Who Is My Enemy?

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Who Is My Enemy?

Questions American Christians Must Face about Islam—and Themselves

Lee C. Camp

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To my parents

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You've heard it said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so you may be children of your Father in heaven; for God makes the sun to rise on both the evil and the good, and sends rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you—well, so what? Even mobsters love that way, don't they? And if you show care only to your brothers and sisters—well, what's the big deal there? Even those who have no relation with God love that way, don't they? So, grow up—into the sort of whole and complete love with which your heavenly Father loves.

—Matthew 5:43–48 (author's translation)

Our struggle is not against enemies of flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this present darkness.

—Ephesians 6:12 (author's translation)

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Preface

"Public Enemy Number One" was killed last night.

The night before I signed off on the proofs of this book, Osama bin Laden was killed. The United States' Public Enemy Number One for a decade and the mastermind of the 9/11 terrorist plots, bin Laden had been hunted down and his death was greeted with widespread revelry and celebration. The media reported student gatherings in front of the White House complete with chants of "U-S-A!" President Obama, in announcing the killing of bin Laden, asserted, "Justice has been done." Numerous government officials called bin Laden's death a "victory against terrorism."

But how do we determine *who* our enemies are? *And*, who is the *we*? "Our enemies are not flesh and blood," said the apostle Paul. Nonetheless, if we do identify "enemy" with any given person, how can killing that enemy be a victory for those who follow the Jesus who taught us to love our enemies? Moreover, does our celebration of such killing really serve as a victory over the forces of terror? Certainly Osama bin Laden, his body cast into the sea, will himself foment no more terror and strife. But ultimately, can such vengeance overcome evil? Can there even be such a thing as a "war against terror"? If the light of Christ has overcome the darkness through suffering love, if at the cross of Christ the justice of God was satisfied, and if we are called to take up our cross and follow Jesus, what then? Could it be that the killing of Osama bin Laden is but a continuation of bin

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Laden's ways, which in the end can only be overcome in the long-suffering love of Christ?

These are neither trivial nor flippant questions, and I raise them with much trepidation.

A few months ago I sat across the table from a man who had been described by the local media as stirring up the populace by warning of a coming Muslim threat to America.[1] Knowing that theology is biographically informed, I began by asking him to tell me his story of what brought him to the questions and concerns that were animating him in recent years. He told of being raised a conservative southern Christian, later becoming an Episcopalian, and still later a serious Buddhist. But after September 11, 2001, he recounted, he no longer had interest in Buddhism but would spend his time studying the Qur'an and the Sunna (the words and deeds of Muhammad).

He grabbed a piece of paper and, employing the handwriting of the scientist he is by training, recounted his statistical analysis of how often war-making is discussed in the texts of Islam,[2] the Old Testament, and the New Testament: 31 percent for the Islamic texts; 5.3 percent for the Old Testament; and 0 percent for the New Testament, he claimed.[3] We talked at great length about his understanding of the texts. He clearly believes Islam to be a threat, and dangerous. I recounted alternate interpretations, citing a prominent Muslim theologian in Jerusalem. He responded by saying he cares nothing about "Muslimology." "I don't care what any Muslim may *say* about the Qur'an or Islam; I only care about the authoritative original *texts*," he said in effect.

It just so happened that we were two doors down from the mosque on Twelfth Avenue in Nashville. About that time a young man entered the shop, who, from the looks of his apparel, was Muslim. So I said to the man across the table from me, "Have you ever met with local Muslims, talked to them any?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because Muhammad teaches them that I am their enemy. So if they are Muslims, I am by definition their enemy. And since they believe that Muhammad was one of the greatest of men, I cannot be friends with someone like that. They are my enemy."

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I share with you in this book my own recent journey, trying to make sense of such claims. What are we to make of the apparent threat posed by Muslim militants, and what are we to make of the perceived differences between Christianity and Islam? I have come to think there are some things that need to be said that are not being said, so I started digging around, traveling where I could, and having conversations with folks I never dreamed of having conversations with, in order to better say these things. This journey has taken me not only to the mosque in Nashville but also to the Blue Mosque in Istanbul; to the Oklahoma City National Memorial, where an angry American ex-military man killed 168 people in cold blood; to Hebron, where I would drink Coke with a lifelong PLO activist and colleague of Arafat; to the hills above the Sea of Galilee, where I would read the Sermon on the Mount; to the Old City of Jerusalem, where the blood of Muslims ran deep at the hands of Christian Crusaders; and to New York City and Ground Zero, where the blood of many tribes and tongues was spilled at the hands of Muslim militants.

In this process I have found myself rattled again by what Jesus actually taught and lived, and I frankly wish sometimes that he had taught and said something different than he did. And I have discovered tales and truths both troubling and challenging, which I share herein.[4]

Book writing, like any good work, demonstrates that our myths about individualism are untrue. All work worth doing is necessarily dependent upon the work, goodwill, support, and kindnesses of others. I am thankful for Lipscomb University, the daily Christian community of which I am grateful to be a part, especially Provost Craig Bledsoe for research funding; Craig Katzenmiller and Jonathan Melton, former students and now friends who provided research assistance on this project; the support of the staff of Beaman Library, especially Carolyn Wilson and Rachel Pyle; my dean, Professor Terry Briley, my departmental chair, George Goldman, and all my colleagues in the College of Bible and Ministry and the Hazelip School of Theology, with whom I share a Christian community in which much is held dearly in common, while enough is not held in common to provide us sufficient opportunity to practice charity one with the other, and they most often with me; and Randy Lowry,

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president of Lipscomb University, who continues to challenge us all to do good work well.

I count it a great gift to have been called to the vocation of teaching. I thank my many students who have paid attention to the questions we raise together, who have never let me utter glib platitudes without asking how the gospel must be embodied in real life, and how it is embodied in my own life.

Special thanks to the Louisville Institute, under the direction of James Lewis, whose Christian Faith and Life Grant accorded opportunity for writing and research, as well as travel to the Middle East. In Palestine, I was very graciously and kindly received by the staff at Tantur Ecumenical Institute. There, Fr. Michael McGarry Sr., Bridget Tighe, and all the staff and scholars in residence received me with great hospitality, and I thank them for allowing me space and time and support for my first stay in that land. Professor Mustafa Abu Sway and Fr. David Burrell were especially gracious to me and of great encouragement. In Istanbul, I was also graciously received by the faculty at Fatih University. This work would not have been possible without such support and would certainly not be very interesting without such engaging and lively conversation.

I also thank the following individuals who read all or portions of the manuscript and gave such gracious, helpful, and challenging feedback: David Burrell, Jim and Gayle Camp, Everett Ferguson, David Fleer, Josh Graves, Gyasi McKenzie, Scot McKnight, Melissa Snarr, Glen Stassen, Mustafa Abu Sway, Ken Switzer, and Marshall Switzer. Greg Daniel, author-agent extraordinaire, helped envision this work, and Rodney Clapp, wise counselor and gentle editor, has brought this project to reality. I thank them both, along with Lisa Ann Cockrel, BJ Heyboer, Lisa Williams, and all the staff of Brazos Press. I also thank the many fellow travelers at the Otter Creek Church who sustain, encourage, and challenge me.

I am profoundly grateful for my wife, Laura, and for the relationship God has given us. We have shared so many wonderful times and difficult times together, and I give great thanks. And to be the father of three sons—Chandler, David, and Benjamin—what great joy, a blessing beyond measure. Finally, I dedicate this book to my parents, Jim and Gayle Camp, who first called me to seek first the kingdom of God.

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I thank all these, without assuming that any of them agree with the contents herein. Some of them, no doubt, disagree on important points. Moreover, there is so much more that needs to be said; but book writing is like picture painting in this regard: it can never be done, never perfected. One must simply find a good stopping place, and I pray that I have chosen such a place to stop working on this particular project.

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1

The Muslim Enemy

. . . all these people who want to kill us . . .

—A Nashville resident,
on the local Muslim population

On a recent Independence Day, I delivered a lecture in which I shared my developing understanding of Christian and Muslim views of war and peacemaking. In the question-and-answer period that followed, a woman noted that since it was the Fourth of July, we should all be very thankful for our liberties. That being the case, she asked, how should we respond to those people just down the street here in Nashville, down at the mosque on Twelfth Avenue, "all these people who want to kill us?"

I was so taken aback, I found it difficult to know how to respond to the cavalier stereotyping of one and a half billion people. "I don't think the people on Twelfth Avenue do want to kill us," I said after a moment of awkward silence. "I do," she responded without pause. "Why . . . well . . . ," I stammered, "have you talked to any of the people on Twelfth Avenue?" "No," she replied, "but I've read books." I was sure—and I said so—that she was quite terribly wrong. But I

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was not equipped sufficiently, either intellectually or experientially, to articulate all the ways in which she was wrong. Nor was I sufficiently equipped to voice my conviction that her companion was also wrong. He had raised an objection that I had previously heard from others, that there is only one way to understand the Muslim's view of the world: there is the house of Islam and the house of war. Those not submitted to Islam must be the target of war until they submit. And moreover, he said, any Muslim who says otherwise is merely practicing the Islamic art of deceit. When I cited one source from a well-credentialed Muslim scholar to the contrary, the man replied, "I don't care what your little book says. I'm telling the truth."

I was already acquainted with such hostility. One pleasant November morning I strolled to the end of our driveway to peruse the morning paper before leaving for the ivory tower where I hang my shingle. Reading the Nashville morning paper is no habit of mine. Pure self-interest motivated me, expecting a story to mention a lecture I had delivered at an "interfaith gathering." Our university's new Institute for Conflict Management convened the gathering to make space for honest dialogue among practitioners of various faiths in Nashville. As a faculty member of the university, I was assigned to speak on the "Theological Ground for Peaceful Coexistence."

In the Southeast, where our particular Christian tradition has its largest number of congregations in the United States, it has not been uncommon for jokes to be made regarding our sense of superiority, our historical sense that we have been the only "real" Christians, that we embody the "true church," and no others. The stereotype is in many ways out-of-date, but stereotypes die a slow death. Thus, for us to host a gathering of not merely different sorts of Christians but also adherents of other religions was no small step. It had been, I thought, a good day. I was impressed that there was none of the drivel that seems often to pervade ecumenical or interreligious sorts of talk, none of that pabulum that suggests we are "all saying the same thing, just in different ways."

But serious conversations, carefully nuanced and peppered with rhetorical questions, can quickly get misconstrued. The story I expected to be buried deep in "Local News" was instead an above-the-fold front-page story titled "Christians Must 'Let Go' of Some Beliefs for Sake of Peace, Theologian Says." Readers concluded I had

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argued that we should "let go" of the lordship of Jesus precisely for such so-called peace.[1] I uttered an expletive and went into the house to let my wife know it was going to be a long day.

When I arrived at my office shortly thereafter, I was dismayed when one of the departmental assistants knocked on my door to let me know that a Nashville talk-radio program was on the line, asking for me. In less than three hours, I had been contacted by talk radio in Detroit and Fox News in New York City and was getting unhappy emails from across the Southeast. The local Nashville rap station, one student reported to me later, held a call-in survey. I was found to be "stupid" by a wide margin. My inbox filled; the phone rang incessantly—hundreds of messages by the end of the day. I heard from people across Tennessee, then California, New Zealand, Manhattan, and Israel. By the end of the day, I had been called a moron, an idiot, a *dhimmi*, and an a**hole. The following evening's lead news story on the local Fox affiliate covered the uproar, complete with name-calling and demands that my job be revoked without further delay.

If the task of a theologian is to stir people up, one colleague emailed me to say, you have had great success today.

A man wrote from Knoxville: "We need to broaden our belief's [*sic*] by giving up what we believe? You're worse than an idiot because an idiot never knew. You're simply an a**hole." An old college classmate wrote to tell me that I had become "a joke to common sense, decency, and intelligence." Those who believed themselves to understand Islam—especially a number of people apparently spurred to polemical action because of a posting on an apparently right-wing political blog[2]—wrote to chastise my lack of understanding of Islam. The subject line of one email—"Professor Dhimmi"—caught my attention. I did not yet know what a "dhimmi" was.

> I read that you are teaching your students that they must renounce some of their Christian values if they want to live in peace with Islam. Where did you get that idea? Do you truly understand what Islam teaches? The Umma views the world in 2 parts; the house of Islam and the house of war. There can never be peace until there is just the house of Islam. Non Muslims are given 3 choices per the

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> Qur'an; convert, submit or accept dhimmitude, or die. Then there will be peace.

Many wrote to say similar things. There can be no peace. Muslims do not want peace. They want you to convert, or they will kill you, and if they say otherwise, then they are lying.

The respondents seemed to fall into two camps. There were those who incorrectly concluded that I had publicly denied the faith, that I had publicly professed that we should "let go" of the lordship of Jesus in order to get along with Jews and Muslims. Some of these respondents, though deeply troubled, were nonetheless gracious in their response. An email from New Zealand (!) received late in the day admonished me with the words of the apostle Paul: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel."

But there was another group whose starting point was simply fear. Some of them were (and some were not) interested in Christian orthodoxy. But they were clearly fearful of Muslims. My lecture had indeed suggested that the church must "let go" of an attempt to dominate the world, must "let go" of medieval Christendom models that continue to live on in contemporary American Christian communities. This struck a vein of fear: there can be no dialogue with Muslims, no parley with the enemy, no trusting conversation, because the enemy simply wants to convert you, kill you, or make you submit.

So another email, apparently from a real estate developer in Memphis, came with the subject line "Professor Dhimmi is your name." *Dhimmi*—a new vocabulary word twice in one day. *Dhimmi* is not in the Webster's dictionary I have on my shelf. Several of my colleagues did not know the word either. I would learn that a *dhimmi* is a poll tax paid to Muslim authorities in exchange for protection, typically required from Jews and Christians. The developer said:

> I will not give up my belief that Jesus Christ is the son of God and that he is Lord of all—period. I believe there are several hundred million other Christians who believe the same way and are willing to die to defend their beliefs. There will be no peace with Muslims because that is not what they want. Muslims want one of three things—converts, dhimmis, or death.

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> By the way—the Crusades were the Christian response to Muslims raping, pillage, and killing everyone in their path that stood up to them as they swept across Europe. Learn some history you moron.

I actually *would* learn more about the Crusades, and I would learn that the one who called me a moron (in Jesus's name, of course) actually knew less about the Crusades than he apparently thought.

But that would be later. At the time, I found that day's events instructive for my own inner life. I realized the immense power of media and the rapid ease with which media can misconstrue substantive conversations. I realized, in later reflection, how vain and fearful I am. My own university and church community were immensely supportive, but I realized that I nonetheless remain a people-pleaser. I still want everyone to like me. More perniciously, I realized how much I like attention: "All press is good press," someone told me, and there was a deep place that resonated with the attention, a realization that prompted shame. I would confess later to a mentor that the greedy part of me was pleased with the thought that the attention might mean I sell more books. And, on the other hand, I realized how one's own psyche, when publicly called names and made a public spectacle, if only for one's fifteen minutes of infamy, leads one to duck one's head and keep quiet so as not to be dubbed a troublemaker.

There also remained this nagging question: what *do* I really know about Islam? The furor, the fear, the outright hostility—what was behind this? Had I been a dupe? (One emailer compared my reconciling words to the acts of Neville Chamberlain.) Moreover, why had I, as a faculty member in a university with explicit Christian commitments, never taken time to have any substantive conversations with Muslims, especially when a mosque sits just about a mile north of our campus? I realized my own failing to get to know my neighbors. And thus some new experiences began to unfold.

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2

To Seek to Understand Rather Than to Be Understood

Eight or nine years ago, I was frustrated with some new policy at our university, and I turned to one of my colleagues after a faculty meeting and said, "That really makes me mad." He looked at me, laughed, and replied, "You're always mad." It was a stinging, revelatory moment for me. Something of an addiction to the rush of the state of being offended had developed.

About that time in my life I rediscovered the beautiful prayer traditionally attributed to Francis of Assisi:

> Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. *Amen*.[1]

"Double Vision"

To seek to understand rather than first to be understood; rather than indulging my anger and the desire to be offended, I first listen well

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to the other. What if we were to take this approach as a theological method? That is, rather than a posture of fear, condemnation, or resentment, what would it mean to employ what Alan Jacobs calls a "hermeneutic of love"?[2] What would it mean to seek to read texts and engage in theological conversation with no other goal than to love God and neighbor and enemy? Miroslav Volf's excellent book *Exclusion and Embrace* employs different terminology but a similar approach, which he calls "double vision." He does not mean by this "fuzzy vision." Instead, he calls us to look at things from another perspective, namely, the perspective of our enemies. In doing so, we may be able to see things we could not possibly see otherwise:

> We enlarge our thinking by letting the voices and perspectives of others, especially those with whom we may be in conflict, resonate within ourselves, by allowing them to help us see them, as well as ourselves, from *their* perspective, and if needed, readjust our perspectives as we take into account their perspectives. Nothing can guarantee in advance that the perspectives will ultimately merge and agreement be reached. We may find that we must reject the perspective of the other.[3]

But such a practice may also allow us, he notes, to bring our different conceptions of justice alongside one another so that our different understandings enrich one another and perhaps even issue forth in unexpected forms of agreement.

This is no call to some intellectually lazy relativism. On the one hand, it is important for us to reject the modernist conceit that it is possible to "see things as they really are," to see, as it were, with God's eyes. But to reject such an intellectual arrogance—that we can simply see things with timeless, universal eyes—is not the same thing as saying that one opinion is as good as any other.[4] But it is a call to intellectual humility. We are all finite human beings, belabored not only with our finitude but also with prejudices and presuppositions and our own experiences. That is, we all see things from our own perspective. All our knowing is "socially located." We see things as we see them, and at our best, we seek to describe the world as we see it and understand it, fairly and without self-promoting agendas, but all the while acknowledging that our seeing and knowing are inescapably mediated through our time, place, experience, and often, ill motives.[5]

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Is there any theological ground for the practice of double vision, of seeking first to understand rather than to be understood? One obvious ground is found at the foot of the cross of Jesus. That is, whatever we learn or think we know must be mediated through what we first learn through a crucified Messiah. In my own experience, however, a theology of the cross is what very often drives the rhetoric of certainty and being offended. Someone might object, for example: "Does not Jesus's crucifixion presuppose that God is holy, that humankind is unholy, that God is a God of absolute righteousness who can hold no parley with unrighteousness? Playing intellectual games like double vision brings us nigh unto making a mockery of a crucified Lord, a Lord who died because of the wickedness and injustice of the unrighteous. Our task is not to try to understand the perspective of the wicked. Our task is to call them to repentance, to call them to embrace what we know is good and right."

But the manner of retelling the story of the crucifixion in Scripture invites us to see *ourselves* among the guilty perpetrators. "For us, sinful and limited human beings, following in the footsteps of the Crucified means not only creating space in ourselves for others, but . . . making also space for their perspective on us and on them."[6] If we take seriously the New Testament's insistence that we are all broken, all need a Great Physician, all are slaves to the "power of sin," then the principle of fallibility—that is, a deep awareness that I may be wrong and need to look for *my* part, for *our* part—inevitably follows.[7]

A second commitment that would lead us to the practice of double vision is simply the call to love our enemies. How can I possibly love one to whom I refuse to even listen? How can I possibly love one whose viewpoint or experience I refuse to grant even a hearing?

Double Vision at Ground Zero

My wife and I made our way to New York City on a recent September 11 to observe and pray. Saint Paul's Chapel sits just alongside the World Trade Center site and was a place of refuge for rescue workers and firefighters in the days of crisis surrounding the attacks. There I came across a small note, a thank-you note from a little girl

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for the tireless and self-sacrificing labor of the rescue workers and firefighters. She raised the question often heard in those days about the terrorist attackers: how could they do this to us? How could they do this?—this is an important question. But unfortunately this question often becomes dismissive rather than empathetic. What if we take that question as an authentic agenda of understanding? Really, how could our enemy see the world the way he or she does? What in their experience, in their presuppositions, in their vision, could contribute to the deeds or words or actions we find so unjust and horrid? And what might they see about us, from their perspective, that we might not see?

But the rhetoric we employ to express our outrage may shut ourselves off from the possibility of such questions. To call a certain number of nations the "axis of evil," for example, precludes asking such questions as these. No one wants to *talk to* or try to *understand* "evil." Moreover, even suggesting the practice of double vision might be construed as supporting evil. It should be obvious but must be said: this practice of self-examination in response to the evil done by another in no way removes accountability or responsibility for the wrongdoing of the other. This is not the point. Rather, the point is this: if we are even to begin to make space for the possibility of peacemaking or change, then we must first examine ourselves. This is, at one level, what Scripture means when it says, "Let judgment begin with the household of God," or when those in recovery speak of "keeping my side of the street clean."

Thus, double vision requires at least these two things: first, to see things as we see them, to do our best to articulate our understanding without apology or false humility, believing it to be genuinely true and not just "true for us." But second, believing as we do in enemy love, we seek to practice that enemy love through acts of empathy—an empathy that may not agree, approve, or necessarily even tolerate, but nonetheless seeks to understand. Some sort of practice like this, I suspect, is required to keep us from the bondage of bigotry. Perhaps for that reason alone, it is worth practicing. We may, in the process, learn more about ourselves than we learn about the one we call our enemy.

Double vision is one way of practicing common folk wisdom. "Don't criticize until you've walked a mile in the other person's

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shoes.” But such wisdom requires a substantive level of moral maturity. It is a practice important not only in the moral growth of children, for example, but also in the character required to sustain marriages and other long-term relationships. If every argument is simply a resort to one spouse discussing the faults and failings of the other spouse, there can be little hope for reconciliation. A refusal to examine one’s own failures—regardless of the wrong done by the other—is typically judged to be a basic character flaw. It seems to me that such a character flaw must be addressed if Christians are to get very far in seeking to understand Muslims. And vice versa.

“You Are Doing the Very Same Things”

Note too this more general biblical observation: the apostle Paul states that when one classifies oneself or one’s own group as “righteous” and another as “unrighteous,” one has thereby condemned oneself. In the first chapter of the letter to the Romans, Paul categorizes all sorts of wicked behavior. A reader might be whipped into a frenzy of self-righteous indignation reading Paul’s catalog of indecencies and wickedness. And then the sting: “Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things. You say, ‘We know that God’s judgment on those who do such things is in accordance with truth.’ Do you imagine, whoever you are, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God?” (Rom. 2:1–3).

“But we are *not* doing the ‘very same things’! We haven’t flown any airliners full of civilians into skyscrapers,” someone might handily object. But the apostle’s point is not that we share the same *symptoms* of “sin.” One alcoholic may prefer cocktails, and another some Tennessee sipping whiskey. One shopping addict may prefer malls, and another the Home Shopping Network. One bigot may prefer white Americans, and another African Hutu. From Paul’s perspective, one sinner may prefer lust, another greed, and another gossip. But it is all the same sickness.[8] To the degree that I eagerly catalog the sickness in another, says Paul’s stinging indictment, to that degree do I condemn and judge myself.[9]

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But even still, it is an undeniable historical fact that people who claim the lordship of Jesus—and to all appearances, claim the lordship of Jesus in a manner that they take quite seriously—have killed or participated in the killing of thousands and thousands of civilians in acts of horrid violence, certainly as horrid and malicious as the acts of September 11, 2001. Al Qaeda, may God have mercy, prefers airliners. They have done dastardly work. But the Pauline counsel would prompt us to remember other dastardly work and frightening words too, to remember that "our people," our Christian brothers and sisters have been caught up in similar dastardly work.

The most casual perusal of a classic work like Roland Bainton's *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace* serves as the start of such an exercise: the call to war by Pope Urban II, the start of the Crusade to take Jerusalem from the Muslims, a war that employed "crucifixion, ripping open those who had swallowed coins, mutilation—Bohemond of Antioch sent to the Greek Emperor a whole cargo of noses and thumbs sliced from the Saracens." Regarding the capture of Jerusalem, Raymond of Aguilers recounted:

> Some of our men (and this was more merciful) cut off the heads of their enemies; others shot them with arrows, so that they fell from the towers; others tortured them longer by casting them into the flames. Piles of heads, hands, and feet were to be seen in the streets of the city. It was necessary to pick one's way over the bodies of men and horses. But these were small matters compared to what happened at the Temple of Solomon, a place where religious services are ordinarily chanted. What happened there? If I tell the truth, it will exceed your powers of belief. So let it suffice to say this much at least, that in the temple and portico of Solomon, men rode in blood up to their knees and the bridle reins. Indeed, it was a just and splendid judgment of God, that this place should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers, when it had suffered so long from their blasphemies.[10]

In the later so-called wars of religion—though we will ask whether this is a helpful designation—the Catholics sought to slay the Protestants in great number, and the Protestant Huguenots, for their part, "wore strings of priest's ears, buried Catholics up to their necks, and played nine pins with their heads." In England, "Bloody Mary" got her name, of course, in the attempt to keep the faith of

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England pure for Rome, while in the next century the Puritans under Cromwell sought a church free not only from papal authority but also from other perceived limitations upon Christian practice. Thus, Cromwell's Crusade, taking time to sing Psalm 68—"Let God arise, Let His enemies be scattered"—would not only execute the king but give no quarter to Catholics, slaughtering 3,352 of "the enemy" in a single massacre at Drogheda.[11]

In time, of course, other Puritans would make their way westward across the Atlantic, where other such slaughter of indigenous populations would occur, giving rise within a couple of centuries to the greatest amassing of military might ever witnessed in the pages of human history. Though the Western world would seek to separate religion and politics, and killing for religion would become taboo, Westerners would become more and more convinced that their political traditions were the savior of human history, and democracy and democratic institutions the salvation of the world. And that civilization, convinced with a pious fervor as sure of itself as any Crusader ever was, would become the first, and to this point the only, civilization ever to drop an atomic bomb—twice—on civilian population centers, and that after having burned alive tens of thousands of civilians in firebombing campaigns.

Indeed, may God have mercy, for just as the apostle declared, we are all sold under the bondage of sin, all have fallen short of the glory of God, and the wages of such has indeed been the sowing of death and destruction.

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