

# Violence

## Moral Theological Perspectives

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**Abstract:** After analysing violence, terrorism and war theologically, the author pleads for a culture of non-violence and prudent pacifism as the viable Christian option. We need to foster wise and bold initiatives towards peace.

**Keywords:** Conflict, peace, education, war, violence, terrorism, just-war.

We are living in a critical period of history after the brutal attack on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon of the United States on September 11. As Noam Chomsky has remarked, it is a historic event that is going to change history (Chomsky 2001: 8). Reflecting from a moral theological perspective and making an analysis of it and the response of the global coalition against terrorism, the question becomes relevant: Can we solve the menace of terrorism through war and alliances? Will it really root out terrorism permanently? Or will it escalate violence and lead to a spiral of violence? What possible options are there to fighting this war against terrorism and dealing with the situation that has led to it? And the more fundamental question that arises is: Should we exist together with a philosophy and theology of non-violence or perish together with a spiral of violence?

Terrorism is one of the greatest threats to the survival of humankind today. It has become a burning issue and poses a great challenge to human community. The notion of terrorism is complex. Terrorism may be defined as “the use of violence – as a matter of policy - to cause terror in people, usually so that those individuals will change their beliefs or allegiances” (Ashford 1998: 311). There

is a more fundamental issue with the question of what counts as an act of terrorism, because of late there is a tendency to use the term terrorism outside its more traditional place as a form of violence against governments and citizens. Thus, for example, the term is used in the debates about multiculturalism, racism, racial vilification, exposure to constant racial insults and threats (Ashford 1998: 311-318). The term 'terrorism' is also used in the debates about ethnicity, religious fundamentalism and narrow nationalism.

In addition, the question about terrorism is extremely complicated in today's world. On the one hand, the terrorists are organized and supported by political forces or people like bin Laden, using revolutionary, ideological and religious fanaticism for their own ambitious purpose and games of power. On the other hand, powerful countries like the USA tend to develop counter-revolutionary strategies that provoke terrorism by their injustices. Besides these, there are also hidden terrorisms that are written into the very system of globalization and market economy.

Of course, acts of terrorism must be distinguished from acts of violence that may be regarded as actions of 'just war'. According to St. Augustine, "Just wars are usually defined as those which avenge injuries, if a people or city, on which war is waged, has neglected either to punish what has been done wickedly by its own (citizens) or to give back what has been carried away" "(*Questions on the Heptateuch* 6, 10). But Augustine is careful to add that war is not a matter of taking revenge on others but rather a means of punishment or correction. Thus, though war or deterrence with strategic, tactical or conventional weapons must always be considered a pre-moral evil that must be avoided in principle, there can be circumstances in which the risk of a pre-moral evil can be justified, as for example to avert fundamental threats against those values which are considered to be essential for the existence of human persons as social beings: fundamental human rights such as the life and political freedom of civilians. So, while the effects of particular acts of violence may not be condoned, they may be condoned, when seen as punishment or justified retribution for re-establishing a proper order or for wiping out terrorism altogether. This is because it is the task of the State to establish and maintain a just political order within which human lives

can flourish. And since human lives can flourish only when persons are free to meet their obligations, the State has the responsibility to recognize, guarantee and defend these necessary freedoms against perversion and attack (Stob 1978: 193).

But as there are no clear-cut principles to determine when the concept of a 'just war' is correctly invoked, the invocation of it could be manipulated for the purpose of political expediency. Hence it is better to use the term "justified defence" instead of "just war". Only defence can be considered a right. War, even if it is for defence, is a very reluctant necessity and a last resort because of the many evils like love of violence, insensitivity and hatred of neighbour, feelings of revenge and reprisal that accompany it. Hence, from a moral theological perspective, the crucial question is not war or retaliation but defence, and only 'justified defence'. And the pre-eminent criterion of the right in defence is respect for the fundamental *raison-d'être* of defence itself, and that must be guaranteed by the principle of discrimination or non-combatant immunity. And in the extreme case where military and lethal means are considered, the logical structure of the *ius ad defensionem* is a calculus of value in which a pre-moral evil (the use of war or of deterrence as a means) is weighed against the possibility of avoiding a greater pre-moral evil.

In the light of this reflection, does the response of global coalition against terrorism demand Christian moral endorsement?

Resolution of terrorism through counter-violence is the brute way. It only breaks and wounds communities further, giving birth to new conflicts and reopening old ones. It is not the rational way, much less the Christian way. Retaliation and avenging the wrong doers can never be a response to end terrorism. It only makes us fall into the trap set by the terrorists as it accentuates fanatic fundamentalism from which the terrorists would want to reap benefits for their purposes. In the desire for retaliation it is always humanity that loses out. And as in all wars, it is the poorest of the poor who bear the brunt of them. The present war on terrorism by its asymmetric alliance only produces the spiral of violence and provokes enmity between the West and the Islamic world. And when the immediate victims of terrorists as well as those who counter terrorism are the poor and innocent citizens, no appeal to the merits or demerits of specific

foreign policies can ever justify or even purport to make sense of the mass slaughter of innocent persons.

Analysing further the issues politically, we find that the terrorist attack on September 11 is a creation of the USA and the West. For quite some time now the USA and Europe have acted with arrogance and ignorance toward other societies. They have pursued misguided and unjust policies. They have been casually slaughtering people all over the world. Is this not terrorism? Is this not a calculated use of violence to attain political goals through threats, intimidation and coercion? And now after the war in Afghanistan too, which killed thousands of innocents, the USA and Britain are lauded for the success. This silent genocide gives a good deal of insight into the situation and into the culture of Western civilization. The wealthy nations have to make a real self-examination here.

The USA and its Western allies are largely responsible for the global terrorist network that carried out massive atrocities all over the world. They have justified ruthless power, nationalistic and proxy wars and hatred of other nations, for fulfilling their own narrow selfish interests. These powers through their political and economic policies have reduced the economy of developing countries and created flagrant inequality in the world. Through their foreign policies, they have overthrown democratically elected governments and installed dictators and stooges in many Third world countries.

Besides, the people behind the attack on September 11 are the creation of the USA through its political policies and through its sale of armaments. It is the USA, with the help of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, which hatched the *Taliban* and *Mujahidin* by giving arms and ammunitions to them through the ISI. It was the USA which created Osama Bin Laden. He was profusely helped economically and militarily by the USA to fight the Soviets. The USA is responsible again for the present-day terrorism. Having become the only superpower, the USA dictated the rules of global trade to suit its vested interests. It bombed Sudan, Iraq and Yugoslavia without any regard for the role and authority of the UNO. It went about killing people wantonly anywhere in the world in contempt of legal procedures and courts of law without presenting evidence to the world. It supported Israel's illegal military occupation of the West

Band and Gaza (Arun 2001: 11). By its support of Israel against Palestinians as well as its endless sanctions on Iraq and injustices in Arab countries, the USA has destroyed millions of innocent people in Islamic countries. Thus, the USA has not been less terrorist in the last five decades, than the so-called terrorists.

It is within such a complex scenario that we try to develop a moral theological perspective on the issue of violence and terrorism. Moral theology as a reflection on Christian faith as a liberating event, includes always an Exodus, a Passover. This is particularly so in our time. We need to leave behind an age of violence and enter trustfully into the new millennium in which the cultures of the Third world will be more decisive than those of the Western world. Christians have to get out of their man-made security to make room for the firmness, trust and fidelity that comes through faith. In the ongoing Exodus, Christians have to opt for the victims, the downtrodden, the powerless people, the modest cultures, the poor nations by taking up public positions and facing even grave risks. Those Christians in the wealthy countries have to take steps to spread the benefits of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the whole world and reduce the risks. Only the radical Exodus of transcending narrow communal loyalty and selfish nationalism and opting for the poor with a commitment to non-violent means of liberation can free humanity from violence and ideologies that glorify the sharpening of tensions, conflicts and terrorism. This choice to be peace-makers is an absolute condition for the Exodus that brings hope for the future. "For a Christian, creative, unbending dedication to non-violent action is the most valiant expression of faith in the Redeemer of the world, the Prince of peace who revealed the power of truth and love unto death on the cross" (Arun 2001: 409). Leaving behind the trust in armaments and wars, Christians and Christian nations have to turn away from any thought about 'holy wars' and crusading traditions.

Corresponding to such moral theological reflection, Christian nations must take the lead to evaluate situations and develop active and creative means of non-violent change. The powers of non-violence have not yet been adequately activated by Christians in socio-political issues. In order to be a prophetic voice and a true liberating witness, the Church has to oppose the silent violence precipitated by

unjust economic and political structures that create abject poverty which is the breeding ground of terrorism. The Church and especially her authorities must be continually alert so that they do not become instruments of any governments. The Church has often vehemently opposed the violence by the victims and the oppressed classes, while it has not as much opposed the less publicized violence against the poor and innocent people precipitated by unjust structures and oppressors. She has often failed to be a peace-maker. Instead ‘...she has taken part in a war-mentality through coalescence with cultures marked by false elitism’ (Häring 1981: Vol. III. 406). She has not accustomed herself to be active in struggles for human rights, social justice and peace that concern public life.

In the light of these reflections, the first thing that USA and all of us should ask is: What motivated the hijackers to sacrifice their lives? Why did they carry out such a horrendous attack? What is its real cause and source? What forms of commitment should we take with regard to the oppressive systems and structures for bringing about peace and justice in the world? How should we behave in the face of oppressive and unjust institutional violence? Should we just sit back and passively observe the violation of the rights and dignity of the poor people. Everyone should be equally shocked by the unjust suffering imposed by the selfish and powerful on the poor and downtrodden.

Analysing the September 11 terrorist attack we find that it is an act of vengeance resulting from the injustices meted out to Islamic nations. Studying and looking deeper into the real cause and source of the terrorist attack on September 11, we see that it is only a symptom of the great scandal of a world divided by large and flagrant injustices and inequalities. It is a sign that there are serious problems within the social system that must be corrected. The first question the international community should raise is this: Have we done enough to remove the economic structures which violate the rights and dignity of people and produce such an abyssal difference in the form of an ever-widening gap? Have we done everything in our power to promote justice and to create grace-filled structures for a better world of equality and justice?

Today’s widespread escalation of violence, terrorism and mutual contempt is symptomatic of the failure of the existing insti-

tutions and structures to provide a holistic vision, a sense of purpose and mission to create a peaceful person in a peaceful society. The situation of widespread violence and terrorist attacks should shake us into an awareness of the deep social malaise we are in. It should provoke deeper reflection and honest self-examination. The global alliance formed today against terrorism tends to forget the fundamental cause and source of terrorism itself. The event of September 11 shows how prolonged tyranny can damage gravely the fundamental rights of the individuals and the common good. It shows how abject poverty is driving people to become terrorists. It is often the poor people or half-educated and unemployed rural migrants, who constitute the lower classes in the congested and overcrowded cities, who easily fall victims to the manipulations of terrorists like bin Laden and get recruited to their band.

All organized as well as spontaneous outbursts of violence and terrorism have political and economic roots. They are reactions against the unjust structural and institutional violence in the world today. There is violence due to ethnicity, social inequalities, economic oppression, fundamentalism, narrow nationalism in the world. There is the Superpower's desire for hegemony with national security complexes. The Superpower sells arms to both sides in the wars and conflicts. Terrorism is also propagated by the highly sophisticated arms selling agencies. We are living in a world of collective injustice, group egotism, aggressive and acquisitive mentality. There are people who want to be in power and subjugate everyone. They are ready to perpetrate ruthless violence to be in power. It is a world with a network of conflicts and spirals of violence that operate nationally and internationally. The arms dealers work on fomenting them.

So while searching for remedies, we have to first look into the root cause and source of terrorism. Basically it is a question of denial of human rights and injustice. We need to realize that justice within nations and between nations as well as human rights of individuals and communities are basic human demands both in times of peace and in times of war (Arokiasamy 2002: 4-5). The criminal nature of silence and neutrality in the question of global injustice and abject poverty should be questioned. Bold and imaginative initiatives should be taken out to bring about global solidarity for peace and justice.

Our common concern should be building a fraternal world and our common task should be declaring war against the global tragedy of poverty, illiteracy and consumerism rather than the “war against terrorism”. These shared concerns would certainly generate an inner coherence of vision and purpose for bringing about global solidarity.

In the light of the above reflection, there is a need to interpret Moral Theology’s principles on violence differently. In general, the theology of justice and non-violence are seriously distorted by people to serve their own interests and those of the class to which they belong. Violence seems to have become endemic in our daily life. As it appears, the system has no solution. The victims of oppression are totally alienated and can do nothing unless the political and operational revolution explodes. The only hope for them lies in revolutions. But revolution has been branded as sinful, and revolutionaries have been branded as sowers of hatred and bloodshed. Traditional Moral Theology, with its classist character, denounced revolutionary engagement and searched for theological formulations coherent with the praxis of capitalism and imperialism. It is those with a vested interest in the *status quo* who brand revolution as sinful.

Only if we listen in solidarity to the cries of the victims of oppression can we understand what violence does to people, see its inhuman face and eliminate it. “If we are to break the poverty-barrier for almost two-thirds of the earth’s people, if we are to continue to inhabit the earth, there has to be a revolution in the relationship of human beings to the earth and of human beings to each other. The churches of the world have now to choose whether or not they become part of this revolution” (Beich, *Document no.A1*). Moral theology should interpret differently its principles on revolution and violence. “It should deal with questions of illegal violence challenging the injustice of those who exercise a monopoly over legal violence through the mechanism of state power” (Therukattil 1988: 227). Then there could be just revolutions and liberating violence.

A theology of just revolution and liberating violence is most relevant today when so many lives are sacrificed by prolonging an economic structure that has ceased adequately to serve the needs of the poor. A ‘liberative violence’ in desperate situations of structural



violence or oppression, where only it can change the unjust situation, has to be justified as a means for an urgently needed social change to liberate the poor from an established, permanent and grievous violence. Violence which sheds blood in planned revolution may be a lesser evil than the violence which, though bloodless, condemns whole population to perennial despair. If violence is justified in self-defence, then why shouldn't it be justified as a means for removing unjust situations? "Violence should not be divorced from the conflict situations in which it is exercised... A distinction must be made between, on the one hand, the 'calculated' use of revolutionary violence .... and the violent 'explosions' of people long suppressed who have reached the limits of their endurance" (Bonino 1983: 109). Many of us tend to condemn open and insurrectional violence, while at the same time we condone the subtle and institutional form in which it thrives in the body politic. We are shocked by the violence on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, but we are not shocked at the hidden violence of misery imposed on millions created by unjust economic and political structures. Moral theology should have a pronounced bias towards the poor and the powerless. The Christian can never forget the special claim of the poor and his need to tilt in their favour. The people seeking revolution are usually those who are poor and oppressed – a fact though it cannot justify revolution or violence but nonetheless is an important consideration.

Terrorism is an offshoot of globalization and consumerism. Though we do not claim to possess full knowledge of the motivations of the attackers and their sympathizers, what we do know suggests that their grievances extend far beyond any one policy or set of policies. The attackers despise the overall American ethos and the entire American way of living. For example, consumerism as a way of life or the notion of freedom with no rules, the notion of the individual as self-made and utterly sovereign, owing little to others or to society, the weakening of marriage and family life, plus an enormous entertainment and communications apparatus that relentlessly glorifies such ideas and beams them, whether they are welcome or not, into nearly every corner of the globe. The Americans must put aside their national selfishness and ambition to dominate other nations. They must review their foreign policy and especially their approach to the problems of Islamic countries (Arun 2001: 11).

The Christian ideal in the face of violence is reform by love, forgiveness, persuasion and nonviolent means. As Pope John Paul II has said, “No peace without justice, no justice without forgiveness” (Peace Day Message, 1 January 2002). Historic grievances shall never be compensated for by present retaliations. For Jesus non-violence implied enlightened forgiveness. Enlightened forgiveness does not mean submission to the will of the evil doer, but putting one’s soul against the will of the tyrant. Such active forgiveness can be practised only from a position of strength, not from one of weakness. Such forgiveness may result in the change of heart in the evil doer. One of the best things that President George W. Bush did in the whole mess of September 11 attack was to go almost immediately to a mosque and meet Muslim leaders after September 11 and then to break the fast of Ramadan in the White House with a meal. Such acts of magnanimity and forgiveness will help the terrorists to ponder about their ways.’

It is here Mahatma Gandhi’s *satyagraha*, that is, the dedicated and complete non-violent struggle grounded in Truth, Justice and Peace, becomes most relevant. It is the most consistent and effective method to break the spiral of violence and hatred that is tearing our world apart. “*Satyagraha* liberates the world from the friend-enemy mentality, and thus from the vicious circle of fear and threat” (Häring 1981: 410). Active non-violence counters evil through ways other than violence. Non-violence not only resists evil, but if properly employed resists it more effectively than violence does. It liberates the oppressor who is also enslaved by the structures, which he dominates. It is an expression of spiritual power and spiritual strength and “constitutes in itself a witness against illegitimacy and cries out for its rectification and fundamental transformation” (Srisang 1983: 27). *Satyagraha* is active and not passive, it requires the cooperation of all, and it is obedience to the highest dictates of justice and of conscience. *Satyagraha*, ‘holding firmly to Truth’ is a dynamic attitude. The truth is in the future of which we need not have a clear picture. *Satyagraha* is a leap of faith into the unknown, the Lord of the Future. Holding the Truth is to struggle in hope and in love, trusting that the struggle for justice is never in vain for ‘Truth surely conquers’, *Satyam eva Jayate*’

Effective and active non-violence is something very challenging and demanding. It does not work unless we free ourselves from the lust for power and the culture of enslaving consumerism and greed. Peace in the world depends on the peace we achieve within ourselves. It is not to be interpreted as non-resistance. "Nor is it passivity and resignation in the face of violence and injustice. Jesus was not opposed to resistance or struggle against injustice. He did resist evil. He did not run away from his opponents. Nor did he give in to them. In fact, he actually raised the level of conflict by openly siding with the poor and the oppressed against the established authorities" (Podimattam 1990: 500).

The Gospel non-violence is not against the struggle for justice which in certain conflictual situations, may burst out into violence against a situation of 'manifest, long-standing and oppressive tyranny' (as Pope Paul VI says in *Populorum Progressio* ) which makes recourse to violence lawful and necessary. While the Christian ideal is non-violent persuasion and reform by love, our doctrine of sin informs that force, violent or non-violent, is necessary to prevent evil and injustice. We need to be reminded that non-violence can become a power in the hands of the powerful to protect their status and privileges and to keep the *status quo*. Violence is by no means a Gospel value. Yet there are human situations in which only some forms of violence would seem capable of removing another form of violence. In this situation we are not only confronted by problems of non-violence or violent resistance against internal injustice, but also the problem of security and national defence against external threats by means of non-violent actions or military power.

In situations where violence is necessitated for security reasons, the governments should see that the social costs are proportionate to the end. In other words, defence measures must be in accordance with the national and international common good and, this cannot be realized without a preferential option for the poor. "This implies that from an economic view, the costs of defence may not be at the expense of social security and the promotion of social participation of the economically vulnerable, nor of the research and development of means that are necessary to resolve the problem of hunger and underdevelopment in the third world" (*National*

*conference of Catholic Bishops* 1986: n.24). Distributive and productive justice requires that we do not spend too much for military affairs so that we do not have enough resources to produce what would meet the basic needs of the poor inside and outside the country (no. 24).

The Christian conscience must always look for peaceful means of effecting social change and not wait for the situation to become so bad that violence becomes inevitable. The prophetic and social dimension of conscience as the voice of the 'Other' and 'others' and its formation by listening to the voice of the voiceless should be more and more emphasized (Therukattil 1987: 41-68). "Christian creativity cannot allow itself to be trapped in this dilemma of violent action or inactive nonviolence. Passivity and self-centredness are contradictions of the gospel, and God will require an account from us for the people who are forced to suffer due to our passivity, as well as for those who, driven by our passive attitude, ended up convincing themselves that the only way of bringing justice to the poor was the way of violence" (Antoncich 1987: 142).

Even in situations where violence is necessary to restore peace and order, it has to be in the context of sincere efforts of pursuing peace and reconciliation. It has to be tempered by an 'involved transcendence', as Mahatma Gandhi would say, with no hatred toward the oppressor. Such an 'involved transcendence' is the only way of breaking the spiral of violence which breeds further violence and injustice. But as often happens for the sake of quick efficacy, resorting to violence and bloodshed is not Christian. An authentic Christian moral perspective must recognize that it is God who ultimately establishes the fullness of justice.

But in the meanwhile, there is need to "renew and strengthen the movement of a global solidarity for justice and peace for all" (Arokiasamy 2002: 3). All of us will have to develop a truly global consciousness about what our responsibilities are to each other and what our relationships are to be. "The cry of no war therefore has to become a movement for global solidarity of people in a common effort for justice and peace. The deeper imperative behind all measures to fight terrorism has to be the imperative of justice within nations and between nations. We have become too accustomed and

immune to the inequality of the economic gap between rich and poor, between developing and developed countries. The so-called “war against terrorism” must begin with a serious effort to overcome the gross inequalities, economic, social and political, in our world community. It has to become a shared commitment of peoples and nations to correct fundamental injustices and thus to build peace. There can be no fight against terrorism without a probe into the causes of violence and the context out of which it arises. We need responses based on the criteria of our humanity and faith that hold promise of justice, peace, freedom and solidarity for all. We need creative responses worthy of our dignity. The project of peace-making is not an optional extra for Christians. In dialogical solidarity with all people of good will, we have to respond to the challenge of peace” (Arokiasamy 2002: 4-5).

Considering a world divided by huge injustices and with the structures of international injustice, we have to fight for a global ethics, based on the *humanum* and comprising the basic values, ideals and truths common to all cultures (trans-cultural values or core values). Hindu ethicists distinguish between *Sanatana dharma* and *vishesha dharma*. The *sanatana dharma* is inherently trans-cultural and trans-temporal and consist of values like tolerance, respect for life, social justice etc., without which social life would be impossible. We need such an ethics for protecting and fostering our fraternal communion and solidarity, especially in the context of international injustice and ecological crisis. Arguing for a meta-ethic with trans-cultural values does not eliminate contextual interpretations. A global just humanist ethic that can bring together the needs and concerns, the will and aspirations of differing cultures and ideologies may be the most responsible response to hidden terrorisms. Commitment to human rights and social justice should be based on a vision of the whole of humanity as a brotherhood/sisterhood of all and the Fatherhood/ Motherhood of God. It should be based on a vision of *dharma*, a duty or obligation. The value of Justice has to be trans-valued by the trans-cultural value of charitable justice. Today when one can hardly act correctly locally without thinking globally, we need such an ethics with reciprocal obligation between people of one place and another and between different generations (Therukattil 2000: 195-214). We need then a globalization of humanity, a human solidarity

within a shared earth and a common destiny, within a plurality of perceptions, faith experiences, within the dialectic of the local and the global. In brief, we need a prophetic moral theology that will critique “prince and priest, market and mammon, multinationals and war merchants and all hegemony and all plunder of the poor” (*Final statement of the 4<sup>th</sup> General assembly of EATWOT*) by the superpowers or local magnates.

After the event of September 11, interreligious dialogue of life and action to foster peace and harmony has become all the more relevant. It has become an obligatory path for eradicating the cancer of competitive communalism that has infected world society. Through interreligious dialogue, we learn and understand the specificity of other’s faith, which in its deepest level would make us inter-human by its demand of love of the neighbour (Arokiasamy 1991: 306-307). In such dialogues on theological level, we should be reminded that harmony between various religions would not come about by a ‘world theology’, “but by the development in the various traditions of specific theologies which, taking religious pluralism seriously, will assume their mutual differences and resolve to interact in dialogue and co-operation” (Dupuis 1991: 281). Arising from such dialogical interaction, cooperation for the building of the larger human community should be forged.

But unfortunately what we witness today is that religions have not come up as agents for resolving terrorism. Their valuable specificity, their original call to basic human communion and true openness have not been made use of for educating the public to refrain from encouraging terrorism by harbouring the terrorists in their homes or helping them in any other way. Terrorism would not succeed without public support. The world community and the governments in various countries have not sufficiently tapped the foundational inspirations from the core values of all religions and ideologies to motivate people towards non-violent struggles and make them work together for building mass movements for lasting peace settled on the foundation of justice. “It is through dialogue, not weapons, that controversies are resolved,” said Pope John Paul II during his visit to Kazakhstan soon after the tragic event of September 11. Differences are bound to arise between communities, cultures,

countries and even more between civilizations. And as Huntington affirms: "... the religious resurgence throughout the world is a reaction against secularism, moral relativism, and self-indulgence, and a re-affirmation of the values of order, discipline, work, mutual help and solidarity" (1997: 98). Although one may not agree with Samuel Huntington's thesis of the inevitability of the 'clash of civilizations', at least one can agree with his central argument that there is a resurgence of cultures and civilizations today that are asserting themselves, causing a sharpening of the tensions and divisions and it is of utmost urgency to look for paths that lead to reconciliation, dialogue, and collaboration (Menampambil 2002: 176). Many problems can be solved through real dialogue and international understanding. Demonizing Islam and branding it as fundamentalist is not helpful. Such an attitude would only further terrorism. It would only create a prejudice towards the Islamic community and provoke enmity between the West and the Islamic world. It would only encourage antisocial elements in the Islamic world to resort to terrorism. "In the context of the emergence of 'fundamentalism in several Islamic countries' and the alleged 'Islamic aggressiveness and obscurantism,' it may be good to look at what Islam has contributed to the modern West and through Western experience to the rest of the world" (Menampambil 2002: 180-181).

Besides interreligious dialogue, dialogue between cultures and traditions is also required; dialogue in which there is collective search for the causes of violence and hatred that leads to terrorism. It is not so much dialogue with the terrorists, but with all people, especially with Islamic countries which have openly condemned the attacks in the USA. This will help the Americans to find the answers for the causes of terrorism in the world and reasons why Osama bin Laden is still not captured. It will help them to bring about 'infinite justice'.

Dialogue on various levels is essential for curbing and wiping out global terrorism. Such dialogue means visioning, planning and arriving at practical strategies for peace and harmony. An alignment of enlightened and critical people of good will and people who long for peace and global solidarity for justice is to be created for arriving at strategies for united action. It is joint action to bring about a transformation in society, in a neighbourhood, in a city and in a

country. It should aim at a change of minds and hearts, attitudes and perspectives. It should aim at an interior silent revolution of eradicating any trace of violence from the mind and heart. What we need is a “universal inclusive heart that can accept even violence in a non-violent way” (Mulloor 2002; 139). Dialogue is more powerful than the physical forces of guns and bombs. It has the soul-force of the inner and spiritual power of the transformed attitudes (Edwin 2002: 11).

We have to alarm public opinion and shake the conscience of those who participate in terrorist attacks. The terrorists and their foster fathers make use of people in desperate situations. They instrumentalize religious faiths because they know that religions only provide the basic motive and sustain the people whom they make use of for their malicious designs. Of course, in the case of terrorism, through communalistic interpretations the religious motives are distorted or misused deliberately for personal gain in the form of economic and political power. bin Laden has found that show of religion is the best propaganda tool that he can use in order to keep the masses belonging to contending ethnic groups and colliding regional interests united and loyal (Menamparambil 2002: 190). As Asghar Ali Engineer contends, religion is not the root cause of communal conflict but “is rather a powerful instrument in the hands of those *interests* which seek to play their games through it” (1984: 2-3).

Terrorism can finally be overcome only by social, economic, and political reform. But in the meanwhile, we need to tap the resources of good will and common sense for the work of wiping out terrorism. The issue needs to become the concern of everyone. What Moral Theology can do in this context is consciousness-raising to form a world-wide and strong public opinion against this great menace. A strong message should be given to the terrorists that justice cannot be achieved through violence. It should be “followed by a concerted effort in union with all peaceable people to convince public opinion, legislators and civil authorities how urgent it is to build up a strong movement against war and for peace and justice. It is not just a matter of defence of one’s rights. We need a purposeful and comprehensive education and exercises to uproot mutual fear”



(Häring 1981: 410-411), all feelings of hostility, contempt, distrust, as well as racial hatred and unbending ideologies. World opinion against terrorism is to be aroused. There should be efforts to bring to public consciousness the hidden conflicts and conflict-situations before they explode in such a way that they can no longer be managed. The art of dialogue, reconciliation, arbitration and patient development of healthier relationships also are to be studied.

An approach of wisdom and a bold initiative to mould and shape a united world of peace and brotherhood/sisterhood is what is needed today. Research into the preconditions of positive peace, peace-education and research into conflicts must also be a priority in Christian ethics. It should study and inquire into the various forms of 'unpeacefulness' and awareness of hidden conflicts, their causes. In the context of a Christian peace-ethics, limited use of violence must always be related not only to the fundamental Gospel values of non-violence, but also to prudent pacifism, which is very sensitive to the negative long term effects of the spiral of violence.

If only all Christians and all Christian nations reflected the spirit of St. Francis' prayer for peace: "Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is sadness, joy; where there is darkness, light!"

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