Theology, Torture, Terror, Policing: How not to Have Enemies or to Overcome Evil

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I was very deeply honoured to be invited to give this public lecture on loving enemies as part of a programme of conversations under the theme of 'Overcoming Evil with Good'. As an academic theologian who works also part-time as a police officer,[1] this is a theme very close to my heart. It is a theme, in fact, close also to my body: sometimes uncomfortably so! This kind of conversation is also close to my heart: one that draws Christian faith and theology into dialogue with communities of secular, professional practice and the secular academic discourses that shape, reflect on and critique such practice. I am especially drawn to conversation with public institutions, professional practitioners and secular discourses that deal with human beings where we are most damaged and damaging; indeed, where we might speak of humanity itself as damaged or under threat of being deconstructed: where therefore we might feel compelled to speak of 'evil'.

So I was immensely excited to be in Jena with, amongst others, members of the *Bundeswehr*, colleagues from the *Jena Center for Reconciliation Studies* and from the *Theologische Fakultät*. But I am also more than a little humbled to be speaking about God overcoming evil precisely with you as my listeners. In my short time in Jena, my expectations were quickly and repeatedly confirmed about how much I have to learn from the military, from reconciliation work and from pastoral work: about what evil is in situations where it has taken extreme forms, deeply embedded in complex histories; about how it might be overcome; about what, indeed, it might mean to overcome evil; what the risks and costs might be of trying to overcome it. To put it more expansively, I know how much theology and Christian faith have to learn from secular practice, practitioners and discourses that engage the complex reality of evil, the brokenness and fragility of human beings and of the human good in the concrete realities of specific situations. There is much wisdom distilled through the other pages of this book that evidences and

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[1]   Opinions expressed are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of either organisation I work for.

can help develop deep practical and theoretical understandings of at least the following four aspects:

- what evil is in concrete human reality;
- how difficult and costly it is to overcome;
- the danger of finding ourselves instead overcome by evil;
- that this danger is at its most profound and deceptive precisely where the evil we battle against seems so clear; where the purity and goodness of our mission might appear correspondingly unambiguous. (There is a reason why, despite justified feminist critique about its place in the tradition, pride remains a highly toxic sin for Christians, precisely when we are or think we are at our best and doing good.)

Like colleagues members of the *Bundeswehr*, pastors and those working on reconciliation in situations of conflict, police officers are professional practitioners whose work sometimes confronts them with situations of extreme, profound pathology: where human beings are both at their most damaged and damaging; where humanity itself – and not only particular human beings – seems to be at risk. These are situations where they might well find themselves reaching for the language of evil and also for strategies to oppose it – to be enemies of the evil, one might say. Commonly, in my experience, practitioners' use of the language of evil is prompted only in part by the perceived level of severity of wickedness, harm and damage they encounter. Alongside that is often an equally strong and deep sense of situational (and indeed also institutional) complexity and ambiguity that in its turn poses a different kind of risk, one that faces practitioners trying to tackle the 'evil' and damage in the situation as well as those in it. This is a risk that is both moral and spiritual (although that word itself might be avoided, especially in secular professions). That complexity and ambiguity makes it difficult either to discern or to do the good in a way that is not in turn misshaped by, bound up with or limited by the evil. This is what presents the moral & spiritual risk: situations inviting the label 'evil' tend to be exactly those that invite a response in us that shows itself to be at some point, in some way and to some extent overcome by the evil we seek to combat. Where extreme evil does not traumatise us into passivity, it can incite in us extreme and violent forms of response that often look as though they are also caught up in (bound to) the traumatising effects of the evil they seek to extinguish, overcome and be free from.

In other words, professional practitioners working in situations of evil know why the instruction, 'be not overcome by evil' is necessary: they are often keenly aware that being overcome by the evil they seek to combat is a real and present risk and danger in their work. I find they have often developed a special insight into what it means in reality to 'offer your very selves as a living sacrifice' (Rom. 12:1), a phrase that begins the same chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans that

closes with the imperative that leant our series of meetings its title: 'be not to overcome by evil but overcome evil with good' (12:21).

I point all this out because I want to ask (especially but not only) secular practitioners how you hear this Christian talk of overcoming evil with good. When you hear this verse from Romans, do you hear it as a sign that Christians have a firm grip on the complex, ambiguous reality of evil known to professional practitioners? Or does it sound to you like an example of Christian other-worldliness, of our being out of touch with reality, especially the reality of evil? Does it sound instead rather superficial, facile, trite, to think that we can know and do what is pure good and that evil will quit the field of battle as soon as the good shows up?

Any such suspicions or reservations you might have that Christian talk of overcoming evil tends too often to sound facile and glib is likely to be reinforced by its association with some of its core ethical tropes and the way in which they are commonly rendered. Loving enemies (the topic of this paper) is not least amongst these, but I include also the related tropes of forgiveness and reconciliation. In popular Christian discourse, it is common to find all three interpreted in a way presented as self-sacrificial love: an orientation towards offenders or enemies that creatively opens space for the construction of a new kind of relationship freed from the determinants of past actions or intentions. That orientation and commitment can and has led Christians to talk of and require forgiveness as though it does not involve judgement, and to speak of forgiveness as something that could and should be transacted immediately by victims. Correspondingly, reconciliation is sometimes interpreted in ways that require returning to or restoring a relationship without addressing power dynamics and associated patterns of victimisation. Combined with an emphasis on self-sacrifice and the sin of pride construed as any form of self-assertion, these ways of interpreting forgiveness and reconciliation have proved profoundly dangerous, most obviously in relation to victims of domestic violence. More generally, the urge to love, to forgive and to reconcile seem ungrounded in the realities of the situation, oblivious to the severity and nature of evil in it. Forgiveness and reconciliation on these popular interpretations invite suspicion that Christian love is not so much the creation of an alternative, creative possibility as the construction of a fantasy that dispenses with reality, especially the reality of evil: forgiveness appears easily as acting as though nothing bad has happened and no damage has been done; reconciliation, as the urge to return to an abusive relationship, as though the victim has power in the situation to reconstruct it through her witness of self-sacrificial love and humility, rather than that further embedding the pattern of victimisation. Similarly, loving enemies is interpreted often as a refusal to relate to the enemy as an enemy, such that enemies and enmity both disappear as soon as they are targeted by love. (Spoiler alert: I shall say more about this later and offer an alternative suggestion as to what loving enemies might mean that is more realistic and holds love and enmity together.)

On the other hand, for reasons I have already suggested, many Christians will celebrate precisely this apparent 'lack of reality' as a determined refusal to conform to the standards of 'the world': the positing of a counter-cultural option that creates genuine possibilities for positive transformation towards good in the face of evil by refusing to bow down to or be conformed to its inner logic. I suppose the question between these two ways of evaluating Christian opposition to evil is whether it will grip and transform reality. Or is it instead simply wishful thinking that fails to grasp how evil, evil really is and how ambiguous and fragile is our grasp on the good when facing it down, seeking healing and transformation.

The verse in Romans immediately before the instruction to overcome evil with good directly connects the strategic goal of overcoming evil with tactics that might further embed the position of both sides here. For there we hear an echo of the sermon on the mount's injunction to love our enemies and to pray for our persecutors; an injunction preceded by a direction to refuse to be conformed to 'the world'. The connection in Romans (written before the gospels) of enemy-love with the goal of overcoming evil by refusing to be conformed with the world evidences strongly that here we have values close to the heart of the earliest and enduring core of the Christian gospel. This is key to understanding God's ways with the world from a Christian perspective. Loving enemies occupies a central, even exemplary, position in this. I hope that spending a little time thinking about what it might mean to love enemies, and doing so in relation to a specific context (a context that we all share: the post 9/11 world) might provide a way for us to work at what Christian talk of overcoming evil might mean.

In the post-9/11 world, terror, torture and issues around the practice of enmity are very evidently intertwined. Terrorists enact enmity towards the states and communities they target (which they justify or rationalise as response to acts of enmity initiated by those states and communities). Especially under the Bush administration, torture was both widely discussed and also implemented as a legitimate tool against terrorist enemies in the so-called 'war on terror'. This advocacy of torture as a way of practising enmity against terrorists radicalised the suspicions held by some Christians against the practice of any form of enmity, whilst deepening their sense that the command to love enemies be understood as an alternative to enmity. So, love and enmity are then interpreted as zero sum choices: either love or enmity.

Torture as a response to terrorism looks very much like a case of being overcome by the evil that you declare your enemy. What looks like the intentional destruction of the humanity of a human being does, indeed, seem impossible to reconcile with any possible rendering of the word 'love'. That I completely accept. However, I want in this lecture to question the assumption that the command to love enemies be interpreted as a prohibition against having enemies or in any way practising enmity. The assumption that love is an alternative to enmity is evidently not universal amongst Christians. It is, however, in my experience very widespread. It perhaps will not surprise you to learn that a police officer is resistant to this interpretation and to abandoning the

attitude and practice of enmity. Possibly, you suspect that here the theologian has capitulated to the policeman. I hope that is not true. What is true, however, is that it was my own immersion in the practice of British policing that alerted me to the need for a rich, nuanced and complex theological understanding of enmity that might match, support and critique what I had come to understand through there (where the themes of torture and terror also acquired a specific significance). In particular, I had learned how two apparently contesting active orientations (love and enmity) could be held together, not only in policy but in practice: opposing others (sometimes forcefully), whilst at the same time maintaining a commitment to their humanity and dignity (I offer some examples of this at the end of the lecture). This seemed to me to be a concrete expression of what Christians might mean by loving enemies and invites an interpretation of the command, not so much as prohibition *against* having enemies, but as a theologically inflected way of *having* enemies, a reconfiguration of enmity by love.

Whilst I had been thinking along these lines already, the need to sharpen and develop a theologically grounded understanding of the confrontational aspects of policing became more urgent following the terrorist attacks on the London transport system 7 July 2005. For me as a police officer, as a Christian and as a theologian working and living in the city where the bombs were made and from whence the bombers came made my search for theological understanding, support and critique of policing more urgent and more sharply focussed on the theme of enmity. In perhaps a more obvious and more thoroughgoing way than is the case in relation to other forms of criminality, police action and orientation towards terrorists warrants characterisation as a form of enmity. Police officers adopt an uncompromising stance of active opposition to terrorists, who seek, not only to commit murder, but to disrupt the penultimate good of a reasonably just, decent, diverse and good social order. Terrorists are amongst those whose plans and purposes police work to thwart, disrupt and defeat; those we plan and prepare against and work to protect the public from; the effects of whose actions we aim to minimise; those we investigate and pursue, intending to bring to justice; whom we seek to divert from violence to democratic forms of articulation, engagement, protest, action (which police might then facilitate). Police officers are positioned unambiguously in a stance of enmity in relation to the terrorist.[2]

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[2]   To be clear what I mean by enmity here: a relationship of hostility at least in part constructed and consciously entered into from our side for certain specific and circumscribed purposes (preservation of life, prevention of damage, protection of the social order, bringing to justice), fundamentally hostile. That hostility includes preparedness to act against them using force, including under limited circumstances where others' lives are in immediate danger, lethal force (where loving enemies is most obviously set in the broader context of loving the neighbourhood – see further McFadyen, A. (2020) 'Loving the Neighbourhood, Loving Enemies: Towards a Theology for (and from) Policing' in Millie, A., ed., *Criminology and Public Theology: On Hope, Mercy and Restoration*, Bristol: Bristol University Press, 221–250.

However, when I turned for support to the theological literature on loving enemies, it was both striking and, I think, revealing how little sustained attention has in fact been paid in Christian theology or theological ethics (at least in English) to the question of what it might mean to love enemies, either before or after 9/11 or 7/7. Certainly, love of enemies makes frequent appearances in theological literature, but most often where the interest is more than with exegesis or the history of ideas (e. g., Horsley 1986; Kirk 2003), it serves as a gateway to discussion of other themes that then occupy the centre of attention and receive focal, substantive and substantial discussion: for example, non-violence, forgiveness, reconciliation (see, e. g., Swartley 1992; Cahill 1994; Bretherton 2011; Forest 2014). Typically, we pass through the portal of enemy-love too speedily to have paid any attention either to enmity or enemies (but note the exception of Piper 1980, 128–33). Both disappear from view as the discussion relocates to questions of principle around the use of force or violence or strategies for practising forgiveness or seeking reconciliation. Enemy-love tends immediately to be translated into and colonized by these other themes, so the questions around them (and indeed the nature of love) no longer appear framed consciously by the issue of enmity. It is difficult to avoid the impression that something is actively inhibiting Christians from maintaining attention on enemies and enmity, even where a discussion of these other themes is framed by the command to love enemies. Enemies and enmity seem to disappear discursively as enemies as soon as they are loved, as though Christians have some difficulty with making either love of enemies or enemies themselves the focal theme of discussion. At any time, it would seem curious that such a central, defining trope in Christian faith and ethics has not received more substantive and more frequent attention. It is more than curious that theologians and Christian ethicists writing in English seem not to have reached for 'love your enemies' to help us interpret and respond to the ways in which our world has been comprehensively reshaped since 9/11 by both terrorism and the response of our governments to it. (Johnston 2005 remains I believe the one focal discussion of enemy love in the context of terrorism.)

And so I turned to other theological discussions self-consciously situated in a post-9/11 and 7/7 context with the question of enmity to the fore. Having these specific questions and interests in mind raises questions and suggests answers about the absence of significant explicit discussion of enmity in Christian theology or Christian ethics, post-9/11. As I will discuss later in the paper, it might also help us understand the shape and underlying orientation of theological discussion of terrorism and torture in this context. Illuminated by the questions, concerns and interests that arose for me in a policing context, I shall suggest that dis-ease around enmity has shaped theological responses to terror and the so-called 'war on terror' in ways that are generally implicit and hidden, but which nonetheless sign the way towards Christian ways of having enemies and practising enmity.

Not only the world of British police officers, but – in common with everyone else – the world of Christian theologians and theological ethicists has changed since 9/11 and 7/7. Indeed, given

the explicitly religious identity-ascriptions and justifying rhetoric adopted by both Islamist terrorists and the United States' 'war on terror' (at least in its early iterations), one might expect Christian theology and ethics to have been repositioned and reshaped in their public responsibilities more directly, more urgently and more obviously than some other academic and practice-oriented discourses.

One might, therefore, expect to find a significant body of literature directly addressing the attacks of 9/11 or 7/7 in English-language Christian theology, theological ethics or theological engagement with public life. However, more than a dozen years after 9/11 had produced very little by way of direct reflection on terrorist attacks themselves: a scattering of perhaps half a dozen article-length responses in English; one full-length book (Chinnici 2002; Williams 2002; Cavanaugh 2004; Sobrino 2004; Johnston 2005; Davies 2006; Daponte 2009; Jones 2009).[3] The paucity of theological engagement with terrorism seems to me to be sufficiently striking to provoke a question. Is there a reason that theological attention has been turned so infrequently towards terrorists and acts of terror?

Pausing before framing an answer to compare the terror literature with that on torture in the same period is instructive. One difference between the two is immediately evident: in comparison with the literature discussing 9/11 and 7/7 in the same period, that on torture is larger (Elshtain 2003; Johnston 2005; Keller 2005; Bishop 2006; Cavanaugh 2006; Elshtain 2006; Gushee 2006; Hunsinger 2006; Ortiz 2006; Waldron 2006; McCready 2007; Cavanaugh 2008; Denton-Borhaug 2008; Gushee 2008; Hoffmeyer 2008; Hunsinger 2008; Porter 2008; Schweiker 2008; Daponte 2009; Cates 2010; Reeder 2010; Gudorf 2011; Gushee 2011; Biggar 2014).

Is that difference in quantity significant? A statistician would likely be unpersuaded: the numbers in both cases are small. However, if one reads into both literatures, it is clear that the difference between them is not only quantitative, but qualitative. The torture literature has a coherence absent from the discussions of the terrorist attacks. Almost every publication is explicitly threaded into a single conversation. Theological discussion of torture has a very long lineage, going back at least to Tertullian. Post-9/11, we see not only more works published on torture than on terrorism. We see also an increase in the density of discussion on torture compared with previous decades, which in fact makes very little reference to the previous history of the topic in Christian thought. With but one exception (Cates 2010) the post-9/11 English language discussion of torture has a single focus: the use of torture by the US against terrorist suspects. That sense of coherence is further amplified by the unity of purpose exhibited by all but two contributions (Elshtain 2003; Biggar 2014): theological critique of US policy and practice in relation to terrorist suspects and of the rationales and justifications that have been offered in

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3   The non-Islamist Oklahoma bombing is discussed just once, as are the 7/7 bombings. Other attacks or
     disrupted plots receive no attention at all.

support. Consequently, this literature is not a set of otherwise disparate individual contributions that happen to focus on the same topic and adopt a similar stance. This is an actual conversation, where authors cite one another and sometimes publish in the same place in direct engagement with one another.

That is a very different picture from the array of responses to the terrorist attacks. Those appear to be written in isolation, to be ignorant of one another (Daponte 2009 is the exception in citing Williams) and to be diverse in focus and intent.

Whilst our sample in both cases is small, I think the disparity in terms of the size of the two literatures might, nonetheless, be taken to be significant when read in light of the disparity in their levels of coherence. Read together, these disparities raise a question: why might academic theologians write more and with greater sense of coherence and unified purpose about torture as a response to terrorism, than about the terrorist attacks themselves? Why might we find it easier or more compelling as an act of situated, public theological responsibility to write critically about torture (of enemies) and torturers (and about the 'war on terror') than directly about terrorists and their acts of terror? I believe the answer to this question is related to widespread Christian unease about acknowledging enmity in general; unease which the practice of enmity in the post 9/11 and 7/7 world intensifies.

This might go some way to explain why torture (of enemies) has been both a more frequent topic of discussion amongst theologians and Christian ethicists than have terrorists or terrorist acts. It might also explain why so few of us have written about either.

Approaching the post-9/11 torture literature expectantly looking for enmity as an explicit theme in the discussion will disappoint. For, with just two exceptions in the theological literature on torture in the decade since 9/11 (Johnston 2005; Cavanaugh 2006), it makes no appearance. Is that an insignificant absence of a theme marginal or irrelevant to the main focus and purpose of discussion? Or is it what might be called the 'presence of an absence' (or the absence of something really present in trace, yet determining ways)?

A crucial clue that it might be the latter is provided by that one of only two exceptions: William Cavanaugh's 'Making Enemies: The Imagination of Torture in Chile and the United States' (Cavanaugh 2006). Significantly, the burden of its argument concerns the use of (and discussion of, development of policy and practice around) torture as a tool in the social imaginary: the discursive construction of enemies which serves an ideological function.

Torture is part of this theatre of fear. … It is not simply that the demonization of people as terrorists allows us to justify their maltreatment (why should we bother with human rights when the enemy is subhuman?). Torture also helps create the enemies we need. Torture is a kind of theatre in which people are made to play roles and thereby reinforce a certain kind of social imagination. (Cavanaugh 2006, 313)

Here, the discursive justification for the torture of actual or suspected terrorists is resisted by applying a hermeneutic of suspicion towards the rhetoric of enmity on which it depends. The terrorist threat assessment – hence, the identification of enemies – is portrayed as either fictional or exaggerated. Consequently, terrorist suspects liable to torture tend to appear, not as actual, but as falsely identified, enemies. Hence, enmity is discussed in order to depopulate the text (and wider public discourse) of actual enemies and to counter enmity itself.

Whilst the text may be depopulated of *enemies*, it is implicitly populated by 'us'. The general context of Cavanaugh's article is the rhetoric of the US 'war on terror'; more specifically, that justifying torture. Its intended audience is those of us who are repositioned by that rhetoric in relation both to putative terrorists and to torture, by virtue of our nationality, religion or both. For the focus is *implicitly* as much on those of us structured into relations with others dominated by fear (and hatred) as it is *explicitly* on those who might be subject to torture as targets of this manufactured enmity. And it is the former who are directly addressed in an invitation to resist the rhetorical manipulation of fear of 'the other', a fear which structures us into a stance of enmity in this form (and hate, rather than love) in such a way that lends legitimacy to consideration of torture. Thus, enmity appears here as an *explicit* theme of deliberation only to be dismissed as an attitude appropriate for Christians in rhetorically manufactured circumstances. However, enmity does not only appear here as an explicit theme of discussion. It is present also as a background structuring reality: an actual structuring of relations between 'us' and 'them' in which we are implicated and to which the article is a response as a plea for resistance.[4] Similarly, in the rest of the theological literature on torture, we find specific and direct reference to aspects of US policy, practice or public debate post-9/11 – albeit absent any explicit reference to enmity or to enemies (Keller 2005; Gushee 2006; McCready 2007; Hunsinger 2008; Gushee 2011). For since 9/11 concern with torture is no longer for American (and other) Christians an expression of international solidarity with the victims of oppressive foreign regimes. Now it is a matter of what is being done in 'our' name against proclaimed enemies, sometimes using Christian symbols or traditions of moral justification (McCready 2007; Hoffmeyer 2008; Hunsinger 2008; Gushee 2011). Read in this way, what appears transacted under the surface of recent English-language discussion of torture is refusal of co-option into or complicity in enmity towards putative terrorist others. That can (as in the majority of texts) be expressed more in qualitative terms, as a concern about being co-opted into rhetoric and practice that demonises or dehumanises (Keller 2005; Schweiker 2008). Or it can be expressed primarily quantitatively (Cavanaugh), by

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[4]   Cavanaugh's 2006 article marks the way in which 9/11 repositioned torture as a topic of discussion in US academic discourse, including Christian ethics, since his earlier work: cf. Cavanaugh, W. T. (1998) *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. Cavanaugh, W. T. (2008) 'Torture and Eucharist: A Regretful Update in Hunsinger, G., ed., *Torture is a Moral Issue: Christians. Jews, Muslims, and People of Conscience Speak Out*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 92–112.

focussing on the discursive, fictive construction of enmity, suggesting that, although such enemies might exist, their number is excessively exaggerated for political purposes. Either way, the existential situation out of and in resistance to which these texts are written is the experienced incorporation into the 'war on terror' in its 'crusade' against terrorist enemies. The quintessential expression of that 'war' might well be considered to have changed policy, practice, and public discourse regarding torture. Certainly, this is its expression closest to home, the expression seeking consensual incorporation of US citizens not otherwise directly involved.

What we see in Cavanaugh's text, where enmity is explicitly mentioned, provides an interpretive key that helps us see what is going on in the other texts, where enmity is not explicitly mentioned; where I suggest it is being (subconsciously) avoided. Are these texts not so much absent as strikingly depopulated of enemies and explicit consideration of enmity? Are the other discussions of torture as much *implicitly* propelled by aversion to being structured into a position of enmity in the context of the 'war on terror' as is Cavanaugh's text *explicitly*? Might enmity – or, perhaps better, aversion to and avoidance of it – operate subliminally as a structuring theme beneath the surface of the whole post-9/11 discussion of torture?

I suggest the theological discussion of torture might legitimately be read as a literature of resistance to the 'war on terror', to the dynamics set in place between 'loyal' (Christian?) US citizens and residents on the one hand and suspect or potential terrorist enemies on the other. This is a refusal, in other words, to have enemies (and 'friends', actually) like these and in this way: refusal of the polarised dichotomies rooted in friend–enemy. Primarily, we find a stance of advocacy on behalf of those vulnerable to a gross exercise of state power commended to citizens of the state who might agitate and organise on behalf of those who have been, are or may be subject to torture. Attention is primarily directed, therefore, for understandable reasons, to the articulation of legal-moral regulation of treatment of persons by the state and towards the appropriate attitude (protective love and solidarity) of Christians towards those who may be subject to torture. The torture literature is an indirect and mostly implicit articulation of Christian reservations about enmity – in which enmity and enemies only rarely make an appearance.

Consequently, actual terrorist enemies and the question of appropriate responses to them, largely disappear from the discussion, included – insofar as they are mentioned at all – as vulnerable victims (along with innocent potential victims of torture): putative or actual victims unjustly subject to treatment that is theologically, morally, and legally indefensible, regardless of whether they may or may not be involved in terrorism. But mostly the tenor of discussion assumes innocence, since even guilt cannot justify torture. For what it is worth, this is a view that I also hold.

However, I want to move the discussion forward more positively as I see it as a missed opportunity to think through and take more seriously the question that is hidden behind these texts: how should Christians HAVE enemies? That is a discussion that is inhibited from surfacing by the understandable dominance of the interest in proclaiming torture indefensible, regardless of

whether those potentially subject to it *are* actually terrorists or not. For the net effect is largely to exclude those who might actually be engaged in terrorism from consideration *as enemies* (indeed, as terrorists) and exclusion of the theme of enmity from explicit consideration.

Consequently, the critique of torture is not rooted in consideration of the obligations that might be owed enemies, but in the duties and obligations owed to all human beings *qua* human: a de-particularized and de-contextualized obligation rooted in a universal account of human nature. The emphasis is on our agency and the character of our action towards them (either as torturers or as those with political agency to lobby against torture), rather than as subjects of action (terrorism) themselves. The focus shifts from the acts and agency of putatively identified terrorists and *their* construction of the relationship between 'us' and 'them' to *our* own agency, the character of *our* action; the construction of the relation from our side.

In context, this is easily understood. Where torture is legitimised by framing relations through the language of enmity, the strategy is to resist the departicularising and often dehumanising discourse of enmity in favour of universalizing and affirming, protective discourses of common humanity and social solidarity. Where the rhetoric of enmity exempts from the bonds of human obligation, affirming the humanity of those excluded is in itself an act of discursive resistance. Moreover, continuing to speak of and identify enemies (even to love them?) evidently risks becoming trapped in the vortex of that gravitational pull. Hence, explicitly repudiating or avoiding acknowledging that some of those identified as terrorist enemies *are* either terrorists or enemies, reframes the terms of discussion and the relationship between 'us' and 'them'. Depopulating the texts of enemies and enmity represents, then, refusal to be positioned in a dichotomised us-them relation, as I have already suggested.

Turning with the heuristic key of enmity to the substance of the arguments presented against torture also suggests this negotiation of enmity might be underlying the texts. Torture is denounced as an assault on or deconstruction of the human, often expressed by reference to established tropes in theological anthropology, such as the *imago dei* (Hunsinger 2008; Porter 2008) and / or established principles in ethics or jurisprudence (Denton-Borhaug 2008; Hunsinger 2008; Gushee 2011). This often extends to a concern with the dehumanisation already imaginatively instantiated and discursively realised in articulating the possibility of torture to which prospective, but as yet unspecified, persons may be subject. Sometimes that is expressed as concern with what both actual torture or entertaining its legitimacy have already done to the social body (Cavanaugh 2006; Hoffmeyer 2008). It is no great stretch to render the dehumanising and demonising practices and attitudes identified and denounced in these texts as preparatory to or involved in torture as forms of enmity: exclusion and expulsion from the bonds, mutual obligations, and responsibilities, of both the social body and common humanity.

If this interpretation is correct, the experience of enmity is a significant, though largely unexpressed, structuring theme underlying the post-9/11 torture literature. Silence about enmity and

the absence of enemies in this discursive context paradoxically suggests their significance to the discussion. It is indicative, in fact, of high levels of discomfort around enmity and of the risks associated with its acknowledgment, the dangers posed by rendering the theme explicit.

In Cavanaugh's article, enmity is the explicit focus of discussion and is subject to negative evaluation. What is not entirely clear is how specific or how extensive this negative valorisation and resistance is. Is it only enmity as it features in the post-9/11 context justifying torture? Or is there a more generalised problem with enmity, now being applied to a specific context? The latter would go some way towards explaining the absence of explicit consideration of enemies and enmity in almost all of the theological literature on torture, the relative lack of attention paid to terrorists or terrorism themselves and the longstanding relative lack of substantive, sustained and focal attention to love of enemies as a central theme in theology and theological ethics.

Almost certainly, in a context where torture of enemies is seriously contemplated, the distinction between resistance to any and all enmity or to specific forms of enmity will appear moot; the ambiguity, irrelevant. Here, surely the imperative is not to have enemies and comprehensively to delegitimise enmity. In face of the urgency of preventing torture (Hunsinger 2008), it might seem a matter of purely abstract, analytic interest to clarify whether the alternative proposed is an alternative mode of enmity or refusal of enmity in any possible modulation.

I appreciate the force of this point. Yet I wish to press for further clarity for a number of reasons, not least because of the compelling urgency of our situation. Not only torture, but terror lends urgency to our situation. Enmity does not only refer to that stance of dehumanising and demonising opposition to terrorists proclaimed by advocates of torture, into which I risk being passively incorporated. It also refers to the equally dehumanising and demonising stance of the terrorist in which I am equally passively incorporated.

I have been suggesting the extent and content of post 9/11 discussion of torture and terror suggests Christian theologians and ethicists experience a heightened sense of discomfort and correlate responsibility around our enmity of others, relative to others' enmity towards us. In part, I suspect that reflects the way in which we see ourselves, and especially our agency, positioned in relation to both in the post-9/11 world. But at least as powerfully shaping, I suspect, are extra-contextual traditions of interpreting the command to love enemies which conflate the two: our responsibility in face of others' enmity is to refuse to mirror it. In that way, what would be required in acknowledging others' acts of enmity towards us seems identical to that required awareness of our being incorporated into attitudes of active enmity towards others (so unworthy of further attention): substitution of enmity with an alternative attitudinal stance. And is the name of that attitude, not love? Is love not the opposite of enmity, doing away with it? Thus is reinforced in this context the sense that retention of anything that looks like enmity would be both redundant and problematic in appearing to evidence an attitude unreconstructed through love.

Love of enemies is such a significant, distinctive trope in Christian ethics it is unthinkable it is not at least subliminally present, shaping discussions where enmity is either the explicit theme or submerged, structuring presence. It is, therefore, highly likely that discomfort about and avoidance of enmity, concentration on our enmity towards others, evidenced in the torture literature are rooted in it. Significantly, the command itself is paradoxical and presents an unresolved tension. On any conventional definition, love and enmity are oxymoronic in combination. Few treatments attempt to preserve the paradox, ambiguity and dynamic tension when working out what it might mean to love our enemies. Commonly, the supposition appears to be that there is a zero-sum choice between love and enmity, such that opting for love represents refusal of enmity and loving means – from our side at least – refusing to have enemies. Hence, we find in the tradition a source of lack of clarity about whether only *specific* or *all* forms of enmity are prohibited, alongside a tendency to assume something like the latter: that, with love, enmity and enemies disappear. Something like that interpretation, I contend, does seem to operate as an unexamined, background assumption in a good deal of theological ethics. It explains why we rarely find love interpreted as a qualifier of enmity, rather its antithesis; why we in fact so rarely find extended treatment of enmity under the heading 'love your enemies'. Both enmity and enemies disappear as soon as they are targeted by love, as though we are more conscious of the threat posed to love by enmity than of the power love has to reconfigure enmity.

It seems likely to me that the torture literature might reflect a deeper suspicion of enmity strengthened by the post-9/11 context: That all forms of enmity, not only those that countenance torture, are theologically problematic. Or, better, that any and all forms of enmity incorporate dehumanising and demonising attitudes towards the other (hatred rather than love); attitudes that always foster the sort of treatment of which torture is but one especially repugnant example.

Evidently, having some further clarity about the legitimacy of specific practices of enmity is as urgent in this situation for the police officer as is clarity about practices that might constitute torture and distinguish it from lawful and morally legitimate uses of force. I would contend that this is just as urgent a matter, however, for the theologian *qua* theologian and *qua* citizen. Clarity about whether we are to oppose terrorists and terrorism – whether we are to **have** enemies – and, if so, how love modulates the practice of enmity is a matter of urgent, fully contextualised theological responsibility.

Specifically, in a world in which there really are some people trying to blow other people up or shoot large numbers in crowded spaces – even if their number be exaggerated; their identification difficult; the causes and our complicity in them complex; the discursive construction of enmity in their regard dangerous. Given all those caveats: practising or failing to practise enmity against terrorists is urgent and hardly trivial. No less urgent than the need to prevent their dehumanisation and torture.

Our need as Christians and theologians to resist being structured into a stance of enmity that demonises and dehumanises; our obligation to resist torture; our bad conscience about being structured into a relation of enmity through the rhetoric of 'the war on terror': none of these obviate our responsibility to oppose and resist the demonization and dehumanisation that lie behind and are involved in terrorism; to prevent mass murder; to protect our communities, including of course those who suffer the backlash of white radicalisation that can also be a consequence of terrorism. The question is whether the exercise of both obligations conflict. Evidently, opposing and attempting to defeat terrorism requires recognition and reappearance of enemies and enmity. The interpretation of the command to love enemies, the negotiation of enmity I argue we encounter in the torture literature, suggests love prohibits and cancels enmity in all its possible forms and senses. Thus, is conjured the disappearance of enemies *as enemies*, making their reappearance a source of difficulty for us. To the contrary, might not *having* enemies be rather the *precondition* for loving them, not the cancelation of that possibility? What I believe I have learned as both theologian and police officer about enmity, love and torture (not only but not least in the context of the post-9/11 world) suggests such possibility be worthy of further exploration and explication. Moreover, this supposition (*having* enemies might be a precondition for *loving* enemies) might assist in framing Christians' contextual responsibilities in ways that are distinctively Christian, are more radical and certainly more realist than a zero-sum disavowal of enmity that leaves theologically unsupported those who position themselves in enmity against terrorists to protect the community and to bring them to justice.

I describe what I propose worthy of exploring as distinctively Christian for two reasons. First, it preserves the tension and paradox entailed in continuing to conjoin love with enmity instead of supposing they appear sequentially (first enmity, then love that does away with it). Consequently, second, it more powerfully suggests that the command frees us from the prevailing conventional definitions of both love and enmity; frees us, that is, from the world for the world. In so doing, it admits the possibility that positions that *look* radical in opposing love to enmity might be operating with understandings of both that afford priority of meaning to the 'natural' or 'worldly' apart from the transformative impact of grace. What *looks* most counter-cultural sometimes has an idolatrous tinge.

To put the same issue another way, such interpretation inhibits enmity from being redefined and reconfigured through its continuing in tense proximity with love; prevented also, therefore, from being drawn by the gravitational pull of love into its service. Thus, our understanding as well as our practice of enmity are left unmodified and unmodulated by love; similarly, our understanding and practice of love are neither modified nor modulated by their possible combination with enmity.

Might the injunction to love enemies present us with a more radical and more realist option? One that *combines* love with enmity (McFadyen 1990, ch. 6)? Thereby enmity takes a form

oriented towards the humanity and the otherness of the other (set within the frame of a broader sociality which includes others and in which the enemy may also be incorporated), whilst love resists dehumanised and dehumanising expressions of this identity and of our current way of relating. This sort of interpretation, I suggest, better grounds, not only resistance to terrorism, but also more effective resistance to torture; to the dehumanising rhetoric of the 'war on terror', its assumed universal definition of what enmity means and entails. Moreover, recognising terrorists as enemies but subjecting enmity to love compels towards more expansive consideration of legitimate practices of enmity, beyond the provision that enemies be not subject to torture. It involves a more comprehensive comprehending of the social form of the good to which we ourselves, our enemies, our love and enmity might be related. And it is on the basis of that social form of the good, that our identification of enemies and our practice of enmity and of love will have to be justified.

I acknowledge this is not a novel idea. The injunction to love enemies is the often-submerged subtext of Christian debates around the issue of violence, which can be re-presented in the language of enmity, rendering the theme explicit. The options of both just war and pacifism may helpfully be understood as representing different practices of resistance to evil and evil-doers (enmity), shaped through love. (The revealing recent exchange between Nigel Biggar and Richard Hays can be read in this way, for example: Biggar 2009; Hays 2009; Biggar 2010; Hays 2010) In my view, that discussion could often be clarified through translation into the specific language of enmity. The same pertains in relation to theological engagement with the post-9/11 world, not least its consideration of torture if we interpret the proposed antidotes to malicious and malignant enmity in the torture literature as aspects of a form of enmity qualified by love, rather than alternatives to enmity. Read in this way, post-9/11 theological discussion might lead towards a more realistic and more radical understanding of the command to love enemies. Hence, 'solidarity', 'love' and 'justice' might be read together as indicating an alternative way of having enemies without attendant demonisation or dehumanisation, rather than as an alternative to having enemies.

Once we look for it, I think we can see the same intentions in underlying the much smaller set of post-9/11 texts that explicitly discuss acts of terrorism and terrorists. As I have indicated, this set represents idiosyncratic engagements, rather than a cohesive discussion. For that reason, it is difficult to generalise – except in the one, rather obvious point, that all are written out of an at least implicit consciousness of being structured into a relation of enmity by terrorists, whose attacks declare us all anonymous enemies and potential victims. Read through the hermeneutical key of enmity, here we find resistance to the way in which the rhetoric of the 'war on terror' tempts us to mirroring forms of retributive violence, uncontrolled by concern with justice, proportionality, or humanly transformative outcomes. Having been structured into a relation of enmity by the terrorists, we find in resistance to the lure of the 'war on terror' that same refusal

to be structured into the modes of enmity encountered in the torture literature – presented here as a salve to trauma. Here, however, refusal to be suborned into enmity as commended by the 'war on terror' cannot be interpreted as an alternative to acknowledging and having enemies (even where there is similar reluctance to speak explicitly in the language of enmity); rather, a different modality of enmity.

A clear illustration is again provided by a text by William Cavanaugh, one of two in this set where enmity appears in the title (Cavanaugh 2004). Cavanaugh's article proceeds on the uncomfortable but realist presumption of enmity and is best read as a discussion aiming to improve the quality of our enmity. It is a good and illuminating example of a text best read as resistance to the way in which those in the US (theologians included) are being positioned in relation to terrorists and terror through responses that declare the attacks acts of war and thereafter declares 'war on terror'. Since Cavanaugh is clear that terrorist acts are 'evil' and undeserving of the dignity he believes conferred through their designation as 'acts of war' (Cavanaugh 2004, 29, 32f.), his preference for a criminal / legal framework cannot be construed a *denial* of enmity. Whilst this is not the main burden of his argument, and these not its terms, it is best read as an argument against particular *qualities* of enmity (and, indeed, for other qualities of enmity instead) rather than blanket refusal of enmity in any and all forms. Whereas, on his (somewhat tenuous) reading, designating terrorist acts as acts of war extends them illegitimate dignity, he is rightly concerned that the consequent rhetoric directed towards enemy belligerents ironically does not dignify at all. Rather, it demonises. And in that demonisation, enmity exhibits a pathological quality, the antidote to which is enmity of a transformed and transforming quality.

Switching to a legal / criminal frame seems intended first to restrain and then direct victims' response away from retributive vengeance (that mirrors the enemy's enmity of us) towards the demands of justice, both narrowly and broadly construed. From that might we infer something more is signalled beyond resistance to demonisation and dehumanisation? Bringing offenders to justice entails taking their humanity seriously whilst in a stance of opposition in at least holding offenders accountable for their actions. But as we move from a narrower legal to broader conceptions, it also requires opportunities for terrorist suspects (and others) to narrate their actions and motivations in a more expansive context of explanation and meaning. Within the stance of enmity towards terrorists, understanding their motivations, their enmity, as human, and therefore as comprehensible and in part conveying legitimate grievance and critique, seems a recurrent feature of the terror literature (e. g., Sagovsky 2002). Once we are alert to it, it is not difficult to find it beneath the surface of the torture texts too. Cavanaugh describes it as a 'penitential' approach to terrorism (Cavanaugh 2004), one which combines opposition to enemies with confession in what must be a seeking of our humanity together. Enmity in the service of and moderated by love, perhaps?

In these observations, I propose we have the beginnings of a way of holding enmity and love together in tension. That might prove capable simultaneously of funding theologically grounded resistance to torture, as well as theological support for (thus might shape) the tasks of protecting the community against and preventing terrorist attack, pursuing terrorists to bring them to justice. Here is an intimation of an understanding of enmity and of love of enemies that better matches the ambiguities, nuance, and complexity of our situation – in which we are subject equally to the acts of terrorist enemies and to noxious modalities of enmity in response to the realities and perceptions of that threat.

In noting the significance of acting against terrorists with the intention to bring them into the criminal justice system, we are already straddling the boundary between the world of theological discourse and my second community of practice: policing (See further McFadyen 2020). Bringing offenders to justice entails implicit acknowledgment of their humanity. It is a process that engages their self-understanding and narration of reality and truth from their perspectives, so that motivations and the broader context of offending, for instance, can all be understood. The offender and situation are interpreted as humanly understandable, and not as expressions of some demonic, inhuman force. And they will be subject to judgement as such.

Can use of force and deprivation of liberty – practices of oppositional, confrontational enmity – in themselves (and not only as instruments towards an end that might be described as loving) be characterised as, shaped by, love, that carries the wellbeing (if not flourishing) of the suspect / offender within them? Limiting the use of force to what is necessary, reasonable, and proportionate in the circumstances (minimum level to achieve a lawful purpose) and in the interests of the neighbourhood (that which has lawful purpose such as preventing harm, damage, loss, or to effect arrest) is one way in which the wellbeing of the suspect – and their humanity – routinely enters police decisions regarding use of force. It is an at least minimal expression of love. Similarly, cessation of use of active force once compliance or control are gained is another significant test. Where control is achieved, absent continuing resistance, further active application of force would not only be unlawful but should be understood as torture, no matter how minimal. It is important that police operate with a far lower-level definition of the acts that constitute torture than is conveyed in internationally agreed conventions. It is neither the intensity of pain nor the level of violence that constitute torture for a police officer, nor yet their instrumental purpose. Rather, the one sufficient condition for force and violence to constitute torture is the achievement of physical control and power over the suspect / offender. At that point, the same act that would previously have been lawful and not dehumanising or degrading (say twisting partially or completely applied handcuffs to gain compliance or to use body mechanics to bring to the ground) becomes unlawful and dehumanising violation. Instead, when control is achieved or surrendered, where a suspect is completely in the power of the officer, there is a transfer of correspondingly absolute responsibility for the suspect's (now the officer's prisoner) wellbeing.

This includes, but is not limited to, the vulnerability created by police action, including use of force. It extends to the meeting of the detained person's physical needs (treatment of injuries, provision of food and water) but also their immediate psychological and emotional needs. Again, this is short of an orientation towards full flourishing, but it is a necessary condition at the very beginning of that continuum – a recognition of humanity and human need and recognition to take responsibility for the person of the other (that is typically continued whilst queuing in custody, where very human interactions regarding the prisoner's general situation and hope for the future and possible options for support might be explored).

At the same time, this is still a confrontational practice and is likely still to involve some use of force sufficient to negate risk of escape and of the officer being subject to violence or resistance. Moreover, the outcome is likely to be the journey towards formal police detention in the cells for the purposes outlined in the foregoing discussion (creating investigative space) and thence to bring to justice. So, handcuffs are likely to be and to remain applied, the person searched for weapons and possibility of escape negated by the officer maintaining physical advantage. For example, British officers are taught to switch immediately from aggression to caregiving after deployment of incapacitant spray, expressing care and reassurance, but also maintaining readiness against attack when the effects wear off. This is a practise of enmity that can be (and routinely is) combined with humanising practices oriented towards the wellbeing of the suspect / offender that might helpfully be characterised as forms of loving care.

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