

- A. Islam (in the view of some) differs from Christianity in at least three important ways.
1. Islam is a religion that is based primarily on **moral rules** and **unquestioned obedience** while Christianity emphasizes a **personal relationship** with God and **grace**. This difference sets the context for the different “feel” of the two religious systems.
  2. The Koran is a **static document** containing “revelations” that are not culture related in the same way that the **dynamic Biblical revelation** is an unfolding drama staged within different and changing cultural contexts. This means that Islamic law tends not to be culture sensitive in the same way that Christianity has been. The cultural context of the Prophet is projected onto the present with little respect for the cultural differences. This cultural inflexibility creates a real and apparent dissidence with modern life, as many ancient customs are preserved as sacred.
  3. While Christianity’s hope is **eschatological** (finding fulfillment in the end of time), Islam’s hope is centered in the Kingdom of Allah being obeyed as Lord in **every area of life right now**. The possibility of separation of powers (church and state) is incompatible with Islam’s insistence that Allah be recognized as Lord in every area of culture and life. It should be noted that most Muslims today embrace some form of democracy but many would view this as a compromise not a ideal situation.
- B. I have included two articles that I found helpful. The first is by Craig Branch who has a masters degree in religious education and a rich background as a respected leader in Christian apologetics. He is currently the director of the **Apologetics Resource Center** in Birmingham, AL. [apologeticsresctr.org](http://apologeticsresctr.org) The second article is taken from the **Answering-islam.org** web site and written by one of their staff, Biram Sene

## *Act of War - Jihad*

by Craig Branch

The horrific murderous attack on New York’s World Trade Centers, the Pentagon in Washington, and the hijacked plane crash in Pennsylvania provoked a wide range of emotions and responses throughout America and around the world. Americans initially expressed shock, fear, anger, sorrow, compassion, and numbness. These reactions were followed by resolve, patriotism, reassessment of values and priorities, and an attitude of bonding or unity which transcended the many differences which separate a diverse America.

Incidents like these will bring out the best in people and the worst. The worst is exhibited in attitudes of revenge and more excuses to rationalize racist acts. There have been sporadic incidents of harassment, desecration, and violence towards Muslims or anyone who looked ethnically Middle Eastern.

Above all, people asked, “why” did this happen? This, was followed by “what are we going to do about it?”

But there have surfaced many more questions and issues which require answers. As Christians we should be aware that God has revealed that He “works all things after the council of His will” (Eph. 1:11). So we can know some things truly, those which He has clearly revealed, and can still have the peace that goes beyond understanding in those things we do not yet know.

Roman Catholic theologian Richard John Neuhaus recently spoke here in Birmingham while lecturing at Beeson Divinity School, insightfully noted that the September 11th attack raised two fundamental and profound questions - Who are we as a country? and Who are they? I want to address these two questions and the two previous ones.

The world is trying to answer these questions as well. But there is much confusion. On one end of the spectrum, there are those calling for an aggressive campaign of annihilation against all hostile Arab or Islamic countries, and on the other end, there are those who are staging protests against any act of aggression.

President Bush said his staff are announcing that this is not a war between the US and Islam. And as I anticipated "moderate" Muslim clerics and some secular academics are supporting Bush's claim that these terrorists are not practicing true Islam, but are a radical militant, extremist fringe group. They claim that Islam is fundamentally loving, peaceful, and tolerant. President Bush even hosted a Ramadan break-the-fast dinner at the White House honoring Islam's holy month. And yet, the so called fundamentalist Muslims are calling for a *Jihad*, saying that this is a war against Islam.

On one hand, we have a well known and respected Christian leader, Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago, saying things like, "I was so concerned by the gap between Muslims and Christians that I thought Willow could do something about it."

So what did he do? He hosted a local Muslim leader to speak to all of his 17,000 attendees on Sunday morning (perhaps Bill hasn't read 2 John 8-11). Hybels added, "There are some Christians spreading half-truths that the Quran encourages violence. When you take some stuff out of context, we've got major problems."

On the other hand, many Christian mission societies and apologist echo the charge of Ion Warraq, author of *Why I Am Not A Muslim*, who writes, "to pretend that Islam has nothing to do with Terrorist Tuesday is to willfully ignore the obvious and to forever misinterpret events. Without Islam the long-term strategy and individual acts of violence by Usama bin Laden and his followers make little sense."

"The West needs to understand them in order to be able to deal with them and avoid past mistakes. We are confronted with Islamic terrorist and must take seriously the Islamic component. Westerners in general, and Americans in particular, do not understand the passionate, religious, and anti-Western convictions of Islamic terrorists."

Mayor Guiliani whose response to the tragedy earned him great respect, hosted a celebrity and ecumenical inter-religious prayer and unification gathering at Yankee Stadium and proclaimed to the United Nations Assembly that Muslims, Jews, and Christians are meeting in their places of worship and "getting through to the same God...in slightly different ways." This view reflects and reinforces the unfortunate pervasive perspective of relativism and universalism.

Liberals and skeptics are also taking full advantage of this opportunity to express their own intolerance of all religious fundamentalists in general who attempt to justify their "intolerant and aggressive" view by claiming whatever they do is God's will.

“Fundamentalists” Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson sent the unpopular message that this happened as part of God’s judgment against America, for its slide into immorality, pointing a finger specifically at homosexuals, radical feminists, abortion, the America Civil Liberties Union, and People for the American Way. Then under media pressure, Falwell sort of retracted. Are they right? Wrong? Right but intemperate?

And most recently we are hearing from some that the attack is Americas fault - not due to Falwell’s charges, but due to American arrogance and flawed foreign policy.

So which view is true, or is it somewhere in between? Either way, it is critical that we understand this vital issue.

I believe one clear purpose of this tragedy is that God wants to draw attention to Islam, both for Christians and for Western leaders. Islam is the 2nd largest religion in the world (1.2 billion) and in the US (6 million), yet it is one of the least addressed mission fields.

This article will attempt to answer or at least provide significant light on the issues and questions previously addressed, as well as a few more. We will look at a brief history of Islam, its teachings, how it relates to Christianity and somewhat with Judaism, a special focus on *Jihad* or what is often referred to as “Holy War or Struggle”, how should Christians respond, and what can America learn from this about herself.

To understand the horror of this Sept. 11 as well as the past and continuing history of other suicide bombings, killings, assassinations, torture, war and persecutions in Muslim related countries, in Israel, and in Palestine, we need to understand the evolution of Islam in its historical context.

Islam in Arabic means surrender or submission to the will of Allah (God). The word Muslim is derived from Islam and means one who submits to the laws and duties of Allah. Islam is the world’s second largest religion with about 1.2 billion followers. Islam is America’s second largest religion, numbering about 6 million behind Christianity (Protestant and Catholic).

About 80% of Americans identify themselves as Christian but only 40%, based on their answers to a survey fall into the “born-again” minimally Christian category. When the survey elicits a more informed content based on response, only about 8% of the population are evangelical. These figures help in our understanding of the gap between an idealized or perceived Christian influence, and the more actual reality. This gap also has a bearing on the negative (hostile) perception and prejudice of most Muslims toward the USA and Christianity.

Most Americans perceive the ethnicity of Muslims to be mainly Middle Eastern or North African. Actually the Arab constituency is only about 13%, while 25% are South Asian, 42% are African American (other than the Nation of Islam cult) and 21% are either African or European Caucasian.

### **Beginnings and Early History**

Islam’s prophet, Muhammad was born in 570 AD in Mecca, Arabia, His family was a member of Quraysh tribe, one of the largest and most powerful of a number of polytheistic, occult oriented tribes. He was married to Khadija an older businesswoman with an Ebionite (an early Christian

heresy) background. Some of the heretical doctrines of the Ebionites had an influence in some of Muhammad's later doctrinal formulations.

He claims to have begun to experience visions or visitations from the angel Gabriel in 610. Before Muhammad began to allege having visions he had contact with Jewish traders and merchants as well as Christians (including some Christian sects or heretics/cults). He was attracted to their monotheism and that they had written Scriptures - the Book.

The alleged trance/visions were later collected and compiled into the *Quran* (which means recitations) by his followers. The pagan polytheistic tribes, including his own didn't receive his new messages, and his only allies at that time were Jews and Christians. This explains the content of some of these visions - Biblical characters and events, although flawed. And it explains the favorable disposition and respect in the earlier writing of the Quran toward Jesus and Christians.

Pressure and persecution followed and caused Muhammad to flee to Medina with about 100 families. Here he began to gather more followers and to develop a religious/political code to govern all of life through continuing revelations for the Quran. He began raiding caravans of his enemies - enemies of Allah to accumulate wealth and resources. He justified his actions with more revelations inserted into the Quran.

There exists a general disposition among most historians, especially Christian ones to charge Muslims with the use of the sword as a way of conversion and the advancement of Islam. However, much of its spread was done peacefully through its message and apparent attractiveness of its culture. **But** there was and is clearly a significant historical component to the spread of Islam by the sword.

Muhammad led thousands of followers, Muslims, and laid siege to Mecca which included several battles. Once he won Mecca, in 630 AD, he gained more followers because of his merciful acts of clemency. In the next 2 years before his death in 632, he had gained control of all of Arabia.

During the final 10 years of Muhammad's life he served the Muslim community as a prophet, political and economic leader, and a conqueror in the cause of Allah. He established the umma (Islamic nation) with such strength that shortly after his death Islam advanced quickly to claim vast territories. Under his direction, the mission of Islam had been set. The world was divided into 2 domains: one which existed under Allah and one which was still in ignorance and disobedience and needed to be brought into submission under Allah's theocratic rule.

After Muhammad's death, Islam was led by a series of caliphs which means "deputy of the Messenger of Allah". Four Caliphs served in the first 30 years and during that time Islam, by persuasion and warfare by the Muslim armies expanded their rule into Persia, Syria, Jerusalem, Palestine, all that had constituted the Babylonian and Byzantine, and Assyrian Empires, Egypt, and most of Iraq.

A few years later Libya and Iran came under their control. By 732 they had controlled Spain and a southern portion of France until Charles Martel stopped their further conquest of Europe. They later occupied Afghanistan and penetrated into what is now Pakistan and India. There were peaceful advances as well through missionaries and trade into Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines.

The Ottoman Empire from 1517-1924 made up of Muslim Turks ruled much of Asia Minor and took over Constantinople (renamed Istanbul) in 1453. They expanded their rule from Austria in the west to India in the east. European countries began invading the lands of Egypt (France), India (British), Indonesia (Dutch), Central Asia (Russian), which began the colonization era and decline of the Ottoman Empire. WWI and the Ottoman's alliance with Germany hastened its collapse.

Up until the 12th century, the Islamic umma, or collective community, enjoyed qualitative advances in art, science, technology, and medicine. The strict law made for a generally orderly society. But then things began to occur from the West that would ever foster deep rooted hostility toward Christianity, Israel, Western Europe, and eventually the United States.

### **The Crusades and Inquisitions**

Even though Biblically, the New Testament worldview presents a separation of Church and State, the Church at Rome formed expedient and pragmatic alliances with secular governments in order to regain its strength and for a perceived protection. The Crusades were mounted as an attempt to regain the Holy Lands occupied by the pagan Muslims. There were six major Crusades fought between 1096 and 1212. After some initial success, the "Christians" were beaten back and the lands remained under the domination of Islam until the UN's establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

In the Muslim's mind, their people in 1948, had been unjustly uprooted from the lands they had occupied and settled for almost 1300 years.

The influence of the "Christian" Crusades, the later Spanish Inquisition, and the colonization periods mentioned earlier upon the Muslim world, has caused a deep and bitter animosity within the Islamic umma or community, that is both politically and theologically fed.

Because Muslim view the world through the lenses of their own theocratic worldview, many do not understand that those actions were a incidental perversions of Christianity. Other Muslims are critical of Christianity because it does believe in separation of Church and State and therefore is far inferior to Islam's theocratic Shari'a. Because of the past Muslims have tended to view Christianity as a warring, colonialistic, imperialistic, and political movement seeking to dominate the world, including the lands of Islam. They see Christian missionaries as agents of Western imperialistic societies, as well as preying upon Muslims with blasphemies. Islam's own theology of the duty for every Muslim to engage in a "defensive" *jihad*, or holy war against invasion and oppression, necessitate their active animosity.

Thus these events have never been forgotten. In fact in many Muslim countries and in Muslim mosques, their children are raised with a steady diet of hostile propaganda against the West and Christianity in their primary and secondary school curricula, and in their sermons.

Muslims also view the establishment of the state of Israel and the subjugation of Arab Palestinians as an extension of this Crusader mentality and action. Add the United State financial support, its corrupt social influence (drugs, alcohol, pornography, television, bikinis, materialism, abortion, relativism, gambling - all under the rubric of freedom and democracy), their invasion into Iraq, and their military bases in holy Islamic territory, including the sacred land of Saudi Arabia, and you have aroused the deepest of angers and resentment, even rage.

Some of America's foreign policy efforts have not helped either. From the Muslim perspective the US is thoroughly hypocritical. Muslims say that with all the talk about freedom and democracy, the real foreign policy priority is to maintain *stability* by supporting what they say are corrupt pseudo-Islamic government heads which suppress true Islamic law (shari'a) especially when it furthers the US expansion of its ideology and financial interests.

The true significance of this history coupled with their theology will become more clear later, especially when we understand the controversial doctrine of *jihad*.

At this point we need to examine what are the major beliefs of Islam.

## I. **Islam**

- 2nd largest religion in America at 6 million
- 2nd largest religion in the world at 1.2 billion
- **Islam** in Arabic means *surrender* or *submission*. Today Muslims are attempting to project the meaning of "peace" with the implication of Islam being a peaceful religion. Not true etymologically, doctrinally, or historically.
- **Muslim** means a person who submits or surrenders his life to the will of Allah (God). **Allah** is the Arabic name for God. It is derived from *Al* (the) *ilah* (deity). The one true God.

## II. **Basic Beliefs and Practices**

### A. 5 Pillars - Essential Sacred Duties and Obligations

1. **The confession, (*Shahada*)** - there is no god but Allah and Mohammad is His Prophet or Messenger/Apostle.
2. **Prayers, (*salat*)** - ritual prayers 5 times per day facing the east (toward Mecca).
3. **Fasting; (*sawn*)** during the 9th lunar month, Ramadan, Muslim fast from sunrise to sunset (eating, drinking, and sex), for that month.
4. **Alms giving, (*Zakat*)** - to practice regular charitable giving, formalized in the Shari'a to be 2.5% of one's income to the poor each year.
5. **Pilgrimage, (*hajj*)** - all Muslims must make a trip to Mecca at least once in their lifetime if possible, or intend to, to worship ritually at sacred sites.

### B. 6th Pillar - **Jihad**

1. Literally means a struggle or effort in the cause of Allah. Most Muslims believe in a two tier application of this struggle. These are the "**Greater Jihad**" which involves the personal struggle over evil inclinations and striving for righteousness in submission to Allah.
2. The "**Lesser Jihad**" often referred to as "Holy War" involves mortal combat (the sword) defending Islamic people, territories, and propagation from outside aggression or oppression.

C. **Prophets** - Agents God sends to preach the message of Allah as guardian of the faith. The actual revelation of divine law is given by a Messenger.

D. **Muhammad** - The final messenger, Prophet, Apostle of Allah, the "Seal". The one through whom the Quran was revealed.

E. **Scriptures** -

1. **Quran** - Recitation allegedly given to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel between 610-632 AD Islamic scriptures perfectly preserved, without error, written in Arabic. Any other language translation can dilute meaning.
  2. **Sunnah** - the customs and traditions of Islamic life which are based on the teachings and practices of Muhammad.
  3. **Hadith** - the narratives, teachings, and practices (sunnah) of Muhammad that are written by his close followers and preserved in written form. Most authoritative collection compiled by al-Badawi in 922 AD (7,300 out of 600,000).
  4. Also the Torah of the Prophet Moses, the Psalms given to the Prophet David and the Gospel of Jesus through the Prophet Jesus were also scripture. But Muslims teach that they have been corrupted. Only the Quran is perfect.
- F. **Shari'a** - sacred Canon or Constitutional Law of Islam containing the sum of Allah's guidance for all areas of life. A Theocracy. Based on the Quran, Hadith, the consensus (*Ijma*) of the Muslim community's scholars (*Ulama*).
- G. **Da'wa** - Islamic missionary activity primarily through persuasion, example, economic, political, debate, and social means.
- H. **Umma** - The community of Islam, the solidarity of faith and prayer. Unity of belief and practice under *shari'a*. Islamic state.

### III. How Islam views Christianity

- A. The Paradox -
1. Early Quranic passages show great respect for Christians, "People of the Book".
  2. Quran claims Christians have the Scriptures - Word of God.
  3. Given protected minority status under *shari'a*.
  4. Yet later in Quran, passages grow hostile.
  5. Our doctrine considered *shirk* or blasphemy, therefore apparently we are infidels and idolaters - worthy of *jihad*.
- B. Jesus -
1. A messenger/prophet of God
  2. Born of a virgin, sinless, miracle worker
  3. Coming again in judgment
  4. Was not divine - God the Son or Son of God
  5. Was not crucified and did not die
  6. Assumption, not resurrection
- C. The Bible
1. The Law, Psalms, and Gospel of Jesus are considered Scripture
  2. But they have all been corrupted, abrogated by Quran
  3. They are only true where they agree with Quran and Hadith
  4. Yet. No Quranic verse says that the gospels are corrupted.
  5. References in the Quran to Christians having God's scripture poses major apologetic problem for Muslims (Christians had all 27 NT books at the time).

#### D. The Trinity -

1. In Quran, described as Father, Son and Mary
2. Considered *shirk*, blasphemy because it associates Allah with human and considered polytheistic.

#### E. Salvation

1. Muslims see a contradiction between OT (works) and NT (grace)
2. Islamic salvation based on good works outweighing bad deeds - Paradise (many levels)
3. Automatic paradise for martyrs who die fighting in the cause of Allah.

### Current Period

Currently, the attack on America of September 11 and the subsequent suicide terrorist attacks in Israel has forced America and the Christian Church to turn its needed attention on the complex matrix of middle eastern politics and to uncover the true nature of Islam. What is there in Islam that would lead Muslims to commit so many heinous terroristic acts? Does orthodox Islam sanction such atrocities? Or are they the aberration of a relatively few militant extremists?

Many Muslims in America are attempting to assuage the fears and animosity of the public, while at the same time attempting to take advantage of any opportunity to gain support of their cause or position in Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip).

But what is the truth? Does Islam sanction such terrorism, or is it truly a religion of peace and tolerance? That is the question. The answer is not so simple. The truth is that both dimensions exist in Islam and these two faces are in conflict with each other.

There are five major groupings of Muslims within Islam and each of those groups can have several sub-groupings. The five are nominal or **secular Muslims**, **cultural Muslims**, **moderate Muslims**, **fundamentalists**, and **radical militants**. The unstable, volatile, and ambiguous spectrum is the many Muslims who move between the fundamentalist and militant groups.

After WWII the territories of Islam became a political and economic pawn played between the US and the Soviet Union. The rich oil deposits were necessary to help run an increasingly industrial complex. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Egypt began commercial partnerships with the US, and in the eyes of many conservative Muslims, saw all attempts at modernization as an insufferable spiritual compromise.

This time marked the rise of Islamic fundamentalism which is called "Islamism" led to Iran's overthrow of the Shah and the establishment of the **Ayatollah Khomeini**. Iran is mainly composed of Shi'ite Muslims, which differ in some ways from the major group of Islam - Sunni Muslims. In the struggle for a return to competing views of fundamentalist Islam, Iran and Iraq engaged in combat with one another, declaring a *jihad* (holy war). Iran also seized our American Embassy there and its personnel, holding them hostage, while calling the US, "the Great Satan". The fundamentalists assassinated Egypt's prime minister, Anwar Sadat after he did the unpardonable, signing a peace accord with Islam's two biggest enemies, the United States and Israel.

It is very important to note that during the 1980's and 90's, Islam began escalating a significant revival of fundamentalism. In clashes against Israel and even one another (if a Muslim country was



becoming too secular or compromised too much with the West), as well as more recently the United States (i.e. the first car bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 ; suicide bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut in 1983; the truck bomb attack against the US Marine compound in Lebanon killing 241 Americans in 1983, forcing US Troops to pull out; the 1994 bombing of the US Embassy in Kuwait, and the twin assaults on US Embassy's in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 where 224 people died).

Fundamentalist Islam certainly has been heavily recruiting young Muslims into its ranks, people who are both poor and disenfranchised, and those who are more educated ideologues. Islamic militant organizations like **Hezbollah** and **Hamas**, **Al Qaeda**, and Islamic *Jihad* have been active in their fight, especially terrorist style, against Israel, Russia, and the US.

The renowned Islamic scholar Bernard Lewis observed that Muslims accuse the West, particularly the US of sexism, racism, imperialism, tyranny, and exploitation, all of which they believe is contrary to Islam. Lewis believes that what is the highest evil and totally unacceptable to Muslims is the dominance of infidels over Muslims. This domination is blasphemous and unnatural and therefore true Islam must be protected and defended from such insult and abuse.

Islamic fundamentalism is also against secularism and much of modernism. Therefore, even Muslim countries whose leaders interact too closely and import Western things into their country or culture, are seen as an enemy of true Islam.

So what authority drives Islamic fundamentalism. It is the Quran and Hadith. In the midst of uncertainty and fragmentation, there is a search for the security of certainty. The belief in the absolute certainty of the literal Quran provides that drive. Thus men like Bin Laden and those who crashed the planes on Sept. 11 (as well as every other armed Muslim aggressor), were quoting the Quran repeatedly as their justification.

### **Fundamentalism**

An *Associated Press* story (9/24/01) quoted students representative of more than and estimated several hundred thousand students in Pakistan in Islamic schools as saying, "I am ready for *jihad*, and so is every other student." Many of Pakistan's 30,000 Islamic schools have direct links to militant groups. Most of the Taliban's leaders studied there. Christians can be attacked and killed under the nations blasphemous law.

A *World* magazine story (9/8/01) reported that since 1999 Muslim armies have attacked Christian villages killing between 500-800 in Indonesia. The *Laskar Jihad* group proclaimed a *jihad* against Christians have destroyed 400 churches, and people were forced to convert to Islam.

In Sudan fundamentalist Muslims are fighting to establish Islamic *Shari'a* or strict Islamic law over the country.

My own view is that Islam is schizophrenic. It suffers from a multiple personality disorder. When Muslim clerics and "moderate" Muslims say that those who practice these things are not practicing true Islam, I have to ask, "On what basis do you say that? Who ultimately officially speaks for Islam? How many and which Muslims make up the *Ijma* or "consensus," or which ulama, of what is Islam?"

I ask because there are huge numbers of “fundamentalist” Muslims who claim that the “moderates” are not truly representing Islam but have compromised and are relativizing the Quran.

There is much confusion in the messages we hear from Muslim scholars, Muslim leaders, and the actions of Muslim militants all over the world. The Muslim world, in fact, is anything but homogeneous. It has dividing lines, which have been further exacerbated after September 11.

On one hand, there are many more moderate Muslim elites who are largely Western-educated, who favor Muslim state built on some kind of synthesis of the Islamic tradition and modernity, instead of the canonical Shari’a patterns.

On the other hand, there are many fundamentalists who say that only when religious purity is restored, will the community thrive once again. The obstacles to this are the corrupt leaders in the Muslim world and their allies (the West). Their formula is to eliminate the Western support. The only difference among fundamentalists and the radicals is in the means to accomplish this.

This is the heart of the crisis within Islam. Fundamentalists are trying to import a 7th Century cultural theocracy into the 21st Century. This internal crisis (which also effects the external) is exacerbated because Islam is essentially a dominant creed (non-Muslims vanquished or ruled), a theocratic creed (all aspects of public and private life are governed by Islamic law), and a dogmatic creed (where there is a significant roadblock to reinterpret tradition in terms of modern life).

### **Understanding Muslim Rage**

#### **Events and Theology** - Israel-Abraham- Isaac- Ishmael theological fundamental conflict

- a. Jewish and Christian rejection of Muhammad – Quranic verses (*jihad*)
- b. Ongoing tradition of *jihad* against “Christian” Byzantine Empire first few centuries (and later “Christian” Europe) in spread of Islam
- c. “Christian” Crusades from 1099- 1212
- d. Spanish Inquisition began in 1478 and over 10,000 “heretics” tortured and killed, many Muslims
- e. Colonization Period (18th and 19th century), European West and Russia retaking many territories
- f. 1948 U.N. establishment of Israel
- g. Israeli annexation of Palestine
- h. Israeli partition, inequity, and treatment of Muslims in Palestine
- i. U.S. political and commercial domination grows
- j. Blame of U.S. spread of materialism and immorality for the cause of decline of Islamic culture
- k. Compromise of Islamic political leaders with West
- l. Rise and resurgence of Islamic “fundamentalism” from the 1960’s
- m. Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini’s overthrow of “corrupted” Muslim government and takeover of U.S. Embassy- hostages

- n. U.S. military intervention in Beirut, Lebanon- premature pullout resulted in massacre of over 800 Palestinian men, women, and children (1982)
- o. U.S. forces reentered Beirut, established base - thrust into bloody mosaic of conflicts- Hezbollah and martyrdom
- p. CIA attempt to assassinate Hezbollah leader Sheik Fadallah failed- Mosque bombing killed 80 innocent Arabs
- q. Reagan's arms to Iran deal to aid Shi'ites over Iraqi Sunnis
- r. U.S. bombing of Libya (1986) in retaliation to Kadaffi's role in TWA hijacking and other hostages/ murder
- s. Military bases and presence in Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon
- t. Continual "compromise" of Islamic political leaders with U.S. (West) in economic and cultural affairs
- u. U.S. waited until Muslims almost exterminated in Bosnia before stepping in, yet immediately came to the aid of Kuwait in Gulf War (self interests)
- v. Bombing of Iraq and ongoing embargo causing "millions of Iraq's children to starve"
- w. \$3 billion annual aid to Israel, \$0 to Palestine per Camp David accords (\$450 million to Arafat).
- x. American/Christian alliance with Israel- politically and religiously
- y. Steady diet of the above reasons to hate America fed in many thousands of Islamic schools in recent decades producing large generation of "fundamentalists"

Is Islam a religion of peace? Are the Taliban, Al Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic *Jihad* and many others just cultic perversions of Islam? Does the Quran and Islam reject terrorism? Is Islam compatible with democracy in America? Does Islam permit or encourage suicide bombers? How does Islam view Christians, Jews, and the Bible? Are Christians being Biblical in their response?

The event of Sept 11 has awakened America to the pressing reality of the issues of being a part of the global community. It has shaken us out of our impregnable mind-set and awakened us to our vulnerability.

What God has allowed and ultimately ordained leaves Christians with many opportunities in the kingdom of God. It is a time for Christians and Americans to reassess what is true, important, and to reevaluate our priorities. It is a time to rethink our leadership responsibilities in the world.

It is a time to seriously consider the question who are we as a country and exactly what does it mean to be a "Christian nation".

Satan is not asleep though and the flesh of man is weak. There are many distortions of the issues and reactions/responses which will ultimately lead to weakness and death because it is not of the truth.

The following are some examples of the expert voices, which precipitate the confusion:

1. Muslim scholar Dr. Farid Esack of Auburn Theological Seminary states, "In Islamic Law there is absolutely no justification for this kind of dastardly deed."

2. Veteran religion editor of *Newsweek*, (Sept. 24) Kenneth Woodward recently quoted Imam Yohya Hendi, Muslim chaplain of Georgetown University deploring the slaughter of September 11, "It violates the very foundation of Islamic Law."

An article in the *Los Angeles Times* (Sept. 24) also supported Hendi's view, "Most Muslims and non-Muslim experts on Islam are quick to say that extremists are distorting the faith and violating its fundamental principles of peace." Hamid Dabashi of Columbia University states, "Nothing in the Quran, Islamic theology or Islamic Law in any way, shape, or form justifies ramming two airplanes into civilian buildings."

3. Several years ago after a number of Muslim terrorist attacks on US holdings, a local Muslim leader wrote a letter to the *Birmingham News*. he wrote "According to Islam's deepest instincts political or military subjection is unnatural and calls upon Muslims to resist through *Jihad*. The reality of the present time is the dominant penetration of secularist and excessively permissive Western civilization in the Muslim world...the decadent excesses of immorality with its incalculable degenerating effects are rejected. This major aspect of struggle is the Islamic *Jihad* exercised by Muslims wherever they live. *Jihad* in Islam is a continuous struggle by Muslims, individually and corporately, to enhance the quality of the human condition, resist transgression and disfranchise selfishness."

Now is he talking about the greater *Jihad* or the lesser *Jihad*? The fact is that the condition he relates and the condition related for the "lesser" *jihad* are congruent.

After the September 11th attack, the local Birmingham Muslim Center staged an open house as a public relations effort. "You should know that Islam categorically condemns such action." Also written was, "You should know that the terrorist act is not an act of *Jihad* (Holy War)," and "You should know Islam has always preached love, mercy, justice, and peace...that an American Muslim condemns the attacks just as any other American."

4. President Bush hosted a meeting at the White House, with Muslim leaders from the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the American Muslim Council (AMC), received a Quran, and mutually condemned the September 11th attack.

Yet shortly after that, the media revealed that the leaders of these groups were activist in supporting other militant *jihad* groups. According to chief of the FBI's counter-terrorism section, these two groups have been defending, exhorting, and raising money for the Islamic terrorists groups, Hamas and Hezbollah.

CAIR has a long history of intimidating more moderate or secular Muslims who disagree with its more totalistic agenda.

5. Publicly, some American mosque leaders say Islam means peace and tolerance, and we are Americans from one side of their mouths, but from the other side comes something far different.

For example, a recent *Washington Post* story revealed a profile of Fawaz Damra, Imam of the Cleveland Islamic Center. He is seen inviting Jews to break Ramadan with him and hugging the local Catholic bishop.

Yet several years ago, Damra was taped raising money among Palestinians in Chicago for the terrorist group *Islamic Jihad*, where he said, "The *Jihad* stabs Jews...12 Jews, who will give \$500?"

6. Salman Rushdie, a British author who had a death warrant issued on him by Iran's late Ayatollah Khomeini states, "This war is about Islam...If it isn't about Islam, why the worldwide Muslim demonstrations in support of Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda? Why did those 10,000 armed men mass at the Pakistan-Afghan border answering some mullah's call to *jihad*?"

In fact, a whole chorus of writers ask the questions, “Which Muslim nation is an example of freedom and human rights and where is there not a Muslim nation where there hasn't been bloodshed in the name of Islam?”

7. Salih bin Mohammad Lahidan, chairman of the Judicial Council in Saudi Arabia wrote of September 11th, “Those who commit such crimes are the worst of people. Anyone who thinks that any Islamic scholar will condone such acts is totally wrong.”
8. Zaid Shakir, former Muslim chaplain at Yale University writes, “The Quran pushes us in the opposite direction as the forces at work in the American political spectrum.” From this he argues that Muslims cannot accept the legitimacy of the existing order here in the U.S.
9. We have in our files a number of news reports as well as personal experiences of the attitudes of some Muslims on the street of not-so-private condoning the attack of September 11. Locally, one such Muslim from Pakistan who has lived here 9 years said that bin Laden to Muslims is like the Pope is to Christians.

10. Sheikh Muhammad Sayyed Tantawi is the Grand Sheikh of the al-Azhar Mosque and University in Cairo. He is reported to be the highest spiritual authority for the nearly 1 billion Sunni Muslims.

While Tantawi indicated bin Ladin's aggressive acts do not represent true Islam (whose *Jihad* is allegedly defensive), he nevertheless calls the Palestine suicide bombers, martyrs of Islam. He also publically disapproves of the coalition the U.S. has forged to fight terrorism, stating that Muslims cannot attack other Muslims.

Yet even more recently (Dec. 4, 2001) he condemned (per Shari'a) the 3 suicide bombers in Jerusalem and Haifa (early December 2001). He stipulated that terrorism was aggression against innocent men, women, and children (which is contrary to Islam), and *jihad* is legitimate self-defense against injustice and oppression.

Again, the problem is that the above pronouncements are inconsistent and therefore ambiguous at best. On top of that, many fundamentalist or traditional Muslims point out that Tantawi is respected but his views are not binding. In addition to that, Palestinian Muslims in the Gaza Strip dismiss as irrelevant the “moderate” views of government-appointed clerics.

11. Sheik Yusuf Qaradawi, chairman of the Sunna and Sira Council in Qatar is one of Islam's most prominent Sunni scholars. He too approves of the Palestinian suicide bombers and calls for opposition to the American entry into Afghanistan. He has harshly criticized the U.S. for its support of Israel.

Yet he led a panel of prominent Muslim scholars in the Middle East in issuing a fatwa, a declaration denouncing the terrorist attacks on the U.S. and proclaimed that it is the “duty” of every Muslim to help apprehend the terrorists.

12. Sheik Hamoud bin Oqla Shuaibi, a senior cleric in Saudi Arabia criticizes his own government, “Whoever supports the infidel against Muslims is considered an infidel... It is a duty to wage *Jihad* on anyone who supports the attack on Afghanistan. The campaign by the criminal Bush, under the pretext of fighting terrorism, is nothing but a Crusade as before in history.”
13. On December 6, 2001, the FBI announced the freezing of funds of 153 Muslim groups and individuals in the U.S. who are possibly funding terrorist activities abroad. The leader of one charity, the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, Shukri Abu Baker is an official in the terrorist group Hamas, and Holy Land raised \$13 million last year.
14. Martin Kramer, editor of the *Middle East Quarterly*, writes, “Nothing has been more completely missed than the threat posed by Islamic terrorism to the United States and the West.” He adds that the majority of experts “failed to ask the right questions at the right time about Islam. They

underestimated its impact in the 1980s; they misrepresented its role in the early 1990s; and they glossed over its growing potential for terrorism against America in the late 1990s.”

Yet another leading American scholar of Islam, and founder of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, responds, “some believe that all Islamic fundamentalist groups or movements are a threat. The others, represented by myself and several others, would say that you have to distinguish between mainstream Islamic society and those extremists who attack people in their own societies and now in the West.”

Kramer answers: “In their view, any Islamic movement is either moderate or potentially moderate. So every time there is a disagreeable act by some Muslim group what they say is: ‘Well, this doesn’t represent Islam; this is not true Islam.’ But the real question which they don’t ask is why do the people who perpetrate these acts justify them in terms of Islam?”

### **What is Jihad**

What we continue to encounter from Muslim spokesmen is that Islam is a religion of peace and not one of terrorism, violence, or of coercion. Indeed we often see this latter point quoted in the Quran, “There is no compulsion in religion” (Sura 2:256).

Great pains are taken by the Muslims to repeat, “terrorism is not Islam.” But this is by in large a rhetorical device. First, one must define “terrorism”. Depending on how one defines it, a case can be made from Islamic sources on either side. This is why I refer to Islam as a schizophrenic religion, suffering from a multiple personality disorder.

But the real issue that the Muslim must respond to is that of *jihad* - the sword of Islam. The fundamental problem here though is that the Muslim is faced with the question – “who ultimately speaks for Islam as the final authority?” Since the passing of the Caliphate in 1924, Muslims are personally responsible for finding out the truth through personal study and the learned views of the Muslim clerical scholars - who don't always agree with each other.

Let’s hear how *jihad* is defined by various Muslim authors of Islamic publications. Iqad Hilal writes, “The Islamic ideology...is universal ideology meant to liberate all mankind. Consequently, one cannot expect this ideology to be confined to a specific people or land. In order to deliver this ideology to the rest of humanity, the State that adopts this ideology shoulders the responsibility of carrying it to new lands. **As would be expected, this goal will lead to a conflict with other states and their ideologies. This conflict has to be resolved either through diplomacy or through force**” (*Islam: A Complete Way of Life*, 3rd ed. p. 73).

He goes on, “Islam adapted *Jihad* as its method of carrying its authority, justice, and ideals to other lands...*Jihad*...at best, its legal meaning can be understood as using the military force where diplomacy fails, to remove the obstacles the Islamic state faces in carrying its ideology to mankind...summary, *Jihad* is the method adopted by Islam to protect its lands and save humanity from the slavery of man-made regimes.”

Another Muslim leader, Ahmad Sakr of the Foundation for Islamic Knowledge writes about *Jihad* being among other things effort “and fighting to defend one’s life, land, and religion...*Jihad* **is not a defensive war only, but a war against any unjust regime**. If such a regime exists, a war is to be waged against the leaders, but not against the people of that country...in war Islam prohibits

civilians.” These are latter claims and somewhat comforting but we must ask, “on what authority or basis can you make that claim?”

Lebanese scholar Mahmroud Ayoub, professor of Islamic studies at Temple University writes, regarding the so-called “lesser” *jihad*, he writes, “only in worship, unity of purpose, and social consciousness can Muslims protect those who are weak, exposed and oppressed. In fact, the **main aim of *jihad* in society is to eradicate wrong doing and oppression**. Again the challenge to the first Muslims is most appropriate to us today in view of Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines, and wherever else Muslims suffer oppression.”

Ayoud goes on to explain, “What then is the Qur’an enjoining on the people of faith to investigate the need for fighting and whether it is justified or not.” And what is the justification “that should motivate them to fight?” He answers, “It is to make the word of Allah uppermost. When this consideration calls for a *jihad* of arms, then fighting becomes an obligation on every Muslim able to carry arms.

Ayoud explains what it means to “make the word of Allah uppermost.” He states, “It is to insure His will as revealed in the Qur’an, exemplified in the life of the Prophet Muhammad [Sunnah] and his companions and enshrined in the Shari’ah be done.” In other words, that all the world comes under the theocratic rule of Islam.

So what is the will of Allah as revealed in the Quran and exemplified in the life of Muhammad concerning the *jihad* of warfare by the sword?

1. Speaking of “those who suppress faith” [Islam], “Fight in the cause of God those who fight you but do not transgress limits...and slay them wherever you catch them” (*Sura 9:120-121*).
2. “And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression and there prevail justice and faith in God.” (*Sura 9:123*).

Commentaries on the above passages claim that this is applicable only to a “defensive *jihad*”, similar to a Christians “just war” perspective. While we can understand this, when one adds other Quranic passages and the concepts of the U.S. and Christian military action, military station, cultural and doctrinal presence in the Islamic territories, this amounts to an “oppression”, which justifies even this *jihad*. But there are additional passages, which do not reflect a “defensive *jihad*” either in scriptural or historical context for example:

3. “Fight those who believe not in God nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by God and His Apostle [Muhammad], nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book [Jews and Christians] until they pay the Jizya [compensation] with willing submission and feel themselves subdued” (*Sura 9:29; see also 5:33*).
4. “But when the forbidden months are past, then fight them and slay the Pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them to every stratagem (of war)” (*Sura 9:5*).

Yusuf Ali in his commentary on the above verse states that *jihad* must be pursued with “vigor” which may take the “form of slaughter” or “ambush and other stratagems.” Could that not include suicide bombings? Many Muslim leaders are saying no, it could not because the Quran prohibits suicide and it limits warfare only to combatants. But attain, that is not the whole story as we shall cover momentarily.

5. “It is He who got out the unbelievers among the People of the Book from their homes at the first gathering of the forces. Little did you think that they would get out; and they thought that their fortresses would defend them from Allah! But the wrath of Allah came to them from quarters from which they had little expected it, and cast terror into their hearts” (*Sura 59:2*). Now does that not strike a familiar chord?
6. “Remember your Lord inspired the angels with the message, ‘I am with you: give firmness to the Believers: I will instill terror [there is that word again] into the hearts of unbelievers: you smite [cut off] them above their necks and smite all their fingertips off them” (*Sura 8:12; see also 8:60*).
7. “Fight them and Allah will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame, help you to have victory over them, and heal the wounds of the Believers” (*Sura 9:14*).
8. “Fight in the cause of God and know that God hears and knows all things” (*Sura 2:244*).
9. Some other *jihad* passages are *Suras 47:4; 9:123; 4:10; 4:102; 5:17; 9:52; 61:4*.

### **Some Recent Examples of *Jihad*/Terrorism Against the US**

1. 14,000 killed by terrorist *Jihad* in past 20 years (many Americans)
2. From 1983-mid 2001, 300 suicide attacks documented worldwide
3. Truck bomb U.S. Embassy in W. Beirut (63 died)
4. U.S. stabilization attacked in Beirut -1982
5. U.S. Embassy bombed in E. Beirut 1983 (241 died - also 60 French paratroopers)
6. TWA hijacked (1 Marine hostage beaten and killed)
7. 30 Americans kidnapped as hostages, including priest, pastor, professors - CIA station chief killed
8. World Trade Center in NYC car bomb, 1993, killing 6, wounding over 100
9. Bomb on Pan Am flight killed 241 and 11 ground on Dec. 21, 1988
10. U.S. personnel in Riad, Saudi Arabia, suicide bomb killed dozens of US Air Force personnel
11. 1998, 2 US Embassies bombed in East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania) 224 died
12. Bomb attack on USS Cole Oct. 1, 2000 (17 killed, 39 wounded)
13. Over 3,000 killed on September 11, 2001 in NYC and Washington
14. So far 3 dead in Anthrax bioterrorism attack
15. 13 Egyptian Christians shot dead May 14, 1992 (10 farmers, 1 schoolteacher, medical doctor)
16. Many thousands of other Christians have been killed by Muslims in Syria, Nigeria, Sudan, Egypt, and other Muslim countries

To summarize, I return to my earlier description, Islam is schizophrenic. Traditional, orthodox, fundamentalist Islam cannot escape from their intrinsically militant roots. The more moderate Muslims, which include most of the heads of Islamic countries, are caught between the proverbial “rock and a hard place.” They are trying to play both ends. On one end are the militant fundamentalists to whom the “moderates” have to mollify and appease (which includes paying them large sums of money and turning their heads from their terrorism). On the other end, they realize that they must modify or liberalize traditional Islam in order to move into the 21st century to acquire the technology and commercial benefits (i.e. progress) of modernity from the West. The U.S. is trying to reinforce the latter.



It is often said that the militants are a small percentage. This is true of those who are overtly acting out their militant *Jihad*. But the concern is about those “closet” fundamentalists who are being more pragmatic and biding their time as they work more toward power. But even if that “small percentage” is say, 10% (which is probably an underestimate), then we are talking about 120 million militants!

Muslims we encounter personally may be anywhere along the spectrum of the five categories mentioned above. Christians should be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves” as we interact. Share sympathetically concerning the possible flaws and inequities in past foreign policy and the perversions of the Crusades. Ask good questions regarding their personal understanding of *Jihad*. Hopefully, they may be more moderate and therefore more open to the gospel.

## Islam

by Biran Sene

For a more complete treatment of this subject see [answering-islam.org](http://answering-islam.org)

Over the past twenty years, my wife and I have lived overseas in a majority-Muslim nation. We have hundreds of dear friends who are Muslims. In the country where we work, “peace” in relationships is esteemed more than truth itself. A local proverb says, “**A lie that heals is better than the truth that hurts.**” Personally, I’d rather hear “the truth that hurts” than a lie which superficially and temporarily “heals.”

Since September 11th, much has been written about Islam, some of it true and some false. What many Muslims and non-Muslims alike fail to realize is that Islam is **not a religion** in the same way “religion” is understood in the West. Philip Hitti, the late Lebanese-American scholar who taught at Princeton University for nearly fifty years, was a leading expert on the history of Arabs and Islam. One of his books has three parts: Islam as *Religion*, Islam as *State*, and Islam as *Culture*. Whether Muslims are aware of it or not, orthodox Islam is **a threefold system**—a religious-political-cultural ideology—with the goal to subjugate the world to itself.

### Does Islam promote peace?

In a pamphlet entitled “Islam Explained” (by the Islamic Circle of North America) we read that Islam “**instructs people on how they may live together in peace and harmony regardless of race, class or beliefs.**” Most Muslims are in favor of “peace and harmony regardless of race, class or beliefs”, the question we want to answer is: Are Muslims for peace **because of Islam or in spite of Islam? Does Islam itself promote peace and tolerance?** Consider the following data ...

**1. WHAT THE QUR’AN SAYS.** The familiar term *jihad*, often translated *holy war*, literally means *struggle*. Many Muslims emphasize that *jihad* is about struggling against evil desires and, if necessary, defending one’s homeland and religious heritage. “*Fight for the sake of God those that fight against you, but do not attack them first. God does not love the aggressors. Slay them wherever you find them. Drive them out of the places from which they drove you. Idolatry is more grievous than bloodshed.... Fight against them until idolatry is no more and God’s religion reigns supreme.*” (Qur’an 2:190-192) [Note: Qur’anic quotes from N.J.Dawood’s English translation (The Koran,

Penguin Books, UK, 1993)]. A favorite verse of moderate Muslims is 2:256 which says: *“Let there be no compulsion in religion. True guidance is now distinct from error.”* Militant Muslims, however, will point you to numerous Qur’anic texts where Muhammad (as Allah’s spokesman) commands his followers to fight and subdue all who resist Islam. What leads young men to volunteer to die for the privilege of killing others “for the cause of Allah”? Could it have something to do with the fact that Islam offers no *certain* hope of heaven to any of its adherents, with one exception? Consider these few Qur’anic verses...

- *“As for those who are slain in the cause of God, He will not allow their works to perish. ... He will admit them to the Paradise He has made known to them.”* (47:8)
- *“Let those who would exchange the life of this world for the hereafter, fight for the cause of God; whether he dies or triumphs, We shall richly reward him. ... The true believers fight for the cause of God, but the infidels fight for the devil. Fight then against the friends of Satan ...”* (4:74,76)
- *“The believers who stay at home—apart from those that suffer a grave impediment—are not the equals of those who fight for the cause of God with their goods and their persons. God has given those that fight with their goods and their persons a higher rank than those who stay at home ...”* (4:95,96)
- *“Slay the idolaters wherever you find them. ... lie in ambush everywhere for them. If they repent and take to prayer and render the alms levy, allow them to go their way ...”* (9:5)
- *“Those that make war against God and His apostle and spread disorder in the land shall be put to death or crucified or have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides, or be banished from the land. They shall be held up to shame in this world and sternly punished in the hereafter: except those that repent before you reduce them ...”* (5:34,35)
- *“Make war on them until idolatry shall cease and God’s religion shall reign supreme”* (8:39)
- *“Prophet, rouse the faithful to arms. If there are twenty steadfast men among you, they shall vanquish two hundred; and if there are a hundred, they shall rout a thousand unbelievers, for they are devoid of understanding.”* (8:65)
- *“Fight against such of those to whom the Scriptures were given ... and do not embrace the true Faith, **until they pay tribute out of hand and are utterly subdued.**”* (9:29)

The Qur’an contains scores of similar verses.

Most Muslim Scholars see the world divided into two "houses"—*the House of Peace (Dar Al-Salaam)* and *the House of War (Dar Al-Harb)*. The general idea is that Muslims belong to *the House of Peace*, while those who have not yet submitted to Islam belong to *the House of War* until they are *“utterly subdued.”* However, even this distinction is often blurred since militant Muslims (who take the above verses at face value) also include moderate Muslims in *the House of War*. Consider further...

**2. ISLAMIC NATIONS AROUND THE WORLD.** The concept of *jihad* is rooted in another concept—*Shari'a* (Islamic law). Many of the world's more than forty majority-Muslim countries have embraced *Shari'a*, and those that have not are under relentless pressure to do so. For example, over the past nine years in Algeria, some 100,000 Muslims have been slain by militant Muslims. The reason? These militant Muslims want political control of the nation. This is a growing trend in the Islamic world—even though it is a trend despised by most Muslims.

In the 94% Muslim country of Senegal (where freedom of religion is granted and *Shari'a* is refused), several Middle Eastern countries send over their Islamic teachers, build Islamic schools and finance more mosques in an effort to "purify" Senegal's Islam. So what does "pure Islam" look like? Many Muslims will tell you that there is no country in the world that exemplifies true Islam. Yet Islam claims to be a religion that has the answers for society, a religion that offers peace and wholeness. So where should we look to get an example of what true Islam looks like? Iran? Afghanistan? Pakistan? Libya? Turkey? Indonesia? Egypt? How about Saudi Arabia?

While most Muslims decry the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as corrupt—it is nonetheless the "keeper of Islam" and the religious center toward which more than one billion Muslims face five times a day as they repeat their prayers in Arabic. In Saudi Arabia, freedom of religion is nonexistent. It is illegal to read a Bible or vocalize a non-Muslim prayer in the privacy of your own home. Under Islamic law, conversion to Christianity by a Saudi citizen is punishable by beheading. Saudi's leaders do not support the idea that Islam "instructs people on how they may live together in peace and harmony regardless of race, class or beliefs." According to Amnesty International, the persecution of Christians in Saudi Arabia has "increased dramatically" since the Gulf War. More than a thousand cases have been documented in which Christian foreign workers have been arrested, imprisoned and/or beaten for participating in private worship meetings. Add to that the fact that numerous incidents go unreported, especially among Egyptians, Indians, Koreans, Filipinos and other Third World workers who fear further reprisals against them and their families.

A more moderate Islamic nation across the Red Sea from Saudi Arabia is Egypt. I recently met a family who has fled Egypt to seek asylum in the West. The reason? Constant harassment because of their religious beliefs. In Egypt, Christians can't even paint their walls or do minor repairs on their church buildings without a building permit—a permit that is virtually impossible to obtain. One particular woman had her identity papers confiscated and is being kept under house arrest—all because she left Islam to follow Christ. The charge of "denigrating Islam" is regularly leveled against Christians who are involved in leading a Muslim to Christ. Many Christians living in Upper Egypt have been pressured to pay "protection money" to Muslim racketeers. Those who refuse have been subjected to violent attacks. In October of 1995, Shehata Fawzi (a Christian farmer) was shot to death when he refused to pay 5000 Egyptian pounds to local Muslims. The Cairo-based center for Human Rights/Legal Aid reports the murder of dozens of Copts over the past several years. Last report, the government has failed to put a stop to it. Meanwhile, the militant *Gama'a al-Islamiya* group wants to replace Egypt's "moderate" government with a more strict Islamic state!

The harsh reality is that in every country where *Shari'a* is embraced, non-Muslims face, at best, discrimination, social ostracism and harassment, and, at worst, prison, torture, and death—for nothing other than their religious beliefs. A horrifying example of *Shari'a* and *Jihad* in combination can be seen just south of Egypt—in Sudan, where, since 1983, the Muslim Arab North has killed an estimated *two million* non-Muslim blacks in south. Another five million have been displaced. Slavery, rape, torture, forced Qur'anic indoctrination of children, and bombings of churches are

regular events. Over in Indonesia, the Laksar Jihad, a well-organized, well-funded, and well-armed Islamic militia (which, like many other Islamic groups, includes soldiers imported from other Islamic countries) is waging a campaign to annihilate the Christian population there. Over the past several years, thousands of Indonesians have been butchered for the crime of not converting to Islam. If Islam is for “peace and harmony regardless of race, class or beliefs”—then where is the widespread outrage over these ongoing atrocities committed in the name of Allah?

Yes, accusations could be raised about horrible atrocities committed by those who have called themselves Christians (Crusades, Inquisition, slave trade, abortions, etc.). Yet, we must be honest and admit the fundamental difference between the two. Violence and oppression committed in the name of Christ is in *absolute opposition* to the teaching Christ who said, “*Love your enemies, bless those who curse you ... whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them ...*” (Matthew 5:44; 7:12) and who prayed for those who nailed Him to a cross, “*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!*” (Luke 23:34). However, violent acts carried out against those who refuse to submit to Islam is in *apparent agreement* with the teaching of the Qur’an (see above verses in the first point) and the example of Muhammad.

**3. MUHAMMAD’S EXAMPLE.** History tells us that, at first, Muhammad did not use force to induce the Jews, Christians and pagans to accept Islam. Later, however, when people and circumstances turned against him and when he began to gather an army to himself, he began telling his followers that the latest “revelations from Allah” were saying things like, “*Prophet, make war on the unbelievers and the hypocrites and deal rigorously with them. Hell shall be their home.*” (9:73) Thus began Muhammad’s career of warring in the name of Allah. Those defeated by Muhammad were offered protection *if* they would submit to the dictates of Islam. Those that refused to become Muslims had the “choice” either to pay tribute or to be put to death. This is the apparent “peace and tolerance” Muhammad offered to non-Muslims in his treaty with the people of Khaibar and to others. Non-Muslims were the *Dhimmi*s (the people of obligation) and, as such, were to be “*utterly subdued*” (9:29).

About twenty years ago, a Muslim neighbor lent me his book on the life of Muhammad, hoping to attract me to Islam. Amid the many positive things recorded about Muhammad, one phrase that sticks with me to this day is that the Muslim author wrote that Muhammad could be both “compassionate *and* cruel.” One of the better-known examples of Muhammad’s “cruel side” is recorded in several Hadiths, as well as in other writings such as the History of Tabari, Sirat Rasul Allah, and the Kitab Al Tabaqat Al Kabir ...

“A group of eight men from the tribe of ‘Ukil came to the Prophet and then they found the climate of Medina unsuitable for them. So, they said, ‘O Allah's Apostle! Provide us with some milk.’ Allah's Apostle said, ‘I recommend that you should join the herd of camels.’ So they went and drank the urine and the milk of the camels (as a medicine) till they became healthy and fat. Then they killed the shepherd and drove away the camels, and they became unbelievers after they were Muslims. When the Prophet was informed by a shouter for help, he sent some men in their pursuit, and before the sun rose high, they were brought, and he had their hands and feet cut off. Then he ordered for nails which were heated and passed over their eyes, and they were left in the Harra (i.e. rocky land in Medina). They asked for water, and nobody provided them with water till they died.” (*Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 52, Number 261*: Narrated by Anas bin Malik.)

The oldest still-available biography of Muhammad is called the “Sirat Rasul Allah” (“Life of the Prophet of Allah”). This book was written by Ibn Ishaq a century before any of the major works of the Hadith. “Sirat Rasulallah” is considered the most authentic biography of Muhammad. On page 515, we read of an event that took place about three years before Muhammad's death. This specific narrative tells of Muhammad’s conquest of Khaibar, a large Jewish settlement with some of the best date palms in the region. The Jews of Khaibar were prosperous merchants, craftsmen, and farmers. Kinana al-Rabi, who was said to have had the custody of a certain hidden treasure, was brought to Muhammad who asked him about it. Kinana denied that he knew where it was. A Jew came to the apostle and said that he had seen Kinana going round a certain ruin every morning early. When the apostle said to Kinana, “Do you know that if we find you have it I shall kill you?” he said “Yes.” Muhammad gave orders that the ruin be excavated and some of the treasure was found. When he asked Kinana about the rest of the treasure he refused to produce it, so the apostle gave orders to al-Zubayr Al-Awwam, “Torture him until you extract what he has.” So he kindled a fire with flint and steel on his chest until he was nearly dead. Then Muhammad delivered him to Muhammad b. Maslama and he struck off his head. Were Muhammad’s actions in keeping with a religion that is for peace? And this is only one such example among many.

Friends, do not take my word on this. Do your own research. Take a look at the above-mentioned biography (English translation: “The Life of Muhammad” by A. Guillaume; Oxford Univ. Press) or “23 Years: A Study of the Prophetic Career of Mohammad” (by Ali Dashti; Mazda), or read some of the Hadiths. You will even read of instances in which Muhammad had innocent people put to death (such as Abu Afak, a 120-year-old man and Asma bint Marwan the mother of five children, a slave woman mother of two children, and the one-eye shepherd, all murdered while they slept. Their only crime was that they somehow offended “the prophet.”)

I am keenly aware that such information is both painful and offensive for my dear Muslim friends. Yet truth is truth. Jesus didn’t beat around the bush when He said, “*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ... False prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you before hand. ... Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.*” (Injil, Matthew 7:15-17; 24:23,24; 15:14)

**4. HISTORY OF ISLAMIC EXPANSION.** Encarta Encyclopedia ‘99 says: “The remarkable speed of [Islam’s] religious expansion can be attributed to the fact that it was accomplished primarily through military conquest. Muhammad drew Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula to Islam by his forceful personality, the promise of salvation for those who died fighting for Islam, and the lure of fortune for those who succeeded in conquest. The caravan raids of the early years of Islam soon became full-scale wars, and empires and nations bowed to the power of this new religious, military, political, economic, and social phenomenon.”

Yet in the booklet “The Basics of Islam at a Glance” prepared by *The Islamic Cultural Center* (Tempe, Arizona), we read: “There is no historical proof that Islam was ‘spread by the sword.’ Even non-Muslim scholars now admit that this is nothing more than a vicious myth which cannot be substantiated by historical fact.” However, on an Islamic question-and-answer website we find a more honest assertion: “**Question:** Some enemies of the religion claim that Islam was spread by the sword. What is your response to that? **Answer:** Islam was spread by proof and evidence, in the case

of those who listened to the message and responded to it. And it was spread by strength and the sword in the case of those who stubbornly resisted, until they had no choice and had to submit to the new reality.”

Many say, “Well, what about Joshua and the Israelites? The Bible records that they exterminated entire cities of people!” True. But a close look reveals a quite different set of circumstances. Just as God (after hundreds of years of patient forbearance) had judged evil with a flood in Noah’s day, and fire from heaven on Sodom in Abraham’s day, so God used the people of Israel to judge the Canaanite nations. God waited hundreds of years before judging these nations, giving them time to repent and turn from their wicked ways of idolatry, immorality and human sacrifice. They ignored the witness of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Joseph, Moses and the ten plagues that came upon the Egyptians. Thus, God, at this particular time in history, used the Israelites to carry out His judgments. But please notice that this was no random warfare! These battles were carried out under specific commands from God with limitations. Sometimes God forbade the children of Israel to take any part of the spoil. The victories included miraculous interventions from God—such as Jericho’s wall falling outward (confirmed by archeology by the way) after the Israelites had marched around them on seven consecutive days. Notice also that God was fair and impartial in His judgments. For example, in the Torah, Numbers 25-31, we read how God first strikes the Israelites with a plague because of *their* idolatry and adultery. 24,000 Israelites die. Only after God had judged Israel does He send them forth to judge the surrounding nations.

Muhammad’s wars and later Islamic wars of expansion were very different from God’s acts of judgment as recorded in the Old Testament of the Bible. Muhammad would make treaties with the idolaters as long as he was still in the minority, but when he grew strong, he freely used the power of his human army—taking justice into his own hands. He gained great wealth from the war spoils. Muhammad’s wars were partial—always against non-Muslims, with little or no mercy—quite different from what we see a loving, long-suffering God doing through His prophets and chosen people under the Old Covenant. What’s more, Muhammad totally ignored the long-promised “New Covenant” which Jesus established and in which He commands His disciples: “*Bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. ... A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*” (Injil, Matthew 5:44; John 13:34,35)

**5. TREATMENT OF APOSTATES.** Under Islamic law (based on the Qur’an, the example of Muhammad [*sunna*] and the consensus [*idjmaa*]), whoever falls away from faith in Islam commits an “unforgivable sin.” Such “apostates” must be taken into custody by force, and called on to repent. He who does not turn back to Islam has, according to Shari’a, forfeited his life and is to be put to death by the state. While this is not carried out on a regular basis in most Islamic lands, the threat of it is there.

According to the daily paper, Al Alam, King Hassan II of Morocco, also the imam of his country, presented the following state of affairs before a human rights commission on May 15, 1990: “If a Muslim says, ‘I have embraced another religion instead of Islam,’ he—before he is called to repentance—will be brought before a group of medical specialists, so that they can examine him to see if he is still in his right mind. After he has then been called to repentance, but decides to hold fast to the testimony of another religion not coming from Allah—that is, not Islam—he will be judged.”

It is no wonder that a major section of the Muslim population in majority-Muslim countries like Algeria, Egypt, Turkey, and Indonesia resists the full introduction of *Shari'a*. They do not wish to come under the frightening yoke of oppression which demands that thieves have their hands and feet amputated, adulterers be whipped, and converts to Christianity be killed. However, a significant minority of Muslims passionately demand the immediate adoption of *Shari'a* and are prepared, in some places, to fight for it with the help of terrorism and revolutions. In each Islamic country, militants and moderates wrestle over the *Shari'a*. Unquestionably, Islam is going through a global identity crisis—trying to define what it will become in the 21st century.

In pointing these things out, let me remind you that I am not blind to the madness of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages, in which those who refused to submit to the “Church” were subsequently tortured and killed for their “apostasy”. Once again, however, we must point out that this evil in Church history was in direct opposition to the law and spirit of Christ. Please keep this distinction in mind. In Jesus’ Parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15), the father did not have his rebellious son followed, locked up, tortured, starved or killed. He gave his son freedom to choose (and to suffer the natural consequences of his choices). While God has committed much authority to individuals and to governments, torturing or killing those who refuse to believe and obey God’s way of Salvation is NOT something He has asked man to do! Ultimately GOD will judge every person. “*For it is written: ‘As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.’ So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*” (Romans 14:11,12; Isaiah 45:21-23)

**6. TREATMENT OF WOMEN.** Our search for an answer to the question “Does Islam promote peace and tolerance?” would not be complete without at least mentioning Islam’s treatment of women. This is a subject which requires a very balanced approach. Many Muslims point to the extremes and licentiousness of women in the West as portrayed on television as proof that only Islam can put a stop to such permissiveness. This is because they do not know what the Gospel of Jesus Christ does in the life of those who believe. The loose women flaunted in movies do NOT reflect what a true Christian woman is like. If you know some true Christian women personally, then you know that such godly women are characterized by a desire to obey the Bible, which teaches “*the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.*” (Titus 2:4,5)

While the status of women varies greatly between Muslim countries, I highly recommend two insightful books, “Not Without My Daughter” (by Betty Mahmoody) and “Princess” (by Jean Sasson). The first book opens a window on the lives of women in Iran, the latter on those in Saudi Arabia. We have all been made aware recently of the extreme oppression of women in Afghanistan. Though the Taliban has been ousted, much of their strict legal code remains intact. While the vast majority of Muslims condemn the extremes of the Taliban, few are willing to speak out on behalf of the women in their own lands. Muslims have a very difficult time understanding a true Christian’s marriage relationship, in which the husband is the leader, but a servant-leader who loves his wife enough to put her needs before his own. The New Testament Scriptures teach that “*husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.*” (Eph 5:28,29) Meanwhile the Qur’an says, “*As for those [wives] from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them.*” (4:34)

How would you respond to

## Ten Islamic challenges to the Christian Faith

1. The Qur'an is the last version of God's revelation and what it says is the ultimate truth. This might not mean much for those who do not believe in the Qur'an as such. However, the history of the Qur'an, modern textual criticism and scientific research of the content of this scripture leave no doubt about the truth it contains. The frequently made statements that the Qur'an is the word of Muhammad who copied his information from Jewish and Christian sources is made by people who do not know the history of the world, the Qur'an or Muhammad. The first Arabic translation of the Bible appeared two centuries after Muhammad's mission. If we add to this Muhammad's illiteracy and the scarcity of religious books in any language outside churches and temples in the sixth century we can understand the absurdity of this allegation.
2. The oneness and universality of God's message requires that people accept all the messengers of God. Rejecting one of them amounts to rejecting them all. The Jews reject Jesus' mission and Muhammad's mission; the Christians reject Muhammad's mission; whereas the Muslims accept them all, but reject incorrect historical interpretations and human elements in these missions.
3. Because of the Qur'an, Muslims love and respect Jesus as they love and respect the Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, the Qur'an reports some of Jesus' miracles, which are not reported in the present gospel. For example, the Qur'an tells that Jesus spoke in the cradle and was able to tell people what they ate or treasured in their houses, to mention just a few.
4. It is common knowledge that the divinity of Jesus was introduced by Saint Paul and his followers and was established on the dead bodies of millions of Christians through history which evoked the Castillo's well-known remark "To burn a man is not to prove a doctrine."
5. The choice of the present four gospels was imposed in the conference of Nicea 325 C.E. under the auspices of the pagan Emperor Constantine for political purposes. Literally, hundreds of gospels and religious writings were considered apocrypha, i.e. books of doubtful authenticity. Some of those books were written by Jesus's disciples. If they were not more authentic than the four gospels they were of equal authenticity. Some of them still are available such as the Gospel of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas which agree with the Qur'an.
6. The Unitarian concept and the humanness of Jesus is not only held by Muslims but also by Jews and by some early groups of Christianity such as the Ebonite's, the Corinthians, the Basilidians, the Capocratians and the Hypisistarians to name several early sects. The Aryans, Paulicians and Goths also accepted Jesus as a prophet of God. Even in the modern age there are churches in Asia, in Africa, the Unitarian church, and Jehovah Witnesses who do not worship Jesus as God.
7. Most serious studies of the Bible have shown that it contains a large portion of additions which neither Jesus nor the writers of the gospels said. The church, as Heinz Zahrnt said, "put words into the mouth of Jesus which he never spoke and attributed actions to him which he never performed." Those conclusions were arrived at by some members of the church. However, they are kept secret or available only to the specialists. One of those, who has shown that most of what the church says about Jesus is baseless is Rudolf Augustein in his book *Jesus Son of Man*, (published in Germany 1972 and translated into English 1977).
8. The problem with present Christianity is the personality of Jesus, which is completely misunderstood. Jesus' nature, mission and claimed death and resurrection, are all challenged by



studies in the field. One of those is a book entitled *The Myth of God Incarnate* which appeared 1977 (edited by John Hick) and written by seven theologian scholars in England. Their conclusion is that Jesus was “a man approved by God, for special role within the divine purpose, and ... the later conception of him as God incarnate ... is a mythological or poetic way of expressing his significance for us.” The best George Carey could say in his attempt to refute the findings of those theologians is that unless one takes Jesus as God Incarnate one won't be able to understand Jesus' mission or explain its impact on people. This definitely is a very weak argument because all great prophets such as Abraham, Moses, and Muhammad have had a tremendous impact on people and none of them claimed that he was God or a son of God.

9. The concept of the Trinity is not, of course, available even in the present Bible. There are statements which negate it such as "The Lord our God is one Lord (Math. 12:29) and many others.
10. It is worth noting that Jesus never claims divinity even in the present text of the Bible. The expression “Son of God” cannot be said to have come from Jesus himself. Hasting in *The Dictionary of the Bible* says "Whether Jesus used it of himself is doubtful." In my reading of the Bible, I found only two instances in John Chapter 5 and 11 where Jesus uses “son of God” to refer to himself. Other instances were used by others. Even those are very limited.

## **Islam's challenge to the Christian doctrine of the divinity of Jesus.**

Without a doubt, you have often heard the claim that Jesus is God, the second person in the “Holy Trinity”. However, the very Bible which is used as a basis for knowledge about Jesus and as the basis for doctrine within Christianity clearly belies this claim. We urge you to consult your own Bible and verify that the following conclusions are not drawn out of context:

### **1. God Is All Knowing.....But Jesus Was Not**

When speaking of the Day of Judgement, Jesus clearly gave evidence of a limitation on his knowledge when he said, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the son, but the Father.” (Mark 13:32 and Matt. 24:36) But God knows all. His knowledge is without any limitations. That Jesus, of his own admission, did not know when the Day of Judgement would be, is clear proof that Jesus is not all-knowing, and that Jesus is therefore not God.

### **2. God Is All-Powerful.....But Jesus Was Not**

While Jesus performed many miracles, he himself admitted that the power he had was not his own but was derived from God when he said, “Verily, verily I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do...” (John 5:19). Again he said, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear I judge: and my judgement is just; because I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father which has sent me.” (John 5:30) But God is not only All-Powerful, He is also the source of all power and authority. That Jesus, of his own admission, could do nothing on his own is clear proof that Jesus is not all-powerful, and that therefore Jesus is not God.

### **3. God Does Not Have A God.....But Jesus Did Have A God**

God is the ultimate judge and refuge for all, and He does not call upon nor pray to any others. But Jesus acknowledged that there was One whom he worshipped and to Whom he prayed when he said, “I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.” (John 20:17). He is also reported to have cried out while on the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou

forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). If Jesus were God, then couldn't this be read, “Myself, myself, why hast thou forsaken me?”. Would that not be pure nonsense? When Jesus prayed the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:2-4), was he praying to himself? When in the garden of Gethsemane he prayed, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt.” (Matt. 26:36). Was Jesus praying to himself? That Jesus, of his own admission and by his own actions, acknowledged, worshipped, and prayed to another being as God is clear proof that Jesus himself is not God.

**According to the Bible, God is an invisible spirit....**

#### **4. But Jesus Was Flesh And Blood**

While thousands saw Jesus and heard his voice, Jesus himself said that this could not be done with God when he said: “No man hath seen God at any time.” (John 1:18). “Ye have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His shape.” (John 5:37) He also said in John 4:24: “God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” That Jesus would say that no one had seen or heard God at any time, while his followers both saw and heard him, is clear proof that Jesus was not God.

**No one is greater than God and no one can direct Him...but Jesus acknowledged someone greater than himself whose...**

#### **5. Will Was Distinct From His Own**

Perhaps the clearest indication we have that Jesus and God are not equal, and therefore not one and the same, comes again from the mouth of Jesus himself who said in John 14:28: “My Father is greater than I.” When someone referred to him as a good master in Luke 18:19, Jesus responded: “Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is God...” Furthermore, Jesus drew clear distinctions between himself and God when he said, “I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of myself but He sent me.” (John 8:42) Jesus gave clear evidence of his subordination to God, rather than his equality with God, when he said in Luke 22:42, “not my will but Thine be done” and in John 5:30, “I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father which has sent me.” That Jesus would admit that he did not come into the world on his own initiative but was directed to do so, that he would acknowledge another being as greater than himself, and that he would negate his own will in deference to affirming the will of another, give clear proof that Jesus is not the Supreme One and therefore Jesus is not God.

#### **Conclusion**

The Church recognizes the Bible as the primary source of knowledge about God and Jesus. But since the Bible makes it clear that Jesus is not the Supreme Being and the Supreme Being is not Jesus, upon what basis have you come to believe otherwise?

The belief that the Supreme Being is a Trinity is false and completely inconsistent with the words of Jesus as presented in the Bible. God is one, not three. He is a perfect unity.

## **CHRISTIAN CRUSADES OF THE NINTH CENTURY AND THE TERRORIST ACTION OF ISLAM IN THE TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.**

(observations by Larry Abrahamson)

#### **SIMILARITIES:**

1. Acts of war were justified by religious beliefs – Christian Crusades, Islamic Jihad

2. Those who disbelieved were often referred to as infidels.
3. Brutality and wholesale slaughter was performed in the name of religion
4. Christian were primarily fighting the Muslims
5. Two facets of Christianity were formed – split based on whether icons should be displayed in church. Islamic factions divide over whether descendants of Mohammed should be revered as holy (shiite and sunni's doctrinal difference)
6. Victory meant rewards on earth and in heaven – immediate entrance into heaven if one died in the crusade war according to the Pope.
7. The Islamic Jihad, like the Crusades of the Ninth Century and the Jews attack on the early Christians of the First Century, were/are conducted under the name of God.
8. German crusaders referred to “the infidel among us” as the Jews in the Rhine Valley.
9. Lives of the infidels were minimized - As Saint Bernard of Clairvaux declared in launching the Second Crusade, “The Christian glories in the death of a pagan, because thereby Christ himself is glorified.”
10. Although popes encouraged the crusades, many of the crusaders were not Christians nor practiced the Christian faith – some question whether many terrorists are truly practicing Muslims (some say they are)
11. Children were indoctrinated during the Crusades to fight and die in Christian wars.

#### DIFFERENCES:

1. The Crusades were a mixture of religion and politics and supported by most European governments as opposed to a loosely organized, but extensive, band of supporters of Mohammad carrying out the dictates of the Quran.
2. The purpose of the Crusades was to take back Jerusalem and surrounding “Holy Land” from the Muslims, which had been seized years earlier. Whereas the Jihad war today is against a people – all non Muslims.
3. Not all crusades or those associated with them had the same purpose. Some German crusaders slaughtered Jews when learning that Jews were kidnapping and killing Christian children.
4. The Quran is used to justify, through Mohammed's teaching, the slaughter of non-Muslims. There is no Biblical justification for conquering lands, murdering civilians, and destroying cities in the name of Jesus Christ.

#### CRUSADE OBSERVATIONS:

1. In October to December 630, after the conquest of Mecca in January 630, Muhammad launches perhaps the first Crusade to Tabuk
2. (In the Shade of the Qur'an, vol. 7, pp. 8-15). Islam is expansionist and must conquer the world to express Allah's perfect will on this planet

3. Earliest Jihad: Jews brutally killed and tortured, through stoning and crucifixion, Christians during the time of Christ – making reference to infidels or gentiles.
4. Pope Urban II was the first leader of the Crusades beginning after a speech he made in Nov. 27, 1095
5. There were seven crusades over 200 years.

**Questions:**

1. Why are the wars today, that we call jihads, any different than holy wars of the past?
2. Can Christians claim any superior right over Muslims who now are also fighting for their religion?
3. Isn't Islamic terrorism just a modern day nuisance that we will have to learn to live with - after all, Mohammad's teachings have been around for a long time - why are we now supposed to be concerned?
4. As strong as the US and Israel are, is there any real credible threat to our countries or our ability to practice and maintain Christian beliefs?
5. Isn't all this a reflection of our lack of sensitivity and tolerance of other peoples and religions?
6. Shouldn't we wake up and take some responsibility for why Islam hates the west?