

Contentions

Steve King



JESUS AND ABUSE

Jesus—and I do not mean the historical Jesus, but rather the biblical one, the Jesus of the Church—was an abused child. This formulation helps me to understand why the Church is so violent. For when the abusive nature of a parental relationship is denied or is not fully acknowledged by the victim of the abuse, it is often re-enacted on others, either consciously or unconsciously.

Here are the elements of the Jesus story. His father was a violent patriarch who demanded complete love and obedience from his subjects (everybody) upon pain of death. He took sexual advantage of a young Jewish girl and arranged for, or at very least, allowed their son, Jesus, to be tortured to death in the most horrible way.

Jesus, as his story comes down to us, was the kind of 'good' child typical of abusive relationships. He foresaw his own end but did not try to avoid it, as it was his father's will. He always spoke positively about his father. During his lifetime he preached a message of revolutionary selfless love and forgiveness that was at odds with his father's behaviour. This fact has been ignored or denied. Which of us would treat our offspring in such a way and call it love? I think we suspend our normal judgment when we think about Jesus and his father.

Upon his death an organisation, the Christian Church, sprang up to spread his teachings (or a particular spun version of them?) It continues to the present day and, although it has brought a civilising influence into the world by teaching love and forgiveness, it has also been responsible for as much human misery and death as any other organisation or government in the history of our planet.

This can be explained in part by the ordinary political fact that men (mostly men) who push their way into positions of great power are often very insecure people with strong psychopathic tendencies. Such men will resort to intimidation and abuse of those who threaten them. But there is a darker side to Christianity. So much is made of Jesus' willingness to suffer without complaint, and so little attention given to the circumstances surrounding it. Isn't there a connection between our unwillingness to look at the abusive nature of the son/father relationship and the abusive, violent shadow side of Christianity itself?