

## Self-Defence and Christians - "My Personal Viewpoint"

Written by K B Napier  
Friday, 11 March 2016 11:13

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In my experience the Christians who say we may not defend ourselves, or use force, are those who have never known violence against their persons, or someone they love. Nor have they properly read their Bibles.

It is very easy to make pious (wrong) judgments when safe behind closed doors or when amongst passive people, removed from reality. Indeed, how I wish I could deceive myself into thinking only passively, ignoring stark facts!

In this response I speak as one who lived in a very rough area, and whose previous job involved looking after violent, murderous people. Also, I watch what is now happening throughout the world, and see violent extremists and killers ruling whole nations, with no response from authorities who do not act when they should. And I see Islamic killers starting to rule entire European nations. This is not for me and what I am about to say is frank and honest. I believe in self-defence and, where necessary, in strong offence (pre-emptive strikes) that will stop a violent action.

Concerning the last sentence, as many know, I once worked as a psychiatric nurse and ran a 'violent ward'. This contained about 30 violent men in a locked facility, half of whom were convicted murderers who openly boasted they would kill us if they had the chance. We took many precautions, but all of us were regularly involved in being victims of violence in the ward, and in other wards, sometimes on a daily or even several-hourly basis, depending on the ward.

At first I did not return violence, because of a silly notion that Christians cannot defend themselves (gleaned from bad teaching). But, after being strangled to within moments of my death, I decided that I would never allow an insane (or any other) person to take my life without a fight. They have no right to it, and I had a family to take care of. From that moment I dealt firmly with attackers, often leading to many injuries to myself, but never, of course, to my death. And I did so without becoming hateful or even angry; many times I was just scared. I was able to detach myself from the action, which gave me great strength of emotion and thinking. I planned scenarios in my head - what I would do "if...", so that I would be ready to respond quickly. That was defence. I do not regret such defence, or even pre-emptive strikes. My spirit stands easy with it.

Part of good defence is offence. That is, if necessary, to attack first. At times I had no choice but

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to go on the offensive, to stop threatened or escalating violence. Trained in observation, including facial and body language, etc, like most of my colleagues, I could 'see' when an attack on my person, or on someone else, was about to take place. So, I acted first, thus reducing the possibility of worse injuries or even death. It literally meant 'me or them' and I would never apologise for it.

In my work I was not supported by my church peers, who had no idea what I went through every day or night. They never understood the fear, or the daily anxiety of working amongst killers, especially when I worked alone or with skeleton staff. At those times all I had was myself, whereas police had handcuffs, batons, radios, heavy boots, stab vests, and so on. I had no equipment. In that situation there is usually no time for prior reflection, only an instant response to a burst of evil so intense and sustained it takes your breath away. Your breathing becomes laboured, the throat closes, the adrenalin pumps, the heart feels like a jack-hammer in your chest, legs often turn to jelly... but you had to stand up and deal with it.

In such a situation there is no time for considering what to do – you either defended yourself or you died. Simple as that. I used certain techniques which, though illegal and potentially dangerous in themselves, saved my life on numerous occasions. Forget being 'legal' when someone is about to kill you! Between times, we all knew attacks were imminent and did normal things like sitting with our backs against the wall, standing sideways to be a minimal target and receive lesser injury, removing our ties, pens and watches, and so on. Even with observation and taking care, we had at least three long very violent fights every day. We often went home shaking and covered in bruises or fractures. Or as once happened, I was literally ham-strung by a kicking steel-toecapped boot; I went down like a nine-pin, but still had to fight to control the violent person!

Let me not sugar-coat it – they *were* fights, where staff HAD to win to avoid further mayhem and disastrous injuries or deaths. This meant doing whatever was needed to be done to stop them occurring, or to put an end to an episode. Mostly, by practising scenarios in my head, I was able to just defend myself and counter any moves to disable or kill me. I feel neither pride nor self-loathing over that period in my life. Why did I not leave that work? I tried on several occasions but the hospital boss rejected my resignation or request to move to a general hospital. Why? Because, at the time, I was in charge of no less than three full wards, with very few staff and few staff overall. I could not just leave, because I would then be barred from receiving state unemployment money.

Police on the front line in bad areas know what it is like to be attacked, but at least they have all kinds of equipment to help. Soldiers, too, have a similar protection. Christians do not normally

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think of people who are there to protect them, and who must act violently with suitable force to stop someone committing murder or violence. They especially do not think that on a few occasions such defensive or attack methods can lead to the death of the one who is violent. It is therefore comfortable to say in their churches that self-defence is reprehensible or wrong! They would not say that if a group of evil men burst into their churches and shot them down (as has happened in the USA)... then they would be glad of the men and women whose lives are put at risk on their behalf!

I am no longer young, nor do I now have the strength of my youth, but I would still not allow a wicked man or woman to kill or attack me or my family. I would fight them to my own death if necessary. Think none of this is 'Christian'? Then read your Bibles! At least in my case I was trained to respond in good measure. I guarantee that if someone unused to such situations had to react to violence they would either freeze, or act so violently they would 'lose the plot', unable to stop themselves because of heightened adrenalin. Today, I think it a good idea to learn self-defence, which would help them to pre-empt what to do. Dark days are fast enveloping us, and ignorance of self-defence will prove to be highly dangerous, if not fatal. (I am not forgetting God's protection).

Time and again the Patriarchs went to war against violent tribes or kings, Time and again the Israelites, under God, battled enemies, killing them all as God directed. Jesus advised His disciples to go out preaching carrying a sword... do you think their swords were just to carve bits of chicken, or to whittle wood? The New Testament tells us to beware of the magistrates (who also wield swords/means of punishment) when they administered justice, which could include the death penalty, a form of violence. Do you believe in the death penalty? You should – because the Lord demands it for first-degree murder!

It seems that this readiness to protect (which can include attack) is frowned upon. It seems better to let a killer kill us than to fight him off! It is better to allow a rapist to destroy one's female relatives than to render him senseless if required. It is better to whimper mildly as he beats us to a pulp and then suffer for the rest of our lives!

Would I use any possible means at my disposal to defend myself and my family? Yes, I would. What if an attacker was killed in the process? I would feel neither guilt nor emotional turmoil... I would do what needed to be done and a potential killer would not get away with it. There is no way I could know if he was intent on killing, but that is not an issue. If he acts like a killer then he must be prepared for a rejoinder! This is why terrorists MUST be shot dead on sight. If they are caught alive they will never receive just punishment (a swift death penalty), but only imprisonment, which disregards the command of God by allowing him to live.

Well, reader, that is not for me! Enough of those limp-wristed handshakes that feel like wet lettuce! Enough of those ethereal Christians who bleat about 'love' and passivity with false smiles! There is a time and place for passivity, and being attacked is not one of them. The same weak-kneed Christians are also usually failures when it comes to discussing their beliefs. Fear rules!

### **John Piper's Response is NOT 'Christian'**

I can imagine the reaction of pastors and others to the above. But, their avoidance of reality is not my concern, nor is their 'tut-tut'. I find it all irrelevant – they were not there when I needed them, nor did they have anything useful to say, nor did their reactions come from scripture. (Remember that a 'reaction' is often ad hoc and wayward, whereas a 'response' is usually measured and determined. All Christians should aim at responding rather than reacting, to ANY situation).

John Piper is definitely one of those day-dreamers who thinks Christians should give in to violence and never respond with suitable force. My father fought against vicious guerrilla fighters in India before WW2. By the age of 25 he had killed many of them. But, he was not filled with remorse... it was them or him, and their type of violence really was vile. In WW2 he was a parachutist who regularly fought behind enemy lines, having to kill Germans himself at fairly close quarters.

He did not flinch from this duty, nor did he have nightmares afterwards. It was his job and that was that! There should be no qualms about killing someone who is set on murdering you! And this was his mental approach to it all. He was protecting himself, his men, and his family, and no-one had a right to harm them. Yet, when not at war he was a very quiet man, passive and slow to anger. He was able to separate violent actions from his inner self. And this is what I did. Then, there is no latent or ongoing anger or hatred for those who wish you dead. Just a readiness to act.

John piper, however, thinks that such an attitude brings about an inner hate. This is not so, but is a fantasy that comes from never having to respond to violence. No-one in Old Testament scriptures was more warlike than David, and yet he was loving, considerate and passive when needed. He did not react, but responded with genuine regard for life and spirit. That is how we should be... ready to do battle if needs be, and yet calm, without malice. It is possible – I know because I did it in my work. So did my father in the army. Yes, without thought and care such an attitude *can* degenerate into hatred for the enemy. Hence the need for constant control and

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thought. I had to do it, and so can you. I could fight a pitched battle with patients out to kill me, and the next moment we could sit down together and sip tea.

John Piper, then, is wrong. If everyone was as passive in violence as he claims to be, or what he claims we must be like, we would all be in deep trouble. I know of no biblical text that condemns self-defence or even the killing of open enemies who wish us dead. And, when faced with such situations I guarantee that critics would be the first to react (probably badly).

John Piper was reacting to news that a certain theological college in the USA advised its students to obtain guns, and to carry them with concealment licences. This was a proper response to Muslims running riot and murdering innocent people. In the USA some pastors carry concealed weapons, even in church on Sundays. This was how one pastor shot and killed a gunman who burst into a service with an automatic assault rifle, to kill members. That man was a murderer and his attack was unjustified and illegal. The pastor responded well, and his action saved many lives. There is no comparison. And if Obama was as keen to protect the USA as he is so keen to give inordinate help to Islamic terrorists, perhaps there would be no need to warn students to protect themselves.

Throughout the USA, and now in Europe, many people are buying up guns and ammunition. This is a proper response to Muslims who arrive in alarming numbers, raping, stealing, killing and committing acts of violence. The people have obtained guns because the police have been ordered to stay clear, and governments do nothing to protect citizens.

In the days of the patriarchs there were no police or authorities to protect them. If an enemy struck, they responded with equal or more force until the enemy was killed. We seem to be returning to such days, when everyone must look after their own safety. It is the fault of the authorities, who insist on bringing in huge numbers of violent Muslims or eastern-bloc thugs. The shame is on their heads.

Does this attitude make me 'rough'. No, it does not.

Does it give me a wrong attitude? No, it does not.

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Does it make me any the less a Christian? No, it does not.

Does it mean I hate people? No, it does not.

Does it mean I am always on the look-out for trouble? No. Don't be presumptuous!

Does it mean I am aware and alert? Yes, it does.

Does it mean I WILL defend myself? Yes, it does.

Does it mean I will defend others? Yes, it does.

So, as Christians you must deal with it – harm to you is fast getting closer.

I cannot stand violence. It sickens me to my stomach, scares me, but I must act. As a 12 year old schoolboy, I protected another 12 year old boy who was being hounded and bullied near my house, by a group of about 20 similar-age boys from our school. It incensed me and though I was petrified (and bullied in school) I had to help. I went into our kitchen and put a poker into the fire until it was red hot. Then, I ran up to the road and brandished it before the gang, advising them that I WOULD use it on them if they did not go away. Perhaps not the way to go about it, but I was only 12 and no-one else bothered to save the boy. Next day I was hauled before the Headmaster and disciplined. But, I did not regret what I did, and another boy was saved from a beating. Today, I would be more controlled but would still fight back if attacked. I know many of you will not like such words, but I have been in the thick of violence – have you?

### **Turn the Other Cheek?**

If that is what you want to do, then do it, but you are making a huge mistake. When we are told to turn the other cheek, it does NOT apply to murderers, terrorists and those who want to kill us! I can assure you that just in the UK alone there are MANY psychopaths, including youngsters, who would think nothing of killing another person... and they do. What do you think they would

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do if they beat you senseless and then you tell them to hit your other side, too? They would oblige, and kill you.

The text speaks of not resorting to Hebrew actions that hit out at someone who does them wrong. But, it has nothing to do with those who wish to kill you. Throughout the Old Testament we see Israelites attacking and obliterating enemies, often because God tells them to do so. There is nothing in the New Testament to get rid of this fact.

As for loving one's enemy, we can do that if they stop killing us! And we can deal with them with a cool head and sharp mind. If they keep on coming and we kill them, then it is their fault not ours.

I am an odd fellow. I hate violence and war, but will do both if necessary, and, furthermore, without having a bad conscience about it. Those who want to kill me have automatically lost any rights they had.

Think on this matter and think hard, for the darkness of Satan is followed by a horde of wicked men and women who literally hate us and wish us dead. If you want to line up willingly to die, that is up to you. But, I will not. For me there is no glory in dying at the hands of foul satanic beings, whether they are local drunken thugs or a mass of Islamic genocidal murdering psychopaths.

No doubt some will have very different views, and some might even oppose me. They are free to do so, but it will not change my mind.

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