

# A Christian Response to Terrorism

## Violent Monotheism — Truth or Falsehood?

by Rev. Emmanuel Charles McCarthy

**T**he 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. Jews and Moslems believe their respective understanding of God is the true understanding of God based on His revelation to them. They 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 in accord on the fundamental truth, 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?

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. As there can be in polytheism gods that support or oppose incest, 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 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 either



follow the one and abandon the other or abandon the one and follow the other. A person cannot serve both nonviolence and legitimized 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 "martyr" 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 beyond the galaxies to the threshold of eternity - and possibly pass 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 pre-existent 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. 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."

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 didn't! 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

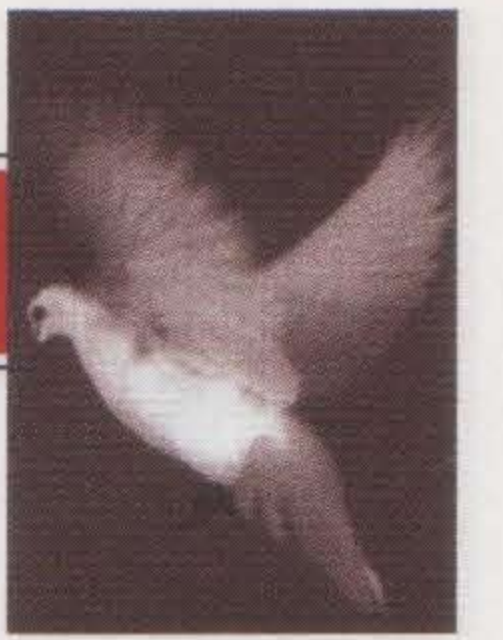
If God is the kind of God who approves the use of homicidal violence against bad people, or even against good people if the cause is thought good enough (collateral damage, human sacrifice, etc.), if God, in other words, is a violent God, then death for death, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, collateral 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."

But, if God is what Jesus is, i.e. nonviolent, and if God's will is what Jesus teaches, i.e. a Way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies, 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, as Jesus 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 one.

### 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, which daughter or son is to be loved as "God made flesh" reveals that she or he should be loved in time and space.

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.

### **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 worshipping 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 separating Himself from or 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 worshiper 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 the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Holy, the Holy Spirit. But, to discern between the spirit of the Holy and the spirit of the unholy requires Jesus because He is the truth about the Holy, since He is the self-revelation of God, the incarnation of

*Can divine mercy ever come from the barrel of a gun? Can the God of Mercy ever be glorified by homicidal violence?*





the Holy. After Jesus, is not authentic worship for the Christian, worship in the Spirit and the 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*

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 a Christian pray for revenge? After Jesus, can a Christian pray for an eye for an eye, for collateral damage for collateral damage? For a Christian are such prayers impotent, blasphemous or both? For a believer in or for a follower of Jesus are such prayers even possible?

### 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 paper, 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

# Take the Cain

*A machine gun is no more lethal than a broomstick without the will to kill. But, with the will to kill*

The spirit of Christmas is above all the spirit of peace. It is not the spirit of war. It is the spirit of joy and meekness, not the spirit of revenge and violence. Gentle holiness and good will toward all people are in the air that the soul breathes at Christmas-time. Indeed, on Christmas Day in 1914 and 1915 on the Western Front of World War I, testimony is given on behalf of the truth and reality of this peace which the newborn Christ brings to humanity, when German, French and British soldiers spontaneously arise unarmed from their trenches upon hearing "Silent Night" sung. They embrace each other, exchange little gifts and literally have to be threatened with death by their military superiors before they will return to their weapons. So it is clear, the Christmas decorations, lights, trees, presents and music all come from and speak to that ineradicable universal human longing for peace on earth - a longing that is also shared of God.

Yet, regularly the top-selling toys each Christmas are toys that seduce children into playing homicide. It is reasonable to assume that this year will be commercially no different from prior years. Corporations, that could not care less about the truth, love, holiness and peace of this Christian feast day, will market old and new lines of "Let's play homicide toys." It is also reasonable to assume that they will turn a handsome profit because Christian parents and children will again be manipulated by the pagan con artists of Hollywood and Madison Avenue to invest in what Jesus rejected: the spirit of Cain.

What this means is that on Christmas morning in front of the manger of the Prince of Peace, millions of little Christian children will be living in the murderous, hate-filled spirit of enmity into which G.I.Joes, toy machine guns, virtual reality homicide games, etc., entice them. To play homicide one must put on a homicidal mind. To give a child a homicide toy is to lure him or her into putting on a killer consciousness where conflict is self-righteously resolved by the total destruction and humiliation of other human beings. Indeed, to give a child a homicide toy is to nurture him or her into enjoying the subtle but powerful pleasures that flows from ruining and humiliating those with whom one disagrees. To give such a toy on the day set aside to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace is spiritually tragic - notwithstanding how normal such gifts have become. The normal, after all, can be a camouflage for the bad and an incubator for pestilence.

To those who say, "Homicide toys are educationally and morally neutral," to those who say, "These toys allow a child to vicariously experience a homicidal fantasy world and thereby reduce the possibility of the child participating in such activity outside the mind," to those who mouth this psycho-babble drivel, I say, "Horsefeathers!" For a toy to be used, that toy's logic, spirit, emotions and reality must be accepted and entered into. The psychological state of a child catching a baseball is utterly distinct from the psychological state of a child pretending he or she is killing a person. I ask this: If toys are morally neutral and if children are not damaged by presenting them with toys that coax them into homicidal fantasies, then why not give children toys that rouse lustful and pornographic fantasies? We all know what the truth is in this matter, regardless of how many in-house psychologists and educationists the toy companies drag out in order to justify the perversion for profit of a Christian holyday.

A person becomes what he or she thinks and desires. A child's thoughts and desires are derived largely from the environment, human and non-human, with which he or she interacts. As the song goes from the musical, "South Pacific":



# out of Christmas

*a broomstick can be lethal. From where does this will to kill a fellow human being ultimately come?*

*You've got to be taught before  
it's too late,  
Before you are six or seven or eight,  
To hate all the people your  
relatives hate.  
You've got to be carefully taught.*

Homicide toys are a very important teaching tool in the hate-enmity-revenge curriculum. They whet the appetite for relishing the joys of total domination and destruction. Unfortunately they teach nothing about the desolation of destruction. This is because by their nature they sabotage and corrode the God-given faculty of empathy, a faculty without which a Christ-like life cannot be lived.

I would ask therefore, that Christian parents this Christmas refrain from giving their children those toys that will motivate the little ones to enter into and enjoy the cruel and sadistic psychological and emotional worlds of the spirit of homicide. I ask Christian parents to be honest with themselves for the sake of their children's temporal and eternal welfare. John Paul II speaking to the young people of the world pleaded:

*On my knees, I beg you to turn away from the paths of violence and return to the ways of peace. I say to you with all the love I have for you, with all the trust I have in young people, do not listen to voices which speak the language of hatred, revenge, retaliation. Do not follow any leaders who train you in the way of inflicting death.*

I ask Christian parents not to allow themselves to become the unwitting accomplices of those of whom the Pope warns. Please, Christian parents, give your children only what Jesus would give them on His birthday: presents that will communicate His loving presence. Stop the subversion of this Day, when Christians celebrate the Birth of the "God of Peace" (Rm 16:20; 1 Th 5:23), by those whose only concern is to manipulate your children in order to make a buck, regardless of what damage it does to your children or to humanity. Be serious Christian adults - disarm Christmas! Be serious Christian parents - take Cain out of Christmas! I repeat, "Take Cain out of Christmas!" I repeat again and again, if necessary, "Take Cain out of Christmas" because your children are "not to be like Cain, who belonged to the Evil One." (1 Jn. 3:12)



*To give a child a homicide toy is to lure him into a world of destruction.*

*Emmanuel Charles McCarthy*

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. 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 along side 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 unChrist-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. (For a critique of these theories by this author see Jesus Journals # 81 and #82.) This has meant that over the last 1700 years almost every species of violence has been religiously legitimized 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 interest - 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. Today, as yesterday for seventeen hundred years, institutional Christianity



teaches 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 at least matched Judaism and Islam in Holy Homicides. 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 violent monotheism and Jesus’ nonviolent monotheism.

### **Distrusting Jesus**

So today all that humanity possesses in terms of institutional monotheism is structures built by and sustained by violent 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 I shall leave for others to explicate. But, since Christians and Christian leaders think Jesus’ teachings on the rejection of homicidal violence are unrealistic, fatuous, fanciful, utopian, idealist, silly, impractical and an embarrassment, this effectively guarantees

*Can the enemy  
of a state,  
tribe, religion,  
economic system  
or person be the  
enemy of God?*

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)

### **Hopping Christians**

There is a primeval Himalayan truth and a titanic 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 Christians, and most especially for the religious aristocracy in all the Churches, to take to heart that moment on Mt. Carmel (1 Kg 18:18ff) when Elijah gathered the Israelites and cried 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

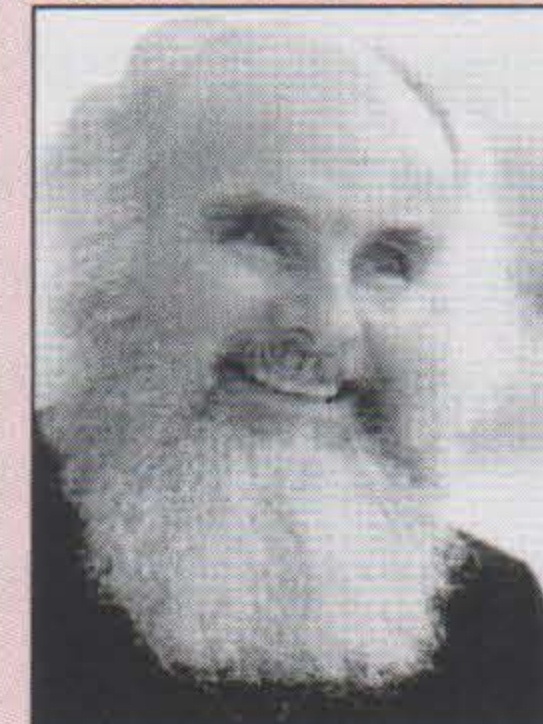
Baal, follow him.”

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; 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 sake of humanity and for the sake of your own integrity stop hopping between truth and falsehood. Stop contorting the image of Jesus in order to create a god who suits your self-interest. Cost analysis is not a sound methodology for encountering the truth about God through Jesus. Nonviolent monotheism or violent monotheism: which is the truth about God, which is the falsehood about God? Which is Divine revelation? There is only One God.

### **A Witness**

Finally, as a human being deeply interested in the eternal, as well as the temporal welfare of each person and of all humanity — past, present and future — I find that the gravity of this problem makes it imperative that I plainly state my position. So, I shall: Jesus is right on this issue. Moses and Mohammed are wrong. ■

REV. EMMANUEL CHARLES McCARTHY,



is a Melkite Catholic priest of the Eastern-rite who is presently the Acting Rector of St. Gregory the Theologian Melkite Seminary in Brookline, MA. He is the father of 13 children.