? After Jesus, can a Christian pray for revenge? After Jesus, can a Christian pray for an eye for an eye, for collateral damage for collateral damage? After Jesus are such prayers by Christians a burlesque of prayer? For a believer in or for a follower of Jesus, such prayers are *non sequiturs*—are they not?

Other Divine Expectations

To avoid any confusion of mind it should be candidly stated that God expects more of people than doing violence or not doing violence. However, other expectations of God, based on the kind of God God is and His revelation, are beyond the scope of what is being addressed in this essay, namely, whether monotheism is violent or nonviolent. Judaism, Christianity and/or Islam might see mercy as the supreme attribute of the Deity. This would mean that God would expect that people created in His image and likeness would make a supreme effort at being merciful. Whether God is violent or nonviolent would be considered only to the extent that it reveals the true nature of Divine Mercy. Can Divine Mercy ever come from the barrel of a gun or can it never come from the barrel of a gun? Can or cannot the God of Mercy ever be glorified by homicidal violence? The fundamental Divine expectation here is mercy, but in order for it to be a moral good it must be ordered to the life and will of the one true God—whatever He may be, violent or nonviolent.

Institutional Christianity

Up to this moment institutional Christianity in its Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant or Evangelical manifestations has been mentioned very little. The reason is that where homicidal violence is concerned, as the non-Christian world well knows, Christianity's history is one of complacent betrayal, its theologies are dismal tracts of doublespeak and its leadership is obdurately obscurantist. It is disquieting for a Christian author to have to acknowledge that institutional Christianity is the incarnational denial of its Founder's teaching about God, God's Will and God's Way on such a momentous phenomenon as homicidal violence.

More generally the method for standing the Nonviolent God made visible in Jesus on His head can be called "The Just Homicidal Violence Theory" when it is expanded to include not simply the radical unChrist-like activities of war, but also...

Since the Fourth Century it has utilized a method to turn the nonviolent Jesus and His teachings upside down in order that the God of institutional Christianity could take His place alongside the other warrior Gods of monotheism, who approve, require or assist their faithful in homicidal victories. The method by which Christian rulership did this is called, "The Just War Theory." More generally the method for standing the Nonviolent God made visible in Jesus on His head can be called "The Just Homicidal Violence Theory" when it is expanded

to include not simply the radical un-Christ-like activities of war, but also the equally radical unChrist-like activities of capital punishment, homicidal acts in the name of personal self-interest and self-defense, violent revolution and abortion. This has meant that over the last 1700 years almost every species of violence has been religiously legitimatized in the name of the God of institutional Christianity.

This theology of God-based, justified homicide has permitted the institutional Churches of Christianity to obtain by violence and to maintain by violence vast amounts of wealth in order to worship their God and serve His interests—and possibly those of others. Today and for seventeen centuries prior to today, institutional Christianity operationally offers humanity a God who ratifies what Jesus unambiguously rejected—homicidal violence. It dares to teach what Jesus never taught by word or deed, "Justified Homicidal Violence Theories," and it teaches these even in face of the fact that Jesus explicitly commissioned His Church "to teach them to obey all that I have commanded you" (MT 28:20). Christianity over these seventeen centuries has more than matched Judaism and Islam in holy homicides, in justified homicide, in "God is with us" religious rhetoric on behalf of the home-team's homicide. The question of whether the God that institutional Christianity is supposed to be following is the God that it is following when it operates out of the ethos, ethic, theology, spirituality, energy and spirit of violent monotheism is a non-question in Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Evangelical Churches. Violent monotheism is simply the taken-for-granted truth, the unexamined conclusive presumption of these institutions. Perhaps the manner of life adopted and invested in by Rome, Constantinople, Canterbury, Geneva and all subdivisions and affiliates thereof does not permit them to ask those questions that would reveal the discordance between their violent monotheism and Jesus' nonviolent monotheism.

The question of whether the God that institutional Christianity is supposed to be following is the God that it is following when it opeates out of the ethos, ethic, theology, spirituality, energy and spirit of violent monotheism is a non-question in Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Evangelical Churches. Violent monotheism is simply the taken-for-granted truth...

Distrusting Jesus

So today, structures built by and sustained by violent monotheism are all that humanity possesses in terms of institutional monotheism. The God of the nonviolent Jesus, the God who is the nonviolent Jesus is without a structure of human association built and sustained according to His Nonviolent Design. Nonviolent monotheism remains unincarnated in the mainline and evangelical churches of Christianity. It is as if these institutions want the person of Jesus but want Him without His revolutionary truth about "what kind of God God is" and "what God expects." It is as if they desire Jesus without His God because like Jews and Muslims, they do

not believe Jesus knows what He is talking about on this matter of the relationship of Divinity to homicidal violence. Christian institutions, their leadership and membership, simply do not trust that Jesus knows God's Plan for conquering the spirit of Cain that roams through time, relentlessly seeking people and groups of people to possess and souls to devour. How Jesus can be God and not know God's Plan or how the teaching of the Source of Reality can be considered unrealistic or ineffective, I shall leave for others to explicate. But, since Christians and Christian leaders think Jesus' teachings on the rejection of homicidal violence are fatuous, fanciful, utopian, idealist, silly, impractical and an embarrassment, this effectively guarantees that Christian leaders and their followers will never attempt to implement them. This in turn assures that structures built on and sustained by nonviolent monotheism will never arise and give witness to the power and wisdom of the invisible God of whom the nonviolent Jesus Christ is the visible image (COL 1:15).

CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS, THEIR LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP, SIMPLY DO NOT TRUST THAT JESUS KNOWS GOD'S PLAN FOR CONQUERING THE SPIRIT OF CAIN THAT ROAMS THROUGH TIME, RELENTLESSLY SEEKING PEOPLE AND GROUPS OF PEOPLE TO POSSESS AND SOULS TO DEVOUR.

Hopping Christians

There is a primal truth and a foundational falsehood in conflict here. Each seeks from humanity that level of allegiance that is due to God alone. So, maybe it is time for people of all religions, and most especially for the religious aristocracy in each religious institution, to take to heart that moment on Mt. Carmel (1 KG 18:18FF) when Elijah gathers the Israelites and cries out to them: "How long do you mean to hop, first on one leg and then on the other? If Yahweh is God follow him; if Baal, follow him."

Christians, and most especially Christian leaders, please be serious spiritual people. If Jesus is wrong about God and His Way, do not follow him, follow Moses or Mohammed or some other person or philosophy that teaches a violent monotheism; but if Jesus is correct about what kind of God God is and what He expects of people, then follow Him without apology and with zeal. Be adults spiritually! If the nonviolent Jesus is mistaken about the nature of God and the will of God then he is self-evidently not who the Gospel says he is: the Christ, the Lord, the Word, etc. If, however, He is accurate in His revelation about the nature and will of God then embrace Him as your Lord, Savior and Teacher, and unreservedly affirm His Way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies as the will of the All Holy One, Abba. For the

IF JESUS IS WRONG ABOUT GOD AND HIS WAY, DO NOT FOLLOW HIM, FOLLOW MOSES OR MOHAMMED; BUT IF JESUS IS CORRECT ABOUT WHAT KIND OF GOD GOD IS AND WHAT HE EXPECTS OF PEOPLE, THEN FOLLOW HIM WITHOUT APOLOGY AND WITH ZEAL.

sake of humanity and for the sake of your own integrity stop hopping between truth and falsehood.

"X" or Not "X"

Nonviolent monotheism or violent monotheism: which is the truth about God, which is the falsehood about God? Between two meaningful propositions "X" and not "X" there is no middle ground. If one is true, the other is false. To say this should not be offensive to a rational person who believes there is only one God, regardless of his or her denominational association. Elijah does not say and could never say, "If you cannot believe in Yahweh and follow him, *at least,* believe in Baal and follow him." In the end there is no ecumenically delicate way to finesse this stark choice between violent and nonviolent monotheism, as there is no ecumenically dainty way to water-down the radicalness of the inherent disaccord in dogma between Christianity, which proclaims Jesus is God, and Judaism and Islam, which say that Jesus is not God. The plain fact is that while Christianity teaches that Jesus is to be worshipped, Judaism and Islam say that worship of him is idolatry. Should Christians deny the Divinity of Jesus and cease worshipping Him in order not to offend the religious sensibilities of Jews and Muslims? Should Jews and Muslims proclaim that Jesus is God and worship Him in order to humor the religious sensitivities of Christians? Or, should Christians, Jews and Muslims simply agree to teach that Moses and Mohammed are also God? Of course not!

Nonviolent monotheism or violent monotheism: which is the truth about God, which is the falsehood about God? Between two meaningful propositions "X" and not "X" there is no middle ground. If one is true, the other is false.

The Foundation Document of Christianity, the New Testament, clearly presents Jesus as Lord, Logos, God from all eternity through whom all things were made. The Foundation Documents of Judaism and Islam, Hebrew Scriptures and the Koran, do not present Moses or Mohammed as God. So also, these Foundation Documents do not present Moses and Mohammed as having the same understanding of God and God's will in relation to homicidal violence and enmity as does Jesus. Someone is right and someone is wrong as to whether the worship of Jesus is idolatry. Likewise, someone is right and someone is wrong as to whether God, His Will and His Way are nonviolent. To those who wish to be excessively politically correct in matters religious, it must be pointed out, that chronic evasion of the hard questions of religious consciousness is a solemn offense against truth, reason, integrity, meaning and God. As the Dalai

To those who wish to be excessively politically correct in matters religious, it must be pointed out, that chronic evasion of the hard questions of religious consciousness is a solemn offense against truth, reason, integrity, meaning and God.

Lama notes in his *Ethics for the New Millennium,* "[A]s we advance along the path of one tradition or another, we are compelled at some point to acknowledge fundamental differences." The central issue being raised in this essay is not, I repeat is NOT, institutional affiliation. The issue is truth—Divine truth and truth about the Divine, true worship and worship of the true God. It is quite possible for a Jew and Muslim to believe in and follow a nonviolent God, although to do so they would have to part company with some explicit teachings of Moses or Mohammed. Likewise, it is possible for a Christian to believe in and follow a violent warrior God, although to do so he or she would have to part company with some explicit teachings of Jesus. An individual's particular branch of religion is not the basic problematic here. What kind of God God is and what God expects of human beings *vis-à-vis* homicidal violence is the sole concern and the soul's concern: "X" or not "X".

EPILOGUE

Each of the following titles was considered for this book. None was set aside because it did not contain an important truth about Christian Just War Theory (CJWT). They are presented here at the conclusion of this work as saws—summarizing sayings that can be easily accessed. They are meant to be of assistance to the Christian trying to clear the forest of obfuscations that conceals the intellectual charlatanism and spiritual booby-traps that lie behind all Christian Just War Theories. According to one's temperament, he or she may ponder them, laugh at them, cry at them, memorize them, act on them, teach them, discuss them or pray over them. But, be assured, that it was not without due deliberation that these 28 saws, many of which possess sharp two-edged teeth, were granted the status of being the last word on the subject of Christian Just War Theory: The Logic of Deceit.

CJWT: A Theology of Smoke and Mirrors

CJWT: Christianity's Trump Card Against Jesus' Teachings

CJWT: The Well of Loopholes

CJWT: How to Justify Any War

CJWT: Dodging Truth, Ennobling Infidelity

CJWT: Dominus Flevit (The Lord Weeps)

CJWT: The Bishops Have No Clothes On

CJWT: Christianity Without Jesus

CJWT: Have Theory, Will Travel

CJWT: The Teaching Jesus Forgot to Give

CJWT: Tongue-in-Cheek Moral Theology

CJWT: Who Needs It? Who Uses It? Who Cares?

CJWT: A Primer for Heavenly Homicide

CJWT: Theology With a Wink

CJWT: A Smokescreen for Agnosticism

CJWT: Jesus Reduced to Poster Boy

CJWT: Bamboozling the Flock

CJWT: Wolf Ethics in Sheepskins

CJWT: Keeping the Body of Christ Off the Cross

CJWT: Christic Truth or Anti-Christic Falsehood

CJWT: An Illusion Within an Illusion Wrapped in an Illusion

CJWT: A Sly Theology

CJWT: Gobblygook, Bunkum and Flapdoodle Canonized

CJWT: The Three-Dollar Bill of Christian Moral Theology

CJWT: Moral Chameleonism

CJWT: Obeying Augustine Rather Than His Boss

CJWT: Reality Disdained

CJWT: Martyrdom Abandoned

BIOGRAPHY

(Rev.) Emmanuel Charles McCarthy

Emmanuel Charles McCarthy is a priest of the Eastern Rite (Byzantine) of the Catholic Church. He is presently Acting Rector of St. Gregory the Theologian Byzantine Melkite Catholic Seminary in Roslindale, Massachusetts. Formerly a lawyer and a university educator, he is the founder and the original director of The Program for the Study and Practice of Nonviolent Conflict Resolution at the University of Notre Dame. He is also co-founder of PAX Christi—USA. He is married and he and his wife, Mary, who holds a Ph.D. from Boston College, have thirteen children. For over thirty-five years his primary vocation has been to call the Churches—Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Evangelical—back to accepting and to following the Nonviolent Jesus of the Gospels and His Way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies. Over the decades he has directed retreats and conferences throughout the world and has written prolifically and prophetically on this unequaled betrayal of Jesus and of humanity by the Churches. He has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his life's work on behalf of genuine peace. His audio-video retreat on Gospel nonviolence, *Behold the Lamb,* is generally considered to be the most spiritually profound presentation of this matter available.