

**The Missionary's Call to Nonviolence**

**Brett Heerwald**

**Religion 399 Thesis Seminar  
Professor Solberg  
20 November 2004**



## Table of Contents

Introduction	1
I. Understanding Mission, Violence, and Nonviolence	4
II. The Jesuit Mission	15
III. Christian Persecution in India	24
IV. Called to Nonviolence	33
Bibliography	43



## Introduction

There were hundreds of people slaughtered; all that remained among the dead bodies were the charred huts, a few surviving children, the remnants of the battle, and an overwhelming sadness of the events that had taken place. This feeling was present in the aftermath of a battle that occurred during the 18<sup>th</sup> century between the Guaraní Indians who were aided by a few outcaste Jesuits trying to protect the lives of the Indians against South American militaries.

This battle and the events leading up to it were portrayed in a film, The Mission,<sup>1</sup> and in it the Jesuits pleaded for the survival of the mission of San Miguel and attempted to stop the Portuguese from using the Guaraní for slavery. It was concluded that the Guaraní had to relocate their territory and allow for the expansion of Portugal's boundaries. This caused the Guaraní and some of the Jesuits to resist those forces and face the Spanish and Portuguese militaries in battle. As portrayed in the film, the outcome was heartbreaking. The Jesuits who decided to take up arms and resist with force were eventually killed alongside the fighting Guaraní and the nonviolent Jesuits were mowed down by bullets along with the women and children.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Mission, prod. Fernando Ghia and David Puttman, dir. Roland Joffe, 2 hr. 5 min. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1986. DVD.

It was the film that sparked my interest in the actual historical events that took place at the time, and also to reflect on the issue of Christian mission in the face of violence. This situation of the Jesuits causes an observer to ponder the actions he/she would commit if put in a similar position. I put myself in that situation and came to the conclusion that without a doubt I would fight back. That conclusion was not final, however. I began to ponder the atrocities that Jesus had been faced with in his time and the ways in which he responded to those.

What would Jesus have done if he were a Jesuit missionary involved in this conflict? This life or death situation causes great difficulty in trying to predict what a person would and should do when confronted with similar circumstances to those above. Controversy and debate arises when one interprets the Bible in defense for an action or lack of action. I finally came to the conclusion that Christian missionaries are called to live in accordance to Jesus' actions and character, therefore, responding to violence with nonviolent alternatives in any conflict presented to them.

Each chapter of this paper will be in support of that claim. Chapter 1 will provide definitions and distinctions of the three terms and concepts of mission, violence, and nonviolent alternatives. This brief discussion will provide a sense of understanding of the topic being discussed and lead one into the following chapters. Chapter 2 provides the historical events of the Jesuits and Guaraní Indians that was introduced above. In the end, it will fully support the Jesuits who responded with nonviolence. Chapter 3 will look into a contemporary situation in the world today in the nation of India. Presently there is much discrimination and persecution of Christians throughout that country, and it will be shown that the government has aided those acts. Even though those hateful acts are

wrong, the Christian missionaries involved are called to respond nonviolently to them. This provides a relevant example of the crisis between mission and violent conflict, and proves that it is present in today's world. Finally, Chapter 4 will give the Biblical basis for the alternative use of nonviolence. The character of Jesus will be the primary concern of the chapter. Jesus used nonviolence in the face of violent persecution and spoke out against the act of violent retribution. Therefore, Christian missionaries throughout the world are called to respond to violence in a similar manner and seek the use of nonviolence.

## Chapter 1

### Understanding Mission, Violence, & Nonviolent Resistance

It is necessary to define Christian mission, violence, and nonviolence as an alternative means of resistance before providing the reasons for supporting the nonviolent resistance claim. This chapter's purpose is to provide a basic understanding of these three terms and concepts and explain their relationship with each other. This will not be an exhaustive discussion on these three topics, but they will be discussed relatively briefly in order to provide background for the next three chapters of this paper.

#### Mission

Mission is an aspect of Christianity that cannot be ignored or forgotten, because it is the very essence of the faith. Jesus commands his followers to "go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."<sup>2</sup> The apostle Paul writes, "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."<sup>3</sup> These are just two among many passages within the Bible that can be used to partially support the missionary claim. The

---

<sup>2</sup> Mark 16:15

<sup>3</sup> Romans 10:9-10.



Bible gives much evidence for the necessity of mission, but it can sometimes be uncertain exactly what mission means and entails.

The word mission is derived from the Latin verb *mitto*, which means to send.<sup>4</sup> The American Heritage dictionary defines *mission* as a “body of envoys to a foreign country,” “a special assignment given to a person or group,” and “a vocation.” The *missionary* is “one who is a propagandist for a belief or cause,” or “one who attempts to convert others to a particular doctrine or set of principles.” However, *Christian* mission cannot be limited to that set of definitions, because it reaches far beyond that. My primary source for defining mission is David Bosch’s book Transforming Mission, and he says “Ultimately mission remains undefinable...The most we can hope for is to formulate some *approximations* of what mission is all about.”<sup>5</sup>

David Bosch’s work has provided a wonderful account of the paradigm shifts in the theology of mission throughout history, and he gives a definition of mission at the beginning of his book. First off, the Christian faith is fundamentally missionary. As a missionary religion, Christianity holds on to the ultimate truth of salvation found in the will of God and the plan of salvation for all generations on earth. For the sake of mission, it is necessary to continually critique and analyze every definition of the mission.<sup>6</sup> The failure to critique and analyze mission would cause a significant hindrance to the capabilities of mission. There are so many aspects of mission and what mission stands for lays everything on the line, and it is through examining it that allows it to flourish in success.

---

<sup>4</sup> Homer Duncan, Divine Intent (Lubbock, Texas: Missionary Crusader, Inc., 1971), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 8-9.

Mission is responsible for expressing the relationship that is present between God and the world; an expression that can be conducted in all places. A common misconception of mission is that it has to be done overseas, when it can actually be done anywhere and originate from anywhere. Mission takes place and is accomplished when a group of people is (re)introduced to the gospel.<sup>7</sup> A person from the suburbs of St. Paul, Minnesota can become a missionary to the college campus of Gustavus Adolphus College. He or she could be part of a Christian mission to introduce the gospel of Jesus Christ to the students that are present on that campus and then continue to help them on their faith journey.

There is also a distinction that Bosch makes between *mission* (singular) and *missions* (plural). *Mission* refers to the *missio Dei*, or God's mission, which is "God's self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate."<sup>8</sup> From the perspective of *missio dei* mission is "the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus. It is the good news of God's love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world."<sup>9</sup> *Missions* refers to the particular forms, which are related to specific times, places, or needs, of participation in the *missio Dei*.

Evangelism is an extremely important aspect of mission. Evangelism is the "proclamation of salvation in Christ to those who do not believe in him, calling them to repentance and conversion, announcing forgiveness of sin, and inviting them to become living members of Christ's earthly community and to begin a life of service to others in

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 9-10.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 519.

the power of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>10</sup> The Christian mission is called to be out of the world and yet sent into it. Being out of the world by not holding to the values that the world/society holds high, but to reject many of the world’s ideals and rather to accept and teach the ultimate value of faith in Jesus. Therefore, mission is challenged to represent a fraction of God’s reign, “having the first fruits of the Spirit (Rom 8:23) as a promise of what is to come (2 Cor 1:22).”<sup>11</sup>

“Christian mission is having knowledge of Jesus Christ and making him known to the world. It is about passing on the knowledge of Jesus conquering death, that he is wonderfully sufficient to satisfy the longings of the human heart, that Christ is willing and able to meet every person’s needs. Mission is the heart of God reaching out to a lost world. It is the grace of God being manifested in the redemption of men.”<sup>12</sup> When a person allows God to fill his/her every need, it is then necessary to pass on the message of Jesus Christ, and the Bible is a carrier of that redeeming message.

It becomes necessary to pass on the gospel when one believes wholeheartedly certain Biblical passages, such as John 14:6, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”<sup>13</sup> Matthew depicts Jesus as saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”<sup>14</sup> Mission is supported by these verses, other verses, as well as the overall themes and purposes of the

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 10-11.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Duncan, Divine Intent, 1.

<sup>13</sup> NIV translation.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 28:18-20.

Bible. Christian history has proven that the Bible is a source of inspiration and guidance, and history has shown the changes and differences in mission.

The Christian Church has been established for about two thousand years, and throughout those years mission has been a primary aspect of it. The twenty centuries of Christian existence will lead one to conclude that mission does in fact change over time. Different times leads to different cultures and ideas, and it is necessary for mission to evolve over time. Bosch says that "transforming mission means both that mission is to be understood as an activity that transforms reality and that there is a constant need for mission itself to be transformed."<sup>15</sup> While mission is to always be attentive to the changing of the years, it is important for mission always to be constant in its origin and purpose by being grounded in the message of Jesus Christ.

Mission has very many characteristics to it, and there are seemingly endless possibilities in the ways to conduct mission. Mission is not only achieved through speaking, but just as importantly through action and deed. Mission is at its best when it is based on love for all humanity, but more importantly, when it is existing primarily for serving God.

### **Violence**

We live in a world in which violence seems to be increasing by the year. Our country is at war against terrorism, television shows are becoming more gruesome, people of all faiths are being brutally persecuted across the world, etc. One needs only to turn on the news and in the first minute murder will likely be mentioned. American citizens have the liberty to practice whatever religious faith they desire to, but that is not

---

<sup>15</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 511.

the case in many countries around the globe. In 1996 alone there were an estimated 160,000 Christian martyrs worldwide, an astonishing amount, and there were countless others subject to unimaginable horrors.<sup>16</sup> These martyrs were people whose lives ended with violence; their deaths are examples of the reality and abundance of violence.

Christian mission is very important for the faith of Christianity, and many missionaries go to extreme cases to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to many people. The message they bring often encounters much controversy and resistance, which leads to hardships and sometimes violent persecution against missionaries. Christian missionaries have been persecuted throughout history, and future missionaries will no doubt be challenged with confrontation and violence. The missionaries involved with this conflict will need to make a decision on how to respond to their opponents. The choice comes down to whether or not to use physical strength in attack or defense of themselves, those around them, and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Violence is real and all people are surrounded by it frequently. The movie industry, as well as television, strives on the use of violence. America's current situation in Iraq is something that citizens have been bombarded with from the media. The actual violent acts are often not shown, but the aftermath of those acts are seen in the form of dead bodies or crumbled buildings. And there is violence in nature too, whether it is a tornado, hurricane, or any other natural disaster. Everyone is surrounded by some type of violence, but whether they realize the presence of it or not is another question.

The American Heritage dictionary defines violence as "physical force exerted so as to cause damage, abuse, or injury." There are obvious places that violence is present

---

<sup>16</sup> The New Encyclopedia of Christian Martyrs, s.v. "Martyrs from the seventeenth to the twenty-first centuries."

such as war. Humans throughout history have used violence to gain control of many things such as land, freedom from oppression, survival, or self-respect. Martin Luther King says there are three forms of violence; pure nonviolence, which requires extraordinary discipline and courage; violence exercised in self-defense, which is accepted as moral and legal in all societies; and the advocacy of violence as a tool of advancement, organized as in warfare, and used deliberately and consciously.<sup>17</sup> Violence is usually used as a response to an individual, economic, social, political, religious, or institutional disregard for human needs. Violence causes fear, and it is fear that causes people to respond in different ways.

### **Nonviolent Resistance**

It can seem very simple to apply violence to a situation, whereas it is often more difficult to resist from using violence in any way. Nonviolence is a resistance technique used as an alternative to violence. The American Heritage dictionary defines nonviolence as "the doctrine or practice of rejecting violence in favor of peaceful tactics as a means of gaining political objectives." It is impossible to write about nonviolent resistance without mentioning Mohandas Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr. These two individuals were examples of what nonviolence is about. They are both very respected men who will never be forgotten for their words and actions of their lifetimes. It is ironic that both men's lives ended with acts of violence against them. This section will focus its attention on them briefly in order to provide a basic understanding of nonviolence in the face of oppression and persecution.

---

<sup>17</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., "An Experiment in Love," in *A Testament Of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James Washington (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986).

Almost everyone is familiar with Mohandas Gandhi, because he was the catalyst or initiator of three of the major revolutions against colonialism, racism, and violence of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup> Gandhi fought for economic and social equality in South Africa and India. For the majority of Gandhi's life the British were in control of the Indian government, and it was Gandhi who organized the nonviolent non-cooperation against this government to help free his people from bondage. This led to nation-wide boycotts of British manufactures as well as all institutions operated or aided by the British in India. In 1919, the Amritsar Massacre took place in which 400 Indians were killed when British men fired on an unarmed crowd by the orders of their general. This event contributed to Gandhi's determination to win independence through nonviolence.<sup>19</sup>

In March of 1930, Gandhi led one of his most famous nonviolent resistance acts. In India, the Salt Acts made it illegal to possess salt that was not purchased from the government. Gandhi responded to these acts by taking his followers on a 240 mile march to the sea and made salt from the saltwater.<sup>20</sup> The Salt Acts affected the poorest section of the community, and this spectacular and successful nonviolent campaign resulted in the imprisonment of more than 60,000 people. During his lifetime Gandhi fasted many times for various purposes, and each time attention was drawn to him and the purposes of his actions. Gandhi will forever be remembered for his use of nonviolent resistance that created economic and social change. He is known as Mahatma, or the "great soul."<sup>21</sup>

Closer to home and more recent were the actions and words of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement. He was an outspoken Christian and lived

---

<sup>18</sup> The Encyclopedia Britannica, 15<sup>th</sup> ed., s.v. "Gandhi."

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

during a time when black citizens in America were very oppressed and segregated from the whites. King lays out six basic principles for nonviolent resistance in *An Experiment of Love*. First, it is not a method for cowards; it does resist. "The method is passive physically but strongly active spiritually. It is not passive non-resistance to evil; it is active nonviolent resistance to evil."<sup>22</sup> Secondly, this method does not go out with the purpose of humiliating one's enemy, but rather to persuade them and win their friendship and understanding. Thirdly, this nonviolent attack is directed at the forces of evil, not at the people who happen to be conducting this evil. Fourthly, those involved in nonviolent resistance must have a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation, or to accept physical blows from the enemy without striking them back. As Gandhi once said, "rivers of blood may have to flow before we gain our freedom, but it must be our blood."<sup>23</sup> Fifthly, it not only avoids physical external violence, but also internal spiritual violence. The one resisting will refuse to shoot his enemy, but he/she will also refuse to hate that person or group. Lastly, nonviolence is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice. With this, the believer of nonviolence has deep faith for the future, because they feel that there is an ultimate good fighting for justice alongside them.<sup>24</sup>

King spoke against violence and hate frequently, and he states that love is *The Most Durable Power*. "I think I have discovered the highest good. It is love. This principle stands at the center of the cosmos. As John says, 'God is love.' He who loves is a participant in the being of God. He who hates does not know God."<sup>25</sup> King believes in the power of love and its capabilities to overcome evil in this world. He tells his

---

<sup>22</sup> King, *Experiment in Love*, 17-18.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>24</sup> King, *Experiment*, 18-20.

<sup>25</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Most Durable Power," in *A Testament Of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James Washington (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), 11.



followers to not respond to evil with evil; "To meet hate with retaliatory hate would do nothing but intensify the existence of evil in the universe. Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love; we must meet physical force with soul free."<sup>26</sup>

Nonviolent resistance was a tactic that both Gandhi and King used with great success and for great purposes. They are models for today on how to attempt to conduct our conflicts through peaceful manners. Since their time has passed, much has been done to further the message of nonviolence. In 1973 the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) urged more attention to nonviolent action, for reasons of practical effectiveness rather than pacifist principle. It called on Christians to become wiser and more courageous in translating their faith into action. In 1992 the WCC said that active nonviolence should be affirmed as a clear emphasis in programs and projects related to conflict resolution.<sup>27</sup> Hundreds of the nonviolent acts have been conducted since the time of Jesus, and many people are catching the vision of the principle to this day.

King's statements in *The Most Durable Power* equate to his fifth principle of nonviolent resistance above and summarize Christian nonviolence. It is a great message that speaks truth. "Always be sure that you struggle with Christian methods and Christian weapons. Never succumb to the temptation of becoming bitter. As you press on for justice, be sure to move with dignity and discipline, using only the weapon of love. Let no man pull you so low as to hate him. Always avoid violence."<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> King, Experiment, 17.

<sup>27</sup> Encyclopedia of Christianity, s.v. "Force, Violence, Nonviolence."

<sup>28</sup> King, Durable Power, 10.

Christian missionaries ought to pursue nonviolent alternatives in every situation. Sometimes this will take the form of complete nonresistance, but often nonviolent resistance can be used. Even though Gandhi was not a Christian, his nonviolent actions were in line with the teaching and life of Jesus. King truly contained elements of Jesus' character. These are nonviolent models that Christian missionaries can draw upon when confronted with violent conflict. Missionaries conducting the mission of God are called to find a way to respond with nonviolence.

## Chapter 2

### The Jesuit Mission

The topic of the Jesuit mission in South America during the 18<sup>th</sup> century was introduced above, but the mission and the conflict that was horrendously experienced by many will be developed upon in this chapter. As chapter 1 illustrated, there is a brutal reality of a relationship between Christian mission and violent conflict, and the Jesuits in this setting are an example of that relationship.

The first portion of this chapter will focus on the foundations and structures of the Jesuit order. This will be a brief description of the founder and other historical events that took place prior to the time period in study. From there, this chapter will turn to the involvement that the South American governments had with Guaraní slavery and the conflicting interests between the two parties in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The events leading up to the battle portrayed in The Mission will be explained and further discussion will take place. The Jesuits had much influence with the Guaraní Indians and some decided to aid them in their fight against the military forces that attacked them. The aim of this chapter will be to propose that those Jesuit missionaries who fought violently alongside the Guaraní were not in accord with their beliefs, and that rather the Jesuits in that situation

were called to respond with nonviolent actions. More defense of this claim will be found in the final chapter.

### The Society of Jesus

His calling was to be a soldier of God. His vision was to set up a new Catholic order to strive for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine. This man with a calling and vision for God's will was Ignatius of Loyola. In 1540, Pope Paul III gave approval to Ignatius' proposals for the new order, which came to be known as the Society of Jesus.<sup>29</sup> The *Constitutions* that Ignatius wrote alongside his companions have not been changed since 1558, which is evidence of the solidity of his writing and vision.<sup>30</sup>

Ignatius' aim in founding the Society was to promote the glory of God through the spiritual good of the neighbor, to go anywhere the pontiff ordered to be Christ's messenger.<sup>31</sup> Before the final Constitution was produced, Ignatius put his initial ideas down in "A First Sketch of the Institute of the Society of Jesus" and the very beginning gives the reader a glimpse into his ideas;

"Whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the cross in our Society, which we desire to be designated by the name of Jesus, and in it to serve the Lord alone and his vicar on earth, should, after a solemn vow of chastity, keep what follows in mind.

He is a member of a community founded chiefly to strive for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine, and for the propagation of the faith by means of the ministry of the word, the Spiritual Exercises, and works of charity, and specifically by the instruction of children and unlettered persons in Christianity."<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> George E. Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola: The Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 45.

<sup>30</sup> J.H. Pollen, "The Society of Jesus," *New Advent*, 18 August 2004, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cather/14081a.htm>> (6 October 2004).

<sup>31</sup> Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 46.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 45.

Ignatius was elected the first supreme general, the highest position available in the Society, and would prove to be a great leader. Ignatius experienced much success, in terms of numbers and growth, the remainder of his life as he would witness the Society expand approximately to one thousand members fifteen years after its initial formation. These members resided in more than one hundred houses or colleges, and enjoyed much prestige throughout twelve provinces on several different continents.<sup>33</sup> The chief authority is given to the general congregation of the Society, and serves as a form of democracy. This congregation consists of the general, his assistants, the provincials, and two deputies from each province or territorial division. The congregation is rarely called together and usually only meets to elect a new general. The general has full administrative power and spiritual authority and does whatever he pleases as long as his actions are within the scope of the constitutions.<sup>34</sup>

The members of the Society fall into four categories. *Novices* are trained in the spirit and taught the discipline of the order prior to making their religious vows after two years. Members that aspire to be a part of the priesthood go into the next stage as a *formed scholastic*. As a rule, they must stay within this stage from two to fifteen years in order to complete their studies, pass a certain period in teaching, and attain priesthood. Depending on the individual's discipline, virtue, and talents displayed he may become a *formed coadjutor* or a *professed* member. Form coadjutors make solemn vows to the Society and the Society binds itself to them. The professed are all priests who take another vow to obey the Pope and go wherever he may send them for the purpose of mission. The three other stages are considered to be a preparation for the professed

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>34</sup> Pollen, "The Society of Jesus."

members. All members live in similar communities and all are bound to the rules of the Society.<sup>35</sup>

During the preparatory process to becoming a priest, the novice must take part in the spiritual exercises. Usually, one is guided through four weeks of meditations on sin and its consequences, *Christ's life on earth, his passion, and his risen life*. The purpose of participating in these exercises is to help one find God's will for his future, and then to give him energy, courage, and passion to follow through with that will. The exercises are accompanied by a certain amount of instructions on how to pray, how to avoid temptation, how to select a vocation without being influenced by selfishness or a worldly attitude, etc. The novice has to go through these exercises, but they do continue to be a part of every member's life from there on out. By taking part in these spiritual exercises, one is escaping from the world in which he lives and is able to focus on God's will for his life.<sup>36</sup>

The Jesuits had established many missions throughout the world by the eighteenth century, and the latter part of that century would prove to be very controversial for them. The foundations of the Jesuits and the fact that they were under the direct order of the Pope supports that Jesuit missionaries should respond with nonviolence in the situation described below.

### **The Mission**

The Guaraní Indians were an indigenous people located in South America in the present-day countries of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil. The Jesuits had established

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> J.H. Pollen, "St. Ignatius Loyola," *New Advent*, 18 August 2004, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07639c.htm>> (6 October 2004).

most of their missions in these regions between 1700 and 1760. These missions were responsible for protecting the Indians against the Paulistas, slave raiders that would come and take the Guaraní for purposes as they saw fit.<sup>37</sup> The Guaraní were regarded as something that could be hunted down like game to be used for livestock and their raw strength. The territory inhabited by the Guaraní is equated with present-day Paraguay, but the boundaries were much different then. The heart of the province was called Guairá, the land of the Guaraní, which now extends across two provinces of Brazil and northern Argentina.<sup>38</sup>

In this region, there are three prominent rivers, the Paraguay, Paraná, and Uruguay, contributing to the very fertile lands.<sup>39</sup> The colony of Sacramento on the river Plate would come into the conflict and resolution between the Spaniards and the Portuguese. This was a port that was located near both the Paraná and Paraguay rivers, serving as a main depot for smugglers and slavers from England, Holland, and Germany. There were many arms stored there, and they were distributed to people who desired to attack the territories of Spain.<sup>40</sup> For this reason, Spain sought control of this territory, but it could only be given to them for something in return. Looking at the territories established today and the thirty-eight reductions of the Jesuits, fifteen were in Argentina, eight in Paraguay, and seven in Brazil—an area larger than 100,000 square miles.<sup>41</sup>

At this time the Guaraní were a semi-nomadic people who practiced simple slash-and-burn farming techniques. They generally lived in small groups consisting of

---

<sup>37</sup> Jean Lacouture, Jesuits: A Multibiography Translated by Jeremy Leggatt (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1995), 229.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 233.

<sup>39</sup> R. B. Cunningham Graham, "A Vanished Arcadia," Litrex Reading Room, 2002 <<http://www.litrix.com/varcad/varca011.htm>> (8 Nov. 2004).

And Lacouture, Jesuits, 233.

<sup>40</sup> Graham, Vanished Arcadia.

<sup>41</sup> Lacouture, Jesuits, 234.

approximately twenty families. They were polygamous and cannibalistic, which contributed to their 'savage' image cast down upon them by the Spaniards and Portuguese.<sup>42</sup> The Guaraní were short and stoutly built, averaging a little over five feet tall. The men of the community saw little need to cover their bodies; their clothing consisted of only the G-string, crowns made of feather, and labrets<sup>43</sup> on the lower lip. The women's apparel was more modest being a woven garment covering the entire body.<sup>44</sup>

The Guaraní community was highly individualistic outside the nuclear families, and it was simply a society without a state or "any form of higher authority."<sup>45</sup> Without a form of central government, the various village communities were united only by the bond of common interest and language, and often tribal groups would be formed based on dialect.<sup>46</sup> It was thought that the land on which the Guaraní inhabited contained an abundance of gold, but this meant nothing to either the Indians or the Jesuits. This lack of greed would serve as a very strong link between the two parties, and would lead to the successful growth of the missions.<sup>47</sup>

In 1608 King Philip III of Spain gave authority to the Jesuits allowing them to convert and make colonies of the Guaraní Indians.<sup>48</sup> The Jesuits saw that it was absolutely necessary to learn the Guaraní language, and it was Antonio Ruiz de Montoya who drew up a Guaraní grammar and lexicon. From 1615 on, there was no Jesuit sent among the Indians unless he was capable of speaking and understanding the

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 234.

<sup>43</sup> An ornament inserted into a perforation of the lip.

<sup>44</sup> James Mooney, "Guaraní Indians," *New Advent*, 18 Aug. 2004, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07045a.htm>> (8 Nov. 2004).

<sup>45</sup> Lacouture, *Jesuits*, 235.

<sup>46</sup> Mooney, "Guaraní Indians."

<sup>47</sup> Lacouture, *Jesuits*, 235.

<sup>48</sup> Mooney, "Guaraní Indians."



language.<sup>49</sup> In 1750, there were seven missions, also known as reductions, along the Uruguay River, and the Portuguese had strong desires to attain these areas. Up to this time, Spain had granted protection to these Jesuit missions located in Paraguay, but that safeguard would soon be nonexistent. The Treaty of Limits of 1750 would cause a tremendous blow to the Guaraní and the Jesuits. In exchange for giving to Spain the port of Sacramento, Portugal acquired the rights to the seven missions located near the Uruguay.<sup>50</sup> This was a great triumph for the Paulistas, and a horrendous moral defeat for the Jesuits, who were forced as subjects of Spain and models to the Pope to hand over to the slavers the people that had trusted them, and whose lives they had so deeply poured Christian values into.<sup>51</sup>

On February 15, 1750 the Jesuits were told by the Spanish courts to prepare the Indians to leave their homes behind them and find new ones in the forests. The chiefs of the seven towns expressed that they would rather die than leave their land in which they had inhabited for nearly one hundred years. When the Indians had learned of the new land that they were supposed to move to they were very angry. They had inherited their land from their forefathers and by the grace of God, and no one was going to tell them that they could not stay there. So after many deliberations and lamentations of hatred of the Portuguese, the Indians in most towns decided to take action that would take the form of a revolt.<sup>52</sup> The battles that took place in the next years have come to be known as the 'Jesuit War,' however it was not the Jesuits who were on the victorious side. The Spaniards and the Portuguese had the best armed battalions, whereas the Indians barely

---

<sup>49</sup> Lacouture, Jesuits, 234.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 247.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 248.

<sup>52</sup> Graham, Vanished Arcadia.

had any firearms, so they had to rely on their bows and arrows in a guerilla warfare fighting style if they had any hope of success. In the end they were not successful.

The Mission depicts the battles fought as gruesome and heavily in favor of the Portuguese military. The Guaraní and the Jesuits relied on the knowledge of their territory and the plan of surprise, but it proved to not be enough. The seven towns and all their territories submitted to the powers of the joint forces of Spain and Portugal.<sup>53</sup> There had previously been about fourteen thousand Indians who lived in the seven flourishing mission territories upon the Uruguay River, but after the war that number had been greatly diminished. The events that led to mistreatment and many deaths of the Guaraní Indians are definitely horrible and violent response was probably necessary, but the Jesuits as missionaries were people who should not have been involved in that violence.

The Jesuits were and still are an order of Catholicism and its organization was based a great deal on hierarchy. This hierarchy is something that each member of the order had sworn to, and when the time came to respond to the authorities, many Jesuits directly denied that authority. The Jesuits were in a very difficult situation, and I do not believe that they were wrong to defy the authority of those above them, but it was wrong of them to use violence in response to the actions taking place. They chose not to abandon the ones they had loved and poured so much of their lives into and that is very honorable and characteristic of Jesus.<sup>54</sup> As shown above, the foundation of the Society of Jesus called for people “to serve God beneath the banner of the cross in our Society, which we desire to be designated by the name of Jesus.” The Jesuits who used violence were serving in the name of Jesus, but Jesus would not have responded in this manner.

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

The events just described occurred over 200 years ago, and many things have changed throughout the years. The next chapter will be similar to the Jesuits in that it presents a situation that contains violent conflict and Christian missionaries.

## Chapter 3

### Christian Persecution and Discrimination in India

The Jesuits and the events displayed in the previous chapter are a great example of the relationship between mission and violent conflict. There were several paths the Jesuit missionaries could have chosen from; leave the country as commanded; join forces with the Guaraní Indians and help them in their defense against the brutal onslaught of the Spanish and Portuguese governments; or respond to the violence with nonviolent resistance. As we sidestep more than two hundreds years of history, we now take a look at a contemporary issue of missions in the face of violent conflict. Today there are many countries in which Christians are being persecuted, some of those country's governments are openly conducting the persecutions, whereas other governments condemn those persecutions but they continue to happen because of the lack of ability to prevent them. India is a country rich in Hindu culture, and the government does not explicitly say that they condone persecution of Christians, however it is a country in which Christian missionaries (and many Christians in general) have been persecuted and even killed recently. The aim of this chapter is to present the political landscape of India and how that directly affects the state of Christian persecution and discrimination. This chapter

will close with an introduction to the final chapter while further supporting the claim that these Christian missionaries are called to (re)act with nonviolent means.

India is home to over one billion people, 80% of that population is religiously affiliated as Hindu, 12% is Muslim, and only 2.4% is Christian.<sup>55</sup> Observing these facts raises a lot of concern in the eyes of Christian missionaries, simply because Christianity is an overwhelming minority in the country. There are approximately twenty five million Christians, and yet that represents only 2.4% of the population. Persecution has been conducted against both Muslim and Christians by Hindu extremists who desire to see India become solely a Hindu state. Persecution takes places even though religious freedom is protected by law; however the enforcement of this law is very poor. The former Hindu nationalist coalition government is called the Bharatiya Janatha Party (BJP), and once the BJP came under power in 1998 there has been an increase of persecution of minorities.<sup>56</sup> Former Prime Minister Vajpayee is a member of the BJP, but he had called for religious tolerance and spoke out against persecutions on several occasions.

There are four political extremist groups in India, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal, and Sangh Parivar.<sup>57</sup> The RSS is a nationalist Hindu party which desires for the complete return to Hindu values and cultural norms. The State Department reported that the RSS is a “force behind the violence and

---

<sup>55</sup> “Christian Persecution in India.” [Persecution.org](http://www.persecution.org), 6 December 2003.  
<<http://www.persecution.org/Countries/india.html>> (29 October 2004).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

bloodshed that targets Christians and Christian Missions in India.”<sup>58</sup> This is the group that has been associated to the assassination of Gandhi. The VHP is a religious organization that is linked to the RSS. In 1998, the secretary warned Christian missionaries to get out of India and also that it would launch a campaign to stop missionaries from converting Hindus to Christianity.<sup>59</sup> Bajrang Dal is a militant Hindu youth organization which consists of about half a million members, many of whom receive military training. Sangh Parivar is the extreme fanatical group, and is similar to the ones above in that it desires India to be completely ruled by Hindu culture and values.<sup>60</sup> These groups have power within the nation and have been known to go to extreme measures to attain their political desires.

Another factor of Indian culture is the caste system. The caste system has been present in India for many years, and it continues to be a major component in the classification of India’s citizens. Most Indians are likely to be at least broadly familiar with two distinct concepts of corporate affiliation: the jati (birth group) and the varna (order, class or kind). The term *caste* is commonly used to refer to both of these.<sup>61</sup> Jati has most often been used for the units of thousands or sometimes millions of people with whom one may identify for such purposes as marriage. The concept of varna contains only four divisions, which is found in a variety of revered Hindu scriptures. It has been most commonly understood as a ranked order or precedence, with the four varna or idealized human callings appearing in the following order. The varna of Brahmins is commonly identified with those fulfilling the callings of priest and spiritual preceptors.

---

<sup>58</sup> Sridhar Krishnaswami, “Christian Forum Plans Protest Rally,” The Hindu, 11 September, 2000.

<sup>59</sup> “Christian Persecution in India.”

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Susan Bayly, The New Cambridge History of India: Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 8.

The varna of Kshatriyas is associated with rulers and warriors, but also includes seigniorial landed groups. The varna of Vaishya is identified with commercial livelihoods, though associated with other producers and wealth creators. The varna of Shudras are known as servile toilers.<sup>62</sup> The untouchables, also known as the Dalits, occupy a place below the four varna scheme.<sup>63</sup> Once an individual is in a particular caste, that caste will greatly determine the status of that individual's life. This is a great disadvantage to those who disagree with the caste system and find themselves in the lower castes.

There have been recent attempts to equal the playing field along caste lines. There is presently a system of affirmative action aimed at uplifting the people who are in the lower castes. Some provisions under this are free education until graduation, reservation of admission seats in institutions for higher education, and a 50% quota in government jobs with fast promotions. Even among the states' attempts to limit the amount of discrimination against the lower castes, it is still taking place however. Another form of discrimination that comes directly from the state is that affirmative action only applies to Hindus.<sup>64</sup> A Hindu who converts to Christianity (or almost any other religion) is not eligible for these affirmative action rights, which does not follow India's status as a secular nation.

India has laws granting religious freedom, but there are laws restricting conversions which hinder that freedom. In November 1999, the Orissa State passed an order making conversions illegal without prior permission of district magistrates and

---

<sup>62</sup> The Encyclopedia Britannica, 15<sup>th</sup> ed., s.v. "Caste."

<sup>63</sup> Bayly, 8-9.

<sup>64</sup> "Caste," Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia, 2 November 2004. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caste>> (10 November 2004).

local police. This process includes the person explaining the reasons for the conversion to the police, who collect information from neighbors, and then their report is given to the courts that have the decision to allow or prohibit the conversion to take place.<sup>65</sup>

Discrimination of Christians is seen in the lowest caste when they lose their affirmative action eligibility by converting from Hinduism. Conversions to some other religions, such as Buddhists, Jains, or Sikhs do not lose this eligibility, because these faiths are included under the definition of a Hindu under the constitution. Conversions can obviously still take place without the authorities knowing otherwise, but local hostilities do not approve of this and persecution may follow. Corruption of officials can also be a cause that leads to unfair treatment of individuals who seek to be converted to Christianity.

The Constitution of India clearly says that "all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion."<sup>66</sup> Under the law missionaries are required to notify officials 15 days prior to the ceremony of conversion, and many times this notification is not taking place. Since law enforcement is poor on the conversion law, other people are stepping in with violence as was the case with Father Arun Doss. The priest was reportedly conducting illegal conversions that directly violated the Orissa Freedom of Religions Act of 1967, which led to his murder.<sup>67</sup> One incident that is further evidence of Christian discrimination occurred on December 6, 2002. Nearly 10,000 Dalits who desired to convert to Christianity and be baptized were denied by police and turned away. Organizers of this mass conversion ceremony were arrested, because this was in violation of the law that

---

<sup>65</sup> "Mission Impossible: Putting an End to Conversion Activity," The Times of India, 13 October 1999.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.



prohibits “forced” conversions.<sup>68</sup> Public conversions can be a dangerous event in India, because it can always be suggested that the conversion is forced and not legitimate. The conversion law, in essence is a good thing, but it also leads to much persecution and discrimination.

One recent and well-known incident of persecution included a Baptist missionary on January 23, 1999. Australian Graham Staines and his two sons, Philip, 10, and Timothy, 8, were burned to death in their vehicle as they slept. Staines was reportedly parked outside a church in the village Manoharpur, which is about 600 miles southeast of the capital New Delhi, where he had been preaching and doing social work.<sup>69</sup> One of Staines’ primary missionary acts was distributing medication to poor leprosy patients, but that was horrendously ended by his death. Over a year after the murder, Dara Singh was arrested on charges of murdering the three individuals and has been associated with the extremist group Bajrang Dal. Singh and his associates were also thought to be involved with the murder of Arun Doss. Graham and his two sons have been survived by his wife, Gladys, and his daughter, who have obviously been emotionally and spiritually hurt by this incident. The impact of the Staines’ deaths was enhanced by the statements of Gladys. She saw the deaths of her beloved family members as “a sacrifice for the nation of India” and that this painful experience does not elicit a curse for the murderers, but rather praises for “God who saw it fit for them to die for others as Christ did.”<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> “Christian Persecution in India,” Persecution.org, 6 December 2003.  
<<http://www.persecution.org/Countries/india.html>> (29 October 2004).

<sup>69</sup> Vatsala Vedantam, “Privilege and Resentment: Religious Conflict in India,” Christian Century 116, no. 12, 1999.

<sup>70</sup> David Emmanuel Singh, “Hindu-Muslim Violence in Gujarat and a Profile of Christian Mission,” Transformation 20/4 October 2003, 213.

There have been many instances in which the Indian state has resorted to silence in cases involving violent religious groups. This silence has allowed the followers of those violent groups to continue and expand on those acts in the name of religion and culture in order to gain their political interests. This has put many minorities on the defensive and created a scare and added that with the rise of Hindu fundamentalism there is no place for minorities in India. Religion is no longer a matter of personal faith, but a public and political attribute. "It has gradually moved from the private to the public domain and as long as religiosity is rewarded politically, brutal incidents like the Staines' murder will be repeated."<sup>71</sup>

Since the Hindu BJP assumed power as the head of the coalition governments from 1998 to 2004, the persecution of Christians rose enormously in certain areas of India. These persecutions usually are not created from the national government, but rather from the extremist Hindu groups, and the state and local governments. The BJP's emphasis on *Hindutava*, Hindu expansionism, helped create a climate in which persecution of Christians had been able to flourish. The US State Department's 2000 *Annual Report on International Freedom: India* states "ineffective investigation and prosecution of attacks on religious minorities is interpreted by some extremist elements as a signal that such violence is likely to go unpunished." This is the result partly to the weaknesses in the legal system, but there are many observers who attribute it largely to the links between these extremist groups and the BJP.<sup>72</sup>

Discrimination is done to most, if not all, minorities. The state government has also been accused of discriminating against the tens of thousands of Muslim refugees

---

<sup>71</sup> Vatsala Vedantam, "Privilege and Resentment: Religious Conflict in India."

<sup>72</sup> "India," Christian Solidarity Worldwide. 2002 <<http://www.cswusa.com/Countries/India.htm>> (2 November 2004).

who are living in filthy refugee camps to escape the violence.<sup>73</sup> Although Muslims have been the main victims, there have been a number of reports of Christians threatened and their property attacked during the massacres. Violence is abundant in India, and most of it is directed from Hindus to Muslims. Even the moderate Hindus who have tried to save Muslims from the mobs were also killed.

There are many different countries in which Christian persecution is occurring, so any of these could be used as examples for the conflict and violence facing missionaries. India provides a clear representation of the violent conflict happening to many lay Christians as well as missionaries throughout the country. As stated above, India's constitution says the nation has religious freedom, but there are many persecutions taking place which are very dependent upon religion. The persecution that occurs is not as likely to directly come from the government, as was the case with the Jesuits in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which makes it more difficult to actively respond to. There are so many differences with every situation, which also makes it difficult to come to a conclusion as to what a missionary's response exactly should entail. The missionary is responsible for interpreting and deciding the best course of action based the beliefs and morals he/she holds to.

As the Christian missionary is being persecuted, it is necessary to respond to that violence with nonviolence as did Jesus with his struggles. Missionaries who respond in a nonviolent manner will only succeed in spreading the true message of Jesus Christ. This feat could be terribly hindered if violent retribution takes place. The name of Jesus would not hold as high a regard without the nonviolent response. The next and final

---

<sup>73</sup> David Emmanuel Singh, "Hindu-Muslim Violence," 207.

chapter will present Biblical passages that support the nonviolent character of Jesus and his loving message for everyone.

## Chapter 4

### Called to Nonviolence

The previous two chapters presented two different examples of conflict arising with Christian missionaries and presented possible responses to violence and injustice. In these two cases there was government intervention, or a lack of it, which led to some type of persecution or discrimination. In the case of the Jesuits, there were missionaries present who felt that some type of justice had to be served. As is the case with India, the persecution of Christians is morally wrong and something needs to be done about it.

The aim of this chapter is to support that when a Christian missionary is involved in a conflict similar to the ones presented above; the missionary is called to live a life of ministry similar to that of Jesus'. It is of the utmost importance for the missionary to respond with nonviolent actions. This chapter will examine Jesus' character, what he said, and how he acted to situations corresponding to violence and responding to it. Obviously the primary source for this information will be taken from the Gospels in the New Testament, alongside contemporary author's studies and opinions. Drawing upon the earlier definition of mission, spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ is a primary aspect of Christianity. With this being the case, the missionary will use the Bible and the Jesus depicted in it as an example or model for his/her life's mission. Passages that are

examined are Jesus' arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, the Sermon on the Mount, the two Greatest Commandments, and the crucifixion of Jesus.

The time had finally come when darkness would rule, but Jesus knew that God would prevail in the end. The setting is the garden of Gethsemane in the last days of Jesus' life, and Judas had just brought the Roman soldiers to arrest his teacher. All four of the Gospels depict the arrest of Jesus, but Matthew 26:47-54 clearly shows Jesus' defiantly opposing the disciples' use of force against the soldiers.

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for."

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword."<sup>74</sup>

If the disciples took up their swords and achieved their immediate goal of rescuing Jesus from being taken away, then their ultimate goal would be lost. The disciple's first compromise is to resist Satan's minions by fighting with Satan's weapons, and to fight betrays their cause.<sup>75</sup>

Even at a time of great distress and fear, Jesus remains as a teacher to his disciples. He teaches them that the way of nonviolence, non-retaliation, love of enemies, is to be pursued to the very end. Jesus has lived out what he has taught and he continues

---

<sup>74</sup> The other three passages are Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; and John 18:1-11. Luke has Jesus responding to the violence saying, "No more of this!" and depicts Jesus healing the servant's ear. John is the only one to give the name of the disciple; it was Simon Peter (v. 10) and Jesus responds with "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

<sup>75</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, "The Gospel of Luke," *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander Keck (Nashville: Abington Press, 1995), 437.

to practice non-retaliatory self-giving. He is telling his disciples that violence is self-destructive and futile, and it results only in a vicious spiral of violence. The way of God's kingdom is to absorb evil rather than inflict it, and to finally bring the evil spiral to an end.<sup>76</sup> As the gospel passages further explain, one must not only resist using violence, but also speak out against the violence and injustice that takes place in the world.<sup>77</sup> The innocent victims need a representative to voice their concern, and that is the responsibility for the person who accepts the gospel.

Jesus spoke out against the use of violence to his disciples in the garden, so what is it that one should do? Should one just fold their arms and allow evil to continue on its course, or resist evil without the use of violence? There has been much debate about the use of nonviolence in the face of oppression and violence. A passage from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5:38-42 offers insight into this pressing dilemma of resistance.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one wants to borrow from you."

Jesus says, "Do not resist an evil person," which may suggest that he is saying that an individual should sit back and allow an person doing evil to walk all over him/her. It may suggest that best possible response is submission.

Walter Wink, in his award winning book Engaging the Powers, contests those notions of submission and explains the significance of turning the right cheek in the

---

<sup>76</sup> M. Eugene Boring, "The Gospel of Matthew," The New Interpreter's Bible, ed. Leander Keck (Nashville: Abington Press, 1995), 477.

<sup>77</sup> PHEME PERKINS, "The Gospel of Mark," The New Interpreter's Bible, ed. Leander Keck (Nashville: Abington Press, 1995), 711.

passage. The society of which Jesus was speaking of was primarily right handed, so a hit from the right fist or open hand would land on the left cheek of the opponent. The striking on the right cheek is a Greek verb meaning "slaps you with the back of the hand" and was used generally more as an insult than an act of violence.<sup>78</sup> In order to hit the right cheek with a fist, one has to use the left hand, but the left hand was only used for unclean tasks.<sup>79</sup> "Even to gesture with the left hand at Qumran carried the penalty of ten day's penance."<sup>80</sup> Striking a person in this instance would be a blow to the right cheek with a backhanded slap, with the purpose to insult and humiliate the subordinate.<sup>81</sup> There were fines for striking an equal, so it would not be wise for the subordinate to strike the person back.<sup>82</sup> However, some type of response seems necessary, so the subordinate must find an alternative way to resist.

The person being struck is able to take away the aggressors power to humiliate by 'turning the other cheek' and not resorting to violence. By turning the other (right) cheek, the striker could not again use the back of his right hand. He must either use his left hand or use the fist or palm of the right hand, both of which were not probable actions that took place. The striker does not want to suggest equality by punching the inferior on the other cheek, and backhanding him/her becomes difficult to do logistically. Therefore this small, but significant action empowers the inferior. The nonviolent person disrupts the cycle of violence and takes a step closer to the restoration of justice.<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Kenneth Barker, ed., The NIV Study Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 1446.

<sup>79</sup> Wink, Engaging, 175-176.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 176.

<sup>81</sup> Reid, Matthew's Parables and Nonviolence, 243.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 177..

<sup>83</sup> Reid, 243-4.



The second example of nonviolent resistance that Jesus tells is of giving the cloak, or undergarment, after already giving the outer garment. The situation to which Jesus is speaking was common during the time. A person had fallen into debt and had become more poverty stricken, the debt was not payable, and the creditor took the person to court attempting to receive a repayment. Heavy debt was a common circumstance for many people, because the Roman imperial system had so heavily taxed its citizens to pay for the vast amount of battles being fought and other expenses. The wealthy sought repayment in other forms besides money. They viewed land as being the best type of property to acquire, but many people were very stingy about giving their territory away. Therefore, they sometimes had to go to vast measures to receive from those individuals owing them a repayment. The creditors sought the debtors' land, their goods, and even their garments in some instances.<sup>84</sup>

In the passage Jesus encourages the poorest individuals to also give up their undergarments when asked to give their outer garments (tunics), which is a very effective and bold action. By taking off the undergarment, the person would be standing in the court naked undoubtedly causing a great reaction. The creditor would have gotten his wish by receiving the outer garment, but to his surprise he would also be holding the undergarment. The naked person had indeed risen above his shame and placed it solely on the creditor by daring him to take absolutely everything the debtor owned.

Wink states that nakedness was taboo in Judaism at this time, and that the shame fell less on the naked person than on the person viewing or causing the nakedness.<sup>85</sup> The

---

<sup>84</sup> Wink, *Engaging*, 178.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 179. Wink references Genesis 9:20-27. Verses 22-23 support the taboo of nakedness, "Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took

naked person parades in his nakedness in the court that has caused him to be destitute, and at the same time exposing the greed and injustice within the society.<sup>86</sup> Through nonviolence, an individual was able to put shame on the court.

The third example of nonviolent resistance in this passage from the Sermon on the Mount deals with forced labor and how the subordinate is once again able to turn humiliation around. In this case, Jesus is likely referring to the "practice of limiting the amount of forced or impressed labor that Roman soldiers could levy on subject peoples to a single mile."<sup>87</sup> Service was commonly forced upon the citizens by the soldiers, such as when Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry the Cross of Jesus in the passion narrative.<sup>88</sup> Most of these labor cases involved a need for postal service for animals and the need of soldiers for civilians to carry their packs.<sup>89</sup>

The purpose of Jesus telling the civilians to carry the bag an extra mile takes away the power of choice that belonged to the soldier. After reaching the first mile marker, the soldier asks for his bag only to find that the carrier has continued on. It was known for soldiers to be penalized for forcing civilians to do excessive work. So this civilian has not only taken away the superiority of the soldier, but also may cause him to face some type of punishment. The soldier's feeling of superiority has been diminished in this instance and the citizen has gained the upper hand.<sup>90</sup>

This entire passage from the Sermon on the Mount depicts Jesus giving instructions to respond to injustice and oppression through nonviolent means. Jesus does

---

garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father's nakedness."

<sup>86</sup> Reid, 244.

<sup>87</sup> Wink, 180.

<sup>88</sup> Mark 15:21 and Matt. 27:32.

<sup>89</sup> Wink, 180.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 181-182.

not command people to retaliate with violence or create some type of mob scene. Rather, he instructs the use of an alternative method that will in the end represent the kingdom of God much more than violence would.

The Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount also give evidence for seeking nonviolence in conflicts. Matthew 5:9-12 says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven." By promoting peace, these peacemakers will be reflecting the character of God and so are called "sons of God."<sup>91</sup> A passage from Romans can be used to further this theme of peace, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord." As this passage implies, there will be a time when judgment will be made by the Lord. It is through peace that the true character of God is revealed. It is possible for peace to be accomplished through the use of violence, and that may be necessary in this world, but it is not the responsibility of the missionary to use violence. Christians may see the use of violence as necessary in some circumstances, but in every situation there must be an attempt to avoid violence.

The two greatest commandments stated by Jesus are "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> Barker, *NIV*, 1445.

<sup>92</sup> Matthew 22:37-39.

Christians are called to live according to these two commandments, and the use of violence does not seem to fit into loving God and one another. In order to truly love your neighbor, you must not become what you hate—violence. Jesus was sent to earth to share his love for all people, and it is his commandments that instruct his followers to do the same. Violence was not a part of Jesus' actions, so as a follower of Jesus a missionary must refrain from and teach against the use of violence.

This compilation of teachings from Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount is an illustration that he commands his followers to participate in nonviolence with active concern for those who are wronged. The commandment to love can no longer be limited to loving one's neighbors, but even enemies are to be loved.<sup>93</sup> Matthew 5:43-45 says, "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." The words "hate your enemy" is found nowhere in the Old Testament, but hatred for one's enemies was an accepted part of the Jewish ethic at the time.<sup>94</sup>

The character of Jesus is revealed most distinctly through the sacrifice of his death on the cross. His choice to lay down his life for others is the ultimate display of love, and it is that sacrifice that missionaries are called to follow. Jesus faced the ultimate persecution and hatred, which led to his death on the cross. However, it was an act that Jesus had to experience to carry out the will of God. The heart of the Gospels is

---

<sup>93</sup> William M. Ramsay, The Westminster Guide To The Books of The Bible (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Know Press), 1994. Westminster, 329.

<sup>94</sup>Barker, NIV, 1446.

love, and at the heart of love is the cross. The cross gives missionaries the inspiration and guidance to respond with love in all situations. Missionaries must stand upon the foundation of their faith and present the good news of Jesus Christ. There is hope in Jesus and there will come a time when those devoted to him and his actions will be rewarded indefinitely. Nonviolent response may result in death, but our bodies were not meant for this world.

The missionary must be willing to sacrifice everything that he/she holds dear, even life. It is an extremely difficult task, but the gospel will only survive from the self-sacrificial acts by those who believe in it. It will not only fail to survive without people dying for it, but it also needs people to live for it through terrible persecution and humiliation. The One in whom which all Christians follow and look up to, Jesus, provided the perfect example of love that every Christian is called to by faith to follow.

It is the responsibility of the missionary to completely display that message of love, and reflecting what one hates does not represent that message. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of every follower of Jesus to hold him/herself to this standard as well, but there are forces and situations in this world that do not make that possible. In the end every person is going to have to make his/her own decision, no body will be able to make the decision for any one else. But one thing is certain, however, Jesus Christ provides a message of hope and love that everyone can hold on to. That message of truth is life, even if it means death.



## Bibliography

- Bayly, Susan. The New Cambridge History of India: Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Bevans, Stephen B. and Roger P. Shroeder. Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004.
- Bevans, Stephen B. Models of Contextual Theology: Revised and Expanded Edition. New York: Orbis Books, 1992.
- Boring, M. Eugene. "The Gospel of Matthew." The New Interpreter's Bible, edited by Leander Keck. Nashville: Abington Press, 1995.
- Bosch, David J. Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission. New York: Orbis Books, 1991.
- Bosch, David J. Witness To The World: The Christian mission in theological perspective. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980.
- Brass, Paul R. The New Cambridge History of India: The politics of India since Independence. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Brodrick, James. The Origin of the Jesuits. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1940.
- Camara, Helder. "The Christian Response to Violence." Pro Veritate 9, no. 3 (1970): 9-11.
- "Christian Persecution in India." Persecution.org, 6 December 2003.  
<<http://www.persecution.org/Countries/india.html>> (29 October 2004).
- Culpepper, R. Alan. "The Gospel of Luke." The New Interpreter's Bible, edited by Leander Keck. Nashville: Abington Press, 1995.
- Dirks, Nicholas B. Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- "Fear Grips Mission Schools." The Times of India, 13 April 2000.
- Ganss, George E. Ignatius of Loyola: The Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works. New York: Paulist Press, 1991.

- Graham, R.B. Cunninghame. "A Vanished Arcadia." Litrex Reading Room, 2002  
<<http://www.litrix.com/varcad/varca011.htm>> (8 Nov. 2004).
- Guelich, Robert A. "Sermon on the Mount." In The Oxford Guide to Ideas and Issues of the Bible, edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Haring, Bernard. A Theology of Protest. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970.
- "The Hindu-Editorial: The state and religious identities." The Hindu, 29 September 2000.
- Kirk, Andrew J. and Kevin J. Vanhoozer. To Stake a Claim: Mission and the Western Crisis of Knowledge. New York: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Krishnaswami, Sridhar. "Christian Forum Plans Protest Rally." The Hindu, 11 September, 2000.
- Lacouture, Jean. Jesuits: A Multibiography. Translated by Jeremy Leggatt. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1995.
- Lederach, John Paul. "Missionaries Facing Conflict and Violence: Problems and Prospects." Missiology: An International Review 20, no. 1 (1992): 11-19.
- "Mission Impossible: Putting an End to Conversion Activity." The Times of India, 13 October 1999.
- Mooney, James. "Guarani Indians." New Advent, 18 Aug. 2004.  
<<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07045a.htm>> (8 Nov. 2004).
- Moses, Greg. Revolution of Conscience: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Philosophy of Nonviolence. New York: The Guilford Press, 1997.
- O'Malley, John W. The First Jesuits. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Perkins, Pheme. "The Gospel of Mark." The New Interpreter's Bible, edited by Leander Keck. Nashville: Abington Press, 1995.
- Pollen, J.H. "St. Ignatius Loyola." New Advent, 18 August 2004,  
<<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07639c.htm>> (6 October 2004).
- Ramsay, William M. The Westminster Guide To The Books of The Bible. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Know Press, 1994.



Reid, Barbara E. "Violent Endings in Matthew's Parables and Christian Nonviolence." Catholic Biblical Quarterly 66, no. 2 (2004): 237-255.

Singh, David Emmanuel. "Hindu-Muslim Violence in Gujarat and a Profile of Christian Mission." Transformation 20/4 October 2003, 206-216.

Vedantam, Vatsala. "Privilege and resentment: Religious conflict in India." Christian Century 116, no. 12 (1999): 414-419.

Verkuyt, Johannes. "The Kingdom Of God As The Goal Of The *Missio Dei*." International Review of Mission. Jan. 1979. 168-75.

Wink, Walter. Engaging The Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

Wink, Walter. The Powers That Be: Theology For A New Millennium. New York: Doubleday, 1998.

