



Should We Love Osama?

Author(s): John Mills

Metanexus Views. 2003.05.20. 6095 Words.

Continuing on the theme of altruism in anticipation of our up-coming conference, we present an essay by Rev. John A. Mills from the First Congregational Church (UCC) of Closter, N.J. Mills asks the difficult question of how far to extend the circle of altruistic concern for others, should we love Osama Bin Laden or Saddam Hussein? He also turns it around to ask whether we should also extend our love towards George W. Bush or Donald Rumsfeld, even if we find ourselves in profound disagreement with their actions? Mills argues that naturalistic evolution can enable humans to evolve from the bottom-up towards a limited circle of altruism, but that the act of loving one's enemies requires a top-down process of religious revelation. He proposes "militant love," as the alternative to "redemptive violence," but it makes no sense without the grace of God, or...

The Rev. John A. Mills is an ordained pastor in United Church of Christ and is also a senior solutions architect at Telcordia Technologies. Mills graduated from Drew University Theological School with a Masters of Divinity degree, Summa Cum Laude, and from Rutgers University with a Masters of Science degree. He has published various technical articles in the field of software engineering and is an expert in the application of software architectures to telecommunications operations and management. He is director of Wisdom's Light, a ministry of his church through which he has facilitated a variety of classes on the subject of Religion and Science for lay audiences in an effort to raise up this very important topic to the general public. =20

Compassionate love, in its diverse manifestations from the easy love of children to the difficult love of enemies, will be the central theme of our up-coming conference at Villanova University, "Works of Love: Scientific and Religious Perspectives on Altruism," May 31 through June 5, 2003. Other thematic foci include: spirituality and health hosted by the Samueli Institute; the scientific study of religious phenomena, in this case, a gathering of social scientists involved in studying spiritual transformation; a gathering of alumni from the Science and Spiritual Quest program; a gathering of representatives from 60 Local Societies; a reception hosted by MacMillan Publishers in honor of three new encyclopedias and their editors; and much gracious conviviality and engaging conversation. There are some 40 world-renowned plenary presenters, 70 invited paper presenters, and some 350 participants from 23 different countries. Please join us for an evening plenary, a full day, or the whole conference. Space is limited and advanced registration is required. For more information, go to

<<http://www.metanexus.net/conference2003>>.

-- Editor

Should We Love Osama?

By John A. Mills

Abstract

This paper will explore from whence the ultimate altruistic act of "love thy enemy" comes. It claims that this ultimate act of loving the one who would destroy us is enabled by both the bottom-up process of naturalistic evolution and the top-down process of religious revelation. Reflecting on Franz de Waal's and others work, the processes of nature provide us with the encouragement to engage in altruistic acts. Evolution is opportunistic and immediate. Evolution gives rise to altruism because there is a naturalistic reward sought, be it personal survival, familial survival, tribal survival, or species survival. Naturalistic reward sets a finite limit to the radius of the circle of inclusion -- this far and no further. Thus, altruism towards an enemy who would destroy us will not develop naturalistically. This last, extravagant step must be given through revelation. It requires a final leap of faith to widen our circle of care to even the one who would destroy us. Through the evolutionary drivers towards altruism, God lays the ground work for this ultimate act of love. But it takes revelation of God's teleos to leap to that last wonderful step that breaks all barriers.

The Claim

This paper[JAM1] explores from whence the ultimate altruistic act of "love thy enemy" comes, where the "enemy" is defined nihilistically to be an irredeemable one who is intent on our destruction. It is a response to two sessions that I facilitated in New Jersey in November 2002. One session was at the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Closter and the other was at the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Westfield. Both sessions were scheduled dialogues of the Wisdom's Light ministry (<http://wislit.home.att.net>) of the New Jersey Association of the United Church of Christ. These are lay dialogues on various topics of religion and science. This particular topic was the scientific basis of altruism. I opened the sessions with discussions of what altruism is, broadly stated as the care for the other as the other. The discussions then segued into some overviews of Franz de Waal's work, Stephen G. Post's ideas of altruistic love and Evan Thompson's ideas of empathy as reported in *Science & Spirit*. The groups, ranging from six to eighteen lay participants engaged in a wide-range of related topics, including whether we invent God, whether guilt is a part of the process, how we are interconnected with creation, and so forth.

I proposed a conclusion[JAM2] in the discussion that contends that the bottom-up processes of

naturalistic evolution provide us with the encouragement or wherewithal to engage in altruistic acts, what I call naturalistic altruism. But left to themselves these mechanisms can carry us only so far, namely to concern at the very most for the redeemable enemy. They will not carry us to love for the irredeemable enemy. The evolutionary process that undergirds the naturalistic process is opportunistic and immediate. It does not operate, so far as we know, on potentialities or teleos. Any surviving mutation must have an immediate use. The biological and socio-psychological discussions uncover these immediate uses: survival of the species, collective defense, collective resource gathering and so forth. But I contend that this opportunistic and immediate process will not have a motivation to care for an enemy unless in the process there is the possibility of redeeming the enemy. Forgiveness, then, becomes the response to the enemy's repentance. Otherwise, the risks to one's survival or one's species' survival of extending altruism to an irredeemable enemy outweigh the benefits. This last, extravagant step must be given through the top-down process of revelation or enlightenment. It is dependent on the development of naturalistic altruism, but requires a final leap of faith transcending naturalistic altruism to widen our circle of care to even the one who would destroy us. This I call revealed altruism. God lays the ground work with evolution, but it takes God's revelation to leap to that last wonderful step that breaks all barriers.

The paper backs this proposition by demonstrating through the authors cited, and leveraging from the group conversations that the natural processes give rise to altruism because there is a naturalistic reward sought, be it personal survival, familial survival, tribal survival, or species survival. This criteria of a naturalistic reward sets a finite limit to the radius of the circle of inclusion-this far and no further. Thus, since love of the enemy may in fact have a higher probability of putting any level of survival at risk than not, the risks outweigh the rewards and we would not expect to find altruism toward the irredeemable enemy in any society that is not developed transcendentally. Indeed, I suggest that if naturalistic altruism is the limit of our concern, then the flood gates of redemptive violence [JAM3] are opened. That leaves revelation as the source of this edict. It is through altruism transcendentally revealed (a top-down process) that shuts these gates and widens our circle of inclusion to his ultimate radius.

What Is Altruism?

Altruism simply stated is regard and empathy for the other as the other irrespective of our own agendas [JAM4]. It is the source of love of the Stranger and enshrined in our Abrahamic belief that God is Love and in our Christian* notion of the self-emptying (Kenosis) of God.

By 'altruistic love,' I mean a warm and abiding personal affirmation of the Other that is grounded both in emotion and in the insight that this particular Other has value, not only in their potentiality (i.e., 'all people have good somewhere inside them'), but in their present, non-ideal and non-sentimentalized actuality. [Post]

Altruism takes us beyond the passive edict to do no harm to the active edict to allow no harm. Altruism requires of us to actively care and nurture the other [JAM5].

... the faithful must struggle to balance love (agape) for the near and dear with love for the neediest, and the outcome must lean toward the neediest and away from the self or the family,

near and dear. [Post]

The marks[JAM6] of altruism are:

* Love of oneself; * Love and empathy of neighbor; * Love and empathy of stranger; * Recognizing the other within ourselves; * Love that furthers the existence, growth, and presence of the other; * Love that responds to need and suffering; * Love that is loyal and patient; * Love that honors the other's freedom, integrity, and individuality.

But altruism is not selflessness. Selflessness is invalid inasmuch that it is not caring for one's self. A person cannot exhibit altruism, if that person does not care for her or him self.

What Science[JAM7] Tells Us

It feels good to be altruistic. The January 2002 UC Berkeley Wellness Letter[JAM8] cites studies that volunteering for community service may prolong life and boost vitality and self-esteem, particularly among retirees. One study at the University of Michigan reported that retirees by volunteering just 40 hours a year increased their lifespan. A Cornell University study discovered that retirees who volunteered were happier and felt they had better control over their lives. A Canadian study found that older Canadians who volunteered "enjoy an improved quality of life, stronger social networks, and increased physical activity." From these studies, we can conclude that altruism is beneficial for our lives and survival. It is evolutionarily a positive survival force for mutations contributing to our desire to care for the other.

Franz de Waal claims that our moral sense, our altruism is an evolved trait and does not require a supernatural intervention[JAM9]. He asks is the "selfish gene" the only path to Darwinian evolutionary survival (survival of the fittest)? And he answers, no, natural selection provides a variety of paths or strategies to survival. He describes the profound paradox that genetic self-advancement at the expense of others -- which is the basic thrust of evolution -- has given rise to remarkable capacities for caring and sympathy. Richard Dawkins metaphor of the "selfish gene" is misleading, rather; the metaphor of the "self-promoting gene" is better[JAM10]. Survival also is promoted by cooperation, kindness, and supportive behavior, not just by aggression and selfishness. De Waal demonstrates in the behavior of other animals, in particular the primates, such that nature is not just "red in tooth and claw", but that there are tendencies and capabilities in primates that can be found at the center of human moral systems.

These traits[JAM11] include sympathetic behavior toward the disadvantaged; sharing of resources; social rules governing the exchange of services (e.g., grooming, food-sharing); methods and types of punishment (e.g., ostracism, withdrawal of sharing privileges); treatment of violators; and rewards (e.g., extra sharing, protection) for "good citizens" and for the peace of the community (conflict resolution). For example, female chimps will intervene between two males ready to fight. An extensive example is the social organization of the bonobos. They are a female-centered, egalitarian primate species that substitutes sex for aggression. They are as genetic close to us as chimps. They are socially dominated by a loose hierarchy of females, where cooperation and conflict resolution is more common than violence.

Thus, the assumption that nature is male-dominated, aggressive, and warlike is a distortion and, therefore; the assumption that warfare and aggression (e.g., the elimination of Neanderthals) were the essentials of human ascendance is incorrect. Other aspects of social behavior were also important: language, the role of women, tool use, and conflict resolution. De Waal concludes[JAM12] that we and the animals are products of both evolution and the environment (learning and education) and that neither we nor the animals are pre-determined. Our development is a free-flowing dynamic integrated process of genes and environment. But is this all that it takes, as de Waal suggests, to achieve that ultimate altruism of loving the unrepentant enemy? Is this naturalistic altruism sufficient?

Stephan Post points out that altruism is not just love of enemies, but rather an ever including sphere, that includes the infirmed, the outcast, and forgiven enemies. He claims that it is our religious traditions that take us from the evolutionary mandated parental love to inclusive love of the other as other. These ever-widening spheres[JAM13] of love include special relations of deeply knowing each other; hospitable relations with those we know from a distance; needy relations with those who are severely ill or famished; and criminal and enemy relations where their inner resurrection is possible. But this last sphere does not include the unrepentant enemy.

In his Metanexus posting of 1 May 2003, [VIEWS] Unlimited Love and Ultimate Reality he says[JAM14],

"Love for all humanity without exception is not innate. It was not a visible ideal among the Greeks, who could not see beyond the city state (polis), and even within the city state friendship (philia) was king. While there was in antiquity a weak notion of philanthropia or "love for humanity," this did not enjoy any fuller development until the late Stoics and it did not apply to humanity as a whole. Judaism too was insular in its beginnings, but of great historical significance it introduced the notion of hospitality to aliens (non-Jews) as well as of moral obligations to humanity as a whole. These ideals are also significant in Islam. Buddhism and Christianity would introduce the remarkable ideal of even loving enemies. We are not "hard wired" to love all humanity, and this form of love has sometimes been reduced to a thin veneer covering a seething cauldron of human hatred and group conflict. With the power of weapons of mass destruction, we must now learn the lesson of love for all humanity or perhaps suffer enormously. Every age can be defined ethically and spiritually by how well it teaches and implements the ideal of love - and love implies justice - for every human being without exception."

Naturalistic Altruism and Redemptive Violence

Naturalistic altruism can include us in a circle that embraces all of God's good creation. With the ever-increasing understanding that we are part and parcel of an interconnected, interpenetrated web of life, our survival, our happiness, our future lies in the care of all of God's good creation. We can expect that even people who are not influenced by a faith tradition could come to this conclusion. Evolutionarily, naturalistic altruism provides a beneficial trait.[JAM15]

But what about the enemy who is intent on destroying us no matter what?[JAM16] What about

an enemy intent on destroying a civilization even at the cost of irreparable damage to the good creation? Should such be included in the circle of altruistic love, or should such be destroyed in the name of altruistic love?

Stephen Post continues in the previously cited posting,

"Whether resistance to evil is nonviolent or not, our actions can be motivated by a love that remains open to forgiveness and reconciliation."

If naturalistic altruism carries us to love and concern for all of creation, can this lead us to care and preserve even the most irredeemable? No. The logic of naturalistic altruism demands that we destroy the nihilistic enemy in order to assure the survival, happiness, and future of the good creation. Evolutionarily, it makes no sense to overtly risk the wide circle of care that we have cast. An irredeemable enemy cannot be expected to contribute to our survival. Thus, if altruism calls us to care for the other, then we are called to protect the other from destruction, and hence; eradicate those who are clearly evil. This path opens the flood gates of redemptive violence: the use of violence to destroy evil.

Walter Wink in *Engaging the Powers*, [JAM18] describes the civic religion of redemptive violence. Violence is deeply embedded in the spirituality of the modern world to the point of being the core of our civic religion. It appears to be in the nature of things. It works, apparently; it is inevitable. It is the last -- often the first - resort to any aggression, small or large. Its practitioners believe that the threat of violence alone can deter aggression.

This outlook has evolved over the generations into a civic religion of redemptive violence: the victory of order over chaos by means of violence. It is rooted in the mythology of ancient Sumeria and Babylon in the ascendancy of Marduk. Redemptive violence is a theology of war: the identification of the enemy with the powers the god has vanquished. The enemy is the incarnation of evil. This theology is a theology of the status quo: to protect the nation-state at all costs. The state is the highest good. Might makes right. Order, any order, is preferable to chaos. Peace can only be achieved through war. Security can only be assured through strength. Yet, chaos finally cannot be defeated, but must be vanquished over and over again. Violence is in our nature. War is natural.

We see this played out in the society of the USA, which has bought into a kind of post-modern redemptive violence that is shrouded in the guise of altruism [JAM19]. We pride ourselves on being altruistic. We believe all people deserve freedom, justice, and the good life. Our leaders, leveraging this concern, have mustered the most technologically and strategically powerful military in human history ostensibly to protect the world from Terrorism and other threats to the well-being of humanity. We resort to war regularly. But when we do, we do it with care and compassion. Our technology allows for precision bombings to minimize, if not eliminate, human collateral damage. Our technology and strategy allows for lightening fast blitzkriegs, again to minimize the economic and social disruption. Our soldiers are armed with netted weapons, to improve their survival on the battlefield and to minimize, again, civilian damage. Our motivations are of the highest. To bring peace, justice, and democracy to the world, we are willing to sacrifice our soldiers and our prosperity. And the past two Gulf wars have shown that

violence used to redeem a nation or a cause succeeds ... apparently. We have "altruistically" sacrifice our resources for the sake of the other.

Yet, this "altruism" is simply a veneer. The destruction wrought by violence - even redemptive violence - leaves behind suffering, resentment, and alienation. No amount of subsequent help and concern can eradicate the inevitableness of violence's ugliness.

God and the Brain

Interestingly, evolution appears to have developed a counterweight to the risk of redemptive violence. Newberg and colleagues in their studies [JAM20] of the neurological basis of belief have discovered that humans have evolved to be receptive to God.

God is dead=20 ... Nietzsche=20 Nietzsche is dead=20 ... God=20 --Graffito [Newberg, p. 128]

If God exists and creates the universe, does it not make sense that the Divine installed brain machinery so we could perceive the Divine? Indeed, it seems that we have in the acquisition of the cognitive imperative. [JAM21] We have evolved with this imperative: the irresistible, biologically driven need to make sense of things through the cognitive analysis of reality. This allows the anticipation of danger even when danger is not present and drives the mind to identify and resolve any potential threat. This facility evolved to protect us from dangers and from the stress of the unknown. The evolution of the cognitive imperative "took" to assuage our fears.

Yet there is one threat that cannot be resolved: everything dies. [JAM22] The contemplation of death leads to further questions. Why were we born only eventually to die? What happens to us when we die? What is our place in the universe? Why is there suffering? What sustains and animates the universe? How was the universe made? How long will the universe last? How can we live in this bafflingly uncertain world and not be afraid? So like many evolved facilities, we have extended the use of the cognitive imperative to myth-making and ritual-participation. The goal of these activities is to lift participants out of their isolated selves and immerse them in something larger than themselves -- the transcendence of the self and the blending of the self into some larger reality and thereby provide mechanisms to deal with the irresolvable questions.

The repetitive rhythmic stimulation (ritual) [JAM23] can result in spiritual satisfaction and ...can drive the limbic and autonomic systems [to] eventually alter some very fundamental aspects of the way the brain thinks, feels, and interprets reality. These rhythms can dramatically affect the brain's neurological ability to define the limits of the self... rise out of themselves and into a larger and more exhilarating state of being [Newberg p. 79].

The evolutionary roots of ritual are social identity and cohesion, the reduction of acts of aggressions among members, and the need to escape the limiting boundaries of the self. Ritual gives us a visceral taste of God and thereby assures us of God's reality. Ritual provides a means to turn spiritual stories into spiritual experiences and to act out our myths.

The inborn physical compulsion [the cognitive imperative] to enact our thoughts may have an

evolutionary purpose. By mentally rehearsing certain important actions ... we might actually hone our abilities to perform those tasks in real life ... If the brain contains such a compulsion to act out thoughts and ideas, it would be no surprise if the brain compelled us to act out the stories of myth [p. 94].

... it's unlikely that the neurological machinery of transcendence evolved specifically for spiritual reasons. Still, we believe that evolution had adopted this machinery, and has favored the religious capabilities of the religious brain because religious beliefs and behaviors turn out to be good for us in profound and pragmatic ways [p. 129].

Newberg and colleagues believe that their neurological approach suggests that God was 'discovered' in a mystical or spiritual encounter made known to us through the transcendent machinery of the mind [p. 133]. If this is true, then this is a case of God providing through evolution the facility to take the next step in altruism and receive revealed altruism.[JAM24]

What Would Jesus Do?

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter drew his sword to protect Jesus from arrest. What greater motivation to draw one's sword than to defend God? Yet, Jesus ordered Peter to put away his sword, for "those who live by the sword, shall die by the sword (Mt 26:52)." Naturalistic altruism can take us only so far, before once again we resort to violence. In this command in Gethsemane, Jesus leaped past what reason and nature would see their way to doing. In the long tradition of the prophets, Jesus incarnated God's revelation of altruism: love your enemies even if it kills you[JAM25]. The mechanisms of evolution set the stage, but could not make this leap. It is received revelation that finally cries out to us to end the violence unconditionally.

To finally expand the altruistic circle to its ultimate limit, we must accept revealed altruism given intrusively by God. This is the top-down component of altruistic development. Genetically we are programmed for altruism. Socially we are conditioned to be empathic. But these are not enough. Our distance of involvement shrinks as someone becomes closer to us emotionally and physically, but we are still prone to diffused involvement dismissing the care of others as someone else's problem. We can still see our way to redemptive violence: to protect the innocent and the deserving we can resort to violence to defeat and destroy the nihilistic enemy. Based on genes and society alone, we will not reach the height of altruism.

It is divine grace that re-enforces genes and society and takes us to the ultimate extent: Love thy enemies as thyself unconditionally (s. Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27,35; Romans 12:20). This ultimacy requires of us divine love without expectation of the other's metanoia; we are to love them despite their unwillingness to repent. This shrinks distance of involvement to zero and widens the circle of care to infinity. It eliminates any diffused involvement and requires collective involvement and mutual enablement.

Evan Thompson suggests a structure around empathy and Buddhist techniques[JAM26] to nourish our altruistic sense that we can apply to the very counterintuitive notion of love the unrepentant enemy. This full performance of empathy requires us to imagine or mentally transpose ourselves into the place of the other; to see ourselves from the other's perspective; and

to recognize the other as a person who deserves concern and respect. =20

From a Buddhist standpoint this full performance of empathy is implemented as the non-duality of self and other. In The Way of the Bodhisattva what we call 'self' and 'other' has no independent existence or intrinsic identity. Enlightenment consists in uprooting egocentrism at its very source so we are no longer governed by attachment to self. To practice this Buddhism teaches us to meditate on the equality of self and other and on the exchange of self and other.

In empathy, I imagine myself as other and ... I become other to myself by looking back on myself through the eyes of another ... What these self-displacing experiences indicate is that ... 'I-ness' is essentially constituted by 'otherness'.

Sanctuary

What would Jesus do, then, with the irredeemable enemy?[JAM27] Jesus taught us that no one was without blame and that everyone was a child of God. Jesus would not forget that even the irredeemable are children of God and would remind us that we are all interconnected in a divine web of love. Jesus would forgive them, but consistently, clearly, confront them and us with their sins and alienation in which they lived and in which we participate. Jesus would recognize that by us returning violence for their violence, fear for their fear, we return their evil for their evil. Jesus would teach us that no matter how the irredeemable may respond, we must respond in love.

The Brits and Yanks assaulted the mountains vast, Slaughtering Terror in each and every blast
Against the heavy solid doors he huddled, Imperfect shelter from the biting wind. He looked at
me with vacant eyes and muddled Face, and passed a fleeting, cynic's grin. I opened Your
abode to let him enter, A holy hav'n for th' world's tormentor. O God, What am I to do with
Osama? O Would I break Your sanctuary, O Amma! Does he dream of bugs and mushrooms,
Heralding a desert order Of scoured lands and crush'd blooms, Purified, allowing no quarter?
Now You send him here into Your arms. And I, You incarnate, must face Your Love, Unlike
him of below, to be above And follow costly Love no matter th' alarms. Society is banging at
Your doors

It knows its foe, gestated in its heart, Is safely inside; now purifying wars It thinks will an order
safe and free impart

"But there's no way to peace, for peace is the way." In the desert dry will bloom Your salaam
And it will ne'er to them occur to bomb. So I open the doors of Love to play and pray: And here
in holy fear we shall stand steadfast -- he and I -- he the snake, I the iconoclast. The Yanks and
Brits assaulted the mountains far, In each and every death joined Terror on par.

What Should We Do?

So this final and wonderful extension of altruism finally breaks the rule of redemptive
violence and calls us to Jesus' Third Way as Wink and Post have described. Stephen Post in his
21 April 2003 [VIEWS] Progress Through Love posting to Metanexus states:

"Love can take the form of correction. It always affirms the value of all others, but it will not

affirm hatreds and harmful actions ... the person of love is not the nice easy going person who doesn't make waves; such a person, after motivational self-examination and conscientious discernment, may make necessary waves. Love is ready to skillfully confront behaviors that are self-destructive as well as destructive of others... But in confrontation, love must never give way to malice..."

Wink describes what I term militant pacifism.[JAM28] We are not to mirror evil. We are never to return evil for evil. Rather we are to respond to evil with non-violent resistance. We are not to passively wait for evil to come upon us. We are not simply to do no harm. We are called to actively seek out evil and confront it. We are to allow no harm to happen. And we are to do this by righteous means, not by evil means. Our means must be consistent with our ends: there is no way to peace, peace is the way.

No matter that the wise of the world will tell us that what we do is irrational, foolish, and dangerous; that it will result in our destruction and theirs, if what we do is what Jesus would do, then we are called to do it no matter the cost. Wink reflects on Jesus sayings in Mt 5:38-42 of turning the other cheek, of giving away your underwear, and walking the second mile[JAM29]. Each of these sayings was to present to the one caught up in evil, the one who follows the theology of redemptive violence with an unexpected, out-of-left-field alternative that undermines violence. Every one of these acts that Jesus proposed was pragmatic and imminently practical in his time. None of them were wishful thinking or acts for a better time.

In the same manner, we must seek out means to undermine violence that work today in our technocratic, democratic society. The ultimate altruism of loving the irredeemable enemy is not for the enemy it is for all those who would destroy that enemy and, thereby, deepen the abyss of violence into which the world is falling. What would Iraq[JAM30] be like today if instead of we Americans having sent in an army of redemptive violence (and that is exactly what it is), we enabled an international host of NGOs to "invade" Iraq with the food and medicine so solely needed by the children with the Blue Helmets only there to protect the NGO workers? Would Saddam still be in Baghdad? Probably. Would the Iraqi people, their children being fed and healed, find hope and empowerment? Just maybe. Would Saddam's power had been undermined and the Iraqi people finding their own way to salaam? Only Allah knows... But that is the way of divine altruism. And that is the way we are to respond. It is what God would have us do ...

Yes, we are to love Osama, even if it kills us.[JAM31]

Salaam/Shalom.

Bibliography

1. Newberg, Andrew M.D., Eugene D'Aquili, M.D., Ph.D., Vince Rause; Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science & The Biology of Belief; Ballantine Books; New York 2001.
2. Stephen G. Post; Regarding the Other: Altruistic Love as Religious Ideal and Scientific

Project; Science & Spirit; Volume 11, Issue 1; March/April 2000.=20

3. Evan Thompson; Empathy and Human Experience

4. Doing Well by Doing Good; UC Berkeley wellness letter.com; January 2002.

5. Frans de Waal; The Biology of Morality; Science & Spirit; Volume 11, Issue 1; March/April 2000.

6. Walter Wink; Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination; Fortress Press (c)1992.

Biography of Rev. John A. Mills

The Rev. John A. Mills is an ordained pastor in United Church of Christ. Rev. Mills is currently pastor of First Congregational Church (UCC) in Closter, N.J. and is also a senior solutions architect at Telcordia Technologies. Rev. Mills graduated from Drew University Theological School with a Masters of Divinity degree, Summa Cum Laude, and from Rutgers University with a Masters of Science degree. He has published various technical articles in the field of software engineering and is an expert in the application of software architectures to telecommunications operations and management. Rev. Mills is also an expert in the relationship of science and religion. He is director of Wisdom's Light, a ministry of his church through which he has facilitated a variety of classes on the subject of Religion and Science for lay audiences in an effort to raise up this very important topic to the general public. He also has written a number of commentaries on religious issues in local newspapers and is interested in mysticism which he expresses in both lyrical and epic poetry. *My religious references will generally be Christian and from time to time Abrahamic. I do not mean to contend that other religions do not have similar notions. Rather, this is an indication of my own limited knowledge. As an ordained minister in a Christian denomination, I am quite familiar with Christian beliefs. I cannot make a similar claim on other religions and, therefore; must leave it to other experts to agree or disagree (as I suppose other Christian believers will) with my contentions.

[JAM1] * Our task is to extend the radius of altruism to the irredeemable foe.

[JAM2] * Evolution provides for naturalist altruism, a bottom-up process of extending altruism as far as the redeemable enemy * Revelation required to extend this radius to the irredeemable enemy: top-down, revealed altruism.

[JAM3] * Naturalistic altruism alone still leads to redemptive violence.

[JAM4] * Altruism is regard for the other as the other irrespective of our own agendas

[JAM5] * Allow no harm

[JAM6] * List the marks of altruism

[JAM7] * Wellness studies=20 * De Waal's primate studies * Newberg's studies

[JAM8] Altruism

* Increases lifespan * Improves happiness * Strengthens social networks * Increases physical wellness Good for our survival!

[JAM9] * De Waal: our altruism is an evolved trait and does not require supernatural intervention

[JAM10] * Not the "selfish gene", but the "self-promoting gene"

[JAM11] * Not just "red in tooth and claw", but ... * Symbiotic or altruistic behavior: o Sharing o Sympathetic to the disadvantaged o Conflict resolution o Rewards * The bonobos

[JAM12] * We are products of both evolution and the environment * We are not pre-determined; but the product of an integrated, free-flowing dynamic of evol. and env.

[JAM13] * Stephen Post reminds us of the ever-widening radius of altruistic inclusion * But does not extend beyond the redeemable enemy

[JAM14] * Love for all humanity is not innate * See quote

[JAM15] * Intermediate conclusion: naturalistic altruism is good for us * No leap of faith needed for this

[JAM16] * But naturalistic altruism cannot justify love of the irredeemable enemy

[JAM17] * The logic of naturalistic altruism leads us to the destruction of the irredeemable * Opens the flood gates of redemptive violence: violence to destroy evil

[JAM18] * Describe redemptive violence

[JAM19] * Describe how altruism used by the powers to justify redemptive violence

[JAM20] * Newberg's studies * We are hard-wired for God

[JAM21] * Our brains evolved with cognitive imperative * A trait that let us anticipate (imagine) danger * Allow planning for and resolution of danger * Assuaged our fears

[JAM22] * But could not resolve the mystery of death * Raised many metaphysical questions

[JAM23] * The cognitive imperative trait extended to myth and ritual making * Dealt with unresolvable questions by placing ourselves in the greater context of the cosmos

[JAM24] * This evolved trait "hardwired" us for the "discovery" of God. * We were prepared to receive revelation

[JAM25] * Revealed altruism: Love your enemies even if it kills you * Jesus went to the cross thusly * Love them without expectation of their metanoia

[JAM26] * Buddhist techniques * The Way of the Bodhisattva * Dualism of 'self' and 'other' abolished * Abolish attachment to self * Meditate on the equality and exchange of self and other

[JAM27] WWJD

* We all are to blame * We are all children of God * Confront the enemy and us * Do not mirror evil!

[JAM28] Militant pacifism

* Do not mirror evil (repeat this) * Never return evil for evil * Respond to evil non-violently * Seek out evil and confront it * Allow no harm * There is no way to peace, peace is the way

[JAM29] * Do the unexpected * Undermine violence * Be pragmatic

[JAM30] * Consider Iraq

[JAM31] * Yes, we should love Osama, even if it kills us

This publication is hosted by Metanexus Online <http://www.metanexus.net>. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of Metanexus or its sponsors.

Metanexus welcomes submissions between 1000 to 3000 words of essays and book reviews that seek to explore and interpret science and religion in original and insightful ways for a general educated audience. Previous columns give a good indication of the topical range and tone for acceptable essays. Please send all inquiries and submissions to . Metanexus consists of a number of topically focused forums (Anthropos, Bios, Cogito, Cosmos, Salus, Sophia, and Techne) and periodic HTML enriched composite digests from each of the lists.

Copyright notice: Except when otherwise noted, articles may be forwarded, quoted, or republished in full with attribution to the author of the column and "Metanexus: The Online Forum on Religion and Science ". Republication for commercial purposes in print or electronic format requires the permission of the author. Copyright 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 by Metanexus Institute.

Published 2003.05.20