

Reflections

Y A L E D I V I N I T Y S C H O O L

VIOLENCE AND THEOLOGY

Winter 2004



The time is ripe for the School to resume a robust involvement with contemporary issues, to engage our alumni, alumnae, friends, and the religious community more generally, in a serious and sustained conversation about the issues that confront church and society from a reflective theological point of view. That is the goal of *Reflections*.

Reflections is a magazine of religious inquiry and opinion generated by the community of Yale Divinity School. Opinions expressed are solely those of the authors and do not represent those of the sponsoring institution.

All correspondence regarding Reflections should be addressed to Jamie Manson at the School's address or at jamie.manson@yale.edu. We welcome your reactions to the material contained in this magazine, particularly those written in the form of a letter to the editor.

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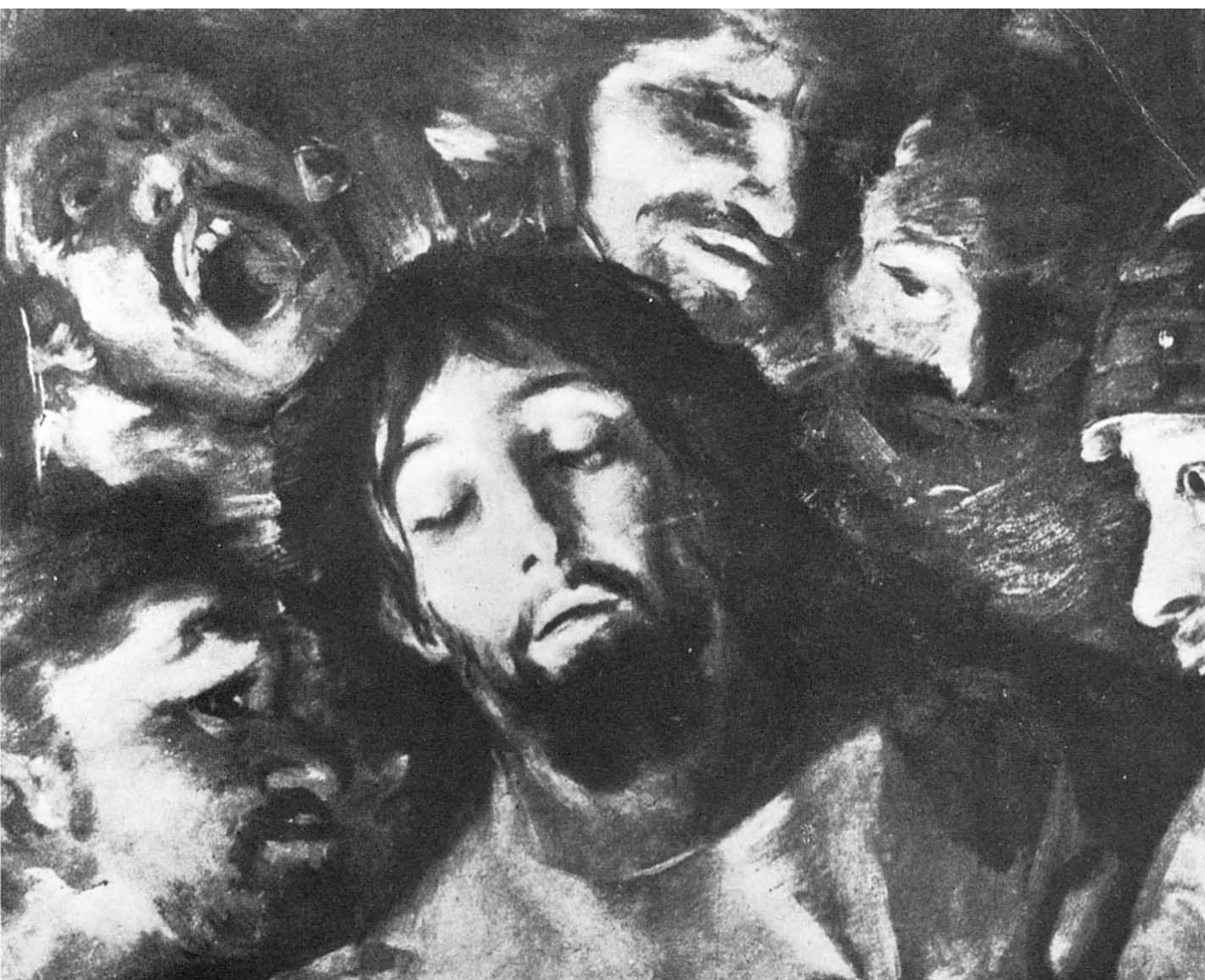
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REFLECTIONS—VOLUME 91, NUMBER 1
ISSN: 0362-0611

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Peter W. Johnson—graphic designer, YaleRIS*

VIOLENCE AND THEOLOGY



From the Dean's Desk



Harold W. Attridge

Dean of Yale University
Divinity School & Lillian
Claus Professor of New
Testament

It is hardly news that the world is a violent place and since the terrorist attacks on the U.S. in September, 2001, we have been acutely aware of the intersection of religion and violence. The vision of zealots crying "God is great" as they crashed passenger jets into skyscrapers still haunts our collective consciousness. But Muslims have no monopoly on the religious grounding of violence, as we are reminded by the language of "crusade" that not infrequently has crept into our own discourse in response to the international terrorism. Violence on a massive, international scale in the early twenty-first century seems to characterize the fault lines between traditional spheres of world religions, in the Middle East, in the Indian subcontinent, in the former Yugoslavia. It also is a feature within those spheres, sometimes along other religiously defined lines such as that which separates Catholic and Protestant in Ireland, or between the secular and the pious in various parts of the world, including our own country. Violence is also endemic in situations not directly defined by religious convictions, on city streets and in marital bedrooms.

Christians Churches, both those committed to a consistent pacifism and those that espouse some form of "Christian realism," have in recent decades generally borne witness against violence. The World Council of Churches, for instance, has dedicated the current decade to a campaign to eradicate violence. The current Pope has echoed calls of many

of his predecessors for a commitment to peace. Yet violence promises to be with us for the foreseeable future and seems to be woven into the fabric of our social and symbolic structures.

Theological reflection on violence constitutes the subject of this issue of *Reflections*, a journal of opinion by the Yale Divinity School community, which returns to circulation after a hiatus of nearly ten years. For many years, this journal provided a forum for sustained consideration of contemporary issues from a theological point of view by the faculty, alumni, and students of Yale Divinity School. During the past several years, the attention of the YDS community has been focused on internal issues: where to locate the school, how to configure its programs, how to recruit and support students, and similar concerns. We have not yet found answers to all of the questions raised about our enterprise a decade ago, but we have made substantial progress. Sterling Divinity Quadrangle has been handsomely renovated; new faculty have come aboard; student enrollment is strong; the school's finances are in decent shape; Berkeley Divinity School and the Institute of Sacred Music, the Divinity School's partners in theological education, are thriving. The time is ripe for the School to resume a robust involvement with contemporary issues, to engage our alumni, alumnae, friends, and the religious community more generally, in a serious and sustained conversation about the issues that confront church and society from a reflective theological point of view. That is the goal of *Reflections*.

The first issue of the revived journal addresses the topic of violence from the perspective of several theological disciplines, biblical, Systematic, liturgical, and practical. We hope that these contributions will stimulate further reflection on these issues by our alumni and friends and we welcome your responses to this issue.

In the future *Reflections* will appear twice a year, with commentary on contemporary issues in various forms, as an offering of Yale Divinity School to the wider world of theological education.



Harold W. Attridge

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The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence

John J. Collins

The tragic events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent war against Muslim extremists have drawn attention again to the age-old implication of religion in war and violence. In the current conflicts, attention has mainly been focused on the religious motivation of Islamic suicide bombers and terrorists. Yet, as Bruce Lincoln has pointed out in his recent book Holy Terrors, there is a surprising symmetry in the rhetoric of George W. Bush and Osama Bin Laden.

Both construe the conflict in dualistic terms as good versus evil, although their values are diametrically opposed. In fact, the religious heritage of the west is scarcely less violent than that of Islam. Religious violence is deeply embedded in the scriptures that are the wellsprings of Judaism and Christianity.

The Book of Exodus tells us that “the Lord is a man of war.” In the ancient world, gods were supposed to defend their people and help them in battle, and the God of Israel was no different in this respect. The most problematic part of the biblical account, however, is surely the conquest of Canaan. According to Deuteronomy, the Israelites were to destroy the people of the land utterly. “Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy.” Rather: “break down their altars, smash their pillars, hew down their sacred poles and burn their idols with fire. For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples of the earth.”¹ The Book of Joshua describes how this commandment was carried out. Because Israel is the chosen people, it may, and is even commanded to, destroy any people that seem to obstruct its mission.

There is of course considerable irony in this commandment. Deuteronomy is also one of the great repositories of humanistic values in the biblical corpus. This is the book that repeatedly tells the

Israelites to be compassionate to slaves and aliens, and to remember that they were slaves in the land of Egypt. The ethical principle to do unto others as you would have them do unto you was not an innovation of the New Testament.² The laws on slaves and aliens in Deuteronomy show an appreciation of what Emmanuel Levinas calls “the face of the other”³ as human and call for empathy with our fellow human beings. But this empathy does not extend to the Canaanites. By the time Deuteronomy was written, the people of Israel and Judah knew what it was like to have their land overrun and their shrines burned down. Yet there is no appreciation here of the face of the Canaanite and no misgiving about doing to others what they themselves had suffered.

In fact, the religious heritage of the west is scarcely less violent than that of Islam. Religious violence is deeply embedded in the scriptures that are the wellsprings of Judaism and Christianity.

There is also some irony in the way in which these commands of destruction are embedded in the story of the Exodus, which has served as the great paradigm of liberation in Western history.⁴ But



Goya, *The Disasters of War*, "Gloomy presentiments of things to come," 1820-, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

the liberation of the Israelites and the subjugation of the Canaanites are two sides of the same coin. Without a land of their own, the liberated Israelites would have nowhere to go. But the land promised to them was not empty and had its own inhabitants. Read from the Canaanite perspective, this is not a liberating story at all.⁵

Yet a further irony is that modern scholars have concluded that the slaughter of the Canaanites is largely if not entirely a work of fiction. Archeologists now find no evidence that the people of Israel originated outside the land. Rather, they seem to have evolved within Canaan. The commandments in Deuteronomy, and their execution in the Book of Joshua, have more to do with the ideology of King Josiah in the late seventh century BCE, than with the supposed conquest of Canaan by invading Israelites six centuries earlier. This does not relieve the moral problem posed by these books, however. In the words of James Barr, "the problem is not whether the narratives are fact or fiction. The problem is that, whether fact or fiction, the ritual destruction is commanded."⁶ The destruction of the Canaanites is depicted in the Bible as the will of God, and it is justified simply by God's decision to give their land to Israel.

I am not suggesting that the religion of ancient Israel was exceptionally violent. In the context of the ancient world, it was probably less violent than most. The violence towards the Canaanites must be balanced against the humanistic aspects of Deuteronomical law. But the violence remains, and it has had

fateful consequences in western history. The English Puritan revolution was justified repeatedly by biblical analogies drawn from the Old Testament. Oliver Cromwell drew a parallel between his revolution and the Exodus, and proceeded to treat the Catholics of Ireland as the Canaanites. He even declared that "there are great occasions in which some men are called to great services in the doing of which they are excused from the common rule of morality,"⁷ as were the heroes of the Old Testament. A generation later, the Puritans of New England applied the biblical texts about the conquest to their own situation, casting the native American Indians in the role of the Canaanites and Amalekites. In 1689, Cotton Mather urged the colonists to go forth against "Amalek annoying this Israel in the wilderness."⁸ A few years later, one Herbert Gibbs gave thanks for "the mercies of God in extirpating the enemies of Israel in Canaan." He was not referring to biblical times. Similar rhetoric persisted in American Puritanism through the 18th century, and indeed biblical analogies have continued to play a part in American political rhetoric down to the present.⁹

Of course Americans are not alone in looking to the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament for an exemplary paradigm. The Boers of South Africa applied the story of the Exodus to their situation under British rule, and black African liberationists later applied it to their situation under the Boers. Most obviously, biblical narratives have been a factor in the Zionist movement in Israel, shaping the imagination even of secular, socialist Zionists and providing powerful precedents for right-wing militants. Biblical analogies also provide the underpinnings for support of Israel among conservative Christians.

Not all violence is necessarily to be condemned. The image of God the Warrior and the hope for an apocalyptic judgment have often given hope to the oppressed.

"There is a time to kill," said Qoheleth, "and a time to heal...a time for war, and a time for peace."¹⁰ Not all violence is necessarily to be condemned. The image of God the Warrior and the hope for an apocalyptic judgment have often given hope to the oppressed. Nonetheless, few will disagree that violence is seldom a good option, and that it can only be justified as a last recourse. Most people in the western world are rightly repelled by the idea that terrorists, such as the perpetrators of the attacks of September 11, 2001, could be inspired by religious ideals. The thrust of my reflections on violence and

religion in the biblical tradition is that the problem is not peculiar to Islam, but can also be found in attitudes and assumptions that are deeply embedded in the Jewish and Christian scriptures. The material of which I have been speaking is what Gerd Lüdemann has called “the dark side of the Bible.”¹¹ The issues it raises are not just academic. These texts have had a long effective history, and there is no reason to believe that it has run its course. What are we to say about it at the beginning of the twenty-first century?

The power of the Bible is largely that it gives an unvarnished picture of human nature and of the dynamics of history, and also of religion and the things that people do in its name. After all, it is only in the utopian future that the wolf is supposed to live with the lamb, and even then the wolf will probably feel the safer of the two.

There is a long and venerable tradition of interpretation, going back through the Church Fathers to Philo of Alexandria and Hellenistic Judaism, that sees it as its task to save the appearances of the text. Luke Johnson has recently argued that modern interpreters have still much to learn from the Fathers: “Origen shows how much more passionately Scripture is engaged when the reader is persuaded of its divine inspiration, which implies that God’s wisdom is somehow seeking to be communicated even through the impossibilities of the literal sense. If interpreters today were to learn from Origen, they would not rest easy with the practice of excising or censoring troublesome texts, but would wrestle with them until they yielded a meaning ‘worthy of God.’”¹² But allegorical interpretation, of the kind practiced in antiquity, is hardly viable in the modern world. It is all very well to say that the Canaanites that we should root out are vice and sinfulness, but we still have texts that speak rather clearly of slaughtering human beings.

A more promising strategy is to note the diversity of viewpoints within the Bible, and thereby relativize the more problematic ones.¹³ So, for example, we can emphasize the concern for slaves and aliens in Deuteronomy, or the model of the suffering servant, or the New Testament teaching on love of one’s enemies. It is not unusual for Christian interpreters to claim that “the biblical witness to the innocent victim and the God of victims demystifies and demythologizes this sacred social order” in which

violence is grounded.¹⁴ Such a selective reading, privileging the death of Jesus, or the model of the suffering servant, is certainly possible, and even commendable, but it does not negate the force of the biblical endorsements of violence that we have been considering. The full canonical shape of the Christian Bible, for what it is worth, still concludes with the judgment scene in Revelation, in which the lamb that was slain returns as the heavenly warrior with a sword for striking down the nations. In short, violence is not the only model of behavior on offer in the Bible, but it is not an incidental or peripheral feature, and it cannot be glossed over. The Bible not only witnesses to the innocent victim and to the God of victims, but also to the hungry God¹⁵ who devours victims and to the zeal of God’s human agents.

And therein precisely lies its power. There is much in the Bible that is not “worthy” of the God of the philosophers. There is also much that is not worthy of humanity, certainly much that is not worthy to serve as a model for imitation. This material should not be disregarded, for it is at least as revelatory as the more edifying parts of the biblical witness. The power of the Bible is largely that it



Goya, *The Disasters of War*, “Contrary to the general interest,” 1820–, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

gives an unvarnished picture of human nature and of the dynamics of history, and also of religion and the things that people do in its name.¹⁶ After all, it is only in the utopian future that the wolf is supposed to live with the lamb, and even then the wolf will probably feel the safer of the two. The biblical portrayal of human reality only becomes pernicious when it is vested with authority, and assumed to reflect, without qualification or differentiation, the

wisdom of God or the will of God. The Bible does not de-mystify or demythologize itself. But neither does it claim that the stories it tells are paradigms for human action in all times and places.

The least that should be expected of any biblical interpreter is honesty, and that requires the recognition, in the words of James Barr, that “the command of consecration to destruction is morally offensive and has to be faced as such,”¹⁷ whether it is found in the Bible or in the Koran. To recognize this is to admit that the Bible, for all the wisdom it contains, is no infallible guide on ethical matters. As Roland Bainton put it, in his survey of Christian attitudes to war and peace, “appeal to the Bible is not determinative.”¹⁸ But historically people have appealed to the Bible precisely because of its presumed divine authority, which gives an aura of certitude to any position it can be shown to support; in the phrase of Hannah Arendt, “God-like certainty that stops all discussion.”¹⁹ And here, I would suggest, is the most basic connection between the Bible and violence, more basic than any command or teaching it contains.

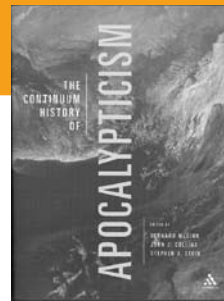
Oliver Wendell Holmes, the great American jurist, reflected late in his career that he had entered the Civil War brimming with certitude over the righteousness of abolition, which surely was a righteous cause.²⁰ By the end of the war he had drawn a different lesson, that certitude leads to violence. The Bible has contributed to violence in the world precisely because it has been taken to confer a degree of certitude that transcends human discussion and argumentation. Perhaps the most constructive thing a biblical interpreter can do towards lessening the contribution of the Bible to violence in the world, is to show that that certitude is an illusion.

John J. Collins is Holmes Professor of Old Testament Criticism and Interpretation at Yale Divinity School. He has published widely on the subjects of apocalypticism, wisdom, Hellenistic Judaism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Professor Collins is also co-editor of the three-volume *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* and has participated in the editing of the Dead Sea Scrolls. He has served as editor of the *Journal of Biblical Literature* as well as president of the Catholic Biblical Association and of the Society of Biblical Literature.



The Continuum History of Apocalypticism

Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein, eds.



The Continuum History of Apocalypticism is a 1-volume, select edition of the 3-volume *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* first published in 1998. The main historical surveys that provided

the spine of the *Encyclopedia* have been retained, while essays of a thematic nature, and a few whose subject matter is not central to the historical development, have been omitted. The work begins with 8 articles on “The Origins of Apocalypticism in the Ancient World,” extending from ancient Near Eastern myth through the Old Testament to the Dead Sea Scrolls, Jesus, Paul, and the Book of Revelation. Next are 7 articles on “Apocalyptic Traditions from Late Antiquity to ca. 1800 C.E.,” including early Christian theology, radical movements in the Middle Ages, and both Jewish and Islamic apocalypticism in the classic period. The final section, “Apocalypticism in the Modern Age,” includes 10 articles on apocalypticism in the Americas, in Western and Eastern Europe, and, finally, in modern Judaism and modern Islam.

“Culled from the three-volume *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, which the editors published in 1998, this one-volume book of essays aims to introduce readers to the basic issues relating to apocalypticism throughout history. The first part explores the origins of apocalypticism in Near Eastern myth, the Dead Sea Scrolls, early messianic movements and the teachings of Jesus and Paul. (A separate essay unpacks the always controversial Book of Revelation.) Part two takes the story from the world of late antiquity through the Middle Ages to the 18th century, focusing most heavily on the Western monotheistic traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the final section, various essays examine apocalypticism in the modern age, offering a truly global perspective on the resurgence of apocalyptic thinking. Contributors to this academic collection—which will be best appreciated by readers already conversant in the issues surrounding the scholarship of apocalypticism—include Paul Boyer, James Moorhead, James VanderKam, Moshe Idel and Abbas Armanat.” — Publishers Weekly

Trauma and Grace

Serene Jones

Being late to church as usual, I had just settled into the back pew when I looked over to find Michelle piling in beside me. A shy and intense young woman, Michelle and I had become friends since she started attending church six months ago. She had recently asked if I would be her sponsor when she joined the congregation in several weeks, and I had said yes. Our friendship had grown deeper since then as we discussed her life, her faith, and her decision to become a church member.

As she took off her coat and sat down in the pew, I smiled at her and together we let ourselves be drawn into the familiar rhythms of worship. In typical Congregational style, we stood and sang of God's glory; we sat and prayed for ourselves and the world; we listened as Scripture was read and the sermon was preached; we gave up our offerings and then rose to sing again. It seemed like an ordinary Sunday morning to me: two friends, a well-loved liturgy, a community of shared faith, the warmth of well-known Bible stories, and the calming power of prayer, silence, and song. Even the slant of mid-winter light as it came through the sanctuary windows seemed to hold our bodies safe and sacred in its cool gray glow.

After the offering, our pastor moved, as she usually did, to the communion table and welcomed the congregation to that part of worship where we remember the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples the night before his death. Since childhood, this part of the Sunday service had been my favorite; I liked the image of Jesus gathering folks for supper and offering that mysterious thing called God's grace to us in bread and wine. But I soon learned that this was not the case with Michelle. As the pastor began talking about the night "before Jesus' death," I could feel Michelle's whole body grow tight and rigid. Her nail-bitten fingers began

to twist her order of worship, and when I looked over at her, her face had a frighteningly blank look on it. She seemed frozen in fear. When the pastor then invoked the words of Jesus, "This is my blood, poured out for you," she quietly slid out of the pew and left the sanctuary. As I turned to see the back doors close softly behind her, I heard the pastor intone the familiar refrain, "and this is my body, broken for you."

Since childhood...I liked the image of Jesus gathering folks for supper and offering that mysterious thing called God's grace to us in bread and wine. But I soon learned that this was not the case with Michelle.

Worried, I followed her out into the back hall and found her standing just inside the open door of a bathroom tucked into the corner. She was staring at the sink. Not moving. Just staring. I stepped inside and asked her if she was all right. The tiled room was cold and she was shivering. She looked over at me and haltingly said that she just needed to put a little water on her face...but she couldn't remember which faucet was hot and which was cold. A simple thing. How could she not know? Before I answered, I tried to imagine what she might be

thinking, where her mind had gone, why she was so afraid. I could feel in my own body the tightening grip of the terror that held her; and for a brief moment, it seemed I was standing beside her not in church, but in a cold, static, confused world. There together, we seemed very far away from the grace I had waited for at the communion table and very, very far from the church, even though we were still, quite literally, held within it.

We stood there in silence, and after a few seconds, I managed a smile and turned on the hot faucet. We washed our hands when the warm water finally came through the pipes. Michelle put some on her face and slowly relaxed. We stepped back into the hall just as the service ended. Michelle found her coat, quietly said good-bye, moved outside into the late Sunday morning light, and headed towards home.

I was assigned to clean up after communion, so it was an hour later when I finally left the building. The afternoon sun was already casting long shadows across the nearly empty church parking lot, and the harsh January wind made it feel like the whole city was shivering. I got in my car, turned on the heater, and looked past the lot to the large colonial structure I had just left. I was concerned about Michelle, and I was very confused about what had happened.

Several weeks earlier, she had told me, in an off-handed way, that she had had a “rough childhood.” Perhaps, I thought as I sat in my car, this was somehow related to her reactions that morning. I also knew that for her, coming to know the reality of “grace”—God’s unmerited love for her—was central to her growing faith. The fact that the communion service had sent her running from worship troubled me. How was it that the very thing she was reaching for was the thing that so terrified her? I didn’t know. The week before we had talked about grace and God’s desire that she flourish and that she know the fruits of life abundant. This week, I had seen her disappear into a world where it seemed only horror abounded and violence stalked her. How might these words about grace reach her as she stood in that seemingly foreign place? The answer eluded me.

As I stared at the church, an image came to me, one that seemed to capture these conflicting worlds. There before me was a single building, one whose body held within it our Sunday morning gathering, a place of worship, a house of faith. But within this house, I saw the haunting image of a dividing wall—the wall between the cold bathroom that held Michelle’s trembling body and the warmth

of the sanctuary that ostensibly held the body of Christ. On one side of the wall was the frozen world of Michelle’s terror; on the other side was a community gathered to celebrate the gifts of grace abundant. Terror and grace. Bathroom and chapel. Frozen silence and joyful singing. The starkness of the divide startled me.

My question returned. How might strains of grace move through that wall and reach the ears of Michelle as she stood there, terrified? How might grace’s warmth seep through and wrap itself around her frigid, terrified body? With these unsettling questions in mind, I turned on my car, pulled out of the parking lot, and drove home.

The following Wednesday, Michelle and I met for afternoon tea, as was our custom, at a coffee shop downtown. I was relieved to see her come through the frosted front door—I had worried that she might feel embarrassed and not show up. To the contrary, however, her spirits seemed high and her smile warm and open.

...within this house, I saw the haunting image of a dividing wall—the wall between the cold bathroom that held Michelle’s trembling body and the warmth of the sanctuary that ostensibly held the body of Christ.

“Cold out,” she said as she took off her coat and plopped into the seat across the table from me. Leaning forward, she grinned and whispered: “Were you afraid I might not come? That I might be stranded in a bathroom somewhere? Waiting for someone to turn on the water?”

“Well, the thought did cross my mind,” I smiled back, only half-way teasing. I paused and said, “I tried to call a couple of times. Are you okay?”

“Am I okay? Oh my, what a question,” she laughed and then paused. “Let me get some tea, and then I’ll try to explain to you what happened.” She rose and put a friendly, nail-bitten hand on my shoulder as she passed me on her way to the coffee bar.

A few moments later she returned to her seat, looking deep in thought. She held her tea cup in both hands, as she spoke, looking into its steam.

“I don’t know where to begin. I get embarrassed talking about this because I don’t know how people will react. But I kinda trust you; you saw me in one of those states, and you didn’t freak out. You stood there.” I warmed my hands on my own tea cup and listened.

"I mentioned before that I had a rough childhood. Well, rough doesn't exactly tell you how really hard it was." She then told me, in sketchy detail, the story of part of her life. Her memories of early childhood were vague, she explained. Her parents had been "hippie types" in the early seventies, and until she was five, they had lived in a tent and traveled around the country with a caravan of folks, doing drugs and picking up short-term work, here and there. During that period, she remembered what she called "lots of weird sex stuff and lots of stoned people frightening me as they stumbled around at night." When her family finally settled down, her father began regularly sexually abusing her—"We were a liberated family," she sarcastically informed me. Her parents split up when she was in junior high; and by the time she got to high school, she was doing drugs herself, trying to be cool. She was raped her senior year, by a supposed friend; they had been drunk and she never told anyone. By the time she started junior college, she was "too depressed to do much." With the help of a teacher, she had ended up at a community center in a group for young women who "were having a hard time." It was here, she explained, that she first heard a social worker use the word "trauma"; and she had gradually come to see that it fit the way she felt most of time, that her whole self—her body and her soul—still held within it the shock waves of all the violence she had known, for so many years.

Since that time, she told me, she had been in and out of various treatment programs for people like her who suffer from what is called "post-traumatic stress disorder," people who remain haunted by the ongoing effects of violence in their lives long after the events themselves have passed. Sometimes she felt she was getting better; at other times, she despaired about the future, times like Sunday when, out of the blue, she was suddenly thrown back into an old state of terror and confusion that she couldn't stop or control.

She took a sip of tea and said softly, "I'm sorry about church. I didn't mean to act so weird."

I assured her that she need not apologize and that I was sorry that all these things had happened to her. "It must have been horrible." To my ears, these words sounded cliché and insignificant in the face of what she had revealed. But I didn't know what else to say, just like that morning in the bathroom. Ironically, I was the one who now felt frozen. She, however, looked relieved to hear me say this. She rested her arms on the table and continued her tale.



Goya, *Crucifixion*, 1780, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

"I started coming to church when I moved into the city last year because I was lonely and—this may sound strange—but I really wanted to be in a place where I could do things like sing and pray with other people. And be with God." Growing up, her family had not been particularly religious, except for the few times when her mother, in brief fits of spiritual fervor, had taken her to a nearby church. She remembered how much she liked the hymns and hearing people lift up prayers to God. She told me that even now, she sometimes awakened in the morning with one of those songs rolling gently through her mind, its rhythm comforting her. Sometimes, too, out of nowhere, she found herself praying little prayers that came from a deep place within her. "It's feelings like these, in my gut, not ideas in my head, that brought me here."

She leaned back in her chair and wryly grinned at me, recalling that I was her church-membership sponsor. "Don't worry. In our talks over the past months, I have begun to understand the idea part of faith as well, particularly all the stuff about grace." I chuckled and said I was glad to hear it, but I certainly understood what she was saying about her gut feelings. They were important to me, too.

When Violence is No Stranger: Pastoral Counseling with Survivors of Acquaintance Rape

By Kristen J. Leslie



"Kristen Leslie's groundbreaking work clearly addresses an issue that is often unspoken and unnamed, pointing to serious psycho-spiritual needs that are therefore

largely unmet. She offers helpful facts about acquaintance rape, refuting the common myths. Her theological and pastoral frameworks are insightful and critical for anyone dealing with survivors and their friends and family. Being a compassionate and open listener is not enough. Leslie offers specific information on the dynamics, symptoms, and needs of survivors. Because of the widespread nature of acquaintance rape, this is a book crucial for every clergyperson to read." —Cynthia A. Terry, Associate University Chaplain, Yale University
"When Violence Is No Stranger addresses the long-neglected subject of acquaintance and date rape with sensitivity and insight. Drawing from in-depth interviews with survivors, Kristen Leslie weaves valuable information together with a theology of healing and hope. Her recommendations for pastoral practice are timely and needed! This book is a significant resource for clergy, counselors, and all who are committed to ending sexual violence." —Pamela Cooper-White, Associate Professor of Pastoral Theolog, Lutheran School of Theology, Philadelphia

She then looked back into her tea cup on the table. "It's not the ideas that freaked me out on Sunday, though. Well, maybe it was partly ideas, I don't know. It happens to me, sometimes. I am sitting there listening to the pastor, thinking about God and love and everything, and then suddenly I hear or see something and it's like a button in me gets pushed. In an instant, I feel terrified, like I'm going to die or get hurt bad. My body tells me to run away, but instead, I just freeze and then numb-out. Last week it was the part about Jesus' blood and body that did it. There was a flash in my head and I couldn't tell the difference between me and Jesus, and then I saw blood everywhere, and broken body parts, and I got so afraid I just disappeared. I thought the bathroom might be safe but even it scared and confused me. I forgot my name. I even forgot the hot and cold." She fell silent and started chewing on the side of her thumbnail.

I once again fell speechless. She had put into words what I had physically felt standing near to her on Sunday. Mind-numbing fear. Descending without warning. Frightening thoughts. Disintegrating order. And then a cold blank. I told her that I could tell she was afraid, and how scary it must have been to feel so unsafe and alone in church, a place where she had sought refuge and company with others and with God. Her eyes welled up with tears.

"Thanks, Serene." She paused and looked up at me, self-consciously laying her chewed fingers on the table. After a few seconds, she spoke again, this time in an abrupt, matter-of-fact tone that seemed to signal the end of this part of our conversation. "I appreciate you listening, but . . . I know it's my problem. My problem. And I'm working on it."

"Oh, Michelle, no." I responded quickly, emotion welling up in my voice. "It's not just your problem. It's our problem. My problem, the church's problem, God's problem. You don't need to be alone. I hope we can work on it together. That's what faith communities do." The words poured out of my mouth before I even knew what I was saying.

A heavy silence then fell. She eyed me with slight suspicion, for only a brief moment. The corner of her mouth tried a smile. She then looked away and turned back to me with a new conversation topic.

They were having a great sale at the clothing store around the corner, and she showed me the new striped sweater she had bought to wear to church next Sunday. She was also thinking about cutting her hair. How short did I think she should go? The brightness she had come in with returned to her face, and we started chatting about one

of our favorite subjects, earrings. Looking at her animated smile, I was reminded that the portrait of Michelle's life was more complex and rich than the tortured images I now had of her violent past and her haunted present. We agreed that her beaded dangling earrings would look great with short hair and a multicolored top.

We left the coffee shop together and hugged good-bye. It was dark as I walked down the street; I was pleased that four days from now, she would once again share a pew with me.

During the next few days, I found myself thinking again and again of our conversation over tea, trying to fill out the picture of her life and connect to her story. In the middle of grocery shopping, Wednesday evening, I suddenly flashed on scenes of her years living in a tent. Did she eat regular meals? The

JOEL HANISEK

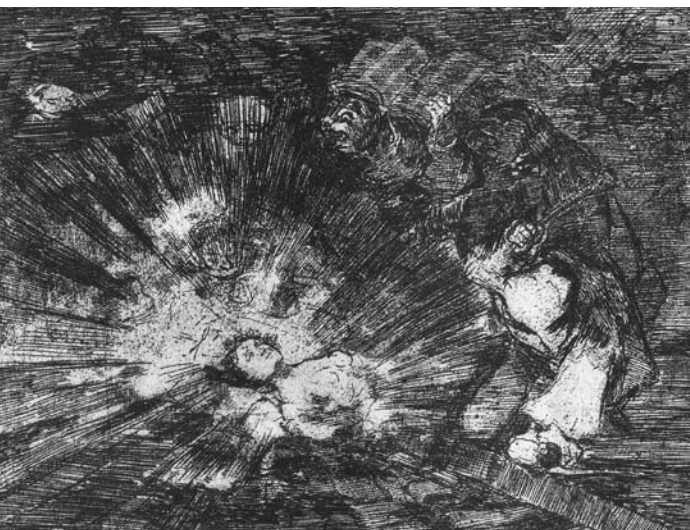
Nights in Jerusalem

I remember that on one of them there was a moon above the city.
It was full and white,
and hung like a melon from a vine. Set
against the sky with such ripeness, I thought
a stem of stars might snap
and drop it to earth, crushing
the old walls into fine, fine dust.

The night before, I stood outside the gates,
looking at the massive yellow slabs of
support, the stones in the road shining
with holy lust and the smooth polish
of footsteps that had searched for a trace of belief
and left the way empty;
only the burning tires wandered down the street
circled, fell, flamed, and gave the deep satisfaction
of black smoke.
In one of my cities there had been hoses instead.
Hate has a way of taking the elements
and mixing them up.

There was bitterness in the air,
the sharp potential you sometimes taste
when you grind a seed between your teeth.
So I spat on the ground and prayed for peace
made a small, wet splotch in the dirt, and
down on one knee, marked my face
with mud.
Didn't that work once?
Before the battle? During the miracle?
All I managed was to get sand in my eye,
such a small thing,
I tore at myself trying to find a single grain,
ripped and scratched the softness of sight
and couldn't even blink until I made myself cry,
then went back to the hotel to sleep,
because I was just visiting,
just passing through after all.

How funny it was the next day though,
when I woke with a patch
and everyone else was crooked,
bent sideways, from looking up
and keeping watch.
The moon didn't fall,
but disappeared as day came, gradually,
like always, dismissing the night that some had hoped would bring
the fury of apocalypse or the soft hand of a savior.
Instead there was breakfast. Yogurt, pita,
and sweet fruit taken with prayer and uncertainty.



Goya, *The Disasters of War*, "Will she rise again?" Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

thought that maybe she didn't disturbed me. The next morning, in the middle of preparing a lecture for my Thursday class, I found myself staring out the window, overcome with anger at her father. I couldn't focus on my notes.

I also found myself looking at other people differently. As I gazed out into the classroom during my lecture, I wondered how many students had felt the traumatic reactions Michelle described and how I might use the words of my teaching in a way that could reach them better. Friday evening during dinner with friends, I took a sip of wine and suddenly remembered Michelle's story of rape. How many young women would be caught in a similar place tonight? I shivered and put my glass down. During those days, I also thought a lot about my own life. I was beginning to realize that Michelle's terror had touched places in my own past that, while unlike hers in form, were hauntingly similar in feel. Trauma. In my mind, I began to see it everywhere.

I kept returning to the promise I had made to her—that she needn't be alone as she "worked on it." Myself, the church, and God would be with her. The more I thought about my urgently issued assurance, the less certain I was as to what on earth I had meant by it. My vision of the divided sanctuary loomed large. How could the church's profession of grace reach Michelle in the cold space of her terror?

On Sunday I arrived at church, late again, and was happy to see Michelle already sitting in our usual pew, her sweater bright and her hair short. As in the past, we smiled at each other and settled

together into the familiar routine of worship. This morning, however, that routine felt different. Sitting next to my friend, I kept waiting for even the smallest sign that something might be going wrong. I tried hard to imagine what the songs, prayers, silences, Scripture readings, and sermon might sound like to Michelle. What images might they be conjuring up for her? Grace? Fear? Blankness? I also tried to recall what I knew of traumas in my own life, what it felt like in my body to be terrified and confused. I was aware, as well, of the people sitting around me and what they might be thinking. The veteran sitting two pews ahead of us. What scenes did he see in his mind as we sang the first hymn? The woman whose son had been killed in a car accident two months ago. How did the Lord's Prayer sound to her? Did our collective words of thanksgiving to God make sense to her?

It was amazing. The whole world of worship, as I had known it in the past, began to shift and change before my eyes. A new world appeared. In this world, Michelle's cold bathroom had expanded to hold a whole congregation of shivering souls. It was a world where I couldn't assume much of what I normally assumed about human perceptions and actions. Memories were blurry; commonly held notions of order—like the order of the hot and cold faucets—seemed unstable, elusive; scenes of violence were suddenly erupting, everywhere, without pattern, overwhelming all thought and sound; bodies were frozen in fear and a sense of utter helplessness filled the air; mouths were gaping open in screams, but no sounds came out, no language worked; and cold blankness constantly threatened to descend.

The whole world of worship, as I had known it in the past, began to shift and change before my eyes.

What was most strange about this scene was that its chaos was unfolding not off in a corner bathroom but in the midst of worship itself. The body of the sanctuary held all of it within its walls; the liturgy moved in and through its midst. At times, that morning, I heard words spoken, sung, or prayed that felt as if they were hitting, hard and violent, against the fragile, traumatized lives gathered there. Taunting. Deepening the terror. Provoking the descent of cold blankness. I knew at once that such words and actions were not harbingers of grace but the spawn of the church's own brokenness and his-

tory of violence. I wanted to reach over and shield Michelle from their assaultive force. I knew these things had to change.

At other times, however, our faith-born words and ritual motions seemed truly grace filled. Powerful. Transforming. Merciful. Understanding. In an old hymn, I recognized a plea for vision where only shadows haunted. The familiar song suddenly sounded to my ears like the words of someone who had known a terror like Michelle's. In the Gospel lesson, I heard anew the story of disciples who kept not understanding Jesus' message, disciples with whom he nonetheless kept traveling. Were they as frightened as Michelle? Did Jesus' words disintegrate before them like the order of hot and cold? In the sharp words of the psalmist against his enemy, I heard expressed my own rage at Michelle's father. And I heard as well God's condemnation of enemies and promises of comfort. At every turn in the service, I heard and saw with increasing clarity that trauma was not something outside of faith, something foreign and distant that the Christian message of grace had to struggle to address. I saw instead that parts of our rich faith traditions were born in the midst of unspeakable terrors—perhaps some of them similar to Michelle's cold fright—and that grace had long been unfurling its warmth therein.

The Gospel of Mark calls it “repentance”—that moment when one is turned around and “sees differently.” The apostle Paul names it “conversion” and describes for us the new reality that opens up when one comes to know the Christ and him crucified. Saint Augustine speaks of the baptism of blood, that turbulent transformation in which one descends into death—perhaps terror and cold blankness—and emerges in Christ. John Calvin calls it “mortification and vivification,” a conversion in which one descends into hell to find life. That morning, sitting next to Michelle, I underwent such a baptism, a converted way of seeing.

In the course of one short week, I had come to see that when one becomes aware of the extensive wounds that events of overwhelming violence can inflict on the souls, bodies, and psyches of people, one's whole understanding of what human beings are and can do changes. It shifts how one thinks about language and silence, how one understands the workings of memory, how one assesses the instability of reason and the fragility of our capacity to will and to act, how one grapples with the fragmentation of perception and the quick disintegration of order, and how one conceives of imagination,

recognizing that at any moment, haunting, shadowy scenes of violence can disrupt it, twist it, shut it down. When Michelle and I spoke of her struggle, we never framed it like this, but all these issues were there.

I knew at once that such words and actions were not harbingers of grace but the spawn of the church's own brokenness and history of violence.

What I saw in church that morning is crucial here. If the church's message about God's love for the world is to be offered to those who suffer these wounds, then we are going to have to think anew about how we use language and how we put bodies in motion and employ imagery and sound. We are also going to have to grapple anew with the meaning of beliefs not only about grace, but also about such things as sin, redemption, hope, community, communion, violence, death, crucifixion, and resurrection.

...news stories fail to show us...that, for the living, violence often continues to exist and expand, in the recesses of their minds and in their patterns of action and of hoping.

The reality of violence haunts us all, daily, in varying ways and to varying degrees. And we all make sense of it differently. When we turn on the evening news, one can't help but see violence everywhere. Buildings explode, nations dissolve, whole peoples disappear, millions die, children lose futures. The violence of our world is, in this regard, very visible. And theologians speak about it often. What these news stories fail to show us in their pictures of devastated lives is the haunting reality that, for the living, violence often continues to exist and expand, in the recesses of their minds and in their patterns of action and of hoping. If faith tell us that God desires that we flourish, that we know the fruits of life abundant, then surely the church should be able to proclaim such grace in the midst of this often hidden legacy of violence. As to how? My guess is there are many answers. When worship ended that Sunday morning, Michelle was still sitting by me. As far as I could tell, no one had left for the bathroom; the community was still gathered when the benediction was offered. I felt relief; maybe I wouldn't have to

worry about her so much this week. Maybe the message of grace was getting through. Maybe church was helping to heal her wounds. Maybe. Maybe.

We rose together and I reached out to pass her the peace of Christ. I expected warmth but was surprised by the coldness of her hands. I noticed a

tight clench in the line of her jaw. She wore a smile, but there was an element of blank under it. Maybe I would worry this week. Maybe the message of grace wasn't quite getting through, at least not all the way. Maybe the healing would not come as quickly as I had hoped. But maybe, just maybe, it would come nonetheless.



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Christianity and Violence

Miroslav Volf

In the aftermath of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center it was not unusual to hear that the attack “changed everything.” “Everything” is certainly an exaggeration, but 9/11, as the terrorist attack is sometimes called, did change a good many things, including our relation to religion. For the attack, in which more than 3,000 lives were lost and the economic life of the nation was disrupted in a major way, was in part motivated by religion.

Religion, we were led to conclude, is alive and well today, and is a force not only in private but also in the public lives of people around the globe.

This is not what the mainstream sociologists of the 20th century, who followed in the footsteps of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emil Durkheim, were predicting. Instead of slowly withering away or lodging itself quietly into the privacy of worshippers' hearts, religion has emerged as an important player on the national and international scenes. It is too early to tell how permanent this resurgence of religion will be. The processes of secularization may well continue, though likely not in the older sense of an overall decline of religious observance, but rather in the newer sense of the diminishing influence of religion in contemporary societies. Nevertheless, religion is presently alive and well on the public scene.

In many people's minds, the reassertion of religion as a political factor has not been for the good. It seems that the gods have mainly terror on their minds, as the title of Mark Jurgensmeyer's book on the global rise of religious violence suggests.¹ Among the intellectual elite in the Western cultural milieu the contemporary coupling of religion and violence feeds most decisively on the memories of the wars that plagued Europe from the 1560s to the 1650s, in which religion was “the burning

motivation, the one that inspired fanatical devotion and the most vicious hatred.”² It was these wars that contributed a great deal to the emergence of secularizing modernity.

The contemporary resurgence of religion seems to go hand in hand with the resurgence of religiously legitimized violence.... Hence, the argument goes, it is necessary to weaken, neutralize, or outright eliminate religion as a factor in public life.

As did key Enlightenment figures, many contemporaries see religion as a pernicious social ill that needs aggressive treatment rather than a medicine from which cure is expected. Did not the perpetrators of the 9/11 terrorist attack appeal to religion as the primary motivating force for their act? In the recent war in the Balkans, did not the Serbs fight for the land on which the holy sites of their religion stood? Is not difference between Catholicism and Protestantism at the heart of the civil war in Northern Ireland? Is not religion a major factor in clashes in India? The contemporary resurgence of religion seems to go hand in hand with the resurgence of religiously legitimized violence—at least in the public perception. Hence, the argument goes, it is

necessary to weaken, neutralize, or outright eliminate religion as a factor in public life.

In this essay I will contest the claim that the Christian faith, as one of the major world religions, predominantly fosters violence, and argue that it should be seen as a contributor to more peaceful social environments. This may seem a bold claim. Lest I be misunderstood, let me clarify my thesis. I will not argue that the Christian faith was not and does not continue to be employed to foster violence. Obviously, such an argument cannot be plausibly made. Not only have Christians committed atrocities and engaged in less egregious forms of violence during the course of their long history, but they have also drawn on religious convictions to justify them. Moreover, there are elements in the Christian faith, which, when taken in isolation or when excessively foregrounded, can plausibly be used to legitimize violence. Second, I will not argue that Christianity has been historically less associated with violence than other major religions. I am not sure whether this is or is not the case, and I am not sure how one would go about deciding the issue.

...when it comes to Christianity the cure against religiously induced and legitimized violence...is not less religion, but, in a carefully qualified sense, *more* religion.

What I will argue is that at least when it comes to Christianity the cure against religiously induced and legitimized violence is almost exactly the opposite of what an important intellectual current in the West since the Enlightenment has been suggesting. The cure is not less religion, but, in a carefully qualified sense, *more* religion. I don't mean, of course, that the cure against violence lies in increased religious zeal; blind religious zeal is at the heart of the problem. Instead, it lies in stronger and more intelligent commitment to the faith as faith. In terms of how Christian faith is conceived, my thesis is this: The more we reduce Christian faith to vague religiosity which serves primarily to energize, heal, and give meaning to the business of life whose content is shaped by factors other than faith (such as national or economic interests), the worse off we will be. Inversely, the more the Christian faith matters to its adherents as faith and the more they practice it as an ongoing tradition with strong ties to its origins and with clear cognitive and moral content, the better off we will be. "Thin" but zealous practice of the Christian faith is likely to foster violence; "thick" and committed practice will help generate and sustain a

culture of peace.³ This thesis amounts to the claim that approaching the issue of religion and violence by looking at the quantity of religious commitment—more religion, more violence, less religion, less violence—is unsophisticated and mistaken. The most relevant factor is, rather, the quality of religious commitments within a given religious tradition.

I will support the above thesis by countering some influential arguments about the violent character of Christianity. This is only half of what I would need to do to make my thesis plausible, a negative half. The other, positive half would be to show that at Christianity's heart, and not just at its margins, lie important resources for creating and sustaining a culture of peace.⁴ In the past, scholars have argued in a variety of ways that the Christian faith fosters violence. In a representative way I will engage two arguments which, in my estimation, go to the heart of the matter.

MONOTHEISM

Some scholars, like Regina Schwartz in her book *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism*, argue for the Christian faith's complicity in violence by pointing to the fact that, along with Judaism and Islam, Christianity is a *monotheistic* religion and therefore, Schwartz argues, an *exclusive* and *violent* religion. "Whether as singleness (this God against the others) or totality (this is all the God there is), monotheism abhors, reviles, rejects, and ejects whatever it defines as outside its compass."⁵ Given that the belief in one God "forges identity antithetically," it issues in a mistaken notion of identity ("we are 'us' because we are not 'them'") and contributes to violent practice ("we can remain 'us' only if we obliterate 'them'").

This argument should be taken seriously. And yet it is not clear that an affirmation of divine oneness *as such* leads to violence. Does not the monotheistic claim to universal truth work also against the tendency to divide people into "us" and "them"? If one accepts the belief in one God, in an important sense everybody is "in," and everybody is "in" precisely on the same terms. True, "being in on the same terms" may feel like violence if you don't want to be "in" or you want to be "in" on different terms. But take monotheism away, and the division and violence between "us" and "them" hardly disappears, and if "us" or "them" are religious, they each will appeal to their good to wage war. This is in fact what happens whether religion is monotheistic or tribal. In a polytheistic context violence may reassert itself

with even more force, because it will necessarily be justified by locally legitimized or arbitrary preferences, against which, in the absence of a divinity that overarches the parties, there now can be no higher court of appeal. Even if monotheism is taken vaguely and abstractly as belief in one God without further qualification, it is not clear that it is likely to generate more violence than polytheism or atheism.

None of the monotheist religions espouses such vague and abstract monotheism, however. Specifically Christian monotheism contains a further important pressure against violence, especially violence caused by self-enclosed and exclusive identities of the type criticized by Schwartz. For Christian monotheism is of a Trinitarian kind. What difference does Trinitarianism make?⁶ One of the socially most important aspects of the doctrine of the Trinity concerns notions of identity. To believe that the one God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is to believe that the identity of the Father, for instance, cannot be understood apart from the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father's identity is from the start defined by the Son and the Spirit, and therefore it is not undifferentiated and self-enclosed. One cannot say without qualification that the Father is not the Son or the Spirit because to be the Father means to have the Son and the Spirit present in one. The same holds true, of course, of the Son and the Spirit in relation to the Father and one another.

Moreover, the divine persons as non-self-enclosed identities are understood by the Christian tradition to form a perfect communion of love. The persons give themselves to each other and receive themselves from each other in love. None has to

wrest anything from others, none has to impose anything on others, and none needs to secure himself from the incursions of others. Far from being a life of violence, the life of the divine being is characterized by mutually uncoerced and welcomed generosity.

It would be difficult to argue that such monotheism fosters violence. Instead, it grounds peace here and now in the "transcendental" realm, in the love and peacefulness of the divine being. The argument for inherent violence of Christianity's monotheism works only if one illegitimately reduces the "thick" religious description of God to naked oneness and then postulates such abstract oneness to be of decisive social significance. I do not dispute that such reduction in fact happens within the Christian community. I do contend, however, that this is a sign that the Christian faith has not been taken seriously enough, rather than that it is inherently violent.

CREATION

So far I have argued that Christian faith may generate violence in its "thin" but not in its "thick" form—when a "thick" character of divine being's differentiated and complex identity is reduced to an undifferentiated "One." But what about the argument that some very "thick" and "concrete" Christian convictions generate violence? Central here are the convictions about the world's creation and redemption.

It is a basic Christian claim that God *created* the world. In her influential book *Sexism and God-Talk*, Rosemary Radford Ruether starts with the observation that in the Hebrew Bible, the creator is like an artisan working on material outside his own nature. God does so, she argues, by "a combination of male seminal and cultural power (word-act) that shapes it 'from above'."⁷ In such an account, creation is a result of an imposition of form on formless matter from outside by an alien force. Hence creation is an act of violence.

So what is wrong with this account of creation? Everything—almost. Even if we assume that creation is best described as "forming" pre-existing material, one would have to argue that this material is "something," and that it is a specific kind of something, which deserves respect. But it is not clear at all that chaos, which according to this account of creation God formed, is a "something." And if the chaos were a "something," why would it not be something analogous to a boulder from which an artisan can fashion a sculpture? For all the sparks flying off his chisel, Michelangelo working on *David* can hardly be described as perpetrating violence. For



Goya, *The Cudgel Fighters*, Museo Nacional del Prado, 1819, Madrid

the activity of “forming” to do violence, the entity that is formed must possess an integrity of its own that demands respect. If someone were to smash Michelangelo’s *David* into pieces, this would be an act of violence.

On the whole, however, the Christian tradition has not understood creation as “forming.” Instead, it has underscored that God the creator is not a demiurge working on pre-existing matter; God created *ex nihilo*, out of nothing. The consequences of this understanding of creation for its putative violent character are significant. As Rowan Williams puts it in *On Christian Theology*, when we say that God creates we do not mean that God “imposes a definition” but that God “creates an identity.” He continues, “Prior to God’s word there is nothing to impose on.”⁸ From this it follows that creation is not exercise of an alien power over something and therefore not an act of violence.

Creation, then, is not a violent act. Indeed, one may even argue that short of having a doctrine of creation, relationships between entities in the world, especially human beings, will be necessarily violent. If identities are not created, then boundaries between identities must be emerging out of interchanges between these entities. And these interchanges themselves must be described as violent, since boundaries, precisely because they are always contested, must be described as arbitrary from a vantage point that transcends either of the contesting entities. Given scarce resources, boundaries will always be the products of power struggles, even if those power struggles take the form of negotiations. Moreover, no appeals for arbitration between the contending parties can be made to something which ultimately stands outside the power struggle.

NEW CREATION

If creation is not a violent act, Christian convictions about creation do not generate violence—provided, of course, that they are not stripped of their specific texture and reduced to the formula “x imposes order upon y.” But what about the *new creation*? What about God’s activity to redeem creation from consequences of sin? Clearly, the new creation is not *creatio ex nihilo* (out of nothing), but *creatio ex vetere* (out of old creation), and that “old” and “sinful” creation does possess an integrity of its own (even if it is an integrity in tension with its true character), and can and does assert its will over against God. In redeeming the world, God intervenes into the existing sinful world in order to transform it into a world of perfect love. Is this intervention not violent



Goya, *The Disasters of War*, “Everything is going wrong,” 1820–, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

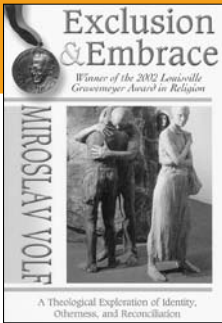
and does it therefore not generate violence on the part of human beings?

The most radical critique of redemptive divine engagement as violent and violence inducing comes from post-structuralist thinkers. For them, any determinacy of the goal to be achieved by divine transformation of this world and any specificity about the agent of transformation already breeds violence. On their account, for what needs to *come*, in contrast to what *is*, not to be violent, it must always remain completely other and cannot be expressed as “onto-theological or teleo-eschatological program or design.”⁹ Any and every Messiah is problematic because by necessity he would exclude something or someone. Hence the only acceptable goal of desirable change is “absolute hospitality,” a posture of welcoming the stranger without any preconditions, just as the only acceptable engagement to achieve it is “radical and interminable, infinite...critique.”¹⁰

“Absolute hospitality” seems generous and peaceful, until one remembers that unrepentant perpetrators and their unhealed victims would then have to sit around the same table and share a common home without adequate attention to the violation that has taken place. The idea ends up too close for comfort to the Nietzschean affirmation of life, in which a sacred “yes” is pronounced to all that is and “But thus I willed it” is said of all that was, with all the small and large horrors of history.¹¹ Absolute hospitality would in no way amount to absence of violence. To the contrary, it would enthrone violence precisely under the guise of non-violence because it would leave the violators unchanged and the consequences of violence unremedied. Hospitality can be

Exclusion and Embrace

By Miroslav Volf



Life at the beginning of the twenty-first century presents us with a disturbing reality. Otherness, the simple fact of being different in some way, has come to be defined as in and of itself evil. Miroslav Volf contends that if the

healing word of the gospel is heard today, Christian theology must find ways of speaking that address that hatred of the other. Reaching back to the New Testament metaphor of salvation as reconciliation, Volf proposes the idea embrace as a theological response to the problem of exclusion. Increasingly we see that exclusion has become the primary sin, skewing our perceptions of reality and causing us to react out of fear and anger to all those who are not within our (ever-narrowing) circle. In light of this, Christians must learn that salvation comes, not only as we are reconciled to God, and not only as we “learn to live with one another,” but as we take the dangerous and costly step of opening ourselves to the other, of enfolding him or her in the same embrace with which we have been enfolded by God.

“This book is a major contribution to political theology today. Born out of the suffering of his people in the Balkans, biblically-grounded and future-oriented to a new human community, it is a great witness to the God who forgives and does not remember forever, creating a new community out of enemies. There is no better theology of the present-day context of life and death.”—Jürgen Moltmann, University of Tübingen

“Combining personal witness, moral passion, and theological erudition with a refreshingly clear style, Volf draws the reader through the complexities of life in a fractured world, demonstrating the multiple ways in which the exclusion of the “other” perpetuates a desperate cycle of violence. He finds hope, not in the answers offered either by modernism or postmodernism, but in the challenge revealed at the heart of the gospel: the wounded yet healing embrace of the suffering servant of Jesus. I recommend it enthusiastically.” —Luke Timothy Johnson, Candler School of Theology

absolute only once the world has been made into a world of love in which each person would be hospitable to all. In the world of injustice, deception, and violence, hospitality can be only conditional—even if the will to hospitality and the offer of hospitality remain unconditional.

Transformation of the world of violence into a world of love cannot take place by means of absolute hospitality. It takes radical change, and not just an act of indiscriminate acceptance, for the world to be made into a world of love. The Christian tradition has tied this change with the coming of the Messiah, the crucified and the resurrected One, whose appearance in glory is still awaited. Is this messianic intervention violent? Does it sanction human violence? The answer is easy when it comes to the Messiah’s first coming. Jesus Christ did not come into the world in order to conquer evildoers through an act of violence, but to die for them in self-giving love and thereby reconcile them to God. The outstretched arms of the suffering body on the cross define the whole of Christ’s mission. He condemned the sin of humanity by taking it upon himself; and by bearing it, he freed humanity from its power and restored their communion with God. Though suffering on the cross is not all Christ did, the cross represents the decisive criterion for how all his work is to be understood.

Does the belief in the Crucified generate violence?

Does the belief in the Crucified generate violence? Beginning at least with Constantine’s conversion, the followers of the Crucified have perpetrated gruesome acts of violence under the sign of the cross. Over the centuries, the seasons of Lent and Holy Week were for the Jews a time of fear and trepidation; Christians have perpetrated some of the worst pogroms as they remembered the crucifixion of Christ for which they blamed the Jews. Muslims too associate the cross with violence; crusaders’ rampages were undertaken under the sign of the cross.

However, an unbiased reading of the story of Jesus Christ gives no warrant for such perpetration of violence. The account of his death in 1 Peter sums up the witness of the whole New Testament well: “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suf-

fered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness" (2:21-24). If there is a danger in the story of the cross in relation to violence, it is the danger that it might teach simply to acquiesce to being mistreated by others, not the danger of inciting one to mistreat others. Whenever violence was perpetrated in the name of the cross, the cross was depleted of its "thick" meaning within the larger story of Jesus Christ and "thinned" down to a symbol of religious belonging and power—and the blood of those who did not belong flowed as Christians transmuted themselves from would-be followers of the Crucified to imitators of those who crucified him.

Finally, what about the Messiah who is still to come in glory? He will come with grace for his followers. But does not the book of Revelation portray him as a Rider on a white horse whose "eyes are like a flame of fire," whose robe was "dipped in blood," from whose "mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down nations" and who is coming to "tread in the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty" (19:11-16)? Some New Testament scholars have attempted to re-interpret the Rider so as to make him fit the generally non-violent stance of the New Testament. What is right about such efforts is that in Revelation the *martyrs* are the true victors so that, paradoxically, the "Beast's" victory over them is their victory over the "Beast." In this they mirror Jesus Christ, the slaughtered Lamb, who conquered his enemies precisely by his sacrificial death.¹²

Yet, the Rider is not simply the Lamb; he is the Lamb in his function as the final judge. But why is the final judgment necessary? Without it, we would have to presume that all human beings, no matter how deeply steeped in evil they are, will either eventually succumb to the lure of God's love or, if they don't, willingly embrace not only the evil they do but the destructive impact of evil upon their own lives. This belief is not much more than a modern superstition, borne out of inability to look without flinching into the "heart of darkness." True, evil is self-contradictory and, if unchecked, is bound to self-destruct. But evildoers are so much "better" as evildoers, the better they are at knowing how to keep making themselves thrive while wreaking havoc on others. No doubt, goodness can and does overcome evil. But the power of evil rests in great part in the fact that the more one does evil the thicker the shield becomes that protects the evil from being overcome

by good. The book of Revelation rightly refuses to operate with the belief that all evil will either be overcome by good or self-destruct. It therefore counts with the possibility of divine violence against the persistent and unrepentant evildoer. Those who refuse redemption from violence to love by the means of love will be, of necessity, excluded from the world of love.

How should we understand this possible divine violence? In the context of the whole Christian faith, it is best described as symbolic portrayal of the final exclusion of everything that refuses to be redeemed by God's suffering love. Will God finally exclude some human beings? Not necessarily. I called the divine "violence" "possible." For it is predicated on human refusal to be made into a loving person and therefore to be admitted into the world of love. Will some people refuse? I hope not—and the Bible along with the best of the Christian tradition has never affirmed with certainty that some will refuse and therefore be excluded.

...the power of evil rests in great part in the fact that the more one does evil the thicker the shield becomes that protects the evil from being overcome by good.

It is possible (though not necessary) that the coming about of the new creation will require divine violence of exclusion of what is contrary to the world of perfect love. The crucial question for our purposes is whether this possible divine violence at the end of history sanctions actual human violence in the middle of it? The response that resounds throughout the New Testament, including the book of Revelation, is a loud and persistent "No!" Though imitating God is the height of human holiness, there are things which only God may do. One of them is to deploy violence. Christians are manifestly not to gather under the banner of the Rider on the white horse, but to take up their crosses and follow the Crucified. If they were to do otherwise, once again, they would be involved in "thinning" out a "thick" element of faith and making a mischievous use of it. They would be arrogating for themselves what God has reserved only for himself, to transpose the divine action from the end-time to a time in which God explicitly refrains from deploying violence in order to make repentance possible, and, finally, to transmute a possibility of violence into an actuality. "Thick" reading of Christian eschatological convictions will not sanction human violence; to the con-

trary, it will resist it.

CONCLUSION

Let me underscore one more time that my point in this lecture is not that the Christian faith has not been used to legitimize violence, or that there are no elements in the Christian faith on which such uses plausibly build. It was rather that neither the character of the Christian faith (it being a religion of a monotheist type) nor some of its most fundamental convictions (such as that God created the world and is engaged in redeeming it) are violence inducing. The Christian faith is *misused* when it is employed to underwrite violence.

How does such misuse happen and how should we prevent it? If we strip Christian convictions of their original and historic cognitive and moral content and reduce faith to a cultural resource endowed with a diffuse aura of the sacred, we are likely to get religiously legitimized and inspired violence in

situations of conflict. If we nurture people in historic Christian convictions that are rooted in its sacred texts, we will likely get militants for peace, if anything. This, I think, is a result not only of a careful examination of the inner logic of Christian convictions; it is also borne by a careful look at actual Christian practice. As R. Scott Appleby has argued in his book *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, on the basis of case studies, contrary to a widespread misconception, religious people play a positive role in the world of human conflicts and contribute to peace not when they “moderate their religion or marginalize their deeply held, vividly symbolized, and often highly particular beliefs,” but rather “when they remain religious actors.”¹³



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Worship in a Violent World: Deconstructing Ordinary Liturgies

Siobhán Garrigan

This article is the skeleton of a paper presented to the bi-annual Ceili-uradh Conference, whose theme in 2003 was “Worship in a Violent World.”¹ My brief was “to examine what ordinary liturgies might be saying on issues of worship in a violent world.” My co-presenter, Graham Ward, treated “extra-ordinary” liturgies.

As a Government of Ireland Humanities and Social Sciences Scholar in the year 2000, I studied the liturgical theology of the Republic of Ireland. I wanted to look at what this conference calls “ordinary liturgies” but to avoid talking solely about the Eucharist because, when theologians write about worship, Eucharist is often the exclusive focus. However, it was difficult to find communities that did anything other than Eucharist as ordinary worship. Where once many Church of Ireland parishes had regularly said Morning Prayer on a Sunday, they now celebrated only the Eucharist; where once an isolated priestless parish had a non-Eucharistic service it now had a Eucharist, with pre-consecrated hosts; where once the Ecumenical Women’s group in Mayo had met for prayer and sharing, it now met mostly for Eucharist; and where once Roman Catholics had observed numerous sacramental and devotional practices, the only one most now knew was Sunday Mass.

If the Eucharist has become our only way of worshipping, we have a ritual of remembered and, in some cases, re-presented violence as our normative practice. I have written elsewhere about the problems inhering in the actual Eucharistic practices in Ireland, arguing a connection between our particular ways of doing Eucharist (basically, without bread or wine being consumed by the assembly)

and the particular violences we have yet to heal: famine in our recent past (so: guilt at eating bread) and intra-Christian war in our present (so: not being convinced that blood is redemptive). Here, I look not at our symbol-usage (bread and wine), but at our language-exchange. I want to argue that the mere fact of doing only Eucharist is a symptom of the same unresolved problems. Of all the stories Christians tell, we in Ireland tell most the all too familiar one about the political prisoner who had supper with his friends before being betrayed to the colonial government by an informer, held by the authorities without fair trial, tortured, and executed. And the way the story is told in our communities is by the ritual breaking of bread—the breaking of a body—and the ritual pouring of wine—the spilling of blood. The point of the story, the *original* Good Friday Agreement, is that only through this profound act of violence could we be liberated. Just how liberating this story is in our own context, where the bodies of political prisoners—and those they have, in turn, broken—are the greatest fuel for Ireland’s ongoing violence, is compromised by how ordinary it has actually become.

Let me begin, then, by saying that no liturgy should become “ordinary.” No assembly of Christian worshippers, whether it convenes three times daily in a monastery or once a week in a parish

setting, no matter how often *repeated*, or felt to be familiar, is ever ordinary. Ritual Studies tells us that religious rituals are composed of “ordinary acts, extraordinarily practiced,”² that is, although they are essentially composed of very ordinary things, their ritualized context is not ordinary relative to ordinary life. And theology tells us that, because Christian liturgy is the intentional manifestation of God’s commonwealth in our midst,³ it is a set of interactions of utter openness to an incarnate God, and there is nothing ordinary about an incarnate God, or about the realm that God breaks-in with every liturgical interaction.

Nonetheless, there is a distinction between liturgies performed frequently which may only be known *over time*, and those performed only occasionally, if at all, in a lifetime. The former contextualize the latter: if we come to know “ordinary” rituals over time, other, occasional rituals make sense: marriages, funerals, ordinations, special celebrations. Without the ordinary, there is no extra-ordinary.

Even with such qualification, there are at least three limitations of “ordinary” liturgy. For most Christians in Ireland, the ordinary is constituted by what happens in church on Saturday night or Sunday morning. For most Christians in the Republic of Ireland, it is Mass, and this is our first problem. In our own deeply sectarian context, it matters that my Catholic nephew said, “I notice you sometimes go to the Protestant Mass.” It doesn’t matter that he noticed—although it was surely the subject of conversation at home—what matters is that Protestants don’t necessarily do “Mass,” yet Mass is the only word he has for it. Mass is so ordinary that not to be Mass is not extra-ordinary, but non-ordinary. Extra-ordinary is seen as special. Non-ordinary is seen as, at best, different and, at worst, wrong. Hence, having an “ordinary” in a violent world is not necessarily benign because the opposite of ordinary is not extra-ordinary but non-ordinary. Non-ordinary people are frequently the victims of violence precisely *qua* non-ordinary; the same cannot be said of extraordinary people.

The second problem is quite different: even within known codes of normativity, what constitutes “ordinary” liturgy often gets turned on its head. This can happen in two ways: the first is due to the illusion that liturgies are performed “by the book” (see below); the second is due to the hard-to-avoid circularity that comes when scholars try to deconstruct liturgy. Catherine Bell’s work has been important in pointing out how, when studying ritual, we have a strong idea of what we look for before we find

it.⁴ Academics who analyze Christian worship thus tend to look first at liturgical texts and, from them, create an expectation of practice; when practice is unexpected, they declare it non-ordinary.

As a result, what theologians say happens in worship often does not; and the converse is equally true: the theology embodied and articulated in worship practices often goes un-remarked by theologians.⁵ The “ordinariness” dictated by the Book of Common Prayer or the Sunday Missal is often significantly altered by actual practices. In my research, recording Sunday services in many Irish churches, I was astounded at how often prayers were omitted or changed, key responses left unsaid, words to hymns dropped or changed, scripture cut or re-translated, common gestures—the sign of peace or genuflection—done in a multitude of ways, and communion withheld or avoided. None of these changes is accidental. When liturgical scholars notice that practices are being changed from established norms, they often remark that things are being “done wrongly”—rather than, “this is extraordinary,” or “this is a new sort of ordinary.”

So is ordinary liturgy what is prescribed or what is actually enacted? As a liturgical theologian, who privileges worship as the main place where theology is formed, I vote, not surprisingly, for the latter. But to say that “ordinary” liturgy is what is actually enacted, rather than what the liturgical text⁶ dictates, is to acknowledge a base-line *contingency* in practice. This makes ordinariness endlessly relative, which has two serious consequences: it leaves liturgy both prone to abuse and harder to study, because we have far greater rigour in interpreting texts than we have yet acquired in interpreting experience.

I shall return to this point in discussing my methodology for studying actually performed liturgy. But first, I briefly note a third problem with supposedly “ordinary” Christian liturgies. In Ireland various groups of Christians meet and worship together, ritualize together over time in Christ’s name and yet are usually considered extraordinary or non-ordinary by academic theologians. These include feminist Eucharist groups, ecumenical Bible study and prayer meetings, meditation services at reconciliation centers, gay and lesbian Eucharist and fellowship communities; services in hospitals, nursing homes, chaplaincies, and schools, priestless parishes developing Eucharistic and other services—regular gatherings of people performing developed repertoires of symbolic acts. Such liturgies are generally considered “marginal” in relation to the “ordinary” liturgies, marginal economically, geographically, by

dint of sexuality, gender or other power dynamics—and yet for participants they are as ordinary as Sunday Mass to my nephew.

Or are they? When thinking about what he does at Mass, my nephew feels an entire society's message of affirmation; when my feminist friend goes to her Sunday evening gathering of feminist Christian women, she lacks the same sense of cultural, political or social affirmation. Perhaps this is what makes Sunday worship in the mainstream churches "ordinary": cultural and social power. And, as noted above, if that social and cultural power is construct-



Goya, *The Disasters of War*, "The cord breaks," 1820–, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

ed in a history deeply scarred by imperial violence and remains deeply enchanted with the mythology of violence, a profound danger resides in the affirmation offered my nephew.

The remainder of this paper will examine case studies from both mainstream and "marginal" locations. I suggest that our liturgies themselves sometimes contribute to and sometimes challenge our violent world, at times within one service. How effective they are in either regard depends largely on the way they conduct the social and cultural power that flows through them, because violence is usually the product of misplaced or abused power. None of the examples chosen is "about" violence as we usually think of it: the war, domestic or other "hidden" violence, biblical stories of aggression; rather, each case exemplifies human intersubjectivity expressed in liberative or non-liberative speech. The notion of violence is here more subtle: the violence of human relationship held, or not held, in balance.

Some preliminary explanation is needed about my methodology. Postmodern theories have exposed the instrumental categories in which liturgy has long been treated as not merely confining but dangerous: confining in their dualisms; dangerous in their esotericism, being the product and property of an educated elite and not the ritual practitioner. Louis Marie Chauvet's work on sacramentality has thoroughly exploded the myth of a split between intent and action, arguing on the basis of Heidegger that reality is mediated by language and thus theology needs to locate its interpretation of things liturgical in the body—and not in ontology.⁷

The difficult question is *how* to interpret what the body knows? How do we access our ritual symbols, including speech? How, without falling back on instrumental categories, such as: the priest raises the host, which "means" x; the congregation recites the prayer, which "means" y; when x and y are enacted in tandem, z breaks through. In sum, how do we interpret *experience* instead of texts? When it comes to examples, even Chauvet, like most liturgical theologians, analyzes printed Eucharistic texts!

The problem is how to interpret our actions, symbols, and very un-written lives. One of the few critical theorists to take this problem seriously is Jürgen Habermas. Habermas noted that for the late twentieth century the dominant scientific method for interpreting experience was Parsons's idea of *action* as the basic unit of social analysis. Theologians felt the force of this prevailing orthodoxy acutely: most Christian churches introduced liturgical reforms during this period and almost without exception, their documents described liturgies as actions and revised the rites to accentuate action. Habermas criticized the effects of "action" as an analytic category (although worship was not at issue), because it obfuscated uneven power relationships. He developed a theory based on the proposal that *interaction*, not action, was the most basic unit of social analysis: no action can occur independently of its immersion in interaction.

Most significant for theology is this position's radical reconceptualization of the subject. The individual acting subject—you or I, he or she—is no longer seen as a unit, but the product of a greater, more basic, unit, all subjectivity having been revealed to be *intersubjectivity*. In liturgical terms, this removes any notion of an individual acting subject, be it the "unit" of the individual worshipper, congregation, or presider, and replaces it with the "unit" that is the very interaction of worshipper with fellow worshipper, with presider, and with God.

How does this help us interpret our experience? First, contrary to much modernist thought, it affirms that experience *can* be interpreted: what is often deemed “inaccessible” is described as such in order to mask its governing power relations. In his legal and political theory, Habermas critically examines how our whole “lifeworld” has been colonized by capitalist economic ethics. His insistence that experience can and must be accessed is central to his campaign to limit the governmental and corporate power abuses. This stance alerts us to the possibility that those who claim that rituality cannot be accessed are protecting something: clericalism, perhaps, a particular view of priesthood, a sense of power, denominationalism—or, in Ireland, colonialism or sectarianism. Second, this position offers a new model for interpretation, a means of accessing experience.

Habermas, like Chauvet, maintains that language mediates reality, but proposes that by studying not language-meaning but language-usage we can interpret a particular reality. Habermas claims that all our interactions are rooted in a set of “formal pragmatics,” a network of *claims to validity*—to (1) truth, to (2) trustworthiness and to (3) appropriateness/truthfulness. These three claims refer respectively to (1) the propositional content of any statement, to (2) the social and moral right of its speaker to speak, and to (3) the speaker’s sincerity. In any given interaction, all three validity claims are in play, but usually only one is explicit.

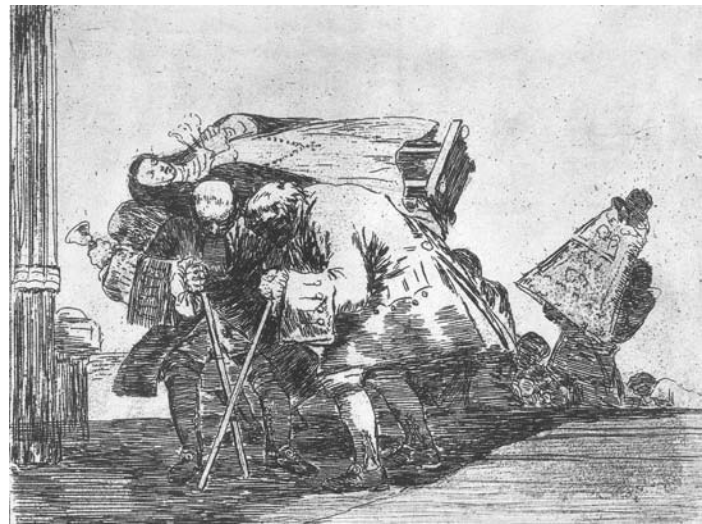
Habermas perceives that previous social sciences divided the world into actors and actions, interpreting each from the perspective of purposive-rational action. This has resulted in social structures determined by “power over” models, producing the violence of oppressive personal relationships, and, in many cases, the violence of the state. These very structures can, however, be undermined by a more nuanced interpretation of the language-exchange used to construct them. Such interpretation reveals a sub-structure that holds the seeds of more equal communicative action and hence social relations free from violence, verbal or physical.

This theory’s strength lies in the fact that reason, and its appeals to truth and justice (or other “norms”), is situated only in everyday communicative action. Hence, the theory is profoundly post-metaphysical. Habermas is saying that the idealizations we make in daily rounds, developed through speech, afford the rational grounds upon which we found our values. The validity claims transcend their particular social location not by appeal to an

abstract ideal, but by virtue of their immersion in the rational world we inhabit and express through our raising and redeeming of those very claims.

In practical terms, then, this theory exposes the conditions of possible understanding that are negotiated through the raising and redeeming, or refusing, of validity claims. With liturgies in particular, this allows us to see made explicit what might ordinarily seem implicit if we interpret actions as actions and not as interactions, or speech as semiotics and not as *intercambio*, ex-change.

Consider one basic liturgical interaction. “The Lord be with you” expects the response, “And also with you.” In case studies of Roman Catholic Masses, I was astonished to notice the frequent omission



Goya, *The Disasters of War*, “No less curious,” 1820–, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

of this interchange, scripted to initiate any Mass. Often, the priest simply said, “In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit” followed immediately by “Let us pray.” Before reading Habermas I would not have considered this change from the text; but, the lenses of communicative action suggested that omitting the greeting obscured who was speaking to whom, because interaction between presider and congregation had not been established. With this realization, it came as less of a surprise to note that often the congregation did not respond “Amen” to the priest’s “In the name of the Father....” If the trustworthiness claim that ought to have been negotiated in the greeting—yes, you speak in the name of the Lord—is not established, then the truth claim—of our collective participation in the triune God—is weakened.

Christian liturgies are a complex matrix of communicative interactions. Sometimes the presider and the assembly interact (Peace be with you...), sometimes the entire assembly speaks directly to God (Our Father/Mother, who art in heaven...), sometimes presider, assembly and God are differentiated in a three-way exchange (Lift up your hearts; we lift them up to the Lord...), at other times congregants speak one with another (as at the sign of peace). In my studies, sometimes these interactions tend to communicative action—and then, through the very equality of relationship they enact, they present a powerful counterpoint to the world's violence. However, at other times these interactions tend toward strategic action and, I suspect, contribute to violence.

CASE STUDY 1

First, an example of communicative action from a Roman Catholic Church in County Mayo:

About 70% of the congregation, who had had their heads bowed for the whole Eucharistic prayer, even when bells rang at certain points, and who had said neither the Sanctus nor the acclamation, joined the presider at the conclusion of the prayer as he said, "Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever, Amen."

Given the lack of congregational verbal participation in the Mass up to this point (less than 30%), the fact that so many people spoke these words is significant. But it is also significant because the words are prescribed for the priest alone, the congregation being required to consent just with a final "Amen." So their speaking this prayer with the presider is a trustworthiness claim: it is literally claiming the right to speak, claiming that the truth of these words and their rightness at this time make it compelling for the whole assembly and not just one person to speak them. For these words to be truthful, the speaker must be the whole assembly, not the presider alone.

Conditions of Possible Understanding (CPU): Certain prayers cannot be spoken by the presider on the congregation's behalf (even if they are scripted to be so; and even if other prayers, scripted to be said by the congregation, are in practice said by the priest alone); the Christological truth claim being made in this prayer can only be understood if uttered—it cannot be negotiated and consented-to by means of the "Amen" response alone.

CASE STUDY 2

Second, an example from an assembly of gay men worshipping together in Dublin:

The reader, seated, read an extract from Ephesians, ending with "This is the Word of the Lord." The congregation responded, "Thanks be to God" and everyone, prompted by the missalette, immediately sang the hymn, "All People that on Earth Do Dwell."

This exchange works on several levels: the singing responds directly to the reading; it is a full-voiced redemption of the *truth* claims inhering in Ephesians. However, it also qualifies the congregants' interpretation of the reading by challenging the truth claims made in it: here the people sing "All people that on earth do dwell," emphasizing the inclusivity of God's engagement in creation. The simple act of singing in unison is also an act of consensus-formation. For one of the other hymns I noticed two people not singing; for another of them a man sitting close-by changed all the "father" imagery to "god" or "creator"; so the unison with which this truth claim is raised, challenged, and redeemed is not to be taken for granted.

CPU: First, God's revelation must be recognized as being for all people—there must be an explicit test of its inclusivity; second, consensus can be expressed by singing together.

CASE STUDY 3

Third, an example from a Church of Ireland parish in Co. Galway which had, up to this point in the service, enacted the rite *exactly* as scripted in their service book:

At the signal for the peace to be passed, everyone who shook hands with me said something, and they nearly all said something different, to me or to one another, including: "Peace," "Peace be with you," "Peace, NAME," "The Peace of Christ," "Hello, NAME," "Good to see you," "Hi," and "Nice to meet you."

This interaction was unusual, because it was not the case that one spoke while another listened; rather both took one another's hand and spoke simultaneously. The variety of greetings is also unusual, as it departs from the "Peace be with you" suggested in the order of service. This too is a *truth* claim, responding to the priest's words a few moments earlier, "Peace be with you," expressed as a desire to provide grounds to justify their response "And also with you." The fact that the community felt as free with their words and movement as they did (i.e.:

DIANNE BILYAK

Standing Buddhas of Bamiyan Kept Watch

*The temple bell stops, but the sound keeps
coming out of the flowers. —Basho*

They stood in place for over 1500 years,
carved directly from rock
and shaped into body.
The size of buildings,
these ample doses of optical impact
have witnessed countless eyes
hoisted up in reflection.
They once had painted robes,
and gilded heads and hands.
Eventually their charisma
was defaced by vandals,
and weather faded them back
to the color of the surrounding stone.

When an American museum heard
about the imminent destruction
they offered to divvy up the statues
into moveable cargo,
adjusting devotional icons into artifacts.
Imagine the glossy brochure
they would have made for that exhibit.
Curators brainstorming with trustees
over which font to use, *parchment* or *papyrus*.

The word *Taliban* is the plural
of *Talib*, which means “religious student.”
But it’s a flock against memory and spirit,
proving with rapid brutality
the Buddhist assertions of impermanence.
Putting irony and semantics aside,
in the spoils of careless war,
they’re just killing something
that’s already dead.

But is that any comfort to those Buddhas?
Or any of us, as our own voices clench,
dumbfounded in disbelief and awe?
In the past tense now, they rest in pieces,
the deliberate seeds of cause and effect
force-fed into them as palpable ammunition.
Estranged by artillery,
A stray ear is pressed to the ground,
it listens to the bulk get sidetracked,
hears the deafening koan of a new age,
hears the sound of one hand,
fully loaded (and clapping) as it strikes
the forest of sand below.

freedom to change the script) reflects the diversity of participants (each giving a slightly different greeting) and their unified vision for their activity (each greeting not just their neighbor but as many people as possible). As speakers they desired to say an authentic word; as hearers they desired to hear as many co-worshippers as possible.

CPU: Community/communion is a live thing, it is not taken for granted; it must be forged and affirmed through one-to-one interaction: touch, eye-contact, greeting, listening; every time, with as many fellow-worshippers as possible.

Each case exhibits communicative action: negotiating leadership roles, expressing consensus, forging relationships through various verbal and non-verbal interactions, interacting directly and openly with one another and with God. There is no restraint to one's ability to negotiate, no coercion to act in an undesired way, no manipulation to do or say something one does not believe. Not every aspect of all Christian liturgies is quite so liberative, as the following examples demonstrate.

CASE STUDY 4

First, again from the same Roman Catholic parish in Mayo:

The celebrant began, "In the Name of the Father [the majority of the assembly made the "sign of the cross" with their hand, but did not speak] and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. I want to welcome today Fr. X as concelebrant of this Mass. Fr. X is originally from Ballyglass and I know you would want me to welcome him on your behalf. He is stationed on the missions in Nigeria and he's here visiting for two weeks and we're delighted he will concelebrate mass with me today, so, you are very welcome Fr. X. Today we hear the story of Jesus' forgiveness of Peter; let us keep this in mind as we pray to God our Father, I confess to almighty God...." Less than 10% of the congregation joined him in saying the prayer of confession.

Firstly, the presider does not greet the congregation, as the Roman Catholic missal prescribes (minimally: "The Lord be with you": "And also with you"). This establishes the priest as sole speaker rather than priest and congregation as partners. Secondly, the subsequent monologue confirms first impressions: the priest makes the sign of the cross and immediately says "Amen" without pausing, or lowering his voice, booming through the p.a., to allow the congregation to join him. By so doing he raises a *truth* claim (that we gather in the triune name of God) but

denies the congregation the opportunity to assent or challenge. Thirdly, the presider then immediately welcomes at length the concelebrant "on your behalf." The priest has not yet established dialogue with the people on whose behalf he claims to speak and they get no opportunity to challenge or affirm because he moves swiftly on. Fourthly, instead of saying "Let us pray" he instructs the congregation to remember his theme for the day. But, fifthly, "we" do not pray. Most congregants do not respond verbally and those whose mouths seem to move can nevertheless not be heard because the presider's voice is so loudly amplified.

CASE STUDY 5

And from the Church of Ireland parish, from the sermon: then he said, "You see, you can't just take it in as it's read, you have to read it over and over, over days. And that might mean you actually have to open your Bibles. Now that would be a novelty, wouldn't it." He paused for a second. Most people in the congregation, who had been looking directly at him, were looking down. He cleared his throat and carried on.

In Christian worship, the sermon is a direct challenge from the assembly to the presider to give grounds, it is a *truth* claim. Earlier liturgical acts prove the preacher's trustworthiness; what remains is to justify the truth claim made in reading the gospel. In the exchange described above, speaker and hearer alike recognize that the truth claim was not in fact being justified.

The priest's comments betray his assumptions about his addressees. It is one thing to challenge an assembly who have given the mandate to preach; it is another to make assumptions about the faith practices of that assembly and issue a sardonic rebuke. In the subsequent pause and the throat-clearing cough, we see that the priest himself needed to interrupt the dialogue, to register the breach of trust manifest in his words. The loss of eye-contact also signaled the rupture.

CASE STUDY 6

And, finally from an Irish-speaking church in a geographically and economically marginal location on the west coast:

The priest began the offertory prayer and the people did not say any of the three responses written for them, but the priest did. The sound of money jingling was heard right

through till the collection at the end of the prayer. It was impressive then, that when the Eucharistic prayer began a moment later, the congregational responses to each and every part were said strongly.

The congregation refuses their lines one minute, but says them loudly and clearly the next. This is no accident. There is a relationship between the audible offering of the people's money and their refusal to assent to the offering of bread and wine. Communicative interaction breaks down at the obvious level during the offering prayer, with the priest saying the congregation's part in their place when they fail to do so. It is not the case that the priest always speaks the congregation's part—in the Eucharistic prayer he is entirely quiet while the people say their pieces in full voice. At the offertory, the priest, overriding obvious resistance, speaks on the congregation's behalf. It may be canonically legitimate in the Roman liturgy, but in terms of communicative action it is a violation, a distortion because their resistance (and the uncertain reasons behind it) is gagged.

In case studies of numerous worship services in Ireland, there were hardly any that did not include a similar example of strategic action, although it must be said that they were far less frequent in the marginal locations. Why, when worship can be the very location in which communicative action, actions that free us from any and all forms of domination, is it so often also the space where both subtle and overt forms of domination and coercion are reinforced? I think we can borrow from Habermas's vision of a politics free from systemic distortion and hope for the same in our liturgies.

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to three areas of potential re-construction: the first is leadership. We urgently need to renegotiate our notion of liturgical presidency to be clear about the limits and responsibilities of the power we invest in our leaders and the power we retain for ourselves. We need to question where the authority of our interactions resides. In my studies of Roman Catholic parishes, the presider often abused power by saying or doing things that violated the assembly's ability to speak; however, just as often, congregations constrained their presider to an isolated and over-powered position by not bothering with liturgical responses, not challenging when given the chance to challenge and not redeeming validity claims when directly asked to do so. These behavioral patterns are deeply ingrained in us by history, the product of a profoundly ambivalent political relationship between people, government

and ecclesiastical hierarchy—and this ambivalence has only been strengthened by the fact there is now a clerical sexual abuse case pending in nearly every parish in Ireland.

One of the most consistent differences between marginal and mainstream conditions of possible understanding exposed in liturgies was that in the marginal locations, leadership was nearly always challenged, defined or otherwise negotiated within the ritual. By modeling the exercise of largely unaccountable power in our mainstream liturgies, we give the unaccountable power that causes violence in society a real sense of legitimacy. We make it sacred.

The second area involves the grammar of the dialogue itself. We need to start small, with the basics of our intersubjectivity. Much valuable work has been done in recent years on how liturgical language can exclude, suggesting possibilities for non-patriarchal and gender-inclusive language and for greater emphasis on hospitality. We also need to ensure that in *using* this language and in our gestures, music, song, sound, and speech, we focus on dialogue. If there is no such thing as subjectivity without intersubjectivity, then let's pay greater attention to our *interaction*.

In terms of language-exchange, the behaviors that engender communicative action are seemingly simple, but extremely difficult to practice: do not interrupt one another, except, of course, to stop a violation; do not be anonymous in your speech actions; always allow for a response; make space for the other; be imaginative; be authentic. It is simple stuff, basically boiling down to: do not talk over one another (but it is too often the case that, to be heard, the worshipper battles: loud microphone, no time for responses, no space to locate her story in the community's story). It is far, far easier said than done; but as the "practice non-violence" movement has taught us for twenty years, it is in such seemingly insignificant interactions, and not by purchasing a gun, that violence enters our world.

Thirdly, and lastly, the Eucharistic liturgy itself should no longer be considered a "unit," a subject, but, rather part of an intersubjective unit of all acts of worship. At its most basic level, this unit is the whole of life; but a specific way of redeeming the truth claim that violence is liberative would be for us to consider the Eucharist not as our ordinary liturgy, but only in tension with and in relation to other acts of corporate worship. It is always already related to Baptism, but this relationship could be more explicit in our worship practices. Could we de-

velop its relation with Morning Prayer, grace before meals, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Evensong, or ecumenical Bible study groups? It is inevitable, if we celebrate the Eucharist in isolation, that only part of its story will be told.

It will also mean that only a part of God is known. The significance of deconstructing liturgies along

these lines is not that we develop a mandate for their renewal; but that we come to know God more fully, to worship God more passionately. What the ordinary interactions of ordinary liturgies show is that like non-violence, God is, as often said, in the details.



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Violence in God's Name: Religion in an Age of Conflict

Oliver McTernan

Orbis Books, \$20, 192 pages

By Maurice Timothy Reidy

Not long after September 11, British Prime Minister Tony Blair tried to assure a nervous public that the terrorists who acted that day were not representative of Islam. The attacks, he argued, were “no more a reflection of true Islam than the Crusades were of true Christianity.” Blair’s words were part of a larger campaign to convince Western audiences that the terrorist attacks were not primarily religious in nature, but the result of economic and political grievances. When war came, President George W. Bush argued that it was not a war against Islam, but one against despotic regimes.

The instinct to absolve Islam of responsibility for the terrorist attacks is understandable and, in many ways, admirable. It is also, in the opinion of Oliver McTernan, entirely wrongheaded. In *Violence in God's Name*, McTernan, a former Catholic priest and broadcaster for the BBC, argues that religion was not the secondary cause for 9/11, but the engine that drove the terrorist agenda that day and in scores of other conflicts worldwide. To deny as much, McTernan contends, is to underestimate the strength and determination of religious extremists. “My argument is that the religious factor in contemporary conflict does matter, and that it should not be dismissed as an epiphenomenon, a proxy for some other cause,” McTernan writes. “Religion needs to be acknowledged as an actor in its own right.”

McTernan rehearses the three main theories on the causes of conflict: grievance, greed, and creed. Some blame social inequalities for war, others the presence of “lootable” resources like diamond and timber; the risk of conflict, the argument goes, is significantly higher in countries where power promises access to precious commodities. The third theory, that religion plays a primary role in conflict, has become more popular since 9/11.

The terrorist attacks present compelling evidence that religion cannot be ignored as a primary cause for conflict. McTernan also examines religious divisions in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, and Israel. This is the best section of the book, with excellent overviews of all three conflicts.

The practice of using religious texts to justify violence is, of course, hardly new. McTernan cites the obligatory examples, including (as expected) the Crusades. But he also writes about lesser-known

cases, such as the story of the Singhalese king Dutthagamani. Historically, religious leaders have excused these acts as aberrations, not representative of their respective traditions. McTernan’s provocative point is that there are so many examples of religiously motivated violence that they cannot be so easily dismissed. Religious leaders must take responsibility for these actions and, most importantly, find a way to prevent them in the future.

The big question is how. Unfortunately, McTernan doesn’t supply a satisfactory answer. While his political suggestions are helpful, his prescriptions for religious institutions are frustratingly vague and naïve. He argues that religious leaders who believe there is only one way of “interpreting the sacred” must become “pluralists,” committed to their tradition, but also to the importance of religious diversity. What does this entail? McTernan hints that religious traditions should surrender their claims to the capital-T truth in order to cut down on discord. That would no doubt solve a lot of problems. However, many religions claim to have a unique understanding of the divine. To deny that understanding would be to deny an essential part of one’s faith. This is a problem that ecumenical leaders have struggled with for decades. It cannot be solved by a simple call for tolerance.

McTernan makes a persuasive argument that religion is still a player on the world stage and cannot be ignored. But a more nuanced understanding of belief is needed to solve the age-old problem of religious discord.

Maurice Timothy Reidy is an associate editor at Commonweal magazine. He has written for The Hartford Courant, America magazine and the Columbia Journalism Review.

Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill

Jessica Stern

ecco/Harper Collins, \$27.95, 368 pages

By Kevin Eckstrom

One of the most unsettling aspects of the September 11 terrorist hijackers was their ability to morph easily into American life. Suddenly, the Muslim extremists who wanted us dead were no longer just screaming caricatures waving AK-47s in the streets of Tehran; they were living among us. From anti-government separatists in Arkansas to militant Jerusalem Zionists to an executed killer of an abortion provider, Jessica Stern's *Terror in the Name of God* describes a new breed of religious terrorists who defy conventional labels. Religious violence, she says, is anything but a Muslim phenomenon.

Her key question is what would make an otherwise God-fearing man or woman take up arms in a perverted expression of religious devotion. What is it that so motivates—and justifies—a war against the infidels? Stern finds her answers in her one-on-one visits with terrorists in Palestinian refugee camps, in the militarized valleys of Kashmir, and at a banquet of the “save-the-babies” movement against abortion. Religious terrorism, at its heart, is an ends-justify-the-means attempt to purify a polluted culture of any number of dangerous influences. “Holy war intensifies the boundaries between Us and Them,” Stern writes, and lays out in strict black and white a world that is increasingly gray. While some—like Paul Hill, who was executed last year for the 1994 murder of an abortion doctor—sentence only the truly “guilty” to death, others, like Osama

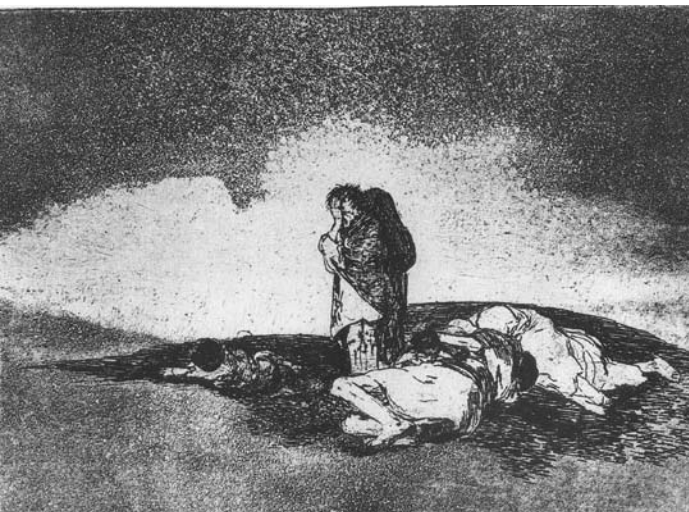
bin Laden, target entire civilizations. Innocents (even Muslims) caught in the crossfire are treated as “collateral damage.”

Terrorist leaders exploit the grievances of poverty, dispossessed land, historical wrongs, and perceived cultural ills to recruit foot soldiers in their holy wars, Stern writes. Often the recruits are emasculated, frequently humiliated, drifters whose search for purpose and mission finds hope in the promises of eternal rewards. “People join religious terrorist groups partly to transform themselves and to simplify life,” writes Stern, of Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, and formerly of the National Security Council and the Council on Foreign Relations. “They start out feeling humiliated, enraged that they are viewed by some Other as second class. They take on new identities as martyrs on behalf of a purported spiritual cause. The spiritually perplexed learn to focus on action....Uncertainty and ambivalence, always painful to experience, are banished.”

Terror in the Name of God is not billed as a theological treatise on the abuse of religious faith in the name of terrorism. Indeed, much of the book is a platform for Stern’s exhaustive—and sometimes exhausting—expertise on terrorism in all its forms. She devotes little time or space to finding ways for religion to correct its own internal compass, beyond saying that society must not succumb to the “spiritual dread” sewn by terrorists. But, in a subtle yet stunning rebuke of U.S. foreign policy, Stern proposes that Americans can no longer ignore the conditions that help fuel the terrorism virus. We can no longer look the other way at the sight of conditions such as despotic governments, rampant poverty, gratuitous sex and violence in American entertainment, or Israeli “double standards” in their treatment of the Palestinians, she believes. We must combat the growing perception that only what is good for Washington is good for the rest of the world.

In her final analysis, Stern unearths why the war on terrorism is fundamentally a fight over irreconcilable values, not religion, culture, or territory. Americans, she said, embrace the idea that “every human being is inestimably valuable, whatever his race, gender or religion. Another is our commitment to freedom of religion, but not freedom to murder for religious reasons. These, alas, are values that put us fundamentally at odds with our foes.”

Kevin Eckstrom covers Catholicism, mainline Protestantism, and politics for Religion News Service. He lives in Washington, D.C.



Goya, *The Disasters of War*, "Nobody could help them," 1820–, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

ENDNOTES

THE BIBLE AND THE LEGITIMATION OF VIOLENCE

- ¹ Deut 7:1-6.
- ² Some formulation of the Golden Rule is known to nearly every culture, East and West. See Hans Dieter Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount* (Hermeneia: Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 509-16.
- ³ Emmanuel Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999) 23: "I have already spoken much about the face of the other as being the original locus of the meaningful."
- ⁴ On the Exodus paradigm see Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).
- ⁵ Edward Said, "Michael Walzer's *Exodus and Revolution*: A Canaanite Reading," *Grand Street* 5 (winter 1986) 86-106; Robert Allen Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians: Deliverance, Conquest, and Liberation Theology Today," *Christianity and Crisis* 49 (1989) 261-6; Keith W. Whitelam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (London: Routledge, 1996) 71-121.
- ⁶ James Barr, *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 209.
- ⁷ Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1960) 151.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.
- ⁹ Conrad Cherry, ed., *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971) 11-12.
- ¹⁰ Qoh 3:3.8.
- ¹¹ Gerd Lüdemann, *The Unholy in Holy Scriptures: The Dark Side of the Bible* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997). Lüdemann provides an extensive discussion of the ban in holy war (pp. 36-54).
- ¹² Luke Timothy Johnson, "Lessons from Premodern Biblical Scholarship," *Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology 2001 Conference*, Princeton, November 9-11, 2001, conference abstracts, 4-5.
- ¹³ So, in very different ways, Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 97, Otto, *Krieg und Frieden*, 76-156; Greenberg, "On the Political Use of the Bible," 466-69.
- ¹⁴ So James G. Williams, *The Bible, Violence, and the Sacred: Liberation from the Myth of Sanctioned Violence* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991) 243. Williams bases his approach on that of René Girard. Compare also William Klassen, "Jesus and Phineas: A Rejected First Century Role Model," *SBL Seminar Papers* (1986) 490-500.
- ¹⁵ The phrase of David Shulman, *The Hungry God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
- ¹⁶ Compare Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 2: "If art imitates life, scripture likewise reflects it in both holiness and horror."
- ¹⁷ Barr, *Biblical Faith*, 218.
- ¹⁸ Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 238.
- ¹⁹ Hannah Arendt, "To Save the Jewish Homeland: There is Still Time," in Ron H. Feldman, ed., *Hannah Arendt, The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age* (New York: Grove Press, 1978) 181-82; quoted by Marc H. Ellis, *Unholy Alliance: Religion and Atrocity in Our Time* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997) 7.
- ²⁰ Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2001) 61.

CHRISTIANITY AND VIOLENCE

- ¹ Mark Jurgensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
- ² R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999) 2.
- ³ The best way to explain my use of "thick" and "thin" is to compare it with usage by others. Clifford Geertz has made popular the use of the contrasting pair "thick" and "thin" (*Interpretation of Cultures* [New York: Basic Books, 1974] 3-30). In his book *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), Michael Walzer has introduced an altered sense of "thick" and "thin" as he applied them to moral argument. "Thin" for me is, for instance, when the words "under God" on the Pledge of Allegiance are drained of specific religious content so that they become more a cultural tradition than a theological assertion; "thick" is when "God" in the said phrase refers to the God of Jesus Christ or to Allah or to Jahwe, which would make the phrase unconstitutional under the "no establishment" clause. I am concerned to show how "thinning" of religious practice opens religious convictions to be misused to legitimize violence because it strips away precisely what in "thick" religious faith guards against such misuse, whereas Walzer is concerned to show that morality is "thick" from the beginning and that the "thin" morality as universal always resides within the "thick" as particular (Walzer, 4).

- ⁴ See my *Exclusion and Embrace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).
- ⁵ Regina Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997) 63.
- ⁶ For the following see Miroslav Volf, “‘The Trinity is Our Social Program’: The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement,” *Modern Theology* 14:3 (July 1998): 403-23.
- ⁷ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983) 77.
- ⁸ Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000) 68.
- ⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994) 75.
- ¹⁰ Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, 90.
- ¹¹ See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin Books, 1954) 139, 253.
- ¹² See Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 74, 90.
- ¹³ Appleby, *Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 16.

WORSHIP IN A VIOLENT WORLD: DECONSTRUCTING ORDINARY LITURGIES

- ¹ I am profoundly grateful to Edward Kessler (Cambridge) and Natalie Wigg (YDS) for their reactions to and criticisms of the paper.
- ² R.L. Grimes, *Deeply Into the Bone: Re-inventing Rites of Passage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) 346.
- ³ See the discussion of the theologies of J.B. Metz and Christopher Rowland in Siobhán Garrigan, *Beyond Ritual: Sacramental Theology after Habermas* (Abingdon, Oxon: Ashgate, 2004).
- ⁴ See Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- ⁵ A notable exception is the work of my colleague here at Yale, Martha Moore-Keish. Borrowing from the methodologies of Ritual Studies, she has developed a system of interviews, surveys and observation of a congregation over time which has revealed Eucharistic theologies of remarkable depth and complexity. “Reading Local Eucharistic Theology” [A presentation to the Liturgy Symposium at Yale, November 3, 2003].
- ⁶ Although I say “text,” I include the worship norms of those Christian traditions which, while describing themselves as non-text based in their worship practices, nevertheless have a strong sense of a “norm” in their patterns of meeting for worship. In an Irish context, I am thinking mostly of the Elim Pentecostal and the fast-growing Evangelical Fellowship churches.
- ⁷ See Louis Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1995).

From the Managing Editor



Jamie L. Manson,
Director of Publications

We hope you have enjoyed this first issue of the revitalized Yale Divinity School publication *Reflections*. As many of you remember, for the second half of the twentieth century this publication featured theological inquiries into contemporary concerns of the church and the world. Though its content varied over the years, *Reflections* always maintained its core commitment to expressing the thoughts of the finest scholars of religion in writing at once profound and accessible.

Since setting out to put *Reflections* back on press, our goal has been to build upon this legacy. The magazine will be published twice a year with the content of each issue centered on one theme of religious inquiry. It will incorporate essays, sermons, book reviews, poetry, and artwork that relates to the theme. Each of these pieces will demonstrate a dialogue between the academic study of religion and the religious issues of importance to the world outside the academy.

This issue showcases the work of Yale Divinity School faculty and students. Future issues will also invite intellectual and creative contributions from among our alumni and alumnae, as well as those beyond our campus. The articles in this issue present theological responses to violence on a global level, in the Bible, in the parish community, and in the quiet pain of the human psyche. In each of their approaches, our authors reflect on the ways in which violence has affected not only their academic disciplines, but also the human reality that lies at the heart of their work.

The images that illustrate each issue will be the work of noteworthy artists. As you notice, the artwork of Francisco Goya illustrates many of the pages of this issue. Goya's work was particularly suited to this issue because of his singular ability to depict the horrors of violence with sensibilities that are as profoundly religious as they are human. So often in history, the artist has complemented the theologian in the creation of images that express ideas, realities, and mysteries that even the greatest theological prose has strained to capture. The faces that surround the *madrileño* on the cover depict multiple human responses to violence: anger, rebellion, surrender, escape, despair, prayer. The faces surrounding Christ on the frontispiece portray the human realities that lead to violence: zealotry, greed, ignorance, betrayal, avoidance, cowardice. The expressions contained in these images are as rich and multi-dimensional as the reflections expressed by our authors in this magazine.

In word and image, *Reflections* highlights the central place of theology in the intellectual conversation about vital issues concerning human life. Whether through an engagement of global concerns, texts that have shaped history, disciplines of the academy, or experiences that touch the human heart, *Reflections* is committed to exploring current questions that lead to the contemplation of ultimate meaning.

The previous issue of *Reflections*, volume 90, number 2, published in spring of 1995, featured a portrait of H. Richard Niebuhr on its cover. In the decade since, Yale Divinity School has undergone an extraordinary transformation, though its connection to tradition remains throughout its halls, most especially in its main auditorium named for Niebuhr. It is our hope that, like its revitalized campus, this magazine will signify the Divinity School's continued engagement in the future of theological inquiry. It is with great joy and anticipation for that future that Yale Divinity School presents volume 91, number 1, of *Reflections*.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. L. Manson'.

Jamie L. Manson

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