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JESUS ON NON VIOLENCE AND VIOLENT RESPONSE TO CONFLICT SITUATION

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ABSTRACT

Violent stories are often sale outs on local news outlets, while many locals longs to hear it. However, experiencing violence increases our fears and becoming a victim results heightens our mistrust of others. This phenomenon has lead many philosophers to speculate on how to reaction and manage conflict. Some answers we seek for on how to respond to violence are grounded in the praxis of Jesus as depicted in different historical books. There is, however, a tension in the account of Matthew, between Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount and the violent endings of some of the parables, some of His actions and speeches. This paper seeks to expose Jesus non violence and violent response to conflict situations.

Keywords: Jesus, Conflict Resolution, Violence, Non-violence.

1. INTRODUCTION

A question was posed by the moderator at an early Republican presidential debate in 1999: "Who is your favorite Social political philosopher?" George W. Bush surprised, if not stunned, his fellow candidates when he tersely declared, "Jesus Christ, because he changed my life" (Groothuis, 1). Some persons might say Bush was uncritical. Although he gave a religious or devotional justification for his choice of Jesus as favorite philosopher instead of stipulating just what it was about Jesus as a philosopher that he valued above other philosophers? There's no reason to doubt his sincerity; nevertheless, he didn't speak to the question. But should Bush's answer taken on its own terms? Was it, as the media generally took for granted, frankly absurd, embarrassing, ignorant? Or was Jesus in fact—whatever else he may have been—a bona fide philosopher? If the answer is yes, several other engaging questions emerge: What kind of philosopher was he? What did he believe and why? How does his philosophy relate to that of other philosophers? Does his philosophizing have anything to contribute to contemporary philosophical debates? Further, who is a philosopher anyway?

Most reference books in philosophy suggest by omission that Jesus was not a philosopher. For example, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967), long a standard reference work, has no entry under "Jesus" or "Christ." The next and well-respected *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1998) has no entry for "Jesus" or "Christ" but includes one on "Buddha." So what is the essential condition for being a philosopher? I take it to be a strong and lived-out inclination to pursue truth about philosophical matters through the rigorous use of human reasoning. By "philosophical matters" I mean the enduring questions of life's meaning, purpose, and value as they relate to all the major divisions of philosophy (primarily

epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics). Many Jesus teaching falls into these categories so one would wonder why he could not qualify as a philosopher. Many of Jesus teaching tries to address one of the major problem we face in our society; Conflict.

2. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict is a situation between at least two interdependent parties that is characterized by perceived differences and that the parties evaluate as negative (Moss, 64). This often led to negative emotional states and behaviors intended to triumph. Conflict is an unavoidable and all-enveloping element in our society and in the world. Conflicts may lead to destruction and even death; conflicts may also result in improved enhanced relationships, effectiveness, and further goal attainment. Undeniably, in human terms conflict is one of the “engines of evolution” that allows us to progress, learn, and grow. Our objective is not to attempt to do away with conflict but rather to dexterously manage conflict to further its positive potential. A conflict state exists when there are: at least two persons or factions involved who are interdependent, who seemingly hold incompatible outcomes or beliefs, and at least one of the parties recognize the incompatibility, who are experiencing strong emotions and perceives this to be problematic (Moss, 64). In conflict parties identify themselves to have mismatched outcomes. The word outcome in this situation refers to what a person wants: their preferred solution or position. Underlying these positions are interests, the reasons why a person wants to attain a precise outcome in the first place. Interests are person’s perceptions and feelings about what is attractive or useful. Interests are essential to a person’s behavior and are entrenched in human beliefs and need (Katz, 9).

3. JESUS THE PHILOSOPHER

Was Jesus a philosopher? Many scholars are confident he was just a healer, religious preacher and was seen as a miracle worker. Obviously, one may speak to life's purpose, meaning, and value in a non-philosophical way - by merely issuing assertions or simply declaring divine judgments with no further discussion. (Some wrongly think this was Jesus' only mode of teaching). Garrett J. DeWeese quoting Michael Martin alleges that the Jesus of the Gospel accounts "does not exemplify important intellectual virtues, both his words and his actions seem to indicate that he does not value reason and learning" (24). This is because according to him, Jesus based "his entire ministry on faith" (24). Martin interprets Jesus' statement about the need to become like children to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:3) as praising uncritical belief. A hint at William Hasker’s use of the term “philosophy” emerges from his following claim: “It is clear that neither Jesus nor Paul performed the sorts of activities characteristic of philosophers, then or now. They did not give public lectures on philosophical topics, nor did they accept pupils for instruction in philosophy, or compose treatises on philosophical subjects, why should we call them philosophers?” (10). It appears, then, that Hasker allows the relevant use of “philosophy” to be determined by the profession of philosophy, specifically by “the sorts of activities characteristic of [professional] philosophers.” Professional philosophy, as a practice with various distinctive activities, thus seems to be his standard for what is to count as “philosophy.” Perhaps it is not surprising when a professional philosopher invokes professional philosophy as the standard for what philosophy and philosophers are. Even so, a problem of conceptual circularity threatens, because a notion of “philosophy” is included in a notion of “activities characteristic of [professional] philosophers,” given the included notion of “philosophers.” Paul Tillich identified an influential approach to the nature of philosophy, as follows:

“Philosophy is the attempt to answer the most general questions about the nature of reality and human existence. Most general are those questions which do not ask about the nature of a specific sphere of reality (as the physical or the historical realms) but about the nature of reality, which is effective in all realms” (Tillich, 90).

This familiar approach captures the truth that philosophy pursues answers to general questions. If we consider the etymology of the term “philosophy,” we may propose that as a *practice*, philosophy is the love and pursuit of *wisdom* with a certain breadth. Correspondingly, we may propose that as intellectual *content*, philosophy is what qualifies as a suitable intellectual product of such a practice aiming at wisdom with a certain breadth. It should be noted that a philosophical approach, however, explores the logic or rationale of various claims about reality; it sniffs out intellectual presuppositions and implications; it ponders possibilities and weighs their rational credibility. The work of a philosopher need not include philosophical system-building (Aristotle or Aquinas), nor need it exclude religious authority or even divine inspiration so long as this perspective does not preclude rational argumentation. Kreeft observes that being a philosopher

requires a certain orientation to knowledge, a willingness to argue and debate logically, and to do so with some proficiency. It is very evident that most of Jesus talks centered upon philosophical issues (3). If Kreft is correct then Jesus was a philosopher. But his philosophy was more substantive than just mere argumentation.

On this account, was Jesus a philosopher? Philosopher Dallas Willard, who makes much of Jesus' brilliance, argues that a philosophical mind requires not only certain intellectual skills but also certain character commitments regarding the significance the value of truth and of logic and in one's life. In his words he claimed that;

Jesus' aim in utilizing logic is not to win battles, but to achieve understanding or insight in his hearers...He presents matters in such a way that those who wish to know can find their way to, can come to, the appropriate conclusion as something they have discovered - whether or not it is something they particularly care for (Dallas, 607).

A thoughtful person must choose to esteem logic and argument through focused concentration, reasoned dialogue, and a willingness to follow the truth wherever it may lead. This cognitive orientation places demands on the moral life - demands that Jesus accepted wholeheartedly. Willard deems Jesus a philosopher by these standards. John Stott observes that Jesus was a "controversialist" (DeWeese, 23). Jesus did not countenance any and every view on important subjects but instead engaged in extensive disputes, some quite heated, mostly with the Jewish intellectual leaders of his day. He was not afraid to cut against the grain of popular opinion if he deemed it to be wrong. He spoke often and passionately about the value of truth and the dangers of error, and he gave logical arguments to support truth and oppose error. This all sounds rather philosophical. It is regular to hear Jesus compared with Socrates because they were both killed for standing up for their beliefs. But though some have labeled philosophy as "learning to die well," it is not his death that makes him a philosopher, but his life, like Socrates, he moved about questioning and people -whether they believed it or not, combating and criticizing popular attitudes. In doing so, Jesus often use the scriptural tradition (we cannot refute that he was religious), but he also use reason in doing so— likewise philosophical argument is in much of his teaching, specifically when he is in conversation (Hattersley, 52). In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, nevertheless, most of his instruction takes the form of parables, which stimuli to deeper thought, likewise philosophical speculations.

4. JESUS CHRIST SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

So what is Jesus's philosophy? Well, if we're bracketing off theological issues of salvation, and politely declining Kreeft's suggestion that Jesus is himself the true epistemology and the true metaphysics (47) we are left with moral philosophy. Jesus' moral teaching is depicted in the Gospels using numerous different methods. He sets moral standards on particular issues, either in a general dialogue as in the Sermon on the Mount, or in a precise dialogue in a set situation. He also challenged established norms and attitudes by contention with the traditional interpreters of the Law, just like the Pharisees. Jesus Christ has a reputation as a moral reformer. The reformed one of the most moral societies of his day by attacking the morality of its most moral members, and by demonstrating a genuinely credible superior morality in himself. The moral leaders, the ones everyone looked up to, were the Pharisees. They had their moral and ceremonial rules down cold. They were generally good rules, even though overly structured and strict; and as even Jesus acknowledged, they followed their law with admirable consistency. And these were the very ones upon whom Jesus pronounced multiple "woes" for their deep moral failures (Matthew 23). Because the Pharisees' ethics were a put-on, a show, while their hearts within were dark. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Jesus said, "For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). For Jesus it was not enough to act good; one must be good. I marvel at his moral clarity. Jesus frequently spoke about his coming death. He talked of himself as 'the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep,' and so on. Long before it happened, Jesus interpreted his coming death as a sacrifice for the sins of all people. This goes much further than the words of a teacher, passing on instruction about how we should live. Jesus wasn't merely telling us that we should 'put others first.' He was pointing to his death as a crucial moment in the history of the world – something he had actively come for. The manner of his death points to Jesus as one who saw his existence on earth primarily as an event, rather than being for the purpose of giving moral instruction.

Most importantly, he steps outside the prescriptive nature of legal detail to establish universal principles based on love that would be valid for all times (Seitz, 40). Matthew's Gospel collects many of Jesus' moral dictums all together in one place (Mtt.5-7) and presents Jesus social philosophy in what is known as the Sermon on the Mount, paralleling the giving of the Judaic Law on Sinai. What is important is the way that Jesus states that he has not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it. He discovered himself with specific laws and then developed them in a original, new way which goes beyond their original setting. The issues Jesus addresses and expands concern murder, adultery, divorce, oath taking, revenge, love of neighbor, the responsibility to give alms, the attitude to money and to judging others. It is summarized in the Golden Rule 'do unto others as you would like them to do to you' (Wattles, 159). In Luke 4, Luke gave the description of Jesus reading from Isaiah 61:1-2. It explained Jesus mission through the Isaiah passage in Luke 4: 16-19:

- announce the good news to the poor
- bind up the brokenhearted
- declare the freedom for the captives
- liberate from darkness the prisoners
- console all who mourn

This was the summary of what the life of Jesus Christ will be. Jesus' public ministry was filled with examples of his concern for all people, especially the marginalized in society (sociologically and economically) (Blaikie, 36). He cared about the tax collectors, the lepers, the Samaritan woman, the children and the blind beggar.

5. JESUS CHRIST NON – VIOLENCE PHILOSOPHY

Those who believe Jesus opposes judgment and violence embrace a number of passages in which Jesus demonstrates non-judgmental acceptance, compassion, and non-violence in both his teaching and example. They emphasize Jesus' statements that we 'love our neighbor'; forgive others, and his specifically nonviolent instructions on how believers are to interact with oppressors (Templeton, 19). They call Jesus' own example into play as he associates with 'sinners and tax collectors' and shows compassion for marginalized people—including adulterers and prostitutes—who do not live up to the holiness standards of the religious leaders of the day. There are several references to violence in Matthew's account, particularly that directed toward Jesus. When Jesus tells to his disciples about their mission and the violence they will encounter as a consequence of being his followers, he advise them to flee from persecution to another town (porter, 227). On the Sermon on the Mount Jesus spoke of three other doable nonviolent responses to persecution and violence. First, he asked disciples to rejoice over maltreatment: "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (5:11-12). Jesus is not asking his disciples to seek out persecution, but rather when it comes as a result of advocating for most oppressed, they should rejoice knowing they are being true to God's will as Jesus and the prophets had done before them. In the prayer that Jesus teaches his disciples is a supplication for deliverance from evil: "And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one" (6:13). In Matthew 5:38-48 Jesus gives the most elaborate of his teachings on how to respond to violence with non-retaliation, nonviolent confrontation, love of enemies, and prayer for persecutors. This teaching is in the section of the Sermon on the Mount that begins at 5:21, in which Jesus' interpretation of Torah is set forth in a series of six antithetical statements. Jesus has said that he has come not to abolish but to fulfill the Law, and he admonishes his disciples that their righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:17-20). Matthew 5:38-42 and Matthew 5:43-48 are the fifth and sixth in the sequence, with 5:48 explaining the whole section. In each occasion Jesus declares a former understanding of the Law insufficiency as his version places more rigorous demands on his followers. The fifth unit (Matthew 5:38-42) is about the law of retaliation: "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Leviticus 24:20). Based on the law of equal reciprocity, the objective of this law was to put confines on retribution and to hold back escalating cycles of vengeance. The reply to an act of violence could not go beyond the scope of the original offense. Jesus reply with, "but I say to you, do not resist [i.e., retaliate against] an evildoer" (5:39). Thus, Jesus is not telling his disciples to ignore or submit to evildoer; relatively, he advised them to respond in non-violence way (porter, 226). Jesus gave four instances (verses 39b-42) of how one can concretely do this. In the first three illustrations the advice is directed to one who is a victim of an injustice

inflicted by a more powerful person. In each case, retaliating with the same action by the injured party is not a realistic option; submission is the expected response. Neither of these is what Jesus advocates. Rather, he gives instance of a different way for the injured person to react that actively confront the injustice with a positive act that short-circuits the sequence of violence and starts a new cycle, carrying with it the anticipation that it will be reciprocated. In the first instance (5:39b), a person is slapped on the right cheek. This is meant to humiliate and insult. It may have been done by a master to a slave or a rich landlord to a poor farmer. For a subordinate to return the insulting slap would be suicidal, serving only to escalate the cycle of violence. But neither does submission restore justice. Turning the other cheek is a provocative response that robs the aggressor of the power to humiliate (Elgin, 226). Rather, the one who planned to shame ends up being shamed. In this way a less powerful person is able to reciprocate—dishonor for dishonor. The Synoptic Gospels do contain proactive Christ principles in responding to violence. Here are some significant ones

5.1. Mediating peace. Peacemaking presupposes a breakdown in conditions that make for peace. While the other principles can be achieved individually, without necessarily involving another person physically, peacemaking must bring opposing persons or groups together and mediate between them. Because peace does not just happen, the principle of peacemaking is wholly proactive as it not only reconciles and restores broken relationships, but sets in place the framework needed to perpetuate reconciliation and restoration. No wonder peacemakers will be called the sons of God. The peacemaker cannot logically and realistically be the master of violence (Reading, 19).

5.2. Exerting positive influence. Jesus' teaching on being salt and light is about exerting positive influence in community. Especially before and during times of violence, the witness of disciples who have and continue to impress, exert and demonstrate positive lifestyles will certainly make a difference in the outcome of violent situations. Effective, positive influence in all human endeavors cannot easily accommodate violence while at the same time being salt and light of the community. In fact, in events of violence, people will run in the direction of those who before the violence consistently lived as salt and light (Shea, 200).

5.3. Recognizing imago-dei (image of God). Murder is the greatest possible act of violence against a person's life because every human being is made in the image and likeness of God. To do violence to another person is to violate a divine aspect of the person. Human dignity and respect for life are all on account of this creation principle. Even if some persons did not think that human beings possess the image of God, they at least understand that life is precious, for that reason, demands great care (Zannoni, 32 -33).

5.4. Cultivating Non-retaliation. The victim of violence, who understandably is capable of retaliation of sorts, should choose the way of a hero rather than that of a coward. Retaliation and a violence-for-violence ethic seemed to be the greatest mark of cowardice and weakness, although normal human tendencies consider these as heroic and bravery. Only cowards, it seemed, could not restrain their capacities to vent up magma when they could equally well up from the springs of freshness inside them. Jesus proposed and preferred the latter, of non-retaliation. Love for the neighbor and enemy alike, and a very high view of human life and worth are distinguishing marks of the disciple of Christ's in relation with humanity (Swartley, 118).

5.5. Understanding reciprocation. At Jesus' arrest, one of His disciples, clearly in an attempt to hinder the arrest, drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear (Mt 26:50-51). This incident, probably more than any other, crystallized Jesus practicing His teaching on self-defense. There, Jesus disclosed before His enemies and friends that there was to be no fighting back to defend either Him or themselves. "Put your sword back in its place," (Mt 26:52) was His simple but clear command to the defender of self. Of course, it is interesting to note that these disciples of Jesus (or at least this one) carried a weapon on him. If we assume that each of the eleven bore a sword ordinarily, or on that night, why would Jesus not allow them to defend Him or themselves against the arresting party? Were the latter too sophisticated for the dozen Galilean men? If we follow the narrative closely, especially the last few chapters of Matthew, it becomes clear that Jesus Himself was totally given over to a preoccupation of His soon coming death. He predicted it and while in Gethsemane, He seemed to linger on much too longer than usual, such that His friends were exhausted and fell to sleep—all that on purpose. If Jesus had wished His disciples to put up a defense, He probably would not have lingered on in the Garden, knowing fully well what was to soon happen. Thus, instead of fighting, He healed the wounded member of the arrest party. Jesus' reasons for hindering his disciple from the use of violence in verses 52 and 53 provide further insight into the working of His mind concerning the issue. Why did He not want His disciple to use a sword to

defend either Him or them at this critical stage? “For all who draw the sword will die by the sword” was Jesus’ first explanation against allowing His followers use violence. This is a reciprocal principle that claims to issue to one what that person issues to another (Ude, 53).

5.6. Thinking non-resistance. France does not think this was just a proverbial maxim because it would generally be untrue as an observation, but probably echoes the interpretation of Isaiah 50:11. Addressing the use of this passage to support professional pacifism, France corrects: Jesus thus lives out the principle of non-resistance which he has required of his disciples in 5:39-42. It is this issue of Jesus’ non-resistance which is the context of this statement; a blanket endorsement of pacifism requires wider support than this one specific instance (France 375-376). France then charged the disciple who attempted armed resistance with simply misreading the situation. That disciple thought Jesus was a helpless victim who needed human help. To this Keener adds that “Disciples often wish to fight the kingdom’s battles the traditional mortal way or not at all” (Keener, 624). Jesus’ conquest would occur in his suffering on the cross, and not by wielding the sword. To employ the sword as a means of resolving the crisis was therefore, to set the precedence equal in spirit to taking things into one’s own hands, thereby neglecting God’s wisdom and method. The one doing so will have to face the long hands of the law of the land or of God. It is as if Jesus were saying, “if you do not want to be caught breaking the law and paying the penalty due, then, put your sword back in its place.” His second reason was that had He need for such help, His Father’s provisions were far more superior to any human invention and they were available at His disposal. He would rather employ His Father’s provision of legions of angels than depend on the arms of flesh for His defense. Third, in submitting to this arrest and all that would follow it, Jesus was enacting the fulfillment of long written prophecies concerning Him and His mission. Jesus did what He did so that in so doing, the scriptures concerning Him will come to realization. All in all, His Gethsamene prayer, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done,” (Mt 26:38, 41, 42) put His action and decision under God’s will. It was God’s will for Jesus to hinder His followers from using any swords when everything else suggest that they do, even if it meant they would later pay dearly for their decision at the hands of some Roman executioner. Such rebellions were not very strange among the Galileans. It could be argued that Jesus knew what we do not know and for that reason understood that it was time to give up His life, and that putting up any resistance would offset this goal. But this argument cannot be sustained much further than proposing it because when Jesus and His disciples could have responded with violence to some previous situations, He pursued non-violent ways. If He did not employ violence or instigate it when He most likely could have, what else was He teaching by such behavior? Jesus did not approve the use of the sword. “Jesus is the prototype of His followers who renounce violence”(Schweitzer, 495).

5.7. Loving especially the enemy. The statements “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them’ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you?...And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment...” (Lk 6:32-34) do in fact teach that the Christian is under obligation to be different from other people in every way. Jesus’ reasons for this are that 1) it attracts reward from God and 2) it represents God’s character and person, and so demonstrates that God is indeed in the disciple. However, while loving the enemy, the disciple must also acknowledge the moral force of anger, hatred and vengeance (Forest, 50 -74).

5.8. Being discerning and smart. There is something to say about the need for Christians to read the situation and be “smart” about what to do and what not to do. In Lk 9:51-56, Samaritan villagers rejected to Jesus coming to their village because He was headed for Jerusalem. This is a typical Jewish-Samaritan hatred was at work here. What the villagers did was not as striking as the response by Jesus’ disciples, James and John. Thinking that the villages had insulted their Lord and Master and should therefore be made to pay for their disrespect, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” The logic of violence was at work in them, but they needed Jesus’ permission for their action. Jesus’ response was a rebuke. Surely this was a great opportunity to prove who Jesus was to these villagers—the powerful Messiah of Israel who deserved their respect. But Jesus rejected their request, indicating clearly that He did not support violence. His leaving the villagers alone and passing on into another village demonstrates instead the proactive response of being smart to know what to do at the moment and what to avoid. Raining fire on the Samaritans would have probably publicized Jesus more, it would have also given Him bad publicity. Even after Jesus had rebuked His disciples He did not force the Samaritans to accept Him. Instead, He and His team went to another village. He was discerning or “smart” to know when to walk away from violence. And there is nothing wrong with running away from a scene of violence if only to avoid being party to the violence. It is in the same spirit of the moral exhortations to “flee” the evil desires of youth (2Ti 2:22) and “avoid every kind of evil” (1Th 5:22). Jesus charged His

disciples to “flee to another” town or village if they were persecuted in one place (Mt 10:23); He withdrew from where He restored the hand withered hand of a man on the Sabbath and got into trouble with the Pharisees for that (Mt 12:15); when He heard about the execution of John the Baptist (Mt 14:13); from discussing with the Pharisees and crowds to the region of Tyre and Sidon (Mt 15:21); once when the Pharisees and Herodians plotted to kill Him, Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the lake (Mk 3:7). Another time, the crowd wanted to make Jesus King by force. Of course, this action would have precipitated violence between the crowds and the political leaders. Jesus withdrew to a mountain by Himself to resist this forceful enthronement (Jn 6:15). Yes, there are times when we must withdraw from, flee and avoid high pressure or potentially violent areas and move to regions of low pressure.

5.9. Being prepared. Preparedness pervades Jesus’ teachings in the Gospels. His disciples were to prepare themselves to serve Him; serve one another and prepare against sufferings and persecutions that would certainly come upon them as they ministered in the world. They were also to prepare for His Second Coming and prepare to be in the kingdom. He used the Parables of the Ten Virgins, thieves in the night and the watchmen and many others to press this point. Preparing against anticipated violence puts believers in a much better position to be proactive. Incidents of violence or anticipated violence gives violence a missiological dimension that urges Christians to preach, teach and lead people to repentance. “Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices,” (13:1) describe Pilate’s act of violence against them. Also, 18 persons died as a result of the Siloam tower falling on them in Luke 13:4. Twice (13:3 and 5), Jesus stressed the need to repent or perish. So violence helps one prepare better and so is proactive even against violence (Ugowe, 85).

5.10. Being self-disciplined. Jesus knew all that was going to happen to Him and His disciples the night of His arrest. But instead of letting the situation put Him to flight, He composed Himself and took complete authority over Himself so that He would be able to address properly whomever He needed to address (Elliot, 141).

5.11. Rejecting the logic of violence. “...all who draw the sword will die by the sword” (Mt 26:52). Peter, James and John at different times demonstrated the logic of violence, a logic that makes violence to breed more violence. He became violent because the crowd was violent. He drew his sword because they were going to arrest his Master. Jesus on the other hand, rejected that logic and its conclusion. He ordered Peter to put back his sword in its place, quickly reminding him that to draw the sword is an expression of one’s willingness to also die by the sword (Wink, 96). Violence sweeps away both perpetrator and victim and therefore, becomes meaningless, in the long run.

5.12. Losing a battle to win the war. In Gethsemane, Jesus demonstrated that one can lose a battle in order to win the war. His war was God’s mission—His cosmic plan to conquer Satan, sin, evil, death and all their forces for all time, and reclaim fallen humanity to Himself. But He would not win that war without enduring the bitter throes of submitting to arrest, humiliation, disgrace, torture and death. This was like enduring the Father’s anger that lasts only a moment, in light of His favor that lasts a lifetime because while weeping may remain for a night, rejoicing comes in the morning (Ps 30:5). Also Hebrews 12:2 reminds that the author of life set His gaze upon the joy set before Him, the joy of the conquering Victor, and for that, endured the cross, scorning its shame, so that the Father’s eternal purpose will finally be accomplished. So in Gethsamene, Jesus lost a battle, the battle of disarming or resisting the arresting party by violence, or by miracle, as in fact, He began to do in John 18:6, that at His initial response, the armed men drew back and fell to the ground. No, they were not worshipping Him; they were scared to death. He had already overcome them merely by speaking directly to them. But Jesus knew better that the joy of winning this battle was only momentary, compared to that of winning the war for which He came to earth. Nothing would now stop Him from losing the war just to win a battle. The Church must learn to do the same when faced with violent situations. It must distinguish between the battle and the war and be willing to lose a battle in order to win the war. Focus must be the war, not the battles, even if they are sure of winning them. But if winning a battle is detrimental to winning the war, then, the Church must give up the battle for the war

5.13. Putting up verbal defense. The arresting party had come fully armed to get Jesus, a law-abiding citizen in the Roman Empire. That the very nature of this arrest was unlawful and unjust is seen in the manner and time of the arrest. If Jesus had led a rebellion, then would be necessary to lead a fully armed crowd to arrest Him. But the arresting party thought that Jesus and His disciples would put up resistance, something that probably would have given the party some further grounds on which to testify against Jesus. They had set out to arrest on the presumption that Jesus was guilty. Now at Gethsemane, Jesus calmly, but

sternly turns the table on these lawless enforcers of justice. “What is my crime? Teaching publicly in the temple court area? Why did you not arrest me there and then? Why now and in this manner?” By these questions, Jesus was forcing His captors to prove their innocence as they established His guilt. He was pushing them to realize that they, not Him, were the guilty ones who should be arrested and maltreated. He had already demonstrated to them by this action, that they were the very perpetrators of injustice and criminal intention. They were the leaders of the rebellion and it was up to them to prove Him wrong. By doing so, Jesus had shown them that even though He did not retaliate physically, He was willing to defend Himself at least verbally on this occasion. In violent situations where the opportunity to speak to those who perpetrate the violence arises, this is a very effective principle that cuts at the very heart of the perpetrators of violence. They may still insist as they did here, but they will never forget that they, rather than their helpless victims, were the real criminals.

6. JESUS CHRIST USE OF VIOLENCE

Those who see Jesus having a judgmental and threatening side point to his threats of hell and destruction. In terms of violence they also refer to his clearing the temple of merchants and their animal stock and money tables. A practical question which Neufeld asks is: “What does the temple incident mean for us?” (Neufeld, 70-72). Isn't it what anyone will point to when explaining about Jesus being violent in the temple? If Jesus violated the personhood of others through his aggressive acts, then perhaps I could say he used redemptive violence. But he never seems to do anything other than promoter for the highest expression of personhood for everybody in the scene. He wants his Jewish brothers to be the people they are called to be (light to the nations), and he also wants Gentiles to be able to come to the tabernacle to meet with Yahweh! So he cleanses, forces out and forcefully removes that which hinders personhood, relationship worship and mission. My belief is that Jesus' actions were aimed at the *things* that were hurting people. Also, eight of Jesus parables in Matthew's account ends with violent penalty for those who do evil (Harrington, 10). Four of these parables are exclusive to Matthew (13:40-43, 49-50; 25:31-46; 18:23-35). In the other four (22:1-14; 24:45-51; 21:33-46; 25:14-30) Matthew makes clear and intensifies that evildoing will result in punishments. In the four parables exclusive to Matthew we find the subsequent violent endings.

In the allegorical analysis of the parable of the weeds and the wheat, the weeds are likening to be the children of the evil one and devil who sows them (13:39). At the end of the age, an angel, will gather all who cause others to sin, all evildoers and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there is gnashing of teeth and weeping (13:41-42). Likewise, the parable of the net that snared all kinds of fish wraps up saying, "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the righteous from the evil and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be gnashing of teeth and weeping (13:49-50). The parable of aborted forgiveness (18:23-35) ends with the angry master handing over the evil slave (32) who did not return forgiveness, to be tormented until he would pay his complete debt. In the parable of the final judgment, the king isolates the blessed (v. 34) from the accursed (v. 41), telling the subsequent to go away from him into the eternal fire arranged for the devil and his angels (v. 41). This group goes away into eternal punishment while the righteous goes eternal life (v. 46).

In the parables that Matthew wrote, Jesus intensifies the violent punishments for those who do evil. In the parable involving the treacherous tenants (21:33-46), after the tenants have beaten, seized, stoned the slaves and killed the response of the property-owner is to put those evil ones people death, and rent the vineyard to other people who will give him the produce at the yield time (21:41). In the parable involving the wedding feast (22:1-14) Matthew gives details that the king's envoys were seized, treated shamefully and killed (v. 6). The king in anger sends his soldiers and destroys those murderers and burns their city (v. 7). Another group of servants is send out to go into the streets and gather all whom they found, both evil and good (v. 10). The Matthean conclusion (vv. 11-14) has it that the king then confront an improperly attired guest, who is then bound hand and foot and cast into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (v. 13). In the parable of the faithful servants (24:45-51) a wicked slave (v. 48) who beats his fellow slaves and eats and drinks with drunkards is cut in pieces by his master and put with the hypocrites, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (v. 51). In the parable of the talents (25:14-30), a wicked worthless (v. 30), lazy v. 26), servant has his one talent redrawn and he is thrown into the outer darkness, where there is gnashing of teeth and weeping.

Throwing evildoers into a fiery furnace, binding them both hand and foot, casting them in outer darkness, where there is gnashing of teeth and weeping, putting them to death, cutting and destroying murderers and burning their city, breaking them into pieces and crushing them, depriving them of the presence of

God, putting them with the devil and his angels, for all eternity— this is what will happen to those who utter evil (Reid 237). Jesus wants us to act with nonviolent resistance to an evildoer (5:39), pray for those who persecute us (5:44), loving our enemies, and acting from unreciprocated, boundless love because that is how God acts (5:44-48)? The punishments meted out in the parabolic endings present a far different picture of how God acts as presented by Jesus.

7. CONCLUSION

Global and national military groups rely upon force and even violence to subdue violence. Violence is present everywhere and seems inescapable. Even Christ claimed that the kingdom of Heaven suffered violence and violence takes it by force. However, we as individuals can transform the energies of violence into healthy, peaceful and harmonious alternatives. Jesus demonstrated that this is possible. Jesus' lecture on the great separation in Matthew 25:31-46 made it clear that His followers can transform a hostile world by their deliberate, planned proactive godly living. How people treat other people affects Christ directly especially, those whom He declares as His brothers and sisters. The Bible, though presenting violent and nonviolent perspectives at different times and in different situations, does in fact show a marked progression from violence to nonviolence, although eschatological violence is still a major theme in the New Testament. That is, God's judgment against the wicked and the ultimate conquer of violence. This is an indication that God does not delight in violence in the hands of His children. He has given Christians the capacity to overcome violence while on earth (Crenshaw 2008).

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