

The Root & Consequence of Holy Rage

A Christian Perspective

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Osama bin Laden's public effort to portray the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the United States as a necessary "holy struggle" for Islam was quickly rejected by mainstream Islamic leaders. Nevertheless, the unintended release of a video of his private communication, portrayed him, and the others, praising Allah for the larger than expected death toll from the attack on the New York Trade Center, and praising Allah for blessing their efforts to wage holy war against the United States. The consistency between Osama bin Laden's public and private communication proved he was driven by religious conviction, and proved that in his mind his terrorist activities were a clear and courageous expression of Islam. It was also established by extension that the entire terrorist network was driven by the same religious zeal. In truth, the terrorists managed to generate a significant consensus within Islamic Fundamentalism that the war directed at the United States was uniquely important, involved sacred beliefs, and the success of that holy struggle was essential to the existence of Islam.

Most belief systems in human history encompassed several threads of understanding which were created and then nurtured by assorted charismatic leaders; and threads which resulted from adaptation to new sociological and political realities. Islam was no exception. Still Islam held itself to be the carrier of absolute truth. That meant truth singular in origin, not subject to modification by human reason, and morally compelling for believers. Islam was the principal source of social order for a large segment of the human race for many hundreds of years. That long history meant essential tenets of the belief system were now passed subconsciously from parent to child as positive, matter-of-fact information about the nature of life and reality, and were therefore immune from question, challenge, or the need for individual consent. The belief system promised rewards for the life rightly lived, and an everlasting reward for the heroic life. However, the convergence of humanity in the modern period forced upon all within that belief system unrelenting comparison with other belief systems which likewise claimed absolute truth, were

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similarly embedded in individual subconscious; but were much more successful in satisfying human need, and maintaining freedom from tyranny. Unrelenting ideological, sociological, and economic stress coupled with a very strong and enduring claim to absolute truth, generated a predictable dynamic within that belief system. That dynamic included, but was not limited to, the following: believers whose faith weakened or failed and which resulted in the gradual transfer of allegiance to a different belief system which appeared to be more true and/or more successful; believers whose faith failed within an environment completely encapsulated by that belief system and which resulted in psychological malaise and increasing sociological dysfunction; and believers with strong faith and/or strong need coupled with individual or cultural shame which resulted in the deep conviction that the problem was the failure of righteousness and/or courage. The model was best understood as a fluid process, and not in simplistic Aristotelian cause and effect relationships. With that in mind, the last category of believers represented the "fertile ground" from which terrorists emerged. But the use of the word "terrorist," actually acted as an obstacle to deeper understanding. What should be said was that the last category of believers represented a social/religious trend or process within Islam that supported and developed the conclusion that individual and collective shame was the direct consequence of the failure of righteousness and the failure of courage. That same social/religious dynamic fostered the conviction that heroic righteousness and/or heroic courage would restore the dominance and vigor of the belief system. In other words, the group fostered the conclusion that the social, economic, and spiritual stress was the fault of the believer. Believers inclined to heroic behavior concluded . . . "I must be more righteous" . . . "I must be more courageous" . . . "I must make this belief system work!" Since these conclusions were not static, but occurred within an on-going social/religious process, they continued to amplify in direct proportion to the failure to achieve the desired results or reach the desire goal. The broader and more persistent the stress, the broader and more deeply rooted was the determination to "make it work." The stronger and more persistent the stress, the stronger and deeper the rage until it became "holy rage" . . . rage that blamed others . . . rage that rendered individual life meaningless, because, "a life that did not please our god had no meaning and no value."

The dynamic, thus described, was not unique to Islam. Indeed, every culture known to history was rooted in the belief that it was the carrier of divine or absolute truth, and that people outside its belief system were either sub-human, or unworthy, and need not be accorded justice. Nevertheless, the need for understanding and meaningful response was best served by the modern examples of Germany under Adolph Hitler, and the USSR under Joseph Stalin. Both tyrants demanded obedience to values held to be absolute in truth . . . values that justified pain and suffering . . . mass executions . . . and war.

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Karl Marx, of course, envisioned an utopian society under communism, but the success of the communist revolution in Russia in October of 1917 actually worsened the already difficult economic situation in that country. Russia had been brought to the brink of economic collapse by the cost of its involvement in World War I, which had usurped its industrial resources while providing little to those industries in compensation. Wages were very poor or non-existent. A serious food

shortage developed during the Winter of 1917, and in February of that year a large group of common people, mostly women, assembled at the Ministry of Agriculture to receive a daily food allocation. They were told to go home because there was no food, but they refused to leave. Repeated orders to disperse were ignored and finally Cossacks began shooting into the crowd to force their dispersal. That only resulted in an out-pouring of social rage, and before that day was over a mob had stormed the Duma (Russian parliament) and installed the democratic Provisional Government under the leadership of Andre Kerensky. Even with help from the West, the Provisional Government was unable to solve the food crisis, and that enabled the Bolsheviks to take control of Russia in October of 1917. Lenin immediately ordered the execution of anyone caught hoarding grain. The proclamation was aimed at the Kulaks, the land owning agricultural class in Russia. Many Kulaks, and other people in agriculture were executed, but that did not solve Russia's food problem. The revolution had worsened an already desperate situation, because industrial workers left their employment in the expectation of a better life, and in the belief that the capitalists, the owners of industry, were largely responsible for their poverty. That meant the people in the cities had even less money to buy food. The Kulaks could not understand why they ought to give up their food stores for nothing, because that would mean their own demise. Industrial production, largely concentrated in the cities, plummeted to near zero over the next ten years, and the populations of Moscow and Saint Petersburg dropped by 50% to 70% as people flooded into the rural areas of Russia in an effort to avoid starvation. Lenin's policies had not solved the problem by the time of his death in 1923.

Joseph Stalin's move to take control of the new USSR after the death of Lenin was decisive and well planned. By 1930 he was in complete control and from that position of power began a systematic purge of troublesome citizens, uncooperative members of the Communist Party, and mettlesome intellectuals. It had been called a reign of terror, and so it was. Nearly 7,000,000 people were executed between 1930 and 1939. Joseph Stalin clearly fit the profile of a terrorist set forth above.

Joseph Dzhugashvili was born in the village of Gori, in the Georgia region of Russia on December 7, 1878. He was a very intelligent and perceptive child, but his childhood was dominated by extreme poverty and unmerciful and protracted abuse. The Tsarist culture of Russia offered absolutely no hope to such a boy, and so he joined the Bolsheviks in 1898. His decision to change his name to Joseph Stalin (Stalin meant "steel") in 1910 was symbolic of a deep bond with the communist ideology, and a deep commitment to "make communism work no matter what the cost." Certainly that meant success in overthrowing the Tsarist regime,

but the Bolsheviks would never be satisfied with partial success. Human need mandated that ideology be absolute, because only absolute truth would have the power to generate the broad social appropriation of the prescriptive behavior necessary to establish social order, and achieve social progress. Partial success within the psyche of one fully bonded to the "absolute truth" of an ideology never resulted in moderation, but always generated renewed determination to achieve complete success. It was inevitable that the drive for complete success, which continued unabated, would become delusional. So it was with

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Joseph Stalin . . . after years of purges and executions he would have people destroyed for one word of disagreement, or one wrong attitude. Stalin, and those who had fully appropriated the communist ideology, truly believed communism would soon rule the World.

There are several essential insights into the terrorist phenomenon that must be gleaned from the USSR under Stalin.

- Stalin did not rule the USSR or the Communism Party single-handedly, but was the undisputed leader of a broad consensus within the Communist Party, and a significant consensus in the general population. The need that generated the bond to the communist ideology was deep and pervasive in Tsarist Russia, and that need generated a strong determination to "make communism work." Though the consensus within the Communist Party strengthened over time, neither Stalin, members of the party, nor foreign intelligence operatives, noticed the growing individual malaise and the growing social dysfunction that eventually crippled communism.
- The persecution of the intelligentsia and the extermination of many members of the communism party, who appeared committed to communism, was driven by the instinctual understanding that ideology must be appropriated as absolute truth for it to have the power to generate the prescriptive behavior necessary for the success of communism. The most essential quality of "absoluteness" was immunity from modification by reason or intellect. Such modification and/or intellectual tinkering would have rendered the ideology equivocal, and therefore, powerless. Other cultures have protected the absolute quality of their ideology by nurturing strong links with religion, for example, Europe, the United States, and all Muslim countries; or by protecting the origin of the ideology with cultural taboo, for example, Japan and the United States.
- The "Rain of Terror" during the Stalinist Era was entirely ineffective in establishing communism as a historical reality. It appeared on the surface to be quite effective, and for a brief time observers marveled at how quickly the USSR became a world power. However, that perception was skewed by the very significant contribution the USSR made to the Second World War, and the penchant of the American culture to grossly inflate the capability of its enemies. The "Rain of Terror" only delayed the disintegration of communism at the cost of millions of lives.
- The deep and desperate need that pervaded Tsarist Russia on the

eve of the communist revolution was worthy of compassion and effective action. Nevertheless, the reality of their suffering did not empower those people to formulate their own version of absolute truth which would then have the power to restore justice and meaning.

Adolf Hitler was a German Army Corporal recovering from gas-blindness in a German hospital at the end of the First World War. Like many Germans, he did not believe Germany actually lost the war because Germany had never been invaded or occupied. That led to the conclusion that Germany had been betrayed by its leaders. Hitler and most Germans were further enraged by the Treaty of Versailles published in June of 1919 which imposed such harsh measures on Germany that it resulted in a loss of all of the Alsatian potash and textile industries, most of its iron ore and zinc deposits, a huge percentage of its ships, shipping facilities, and railroad cars; 10% of the population, 14% of its territory, and 15% of the arable land. But the most galling provisions of the treaty for the Germans were the reparation payments demanded by the Allies, and the assignment of full blame for the war to Germany. The bitter rage was exacerbated by severe inflation after the war which was primarily the result of the heavy indebtedness incurred by the German monarchy in financing the war. The German monarchy, consistent with the long standing tradition of European and English nobility, had turned to Jewish sources for that financing. Germany plunged into anarchy, then attempted to pay off the heavy indebtedness by printing money.

Rage dominated Germany, but deeper than the rage was the tension between collective shame and the unscathed conviction of the truth of the German ideals. That tension, often expressed as rage, drove the conviction that the German ideals must triumph no matter what the cost or who was destroyed. Adolf Hitler, no doubt more acutely than most, carried the feeling of the deep shame and the desperate need of the German people. Nevertheless, he was not alone in that feeling. It was broad and deep in the German people. Hitler became the leader of that broad consensus because he was intelligent, a spell-binding orator, and he aspired to leadership. His leadership sought to restore the Germany ideals by creating a war machine capable first, of regaining all that was lost to Germany as a result of the Treaty of Versailles, and then secondly, achieving world domination. Hitler's regime addressed the debt crisis in a manner also consistent with the long standing tradition of European and English nobility, namely, the indebtedness to the Jewish sources of financing was not honored, but instead the Jews were attacked and made the scapegoat for Germany's financial chaos.

The salient points to be drawn from the German experience under Hitler are:

- The humiliation of the German people with the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 only assured a far more destructive war in the future. The notion that the victor had right to inflict humiliation was only the product of foolish vanity.

- The threat of another retaliatory war after World War II was eliminated by forgiveness . . . by meaningful assistance in rebuilding a war torn enemy . . . and by prosecution, in a dignified court of law, of enemy leaders guilty of criminal acts. That resulted in an enemy becoming a friend, the subordination of the German ideals to the greater ideals of the human race, and a clear proclamation that justice transcended revenge.

The three men discussed above were evil. The social processes that empowered them were evil. Confrontations with such evil after heinous crimes were committed was a dangerously inadequate response. Obviously humanity must rally against such evil, but the destruction of the leaders of evil only after thousands to millions of people were lost was only a grim and ephemeral success. In two cases evil returned more ferociously after apparent defeat. Led in one case by the abused son of impoverished boot makers, and in another case by a troubled army Corporal. Evil could have ignited again under the leadership of a Pakistani youth living in his village in shame because he participated in an Taliban army that was easily defeated by the United States. Horrific evil was the ultimate consequence of social processes that appeared innocent and barely visible at inception. Obviously humanity needed the discernment to clearly recognize evil at inception, but the subtlety of understanding necessary for such discernment was not available and could not have been developed from extreme examples of evil. Rather, it had to be developed from less harsh expressions of revenge, and less violent examples of social processes that define "citizen," "believer," et al, so as to exclude others judged to be non-believers, less human, or unworthy, as a prelude to unjust, unequal and/or harsh treatment.

The American people in general, and the citizens of New York City in particular, responded with a remarkable lack of panic to the terrorist attack on that city on September 11, 2001. Nevertheless, a strong consensus developed immediately that the responsible people should be destroyed. As the plan for counterattack was formulated, the political and military leaders proposed, and the American people endorsed, that terrorists captured on foreign soil need not, and indeed should not, be accorded the full rights normally granted a criminal by the American Constitution. As the counterattack against the terrorists developed successfully, the energy in the American culture which had pressed for limitations on the constitutional rights of the terrorists moderated. Though subtle to the degree it was almost completely invisible, that reaction in the American culture was consistent with the principle that people who were bonded with an absolute value system would; 1) judge people outside that bond to be unworthy of equal treatment, 2) would respond with rage directed at those who caused stress to that belief system, and 3) the intensity of the rage was directly determined by the intensity of the stress.

Military and political leaders also announced that innocent people would be killed during the retaliation. It was, they said, an unfortunate but thoroughly justifiable consequence. Certainly innocent civilians were not killed intentionally. Nevertheless the justification of innocent civilian casualties was an action taken by all absolute value

systems when the decision was made for retaliation against those who posed a threat to that social structure.

The public persona of America was freedom, diversity and equality, and those qualities portrayed an open and flexible social structure. None of those three qualities, however, were elements of the essential, and absolute core values of the American belief system. Rather, the core values were:

Sanctity of the individual. The concept of individual identity as personified in the United States developed in symbiotic tension with the "divine right of kings" after the Christian Reformation. The divine right of kings had been the essential absolute value around which all of Europe was ordered from the rein of the Holy Roman Empire to the Enlightenment. In order to successfully break from the oppression of kings who claimed the divine right to rule, such as occurred in the French Revolution, the right of the individual had to be elevated to equal or greater stature than that of kings. Therefore, sanctity of the individual became, "the divine right of the individual." The success of that effort was dependent upon Martin Luther tendering his own interpretation of Christian Holy Scripture, and the invention of the printing press. Those two events allowed individuals to interpret Holy Scripture for themselves, and thus granted them direct access to God. The resulting "divine right of the individual" reached its quintessential expression in the United States where the principal quality of that right was "self-sufficiency." That meant an individual who had no physical, emotional or spiritual needs that were the responsibility of others, or the responsibility of society. As the American culture matured, the divine right of the individual reinforced by the admonition of self-sufficiency, elevated the individual above the need for god, and the claim of any god, or any religious tradition. The kind of diversity advertised as an essential quality of American life was not really diversity at all, but a requirement that all believers subordinate their god to the American absolute value of the superior right of the individual.

Capitalism. Adam Smith, the renowned British economist of the early Industrial Revolution, coined the phrase, "If individuals are allowed to pursue their own self-interest, the greatest good will be done for the greatest number as if guided by an invisible hand." That famous saying was supported by observations, examples, and analysis in his book, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations. He became the founding father of Capitalism by supplying the requisite vision of the social infrastructure required to translate "the divine right of the individual" into a functional social process. The famous dictum contained the promise of a utopian

result, ". . . the greatest good will be done for the greatest number," and the appropriation of divine language, ". . . as if guided by an invisible hand." The utopian result and the appropriation of the divine were necessary for capitalism to become an absolute value in American ideology. The collapse of communism in the mid 1980's allowed the infrastructure of that American absolute to expand until it achieved world domination under the banner of the "Global Economy." Signatories to the treaty which created The World Trade Organization, the watchdog of the global capitalism, gave that organization the authority to modify or ignore laws of individual countries insofar as they were an obstacle to the stated economic goals. Global capitalism was not achieved by gentle persuasion, but aggressive proselytization whereby capitalism was advertised as the absolute and only path to economic success.

Corporate Culture. In an astonishing coup, the business and political interests, principally English and Scottish Protestantss, which drove the creation of business law in America's early years, succeeded in having the corporation defined as an individual. The consequence of that identification was a protective mantle over corporate activities that allowed them the same freedom and privacy of individuals. That, in turn , gave them a huge advantage over labor unions and craft guilds which grew out of the Jewish and Catholic immigrant groups, and were successfully labeled as "unions" or "group activities" which were at odds with the "rights of the individual," and therefore at odds with the American culture. The most important social role of the corporate culture was the provision of an environment for acting out the essential social ideal of competition, and to shield that activity from conflict with the cultural ideal of equality. It was primarily through the corporate culture that Americans became unequal, and therefore "special" or "superior" . . . in terms of business acumen, invention, and wealth. As the corporate culture grew in size and power, it became the principal testament to the supposed superiority of the ideal of competition, and the therefore the superiority of the United States. The success of the American corporate culture in the global economy definitely established it as an essential absolute value in America.

Competition. The public persona of America was certainly equality, and equality was certainly the intent of the founding fathers. Nevertheless, the true absolute value was competition, or more precisely, the ritualized activity which established superiority. Competition was employed in schools in the form of comparative grades from kindergarten through graduate school, in the business world, and in individual relationships. Competition was said to ensure the best education, the most competent employees, the best product at the best price, the most diligent and efficient business

operations, and the most efficient use of economic and geological resources. Professional sports constituted the ritual re-enactment of the aggressive and competitive attitude which was believed to account for American supremacy in the world, and therefore was the most cherished of American values. Just like the gladiatorial battles in the Roman Colosseum which constituted the ritual re-enactment of the behavior Romans believed accounted for their supremacy. The billions of dollars spent on sports in America was an unequivocal testament to the depth of yearning in those people, especially in young men, for the feeling of being special, unequal, and ultimately, superior. Mainstream America was comprised of those who embraced self-sufficiency and competition, those who did not were treated as unequal. American women were a case in point. The social role of housewife and mother was non competitive and undermined the ideal of self-sufficiency. Women who chose that life style may have received some token acknowledgment for possessing "women's intuition," but were nonetheless treated as unequal, and less competent. The apparent progress of woman to greater equality did not represent a shift in American ideology but rather resulted when increasing numbers of women rejected that traditional role and embraced the ideological values of competition and self-sufficiency. That shift was given symbolic expression by increased participation of women in competitive sports. In like manner, the apparent lack of progress for Black and Native American males resulted from their comparative limited success in appropriating the American value of self-sufficiency, and appropriating competition as the means of establishing self-worth. Many in the culture have used the success of oriental immigrants as vindication of the basic fairness of the American culture, in a manner that constituted further insult to Blacks and Native Americans. What was lost in that assessment was the fact that ideology only acquired the power to shape human behavior when it had been appropriated subconsciously. That required several generations of positive affirmation of those values, whether that affirmation occurred within, or outside the United States. Blacks and Native Americans instead had a subconscious root of bitterness which resulted from generations of slavery and genocide. It was likely many within those two groups would never bond to American values. That also explained the raising popularity of Islam amongst Black males. The minority women from those two groups appeared to experience more success because they initially shared the unequal status of all women. When women in general began to move away from the traditional role of women, minority women followed that path instead of that of their male counterparts.

Majority rule. America never tired of emphasizing its democratic institutions and calling itself the land of freedom, and though it probably did offer more freedom than any other culture, it had to succeed in eliciting the prescriptive behavior from its citizens dictated by its ideology for the culture to prosper. Citizens had to

provide for themselves in order to respond to the admonition of self-sufficiency and, for the vast majority, that meant working in the autocratic corporate culture most of their adult life. The culture also needed to ensure that Americans were motivated to consume goods and services in order for corporate America to prosper. Americans also had to be willing to die for the good of the country if deemed necessary by the majority, and needed to offer positive affirmation of the institutions through which the prescriptive behavior was channeled. Those needs were fulfilled by majority rule, and the derivative peer pressure. Majority rule was absolute, and though it was sanguine at times, it was just as often tyrannical. Presidents cowered before the majority, and judges modified decisions and adjusted laws. It was always dominant because it was no person in particular, and no institution in particular . . . it was prejudice . . . or affirmation . . . social acceptance . . . or social rejection . . . the offer of opportunity . . . or the denial of opportunity . . . praise . . . or criticism . . . receiving an invitation . . . being ignored. It was a world of feelings and innuendo that eluded the scientific mind, and yet was the cause of much pain and suffering. Nevertheless, it was an absolute authority that was astonishingly effective in communicating the prescriptive behavior required in the culture.

Science. Every value system accepted as an absolute had to be tautological and teleological. Teleological meant a perfect and/or utopian existence resulted from the completed implementation of the system, and tautological meant that all knowledge necessary to achieve that utopian result was contained within, and under the control of the value system. Though partially responsible for teleological promises such as the end of infectious disease, cancer, and genetic defect, the principal mandate given science was satisfaction of the tautological need of the American culture. Repeated announcements by genetic researchers that they had discovered the key to all life was one thread within the scientific community directed at complete and therefore absolute knowledge. The work of the astronomers to mathematically describe the creation of the universe millisecond by millisecond combined with the theory of evolution was intended to supplant all other accounts of creation, and to establish complete control over the logic and evidence of that new account of creation history. The missions to Mars to find evidence of life on that planet was a third thread intended to confirm the validity of scientific knowledge, and strengthen scientific control over all knowledge. In conjunction with the scientific research intended to fulfill the tautological need of American ideology, the scientific community was also responsible for challenging competing claims from any other value system. To that end, scientists continuously challenged any advocacy of the Christian account of creation, and any attempt to discount the scientific version of creation. Scientists snickered at Muslims for confining their education to the Koran, in complete ignorance that Muslims were

only fulfilling their own tautological needs exactly in the same manner as the scientists. Scientist also worked hard to debunk acupuncture, herbal medicine, creation stories, and any other claims of truth from any other culture, religion, or ethnic group. The scientific community was eager to use the word "miraculous" to characterize their own discoveries, for example, penicillin and DNA, but even more aggressive in debunking the claim of miraculous from any other value system.

America indeed had at its core a belief system accepted as absolute truth by those bonded to that culture. America indeed put extremely intense pressure on all of its citizens to subordinate their religious beliefs, or other absolute beliefs, to the American belief system. America did aggressively proselytize the world. And Americans were largely unaware of any of that, because the absolute values had a long history of being passed subconsciously from parent to child as positive truth, and "matter-of-fact" information about the nature of life. Those values were also strengthened by strong ties to religion. The consequence was a very strong value system, immune to intellectual challenge. In proselytizing the world Americans believed they were doing the world a favor . . . they were showing the world how to be productive, prosperous, and intelligent. Many Americans simply could not accept that some in the world reacted with rage at seeing their own absolute value system marginalized by the intense economic and epistemological pressure from the United States.

In past millenniums the earth was so thinly populated and the human race so dispersed that civilizations could rise and fall without much notice from humans outside that absolute definition of reality. In the modern period greatly increased population and instant global communication made all humans painfully aware of all cultural trauma. From the confrontation between Moses and the Pharaoh to the Cold War standoff between the United States and the USSR, two absolute value system could not co-exist. They would inevitably war against each other until one prevailed and other receded to the archival records of historians. Though America advertised its willingness to co-exist with any and all absolute value systems, that only represented a lack of self-awareness, and a lack of awareness of the pain they caused others. Surely America had the military might to win the battle of escalating rage, and had the power to stomp the rest of humanity into oblivion. Would that have meant a peaceful future under the banner of global capitalism? Most cultures lost in the annals of history disintegrated from within even as they dominated their world. Cultural strength did not derive from military might, but from the ability to generate the subconscious bond of absolute truth with succeeding generations. What was the window onto the soul that enabled understanding of that inner dimension?

Joseph Conrad said in describing the soul of a young man:

"'We want in so many ways to be,' he began again. 'This magnificent butterfly finds a little heap of dirt and sits still on it; but man he will never on his heap of mud keep still. He wants to be so . . . and again he wants to be so . . .' He moved his had up,

then down. ' . . he wants to be a saint, and he wants to be a devil - and every time he shuts his eyes he sees himself as a very fine fellow - so fine as he can never be . . . in a dream.' ' . . And because you not always can keep your eyes shut there comes the real trouble - the heart pain - the world pain. I tell you, my friend, it is not good for you to find you cannot make your dream come true, for the reason that you not strong enough are, or not clever enough." (*Lord Jim*)

Jim, the character in Conrad's book, got his chance to be a saint . . . "Tuan Jim" . . . Lord Jim . . . and when his dream failed he accepted death from the chief of the tribe that had elevated him to divine status. But Conrad had described the hunger for significance as a dream to be a saint . . . or a devil. Why? The deep need for significance had no morality. Morality was derivative behavior appropriated from the absolute values, or the opportunity, that offered significance, and would last only as long as the bond to that absolute. A value system was accurately judged by its ability to create a subconscious bond with succeeding generations, and the existence or non-existence of that bond was evidenced by the appropriation of the morality of that value system. Value systems in a weakened state experienced increased immorality, anarchy, and terrorism from within.

The human race created, and then re-created absolute value systems throughout history, but the convergence of humanity in the modern period dramatically increased the pressures, the wars, and the inner disintegration. What was the answer to all that yearning for an absolute, and all that yearning for significance?

"How blest are those who know their need for God; the kingdom of Heaven is theirs." (*Matthew 5:3 - The New English Bible*)

Humans were created to need God, and they had nothing to say about it. No matter how brilliant the pursuit of heroism, no matter how many centuries were devoted to the fabrication of an absolute value system, the heroic adventure fell short and the value system disintegrated. Like Lord Jim, who willingly accepted death at that point, all humans wanted to die when they knew the dream was delusion.

"When this happens, men will long for death and not find it anywhere; they will want to die and death will evade them." (*Revelation 9:6, Jerusalem Bible*)

Humans were kept alive for the sake of God's glory . . .

"... what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners." (*Romans 5:8, Jerusalem Bible*)

Sin . . . the separation from God . . . humans knew him not, yet out of the need for him they struggled to create their own god, and dreamed of a self worthy enough to know fulfillment of their deepest longing. Even as they struggled and dreamed, God took the initiative . . . not just a nice gesture, or a pleasant invitation to believe, but he gave his life. The promise was signed in blood, which was, in the world before Christ, the ultimate statement of the honor and commitment of the one making the promise. The cow was killed, the virgin sacrificed to prove to god the honor and commitment of those requesting divine intervention . . . they made such commitments when their need was desperate. And God said to Abraham, and to all humanity with the death of his son, you don't need to kill your ox, your son, your virgin, the unbelievers . . . to prove to me your worthiness . . . I know you are worthy because I created you, and I long to give you significance and an abundant life . . . and I will prove the integrity of my promise by giving up my Son to death. Christ's death on the cross did more than validate the Father's promise. He absorbed the rage of humanity, and responded in love . . . that forced a transformation in world history . . . six cultures which had been separate, came together to form Western Civilization.

Even with that spectacular foundation Christianity used force, sometimes brutal force, to settle doctrinal disputes, or to make the Christian absolute values work in a stressed culture. The most notorious example from the American/scientific perspective was the heresy conviction of Galileo in 1632. That event occurred within the scope of the Inquisition which was really a series of actions taken between 1231 and 1834. The darkest days of the Inquisition were the 14th Century in southern France and northern Italy, and the 15th Century in Spain. Consistent with the model set forth earlier, the Inquisition represented the grim determination to make an absolute value system work, and much of it was directed at fulfilling the tautological need of Christianity. The extent of brutality was determined by the degree of cultural stress. The plague and the 100 Years War caused horrible stress in Christendom in 14th and early 15th Century. Spain had the added problem of balancing Catholic and Muslim sub-cultures.

The Crusades, the Puritan ruler Oliver Cromwell in Britain, and the French Revolution were brutal efforts to make absolute values work, and therefore little different in principle than modern terrorism. Furthermore, Jesus directed most of his scorn at the Pharisees, which was a movement within Judaism wherein lay people took a solemn public vow to live the Jewish law perfectly. Therefore righteousness was not the Christian way. Why? . . . it was self-centered, judgmental, and elevated the minister. Christ was loving, forgiving, elevated the one ministered to, and humbled himself. How did that translate into a grand strategy for the modern period.

Transformation out of the convergence and disintegration of the disparate. The truth was, the Christ always took the initiative, always gave advance notice, a couple of

thousand years notice to be exact, and always prepared for critical transformations years in advance. The first phase of the divine strategy for transformation of the modern age began with the Second Vatican Council, through which the Holy Spirit drew forth from the Catholic Church a diaspora of highly committed Christians that carried away from institutional authority a vision of reconciliation. That diaspora spread invisibly through the other churches, institutions, and cultures of the world . . . like yeast in the bread.

"Another thing he said, 'What shall I compare the kingdom of God with? It's like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till in was leavened all through.'" (*Luke 13:21-21, Jerusalem Bible*)

Yeast, however essential, was still invisible. There also had to be overt expression and leadership. Driven not by dehumanizing efforts, brutal or benign, intended to "make the system work," for Christianity was not knowledge . . .

"Is there knowledge? It will vanish away; for our knowledge and our prophecy alike are partial, and the partial vanishes when wholeness comes." (*1 Corinthians 13:8, New English Bible*)

but relationship . . .

"Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?' Jesus said, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your Heart, and all your soul, and with all your mind. This the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also.'" (*Matthew 22:35-40, Jerusalem Bible*)

The methods of forgiveness, faith, hope, and love were essential. Yet in the troubled world of multiple claims of absolute truth there must be manifestations of Christ's glory, for if there was no living God, there was no way to separate one absolute claim from the other, and the world would inevitably regress into barbarism. The quintessential example of divine glory was the life, death and resurrection of the Jesus the Christ. Jesus was the Son of God, however, a more human example was the Heavenly warfare between Moses and the Pharaoh.

The Lord said to Moses:

"Then tell Pharaoh that these are the words of the Lord, 'Israel is

my first-born son." (*Exodus 4:22, The New English Bible*)

Those were words of war because Moses, an individual with only a staff, and no army, no wealth, no kingdom, publicly declared that Israel occupied the most honored position in God's household. Words of war because Pharaoh's Dynasty was founded on the declaration that Pharaoh was God's favored, and God's representative on earth. Pharaoh had a kingdom, fabulous wealth, an army, pyramids, and a legion of servants. What was the principal weapon of war? . . . Moses himself . . . for he consented to being a vehicle for God to make plainly visible his own glory . . . his own will and power. It was the only weapon God needed. The creative focus of salvation history shifted to Israel, and Pharaoh's empire moved into "The Thousand Years of Trouble," a thousand years without vision or inspiration . . . and then it disintegrated into archival dust in the annals of history.

Christians can not make the heavenly kingdom come, or even make themselves worthy in the eyes of the Lord. Christians can nurture a relationship with Christ, and relationships with people that transcend knowledge. In the larger community of believers and non-believers they can consent to action as an instrument of the Holy Spirit in the manner of Moses. *O Lord, " . . . thy kingdom come" . . . "thy will be done."*