

# RECLAIMING JESUS

—BUT NOT—

## THE NONVIOLENT JESUS OF THE GOSPELS

It is difficult, if not impossible, to figure out which Jesus is being reclaimed in the recent much-ballyhooed document, *Reclaiming Jesus: A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis* (attached below). But, what is clear is the Jesus that the document presumes to reclaim is not the Jesus of the Gospels who was Nonviolent and who teaches a Way of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies. Not once in the entire *Reclaiming Jesus* document is Jesus' rejection of violence by word and by deed in the Gospels mentioned, although the document gives a list of things that must be rejected based on Jesus' teachings and His being *Lord*. Nor is it mentioned that His disciples are called to follow Him and reject violence. So, the document communicates that a Christian, whether American or British, who has reclaimed Jesus as the document prescribes could join the American or British military and bomb the be-Jesus out of human beings designated "enemies" or designated "collateral damage" in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria.

The idea governing *Reclaiming Jesus* and around which its authors state the entire document is composed and validated, is this: "*Jesus is Lord. That is our foundational confession. It was central for the early church and needs to again become central to us. If Jesus is Lord, then Caesar was not—nor any other political ruler since. If Jesus is Lord, no other authority is absolute.*" Neither I nor any other Christian could reasonably disagree with this. It is in fact the theological basis for proclaiming and adhering to Gospel Nonviolence. The Gospels themselves in which Jesus teaches, lives and dies in the Way of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies—and which Gospels the Catholic Church teaches in its Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution *Revelation* (SEC 18-19), "*faithfully hand on what Jesus Christ, while living among men really did and taught for their eternal salvation*" — are the HISTORICAL root of Gospel Nonviolence. But the profession, *Jesus is Lord*, is the THEOLOGICAL root of Gospel Nonviolence, because if Jesus' authority in matters of Christian faith and morals is not absolute, then He is just another guy conjecturing about the manner in which life should be lived or how to be saved from eternal death.

The *Reclaiming Jesus* document goes on to say, "*What we believe, i.e., Jesus is Lord, leads us to what we must reject. Our 'Yes' is the foundation for our 'No.'*" It then goes on to list those matters that Christians must say, 'No' to and rejected on the basis of their, 'Yes', to *Jesus is Lord*. The given list of what must be rejected because *Jesus is Lord* is this: "white nationalism and racism, misogyny, the mistreatment, violent abuse, sexual harassment, and assault of women, language and policies of political leaders who would debase and abandon the most vulnerable children of God, the practice and pattern of lying that is invading our political and civil life, any moves toward autocratic political leadership and authoritarian rule, "America first" as a theological heresy for followers of Christ."

It should be noted, and noted well, that while their document states, "*If Jesus is Lord, then Caesar is not,*" these Christian peace activists from the U.S. and Britain and their document do not reject Christian participation in Caesar's violence and war because *Jesus is Lord*. This is bizarre since the Lord Jesus' rejection of violence in the Gospels is unambiguous. It is strange since the authors respective countries are two of the

greatest purveyors of violence in the world historically and today. It is gravely disingenuous since the Christians in their societies did and do most of the violence done by each country. *Reclaiming Jesus* and proclaiming *Jesus is Lord* in such societies should, at a minimum, mean rejecting participation in the legal and illegal, romantic and sorted violence of these societies and their institutions that incarnationally follow the way and use the means of the violent Caesar rather than the Nonviolent Jesus. It should mean at least this because,

*"Jesus taught that violence belongs to the Reign of Satan, and that men must expel violence if they wish to liberate themselves from the Reign of Satan. If Jesus did not reject any type of violence for any purpose, then we know nothing of him. No reader of the New Testament, simple or sophisticated, can retain any doubt of Jesus' position toward violence directed to persons, individual or collective, organized or free enterprise, he rejected it totally. Jesus in no way accepts violence as a means of controlling violence.*

*Jesus presents in His words and life not only a good way of doing things, not only an ideal to be executed whenever it is convenient, but the only way of doing what He did."* (Quoted section is from the Catholic Biblical scholar, REV. JOHN L. MCKENZIE.)

It is, however, not surprising that no mention is made of reclaiming the Nonviolent Jesus of the Gospels. Some of the authors of this document were formally on Barack Obama's, aka Barack Obomba's, spiritual consultation team. And, one the authors is the episcopal chaplain of the British royalty—a gene pool that has never existed, cannot exist and does not exist without gargantuan amounts of violence being employed to sustain it and to protect its unholy and promiscuous accumulation of luxury wealth in the face of thousands of human beings writhing in pain and unnecessarily perishing daily because they lack the few cents to procure the needed food or medicine. The hoarding of luxury wealth in a world where billions do not have the bare necessities needed to live can only be defended and sustained by violence.

If a Christian were to truly desire to reclaim the Jesus of the Gospels—the only Jesus there ever was or will be—it takes no literary skill to say,

*"What cannot be done without violence cannot be done by a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus. A Christian cannot follow Jesus' "new commandment" to "Love one another as I have loved you," and use violence to do good or to fight evil."*

But this is exactly the Jesus that this document and its peace activists authors do not want to reclaim, any more than the institutional Churches of Christianity want to reclaim Him. Both want a "Jesus" who endorses violence so they can carry out their plans to make the world a better place by using violence, whatever their plans may be.

So which Jesus is this *Reclaiming Jesus* document trying to reclaim? It is trying to reclaim—or more accurately trying to propagandize—a "Jesus" that never existed in history as a person—a violent liberal-Constantinian Jesus. But a violent liberal-Constantinian "Jesus" is no more the reality of the Person revealed and proclaimed in the Gospels than is a violent conservative-Constantinian Jesus. They are mirror images of each other in terms of the means they use to respond to evil and to promote the good. What each calls Christian love is saturated with violence—that is, with that phenomenon that *"Jesus teaches belongs to the Reign of Satan."* It is Christians and their Churches that almost universally confess faith in a violence-endorsing "Jesus" that are the source of this time of crisis. The spiritually malformed Christians Trump, Obama, Clinton, Bush, Merkel, Blair, Putin, etc., are but blips on the screen of the crisis.

It is the institutional Christian Churches and their deceitful leaders, who—through nurtured hardwiring—created in them, and in billions of other Christians the mind-style of justified Christian killers and liars under the pretense of helping them put on the mind and truth of Jesus, who are the cause of the crisis. It is absurd to believe that implementing a new agenda for the betterment of humanity via a new version of a violence endorsing “Jesus” can solve this crisis. The violence-endorsing “Jesus” illusion is the crisis in the Church and in the world.

The Jesus that must be reclaimed to solve this crisis is the Nonviolent Jesus of the Gospels with His Way of Nonviolent Love, without exception, of friends and enemies. The Nonviolent Jesus of the Gospels is *Lord*. Believe it or not. His authority is therefore absolute. Believe it or not. *Jesus presents in His words and life not only a good way of doing things, not only an ideal to be executed whenever it is convenient, but the only way of doing what He did.* Believe it or not. And, that Way unequivocally rejects violence, even when—indeed most especially when—ordered by Lord Caesar. Believe it or not.

Let this new evangelization program, as well as all new evangelization programs of all Churches, be in fact new and reclaim the Nonviolent Jesus of the Gospels from the deceitfully concocted and institutionally propagandized illusion of the violence justifying, endorsing, supporting Jesus, that has brought so much evil and misery into the world and prevented so much good from being done.

—EMMANUEL CHARLES MCCARTHY