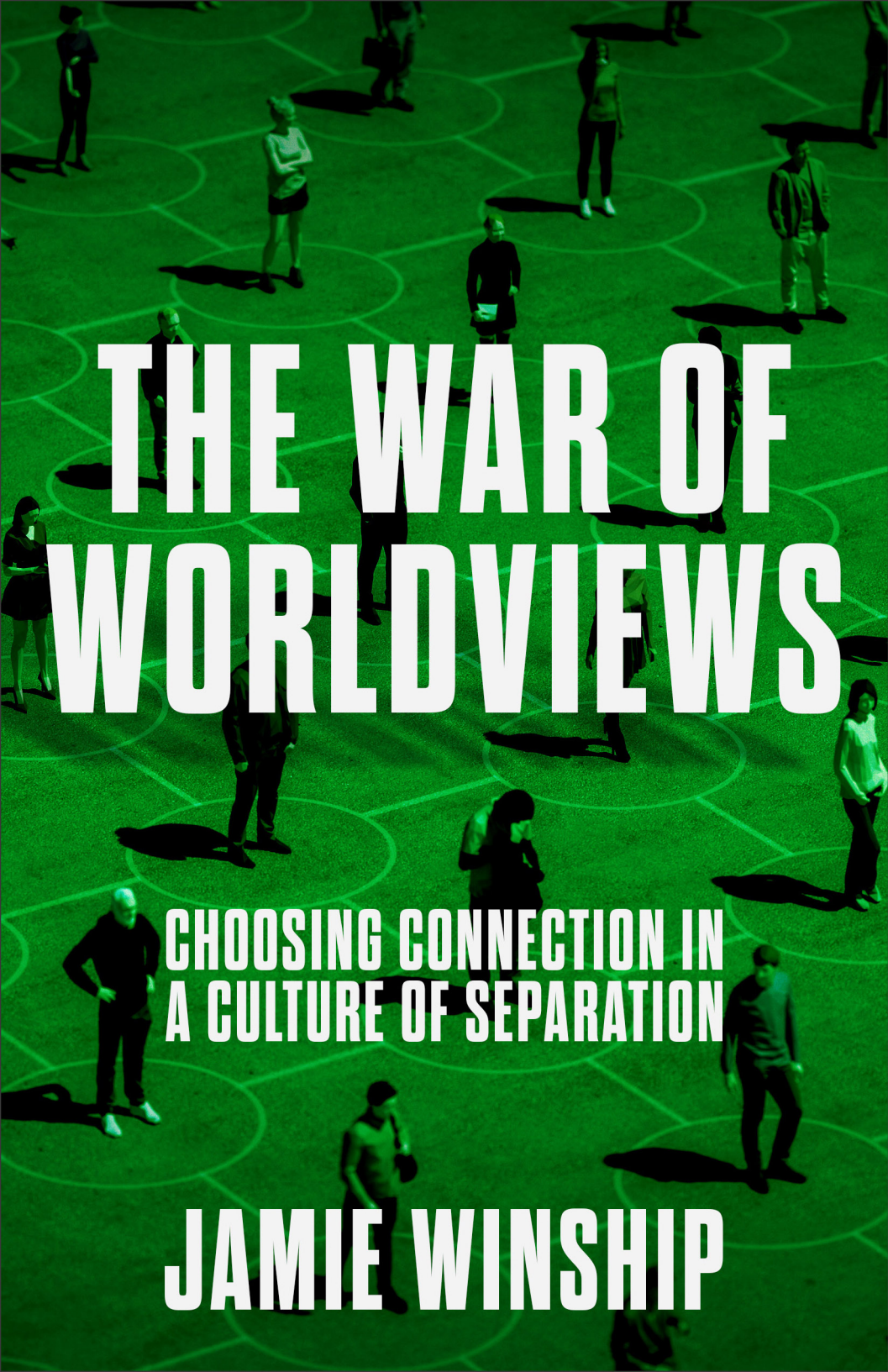

THE WAR OF WORLDVIEWS
CHOOSING CONNECTION IN A CULTURE OF SEPARATION
JAMIE WINSHIP

THE WAR OF WORLDVIEWS

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Living Fearless
Living Fearless Guided Journal

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THE WAR OF WORLDVIEWS

CHOOSING CONNECTION IN A CULTURE OF SEPARATION

JAMIE WINSHIP

Revell
a division of Baker Publishing Group
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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This book is dedicated to all the amazing greeters and welcomers at church entrances across the world, to those who need to walk out of dark places, to those who need to walk into dark places, and to the God who goes before and behind, on the right and the left, above and below, and says to all of us, "My grace is enough for you, for my enoughness is made perfect in not-enoughness." This is so we can say with the apostle Paul, "So then I will boast most gladly about my not-enoughness, so that the enoughness of Christ may reside in me."

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PREFACE

In January of 2023, I was invited to speak as an in-person presenter to a study group at the Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics. Feeling immediately inadequate, I determined not to accept the invitation into the land of smart people. That strategy of stagnation was working just fine, until I ran into Christopher and Benjamin, both of whom were on Sunday "greeter duty" at the front door of the local church I attend.

Christopher, tall and lean, dressed in his signature tie-dye shirt and black sweatpants, greeted me with a full-on bear hug, his bushy gray beard surprisingly soft as he pressed his cheek to mine and told me Jesus loves me. Not surprisingly, he smelled of crisp winter air and evergreens, because he lived somewhere in the woods—no one knew exactly where—and traveled everywhere on foot.

Behind Christopher at the church entrance stood Benjamin. Short and stocky, Benjamin had a playful boyishness about him. His dark, compassionate eyes displayed a genuine concern for others, learned from his heroin-addicted years alone and abandoned in jail cells and trap houses across the country.

At Christopher's release of me, Benjamin, who was finishing up a long swig from a bottle of red soda pop, wiped his mouth

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on his sleeve, smiled at me, and shook my hand. "You looked stressed out," he said in his easy Tennessee drawl. "You wanna talk about it?"

"I did feel some uptightness in you," concurred Christopher from behind me. "Right up here in your shoulders. What you need is a quick Jesus rub and a talkin' to. I'll rub, and Benjamin, you talk."

As I was momentarily speechless and at the point of tears—partially due to the emotion I felt at the concern of these two men but mostly because of the trauma I was experiencing being "Jesus rubbed" by Grizzly Adams—Benjamin took it upon himself to offer up counsel.

"Most people"—he used his soda-pop bottle as a pointer to indicate himself, Christopher, me, and the other folks entering the church—"are afraid of one of two things. Some people are afraid of going into places, and some people are afraid of coming out of places. Now, me, I was afraid to come out of the trap houses because I was afraid to come out of my addiction to heroin. Christopher is different from me. Christopher was afraid to go into places where there are lots of people because people scared him. Right, Christopher?"

As the painful massage worked to loosen and relax the tension in my body, the painful words of truth worked to loosen and relax the tension in my soul. Caleb was massaging my shoulders, Joshua was giving me counsel, but was Moses (moi?) missing a significant invitation?

"Now the thing is," said Benjamin, "the reason for not wanting to go into places and not wanting to leave places is the same. It's fear. And what all of us are afraid of is that we're not smart enough or good enough to come into a situation or to come out of a situation. What we need, all of us humans, is a big ol' shot of this." He held up the bottle from which he'd been drinking so I could read the label.

Dr. Enuf. The slogan on the bottle read, "Enuf Is Enough!"[1]

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"Jesus is the doctor of enoughness, and that should be enough for all of us to live without fear." Benjamin smiled.

"Do you guys want to come with me to speak at Harvard?" I asked without jest. "You just taught me the secret to good governance and its impact on human identity."

"No thanks," Christopher said. "It's a twelve-day walk from here. You go talk to your people, and we'll talk to ours. That's enough for us."

I was glad that at least for that moment, I was one of their people.

Let's face it. What the world could use right now is a big ol' shot of the enoughness of Christ.

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INTRODUCTION

> The willingness to obey every word from God is critical to hearing God speak.
>
> HENRY T. BLACKABY

> In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.
>
> HEBREWS 5:7–8 ESV

One morning I happened to meet a police captain in charge of his training division, drinking coffee in an establishment near the location where I was speaking. Because I had been seeking this type of opportunity from God, I didn't hesitate to be direct with the captain. "Sir, have you ever heard of transformational policing?" I asked.

"I have not," he replied. "What exactly is transformational policing?"

I didn't want to blow this chance.

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Lord, give me wisdom. What do you want me to know? What do you want me to do?

While I was staring at the captain in silent prayer mode, one of his three cell phones rang.

When the captain ended his phone call, he sighed heavily and said, "I've got a busy day ahead of me, so if you want to explain something to me, I've only got a couple of minutes."

I was nervous. I hesitated. The word *shama* came to mind.

The Hebrew word *shama* (שָׁמַע) means "to hear, to listen, to give attention, to understand, to submit to, and to obey." There is only one word in Hebrew for obedience, and it is *shama*.

For the next twenty minutes, I guided the captain (who turned out to be a person of faith) through an exercise wherein he confessed the fears and doubts wrapped up in his false sense of God, himself, and others and exchanged it for the liberating truth of Christ, which moved him into a new sense of God, himself, and others.

"Wow," he said, dabbing his moist eyes with a napkin. "I wasn't expecting God to speak so clearly and quickly. I see what you mean by 'transformational.' Did you do this with people when you were a police officer?"

"I was just learning the process in my police years but became much more adept as I moved overseas and began working in the Muslim world. It takes significant time and superior discipleship."

"Listen," said the captain, "I'm going to take a risk here." He produced a business card from his shirt pocket and handed it to me. "In three weeks, we are promoting twenty-three officers to the rank of sergeant. Part of their promotion process is they have to attend a series of classes at the academy. If I give you a one-hour time slot with them, can you walk them through a similar process you did with me, only with no religious language at all?"

"Yes," I answered, having no idea at all how to do what he just requested. No religious language? What did that mean?

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"When you finish teaching, we'll poll the sergeants. If they unanimously approve of what they've experienced, we'll get you in front of the chief."

"And if it's not unanimous?" I asked.

The captain stood and smiled. "Well then, at the very least we obeyed what we believe we heard the Lord say this morning. You and the Lord blessed me greatly this morning. Thank you. My assistant will contact you. See you in three weeks."

For the next three weeks, I fasted, prayed, and studied. What exactly was I supposed to say to twenty-three seasoned police officers in an academy class where no religious terminology was permitted?

My prayer became, *Lord, show me a way to teach your truth in a new and fresh way, appropriate to my audience, that will allow these officers to experience your presence in such a way as to amaze them. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening—shama.*

When the day arrived for me to lead the one-hour 9:00 a.m. session, I arrived early enough to sit in on the final few minutes of the class prior to mine. I wanted to observe the demeanor of the newly promoted sergeants before I stepped in front of them. That was a mistake. I should have just gone in cold, without any preconceived opinion, and trusted the Spirit's leading in the moment. The instructor was fifty-five minutes into an atonal lecture regarding a departmental procedural change that the students appeared immensely disinterested in. Some of the sergeants feigned interest but leaned back in their chairs with their feet up on their desks. Other less courteous students fiddled with their smartphones, and two officers, decidedly secure in their promotions, slept.

As I watched the class with growing dread, an academy instructor approached me and asked, "Who are you?" He was consulting a list on a clipboard, which I feared did not contain my name.

"Uh, Jamie Winship. I'm teaching the 9:00 a.m. session."

"Okay, I got it. The captain lined you up, right?"

"Yes, sir."

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"What's your topic? There's no topic listed here. How do I introduce you and your course to the sergeants?"

"The title of my session is 'Transformational Policing—Discovering Wholeness and Resiliency: Getting Well at Work.'"[1]

The academy instructor rolled his eyes. "I'm not saying all that."

"What would you say is their greatest fear on the job?" I asked.

He answered without hesitation. "Internal Affairs. They're afraid of getting in trouble on the job by making some mistake or saying the wrong thing to the wrong person."

Fear.

Fear kills receptivity and creativity in any human, police officers being no exception.

I now understood more clearly what the Lord wanted me to say, similar to the Lord saying to the prophet Jeremiah, "Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them" (1:17 NIV), and the words of Jesus to his followers: "Do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Matt. 10:19–20 ESV).

Walk them through their fear, the Spirit nudged.

That will not be easy, I prayed, *because I'm afraid*.

Perfect love casts out fear. Love them and lead them. Shama.

"I have no idea who our next presenter is," began the instructor, "or where he comes from, but the brass wanted him here, so . . . well, here he is to talk about . . . wholeness or something."

With that inauspicious introduction I moved to the front of the room and began. "I am here to ask you one question and only one question: What in your life are you most afraid of?"

The consensus in the room seemed to be they weren't afraid of anything, except maybe telling the truth about what they were actually afraid of.

"I'm asking this question," I continued, "because that fear, whatever it is, is ruling your life, stealing your joy, and killing your real

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capacity to bring change to this city, which I'm assuming you all believed in before you became afraid. What are you afraid of? And if you say you're not afraid of anything, then I know you are definitely afraid of telling the truth. Shall we begin? Or are we afraid?"

The room stirred uncomfortably. Feet came off desks, smartphones went dark, and sleepers awoke.

"Let's begin with my fear," I said. "I am afraid that this class is going to be a disaster, I'm going to fail in helping you, and I'm going to be a disappointment to the one who took a professional risk to bring me here. That's what I'm afraid of."

The room was attentive and silent. Perfect.

For the next hour, those officers and I, guided by the Holy Spirit, dug into some dark places and emerged with such joy that at 10:00 a.m. they applauded. Veteran cops don't applaud at the end of an in-service training very often. In my career, I had neither witnessed nor participated in clapping for any training. On this morning, I clapped with the sergeants.

At 1:30 that day, I received the following text message from the captain: *Jaime* [incorrect spelling]. *Not sure what you did with the sergeants, but they voted and unanimously agreed that the class was "exceptional," their word not mine. Well done. The chief's office will be contacting you for a meeting.* Five minutes later I received another text from the captain: *What did you do with the sergeants?*

What I walked through with the sergeants is what I want to walk through with you, the reader—and more. The class with the sergeants was only the beginning of something larger the Lord was wanting me to learn, and it is the larger concept that I want to explore with you. It's something essential that helps us understand why it's difficult for us as human beings to hear, listen to, and obey the word[2] of the Lord. The goal of this book is to identify this often unseen or ignored deception and replace it with what is true within the reality in which we live. In so doing, we will also be enabled and empowered to help others.

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Before I explain the layout of this book, I need to go back to my meeting with the chief.

The March morning was cold and crisp, the sky a crystalline blue. I was excited to meet the chief I held in high regard. Confident in the Lord's presence, I was ushered into a spacious office, where I was warmly welcomed by the chief, his personal assistant, and the assistant chief.

The chief said, "I've heard high praise for your class from our newly promoted sergeants, and I don't think I have to tell you that their praise doesn't come cheap. Unfortunately I don't have a lot of time, so as briefly and succinctly as possible, tell us what you'd like to bring to our police department."

When I finished, the chief and assistant chief exchanged glances, and the assistant chief said, "Can you submit your ideas in writing to Sarah here?" Sarah smiled and waved her pen. "And we'll run them through the proper channels and get back to you whenever we can. May take some time. You know how bureaucracies slow things down. Thank you for coming."

And that was it.

I entered the chief's office feeling excited about working with the PD, and I left feeling very much like a small-time aspiring screenwriter who had pitched a story concept to a big-time movie producer and was dismissed with the cliché "Don't call us, we'll call you."

I walked down to the city's waterfront to be alone with God and pray. *Lord, what do you want me to know, and what do you want me to do?* I stood gazing at the bay for some time before returning home. That evening and for the next month I kept asking God what I was missing.

Five weeks into my search for an answer, which involved praying, studying Scripture, reading books, talking with colleagues, and listening to podcasts, an idea came clear. What synthesized in my mind and spirit was that the three scenarios I had presented in the academy class were the introductory examples pointing to a

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much larger issue that the Lord wanted me to explore, including and beyond the issue of true identity. As I continued reflecting on this broader theme, it became evident that the forces shaping our understanding run deeper than individual situations; they touch the very foundations that guide how we interpret the world around us.

It is often said that culture eats strategy for breakfast, meaning no matter how well designed your strategic plan is, it will fall flat unless your team shares the appropriate culture. While this may be true, I believe Scripture teaches that worldview eats culture for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

If culture is shaped by worldview, then it seems as if a shift in worldview would shift our world away from a universal culture of violence and conflict toward a culture of peace—shalom.

Let's investigate the possibility, shall we?

You are now engaging in a four-part in-service training program designed to prepare you to take on the most perplexing issues of our time. The four parts are as follows:

Part 1: The Power of Worldview—Separation vs. Connection

Part 2: Grievous vs. Gracious Governance—Empire vs. Kingdom

Part 3: Lasting Leadership—Caesar vs. Christ

Part 4: Other-Focused vs. Self-Focused—How Shall We Then Live?

Let's pray together as we begin.

Lord, as I wrestle through these thoughts and ideas and questions, I ask that I will hear your voice, listen to your voice, and obey your voice. Amen.

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PART 1

THE POWER OF WORLDVIEW

SEPARATION VS. CONNECTION

If worldviews or metanarratives can be compared to lenses, which of them brings things into the sharpest focus? This is not an irrational retreat from reason. Rather, it is about grasping a deeper order of things which is more easily accessed by the imagination than by reason.

ALISTER E. MCGRATH

Your worldview has to have the same shape that reality does.

J. BUDZISZEWSKI

God looked over everything he had made;
it was so good, so very good!

GENESIS 1:31 MSG

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CHAPTER 1

THE SEPARATION WORLDVIEW

One Christmas Eve many years ago, when I was a young police officer, I was dispatched to a burglary in process. The suspect description was of a very large man with a muscular build, wearing a red hooded jacket and carrying a red backpack containing Christmas presents stolen from a private residence. The suspect was last seen exiting the residence from an upper-floor window, climbing down a wooden lattice, and running into a nearby wooded park.

Bad Santa?

Another officer—lovingly referred to by other cops as Ferret, owing to his small size and quick movements—radioed that he would enter the park from the north if I came from the south in order to form a perimeter in which to ensnare the suspect. "It's going to be pretty hard for this guy to hide in the snowy park," radioed Ferret, rather poetically, I thought, switching to the car-to-car sideband.

"Ten-four," I responded.

I parked my cruiser on the shoulder of a road overlooking the park, and upon exiting my vehicle, I immediately saw the suspect making his way through the park on a collision course with Ferret.

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The problem was that Ferret, moving cautiously on foot through the wooded area, couldn't see the suspect. Additionally, even from my distance, I could see that Bad Santa was a very large man, and the closer he moved in the direction of the officer on foot, the larger he became and the smaller Ferret got.

"Ferret," I called out, now slipping and sliding down the wintery bank into the park. "Eyes up! Eyes up!" I didn't want to alert the suspect to Ferret's position, but I didn't know what else to do. "Suspect sighted," I said into my portable radio, hoping Ferret was carrying his and was listening. He seemed not to hear. The dispatcher responded and alerted other units.

The struggle that ensued when Bad Santa's and Ferret's worlds collided was similar to watching a rodeo chute gate open and a professional bull rider trying to control a 1,500-pound Brahman bull named Bushwacker or Mossy Oak Mudslinger.

"Stop resisting!" I shouted as I neared the dueling duo. "Get on the ground now."

Surprisingly, the big man ceased battling, dropped to his knees, and raised his hands above his head. Realizing the suspect's wrists were too large for my standard Smith & Wesson handcuffs, I employed flex cuffs to restrain him. As other units arrived on the scene and EMTs checked out Ferret for injuries sustained during the struggle, I recovered the backpack with the stolen property and walked the now-docile giant up the hill to my cruiser to transport him to a magistrate and then lockup. Getting him into the caged rear seat of the Ford LTD cruiser was another wrestling match, not because of the arrestee's resistance but because he was too big for the space. Eventually, he was able to wedge himself sideways into the back seat, his head pressed against the ceiling.

"Unit six, I'm ten-fifteen one time," I radioed to the dispatcher, letting them know I was transporting one suspect to the magistrate's office.

"I didn't mean to hurt that officer," the big man said softly. "I shouldn't have fought him. I was scared and just trying to get away."

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I didn't respond.

"My wife's in graduate school and it's Christmas and we're broke, and I just wanted to get her a Christmas present."

I looked at the face in my rearview mirror. Sure, he acted remorseful, but so does everyone who gets caught. Jailhouse conversion. Foxhole faith. I didn't believe a word he was saying. In my experience, guys out doing daylight snatch-and-grab burglaries and then resisting arrest don't have scholarly wives attending grad school.

Tell it to the judge.

But then, the Judge had something he wanted to tell me.

Let him go!

The thought was so clear and imperative, I jerked the steering wheel, causing the big man to bump his head against the window. "No need for that," he mumbled, assuming I intended the maneuver.

"I don't do that stuff," I said to him. "Just got distracted."

"Okay," he said, sounding unconvinced.

Let him go!

The thought came again with greater intensity, from deeper within my spirit. I had been practicing listening prayer and hearing from God for several years on the job and had seen God do some amazing things, but this was a whole different scenario. He had invited me into some sketchy situations and actions with significant results but never requested that I release a suspected felon caught in the act. Did God do things like that? I tried to do a quick review of Scripture.

> The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
> Because the LORD has anointed and commissioned me
> To bring good news to the humble and afflicted;
> He has sent me to bind up [the wounds of] the
> brokenhearted,
> To proclaim release [from confinement and
> condemnation] to the [physical and spiritual] captives
> And freedom to prisoners. (Isa. 61:1)

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Uh-oh!

Scripturally, okay, maybe. But legally? What are the Police General Orders?

A police officer can "de-arrest" a prisoner, meaning release them from custody, if the officer determines that there was not sufficient probable cause to make the arrest in the first place, if new information comes to light exonerating the suspect, or if the alleged crime is deemed not serious enough to warrant continued detention—essentially, when the legal justification for the arrest no longer exists.

Did any of those apply?

Had new information *from God* come to light exonerating the suspect? Did the legal justification for arrest no longer exist because God had intervened?

Then, an unexpected recollection . . . There is a scene in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* where the main character, an angry, escaped prisoner named Jean Valjean, steals valuable personal items from a bishop who is trying to help him. When Valjean is captured by the police and brought back to the bishop for verification of the crime, the bishop not only says that he gave the items to Valjean as a gift but offers two more silver candlesticks, which he says Valjean forgot to take. When the officers leave and Valjean is left alone with the bishop, confused as to what has happened, the bishop utters these words: "Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. It is your soul that I buy from you; I withdraw it from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God. But remember this, my brother. See in this some higher plan. You must use this precious silver to become an honest man. By the witness of the martyrs. By the Passion, and the blood, I have raised you out of darkness. I have saved your soul for God."[1]

Let him go, now.

The voice in my head was almost painful. I knew it was the voice of the Spirit—who else could it be? I was certain neither I nor Satan was coming up with the "just cut the guy loose" plan.

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The Scriptures teach not to grieve or quench the Spirit,[2] but the fear of the consequences of releasing this prisoner did much to quench and grieve that voice in my spirit.

I pulled my cruiser into a parking lot miles short of the magistrate's office and banged my fists on the steering wheel.

"What's happening?" came the nervous voice from the cage. I could hear him working his Thor-like arms against the flex cuffs. Didn't Victor Hugo describe Jean Valjean as having the strength of four men?

"Don't talk," I shouted. "Trust me, you do not want to interrupt this conversation."

"Who are you talking to?" he asked, sounding panicky and confused.

"God. I think," I whispered to myself, the statement followed by a rapid cavalcade of Nativity reminders and an admonition to trust.

Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be for all people.[3] *The virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel,*[4] *God with us, and he will rescue the people from their separateness and alienation. So trust in and rely confidently on me, your Lord, with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. In all your ways know and acknowledge and recognize me, and I will make your paths straight and smooth, removing obstacles that block your way. Do not be wise in your own eyes! Fear me, your Lord, with reverent awe and obedience, and turn entirely away from injurious deeds.*[5]

There it was. So clear and beautiful. So . . . Christmassy. So putting Christ back in Christmas, right? And still, I wavered in receiving God's word and obeying it. Why? I knew that this situation was an invitation from the Lord. Why couldn't I just say yes?

This was the first case study I presented to the sergeants, using language they could accept and understand.[6] And I'm presenting this to you, reader, using the deeper faith language, the lingua franca of my heart. However, the question I asked the sergeants

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is the same question I'm asking you now to consider: Why are we (and the folks in the Scriptures too) so hesitant or resistant to God's mind-transforming, life-altering, world-changing invitations in our lives? Jesus asks the question like this: "Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?" (John 18:11 ESV).[7] The whole Bible is one giant invitation from God to humanity. Why are we so quick not to drink of the Lord[8] and to miss such great opportunity and blessing? Because of our worldview!

What in the World Is a Worldview?

"Worldviews," according to New Testament scholar and theologian N. T. Wright, "explain the basic stuff of human existence, the lens through which the world is seen, the blueprint for how one should live in it and above all the sense of identity and place which enables human beings to be what they are."[9] Worldviews provide stories through which human beings view reality and answer basic questions that determine humanity's manner of living:

1. Who am I?
2. Why do things happen?
3. What is the purpose of life?
4. What is human nature?
5. What is sacred?
6. Who are we as people?
7. Where did we come from and where are we going?

Every human being possesses a worldview. However, we are not born with one. The worldview we hold to forms the bulk of our identity. Considering that as an infant we don't really possess the capacity to form words, let alone comprehend abstract concepts, we can conclude that we don't come with a worldview. It is formed in us over time, solidifying as we experience the various

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events of life. Numerous things directly and indirectly influence how we form our worldview, such as family, friends, community, education, religion, popular cultural influences, life experiences, and ourselves. In short, worldview is learned.

Many people are uncertain and vague about their worldview, while others answer that they have a biblical or Christian worldview, a Qur'anic or Islamic worldview, a conservative or progressive worldview . . . The list is endless and mostly incorrect because, you see (or maybe not), it is your worldview that *informs* your view of the Bible or the Qur'an or politics or religion or other races or gender.

Most of us are like the two young fish who were lazily drifting and chattering among some reeds one warm morning. An older fish swam by and asked, "How's the water, boys?" The two fish looked at each other, confused. "Water? What does he mean, 'water'?"

When I ask people where they learned their worldview and how wholly or holistically they live out that worldview, there is often silence.

The difficulty arises because our worldview is the lens through which we view everything and everyone, and yet we cannot *see* the lens. It's like trying to find our glasses when we've lost our glasses. Consequently, we can't tell if we're seeing the world around us accurately. How then do we test the lens when we're looking through it?

Fortunately, holy Scripture has done the work for us by literally giving us a worldview eye exam right at the beginning of the story in Genesis. The Genesis account is a divinely inspired Moses, in the wilderness, explaining to the newly liberated Hebrews how they as a people ended up in slavery in a world where enslaving people is acceptable and considered a sign of victory and success to the enslaver. Prior to Moses's narrative, Israel's sole identity has been as *powerless slaves*, and the reason they believe the way they do about themselves and the world they're in is because they are

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acting in agreement with a *separation worldview*. This worldview is sourced in fear and a deep belief in the absoluteness of scarcity. This belief can result only in the formation of false identities that are self-protective and self-promotional. These false identities create a fragmented, broken world of rising and falling empires (like Egypt) in an endless cycle of war and bloodshed.

The problem then is as follows: Most humans (Christians too) are raised and live in this same separation worldview, sourced in scarcity, and as a result, our operating life descriptor is "NOT ENOUGH!"

Ask yourself how many times in a day you use the two little, incredibly dangerous words "not enough."

I don't know. There's not enough time in my day to think about stuff like this. And if I waste time—an irreplaceable resource—thinking about not having enough time, then I might lose money because time is money and there's never enough money. Or I might lose resources and then lose my job because there're not enough jobs to go around, and if I don't have a good job, well, then maybe I'm not enough.[10]

There it is! The scarcity, not-enough worldview can produce only separation from God, myself, and others—the inverse of the Great Commandment.[11]

The worst thing about the separation worldview (or maybe the best) is that all of its tenets are *false*.

In Genesis, Moses also presents the true worldview, which is the *connection worldview*, sourced in love itself and the deep belief in the absolute enoughness of God. In separateness there is never enough, but in interconnectedness and community, as exemplified in Trinity and creation, there is always enough, and *you* are always enough. The result of this worldview is true identity demonstrated in other-focused, self-emptying, unconditional love for even our enemies. This is love for God, ourselves, and others as the preeminent goal of our lives. This worldview is modeled in, by, and through the life of Jesus.[12]

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With all this in mind, it seems wise to explore these two worldviews and their effect on our world in more depth. We can accomplish this by comparing the two worldviews, separation versus connection, in the context of empire versus kingdom and Caesar versus Christ. The separation worldview produces *empire* led by *Caesar-like* leaders who marginalize people and advance through fear, power, and control. Conversely, the connection worldview produces *kingdom* led by *Christlike* leaders who reconcile people and advance through love, joy, and peace.

Let's begin with the problem—the predominant worldview, separation.

Does God Separate?

There is a distinct difference when God, as opposed to humanity, is the author of separation. For example, in the creation account, Moses describes how God *separated* many things, including light from darkness, waters above from waters below, day from night, land from sea—all of which God saw as good (Hebrew *tob*, "beautiful, best"). Separation is a theme in Genesis 1, and it can have several implications as well. Separation can create beauty, such as the diversity of creation, and can create conditions for love, such as unity. God seems to prefer unity to uniformity. Separation can be part of God's redemptive plan for the world because he creates important borders and boundaries to bring order to chaos. This is all good, very good.

The human version of separation is quite different—noticeably self-imposed and destructive.

Solomon, perhaps using his wisdom to describe or predict his own folly, wrote quite a bit about the danger of separation as a way of life.

> He who [*willfully*] *separates* himself [from God and man]
> seeks his own desire,
> He quarrels against all sound wisdom.

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> A [closed-minded] fool does not delight in understanding,
> But only in revealing his personal opinions [unwittingly displaying his self-indulgence and his stupidity]. (Prov. 18:1–2, emphasis added)

The Hebrew word used here and translated "to separate" is *parad* (פָּרַד), meaning "to disperse, divide, be out of joint, part, scatter (abroad), separate (self), sever self, stretch, or sunder." We see the word again in Proverbs 16:28: "A perverse man spreads strife, and one who gossips *separates* intimate friends" (emphasis added).

Humanity's propensity toward separation is not good. The apostle Paul makes this clear in his letter to the Ephesians, where he refers to the "dividing wall of hostility" between Jews and gentiles:

> Remember that at that time you were *separated* from Christ [*excluded* from any relationship with Him], *alienated* from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise [with *no share* in the sacred Messianic promise and without knowledge of God's agreements], having *no hope* [in His promise] and [living] in the world *without God*. . . . For He Himself is our peace and our bond of unity. He who made both groups—[Jews and Gentiles]—into one body and broke down the barrier, the *dividing wall* [of spiritual antagonism between us]. (Eph. 2:12, 14, emphasis added)[13]

Sounds like God has some serious issues with man-made gated communities, doesn't it?

The prophet Ezekiel doesn't waste words when he warns that the person or culture who "miss[es] the goal or path of right and duty"[14] will die (see Ezek. 18:20 KJV).

This is serious stuff! This separation worldview nearly prevented me from following God's invitation to release the man from the confines of my police cruiser. This *learned* worldview has plagued humanity since the beginning and continues to do so today.

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Let's ask the question, When and where did this separation worldview originate?

The Devil Is in the Deception—Genesis 3

In the garden of Eden, Eve is deceived by the serpent into eating the forbidden fruit, after which she offers it to her husband, who also partakes, and the whole world is plunged into sin.

When Moses is delivering the creation story to the people of Israel, he is speaking to a people who are operating in a very distinct, demonically inspired, deceptive, and destructive worldview, which Moses himself held to until his encounter with God at the burning bush. As with all humans, Moses and the Israelites *learned* their view of the world from the prevailing culture of their day—in this case, ancient Egypt. This was a worldview that began for the Hebrews with wealth and prestige in Goshen[15] and ended in total enslavement. By narrating the Genesis story to the newly freed Hebrews, Moses is going to explain or reexplain their history in such a way that they can make the intellectual and spiritual shift from an ancient and destructive separation worldview to the eternal and redemptive connection worldview. Without a correct worldview, the Hebrews (and all of us today) would very likely begin their new life journey with joy and freedom and end up in moral poverty and physical bondage . . . again.

Remember, God's desire for Israel is for them to become a powerful and influential people, described by the prophet Isaiah as a light to all nations: "I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations" (Isa. 42:6 ESV). And again, Isaiah states, "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (49:6 ESV). The correct worldview is essential for this to happen, or not.

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When Moses recounts the failure of Eve and Adam in the garden, using bondage in Egypt as a historical backdrop, he is revealing the origin of a deceptive separation worldview that results in the act, on the part of humans, of separation.

In the opening pages of their very excellent book *An Other Kingdom: Departing the Consumer Culture*, authors Peter Block, Walter Brueggemann, and John McKnight make an interesting statement referencing the Egypt of Israel's day. They note that the economic systems based on competition, scarcity, and acquisitiveness have become more than a question of economics; they have become the empire within which we dwell *today*. That way of thinking invades our social order, our ways of being together, and what we value. It replicates the empire of ancient Egypt, Pharaoh's empire. It produces a consumer culture that centralizes wealth and power and leaves everyone else wanting what the beneficiaries of the system have.[16] Sound like a worldview to you?

While it is not my goal here to explore what Block, Brueggemann, and McKnight label the "free market consumer ideology" versus "neighborly beliefs," their use of the concept of pillars that support these two systems is very helpful when we think of the creation narrative and Moses's presentation of worldview, or the origin of the lens through which humans view their world. We turn to that in the next chapter.

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