GOD AND WAR: AN AUDIT & AN EXPLORATION

Compiled[1] by Greg Austin, Todd Kranock and Thom Oommen[2]

INTRODUCTION

As the USA and the UK were preparing to invade Iraq in 2003, people around the world engaged in renewed debate about religion and war. 'Holy war', 'God's war', 'just war', and 'clash of civilizations' were just a few of the terms. Was there some new war between Christianity and Islam? Are Al Qaida's acts of terrorism a war between Islam and the secular West? What is the relationship between religion and war? Has there been a rise in religiously motivated violence?

There is a view that the 'number of groups involved in conflicts with significant religious dimensions has increased dramatically in the more than half-century since the end of World War II: from 26 between 1945 and 1949 to 70 in the 1990s, with the greatest increase in the 1960s and 1970s'.[3] The author of that view postulated that 'by the 1980s militant religious sects accounted for one-quarter of all armed rebellions'. He cited Martin van Creveld: 'There appears every prospect that religious attitudes, beliefs, and fanaticism will play a larger role in the motivation of armed conflict than it has, in the West at any rate, for the last 300 years'.[4]

This article concludes that at a philosophical level, the main religious traditions have little truck with war or violence. All advocate peace as the norm and see genuine spirituality as involving a disavowal of violence. It is mainly when organised religious institutions become involved with state institutions or when a political opposition is trying to take power that people begin advocating religious justifications for war.

One organising feature of this article is what it calls the 'Religious War Audit'. BBC asked us to see how many wars had been caused by religion. After reviewing historical analyses by a diverse array of specialists, we concluded that there have been few genuinely religious wars in the last 100 years. The Israel/Arab wars from 1948 to now, often painted in the media and other places as wars over religion, or wars arising from religious differences, have in fact been wars of nationalism, liberation of territory or self-defense.

The Islamist fundamentalist terror war being led by Osama bin Laden, also often painted in media commentary as a war about Islamic fundamentalism, is more about political order in the Arab countries, and the presence of US forces in Muslim countries, than it is about religious conversion of foreigners or expansion of territory in the name of God. Nevertheless, as seen by bin Laden, it is a war of religious duty. But the religious duty he identifies flows from his disaffections with the political order and with the fact that a foreign, non-Muslim

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[1] This article is not meant to be a piece of original academic analysis, but rather draws very heavily on the work of scholars in a diverse range of fields. All material drawn upon is referenced appropriately.

[2] Dr Greg Austin is a principal research Fellow in the Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford. Todd Kranock is a Research Assistant at the Centre for International Co-operation and Security, and is also completing a Master of Arts in Peace Studies from the University of Bradford. His MA dissertation focuses on US imperialism and its 'dominating culture of violence'. Thom Oommen has just graduated with a Master of Arts in Peace Studies from the University of Bradford. His MA dissertation focused on Hindu nationalism and communal riots in India.

[3] Gabriel Palmer Fernandez, Encyclopedia
http://www.routledge-ny.com/religionandsociety/war/introduction.html

[4] Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, New York: Free Press, 1991, p. 214.

power has stationed military forces in Saudi Arabia, a situation he sees as contrary to his religious traditions, especially when those forces are being used to attack other Muslim countries.

The US and allied invasion of Iraq is a war that has arguably been caused by religion: the religious conviction of one man, President George W. Bush. This is discussed later.

The War Audit found that we needed to go back to the wars of Islamic expansion beginning in the seventh century, the Crusades beginning in the eleventh century, and the Reformation Wars beginning in the sixteenth century to find wars linked more closely to religious belief than to other political causes: that is, cases where the wars were fought because of religious differences.

The audit for internal war or inter-communal violence is somewhat different. Some internal wars in the last 100 years have been more closely tied to religious identity than inter-state wars. These include the Hindu/Muslim clashes in Gujarat India and the Christian/Muslim clashes in Maluku Indonesia in the last few years. But even these wars have political causes as much if not more than religious wars.

To situate its discussion, the article precedes its war audit with a brief review of what the sacred texts of the main religion say about war and its place in the moral order. The article then looks quickly at four types of war that might have a close link to religion or the moral order mandated by religion: wars of conversion, wars by theocratic states, war in self-defence, and just wars (that is, wars allowed by or ordained by God). That section discusses briefly the content of just war doctrines. The third section of the article then provides the war audit for the period to the end of the twentieth century. A section devoted to the situation in the first years of the 21st century follows. It looks at the most recent examples of serious religion-related violence: inter-communal violence in Gujarat in India and Al Qaida's war on the USA and its allies. This discussion is supported by a closer look at the three different fundamentalisms on show in these cases: Hindu, Muslim and Christian. On the basis of this discussion, this fourth section asks whether it is possible to identify a list of states that are most likely to go to war by invoking the name of God. It notes the difference in the disposition to war in the name of God between these states and secular or atheistic states, such as China. A genuinely secular (atheistic) state may be less inclined to go to war than a state in which religion is very prominent, as long as the secular state is one which is not pursuing a millenarian or totalitarian ideology (such as Communism or Nazism) and as long as the state is one in which pluralism and tolerance of diversity are the norm.

The fifth section of the article turns away from religion itself to the psychology of individual people to see whether this area of social science offers a better explanation for the fanaticism of the 'holy warriors' than some presumed religious causes or inspirations. This discussion focuses on the issue of how identity affects their views of the link between god and war. It pays special attention to the work of Erik Erikson.

The final section of the article returns us to the first main point. Religious traditions usually say more about organising for or aspiring to peace and harmony than about war. The final section looks at nonviolent religious militants and the ways in which religious actors and organisations are having an impact in the world.

From the outset, we must recognize that 'there is an extreme variation in religious experience'.[5] Therefore, how people experience God will impact how they understand war and violence. John Crossan, one of the world's leading authorities on Christianity, concludes that our understanding of war and violence is dependant upon the 'character' of our God.[6] But there is room to doubt that, at the end of the day, the difference in the tendency of states to go to war depends on which religious tradition primarily influences them. The better indicators may be the prominence of religion in the life of the state or armed opposition group and the existence of just war doctrines.

In approaching this complex subject, it is important to understand where it sits in our social and political order. First, we must recognize that armed conflict is rarely, if ever, solely about religion or religious differences. Although armed conflicts may take on religious overtones, their genesis is found in a complex matrix of crisscrossing and mutually exacerbating factors such as economics, politics, resources, ethnicity and identity, power struggles, inequality, oppression, and other historical grievances. Rabbi Marc Gopin, a faculty member at Tufts' Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, asserts, 'disputes that appear to be religious in nature are also rooted in a tangle of local and national struggles over power, land poverty and jobs'.[7] Moreover, religion 'always contributes to conflicts, but it's to simplistic to say that they're either about religion or not about religion'.

Second, whether or not armed conflict is inspired by political (or religious) motivations, war always has moral consequences. Its perpetrators do not just use religion to manipulate opinion or action of others. In most cases, the choice for resort to large scale deadly violence is based on the religious convictions, no matter how distorted these may be, of the leaders and the followers. It may be impossible to separate religion from politics, or vice versa. Neither is isolated from the other, and therefore, neither goes unaffected by the other.

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[5] Johan Galtung, 'Religions, Hard and Soft', *Cross Currents*, Winter 1997-98, Vol. 47 Issue 4, Available at: http://www.crosscurrents.org/galtung.htm
[6] John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus*. Harper, San Francisco: New York City, 1988, p 575.
[7] Tufts e-news 2002, No. 1.

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II.   WAR IN RELIGIOUS TEXTS

Throughout recorded history, humanity has honoured gods of war, such as Ares from Greek mythology. He was the son of Zeus and Hera, the king and queen of the Greek gods. Ares was the father of many children, most of who were war-like or were associated with war. In Roman mythology, Mars was the god of war. Before entering into battle, Roman troops offered sacrifices to him, and, when victorious in battle, Romans honoured Mars with a share of their swag. The word *martial*, meaning war-like or military, originates from the Roman god's name. At the same time, the Greeks and Romans identified Goddesses (yes, female deities) with other qualities, such as peace and wisdom. Thus there was in the Greek pantheon, the goddesses Eirene and Athena. In the Roman pantheon, was the goddess Minerva. Interestingly, in Roman mythology, Minerva was also the light of men in war.

This ambivalence in the pagan religions toward peace and war is found in the texts of the main religious traditions. Many 'sacred' texts are flooded with images of a vengeful and violent God: a God of war who destroys our enemies and punishes us if we stray. Elise Boulding observes: 'The warrior god has dominated the stories of our faith communities, so that the other story of human caring and compassion and reconciliation, is often difficult to hear'.[8]

But, are people who would kill in the name of God, or claim that God justifies war, misreading the scriptures? Does God really sanction violence? In his book, "Is Religion Killing Us?", Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer argues 'religiously justified violence is first and foremost a problem of 'sacred' texts and not a problem of misinterpretation of the texts'.[9] Because of such imbedded violent images of God, people can selectively recall such texts and extract from them divine support for war, creating the foundation for what Nelson-Pallmeyer terms the 'violence-of-God' tradition.

This means that even people who do not consciously invoke God as a justification for war may be acting as if they were. Carl Jung stated, 'anything we have heard or experienced can become subliminal, that is to say, can pass into the unconsciousness. And even what we retain in our conscious mind and can reproduce at will has acquired an unconscious undertone that will colour the idea each time it is recalled'.[10] Again and again, in churches, temples, mosques, meetinghouses, synagogues and homes, the violence-of-God traditions are passed down through the generations, moulding our individual and collective psyche. As these narratives are told and retold, they become a part of our cultural and spiritual identity, ultimately conditioning our behaviour, our understanding of God and our relations with others.

Box 1 provides some illustrative extracts from key religious texts on questions of war and peace.

As later discussion shows, all of these cited (except for the Buddhists, Baha'i and Quaker traditions) do appear to support the notion that in some circumstances war is either justifiable or inevitable, but that it must be fought according to certain principles and usually only in

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[8] Elise, Boulding, Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, NY, 2000, p. 11.
[9] Jack Nelson Pallmeyer, *Is Religion Killing Us? Violence in the Bible and the Quran*, Trinity Press International, Harrisburg, PA, 2003, p. xiv.
[10] Carl Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, Aldus Books, London, 1964, p. 27.

self-defence. At the same time, pacifists have used religious texts to support the notion that their religion (and others) implies a duty to abstain from violence and war.

Thus, as Fernandez notes, 'most religions have explicitly scriptural and doctrinal views on war' while at the same time, the 'values of nonviolence and, more generally, pacifism are widely represented in the religions of the world'. [11]

He also notes correctly that 'there is a striking similarity between the Jewish, Christian, and Koranic views of war': 'All three traditions see war as a way of establishing the divine will on earth, and they believe that warfare is constrained by divine pronouncements concerning the conduct of war, particularly the treatment of prisoners'. [12]

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[11] Palmer Fernandez, *Encyclopedia*.
[12] Ibid.

Box 1: Selected Extracts from Main Religious Texts

Jewish Scriptures

'Thou shall not kill' [Exodus 20:13].

'When the Lord your God brings your into the land which you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, … and when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them; then you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them and show them no mercy' [Torah, Book of Deuteronomy 7:1-2].

'And Israel smote them, until there was left none that survived or escaped. … And all who fell that day, both men and women, were twelve thousand, all the people of Ai' [Joshua 8: 22, 25].

'And so Joshua defeated the whole land, and the hill country and the Negeb, and the lowland and the slopes, and their kings. He left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord of Israel commanded' [Joshua 10:40].

Christian Scriptures

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God' [Matthew 5:9].

'You have heard it said, Thou shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy. But I [Jesus] say to you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute you' [Matthew 5:43-44].

'Then Jesus said to him, 'Put up your sword; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword' [Matthew 26: 52].

Koran

'Fight in the cause of God against those who fight you, but aggress not. God loves not aggressors. And slay them wherever you come upon them' [Koran 2:190].

'Those who readily fight in the cause of God are those who forsake this world in favour of the Hereafter. Whoever fights in the cause of God, then gets killed, or attains victory, we will surely grant him a great recompense' [Koran 4:74].

'To those against whom war is made, permission is given [to fight] because they are wronged; and verily, God is most powerful for their aid' [Koran 3:172].

Buddhism

Non-violence is at the heart of Buddhism. Indeed, the first of five precepts of Buddhism states: 'I shall undertake to observe the precept to abstain from harming living beings'. Buddhism does not support war or any type of violence; none of the Buddhist scriptures advocate the use of violence as a means to resolve conflict or as a way of life.

One of Buddha's sermons powerfully illustrates Buddhism's commitment to non-violence: 'Even if thieves carve you limb from limb with a double-handed saw, if you make your mind hostile you are not following my teaching.'

'Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world; it is appeased by love.' (Dhammapada, I, 5)

Sikh

'When all efforts to restore peace prove useless and no words avail, Lawful is the flash of steel, It is right to draw the sword.'

Box 1 (continued)

<u>Hinduism</u>

Hinduism includes a wide range of religious groups. Although they vary in many ways, they also have some common teachings. Like other religious traditions, Hindu texts both condemn and condone the use of violence.

'May your weapons be strong to drive away the attackers, may your arms be powerful enough to check the foes, let your army be glorious, not the evil-doer' [Rig Veda 1-39:2].

'[If] you will not engage in this lawful war: then you give up your Law and honor, and incur guilt. Creatures will tell of your undying shame, and for one who has been honored dishonor is worse than death. . . and what is more miserable than that?' – Bhagavad Gita

'Governing sense, mind and intellect, intent on liberation, free from desire, fear and anger, the sage is forever free.' – Bhagavad Gita

'When a man dwells on the objects of sense, he creates an attraction for them; attraction develops into desire, and desire breeds anger' – Bhagavad Gita

'As one acts and conducts himself, so does he become. The doer of good becomes good. The doer of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous action, bad by bad action' – Maitri Upanishads

 <u>Taoism</u>

'He who would assist a lord of men in harmony with the Tao will not assert his mastery in the kingdom by force of arms. Such a course is sure to meet with its proper return.

Wherever a host is stationed, briars and thorns spring up. In the sequence of great armies there are sure to be bad years.

A skilful (commander) strikes a decisive blow, and stops. He does not dare (by continuing his operations) to assert and complete his mastery. He will strike the blow, but will be on his guard against being vain or boastful or arrogant in consequence of it. He strikes it as a matter of necessity; he strikes it, but not from a wish for mastery. (*Tao t'e ch'ing*, 30.)

….Now arms, however beautiful, are instruments of evil omen, hateful, it may be said, to all creatures. Therefore they who have the Tao do not like to employ them.' (*Tao t'e ch'ing*, 31.)

<u>Baha'i</u>

The second Ishráq of the Baha'i faith reads: 'We have enjoined upon all mankind to establish the Most Great Peace -- the surest of all means for the protection of humanity. The sovereigns of the world should, with one accord, hold fast thereunto, for this is the supreme instrument that can ensure the security and welfare of all peoples and nations.'

<u>Quakerism</u>

'We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world. The spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it, and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any (person) with outward weapons, neither for the kingdoms of this world.' (The first Quaker Peace Testimony, issued to King Charles II in 1660.)

III.   VIOLENCE IN THE NAME OF GOD: FOUR REASONS AND JUST WAR DOCTRINES

There are four main ways in which religious texts have been used to comment on war and the use of violence for mass killing:

q   Evangelical war

This is the war when one state (or one religious group within a state) decides that its neighbours should either convert to its religion peacefully or be punished with conquest or death for remaining loyal to another faith.

q   Wars of conquest: glory of the state is the glory of God

This is the war where the state authorities, often backed by the hierarchy of the dominant religion, see the destiny of the state as ordained by God and are willing to perpetrate wars of conquest in order to advance state power, because gains in state power and military victories are seen as a reflection of the glory of God.

q   Just War: God permits violence for self-defence

This is the belief that some wars, at least, are right because they are perceived to be in the interests of justice - and should therefore be fought according to just rules.

q   Wars of retaliation: God is vengeful

Belief in 'Holy War': the God of a religion is perceived to ask, or command, its followers to make war on those who have committed some offence against the religion.

These four categories really depend in the main on the idea that in some circumstances, God and religion justify war. This is the 'just war' doctrine.

The notion of 'just war' is based on the violence-of-God tradition, attempting to solidify the relationship between God and war. However, any arguments regarding divine war are built upon understandings of divine justice. Analyzing the concept of 'just war', Richard Kirby contends that 'it is not that the variable attributes of the war which are problematic; it's the elasticity of the concept of justice'.[13] Subsequently, justice, too, can be described as a spectrum of extremes, from vengeful to compassionate. Is God's justice punitive, retributive, distributive and/or restorative?

Divine warfare or divine violence is founded upon retributive justice, or, in other words, vengeance. Crossan poignantly asserts: 'if we await a divine slaughter of those who are not Jews or those who are not Christians, then we are the killer children of a killer God. It is a question, once again, of character. Is your God a God of justice or of revenge?'[14] Scriptures act as constitutive texts that portray the constitutive nature of one's God.

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[13] Richard Kirby, 'Is God At War?', *World Network of Religious Futurists*, 23 September 2002, [Online] Available at: http://www.wnrf.org/cms/war.shtml

[14] Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity*, p. 586.

In the Christian tradition, the doctrine of 'just war' has evolved throughout the last 1,700 years, originating with St. Augustine and later significantly shaped by St Thomas Aquinas, both of whom developed ideas of the Greek philosopher Aristotle and the Roman philosopher Cicero.[15] Saint Augustine (354-430) served as Bishop of Hippo for 34 years. His idea of just war has two foundations. The first, owing much to the Eastern religious traditions, is that in all things a person should not act out of selfish considerations. Thus, Augustine argued, it is wrong to kill an attacker simply to save one's own life. The second foundation was the duty to act out of desire to serve other people. Therefore, he argued, the state 'has an obligation to protect people from the destruction that others do, to avenge injuries, and to restore what has been unjustly taken'.[16] Augustine argued that if Christianity prohibited war, the New Testament would have made that plain, but it does not. He argued that Christians are called to be peacemakers and that war can be waged to restore peace.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) further developed the ideas of justifiable resort to war by elaborating on how it should be conducted. He was appointed as a professor of theology at the University of Paris in 1256. In 1265 he began to write his most famous work, *Summa Theologica,* in which he attempted to systematically explain Christian theology. He argued that there was no conflict between faith and reason, and he attempted to combine Aristotle's teachings with Christian doctrine. While Augustine had opposed use of force in self-defence of one's person, Aquinas argued that individuals could use proportionate force to defend themselves. The Christian doctrine of just war as it stands is composed of seven rigorous criteria and laid out in a two-fold process of analysis: *jus ad bellum* (criteria examining the conditions which exist leading up to war) and *jus in bello* (criteria used to determine how warfare is to be conducted). The *jus ad bellum* criteria include:

- just cause
- competent authority
- comparative justice
- right intention
- last resort.[17]

Once engaged in warfare, the *jus in bello* criteria address:

- probability of success
- proportionality.[18]

If any one of the seven criteria is not fulfilled war cannot be justified and, therefore, any military action would be illegal and immoral.

During the lead up to the US and UK invasion of Iraq in 2003, there were vigorous debates regarding whether or not a pre-emptive war in Iraq would constitute a 'just war', or just another war. The US and Great Britain went to considerable lengths to justify the conflict in

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[15] Faith and Force: Religion, War and Peace, 'The Just War Doctrine', 20 January 2002. http://www.lyon.edu/webdata/users/mbeck/Thomas,%20Just%20war%20tradition.doc
[16] Joseph L. Allen, *War: A Primer for Christians,* Southern Methodist University Press, 2001, p. 31.
[17] US Catholic Bishops, 'The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response', in David O'Brien and Thomas Shannon, *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, Orbis Books, New York City, 1992, pp. 512-13.
[18] Ibid.

terms of the grater good and the need to root out evil. As discussed later, President George W. Bush believed he was called by God to invade Iraq. Pope John Paul II, the US Catholic Bishops, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and countless theologians from around the world echoed similar conclusions that the US and UK argument to go to war against Iraq miserably failed to meet the seven rigorous criteria of just war doctrine. These criteria are extremely rigid especially when applied to a situation in which a nation-state seeks to exercise pre-emptive warfare. As one writer observed: 'Measured by just war standards, the war proposed on Iraq fails completely of a sufficient cause. … The doctrine of pre-emptive war, if taken seriously, portends a descent into international barbarism…'.[19] It must be reiterated that the just war doctrine (like international law) obliges parties to strive first and foremost for the peaceful resolution of conflict. War may be conducted only as a last resort after all diplomatic and nonviolent means have been exhausted. Pope John Paul II reminds us that 'war is not always inevitable. It is always a defeat for humanity'.[20]

Islamic teaching on war and just war is not too different in its philosophical roots from that of the Christian tradition, in that it provides for self-defence.

> 'Fight in the cause of God against those who fight you, but aggress not. God loves not aggressors. And slay them wherever you come upon them' [Koran 2:190].

> 'To those against whom war is made, permission is given [to fight] because they are wronged; and verily, God is most powerful for their aid' [Koran 22:39]

The Islamic tradition provides for limits on the use of force in war similar to those found in the Christian tradition: 'Never transgress limits, or take your enemy by surprise or perfidy, or inflict atrocities or mutilation, or kill infants'; and 'Never kill a woman, a weak infant, or a debilitated old person; nor burn palms, uproot trees, or pull down houses'. The Koran also provides for the humane treatment of prisoners of war: 'And they feed, for the love of God, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive' [Koran 76:8-9].

According to many interpretations though, the Koran does appear to command evangelical war – that is, war to convert non-Muslims to the faith. The text often cited from the Koran is:

> Fight against those who do not believe in Allah or the last day.... until they pay the *jizya*[21] from their hand [Koran 9:29-30]

But as in other religious traditions, the texts are open to a variety of interpretations. It is certainly the case that Muslim rulers usually tolerated, as the Koran suggests it should, the existence in their own communities of non-believers. There were on average far more tolerant of other religious communities than their Christian counterparts in Europe.

The concept of *jihad* in Islamic tradition has often been seen, incorrectly, as embodying this idea of evangelical war: a war against non-Muslims simply because they do not confess

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[19] George Hunsinger, 'Invading Iraq: Is It Justified?', in United States Institute of Peace, *Would an Invasion of Iraq Be a 'Just War'?*, Special Report, January 2003, p. 9.

[20] Pope John Paul II, Address of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Diplomatic Corps, 13 January 2003, Available at: http://vatican.va/holyfather/johnpaulii/speeches/2003/January/documents/hfjp-iispe20030113diplomatic-corpsen.html

[21] A tax paid to indicate submission to the dominance of Islam, but not indicating acceptance of it as a confessional faith. Payment of this tax allowed non-Muslims to continue to confess their own faiths.

Islam. But the term *jihad* means to 'strive' or 'struggle' in the way of God. It is more correct to say that there are four different kinds of Jihad:

- q   personal spiritual and moral struggle in order to overcome self-centredness and follow the teachings of the Koran;
- q   calm preaching;
- q   righteous behaviour that provides witness to the unbeliever about the way of Islam;
- q   war against those who oppress or persecute believers.[22]

All faithful Muslims are thus involved in a continuous 'greater jihad', which is largely nonviolent. The 'lesser jihad', or war, is commanded by Allah but must be carried out according to strict rules. There is a sense in which the lesser jihad is both a 'Holy War' and 'Just War'. But the purpose pf the lesser jihad (or war) is not to make others Muslim, although some (Muslims and non-Muslim) believe it is.

Sikhism identifies the possible need for war in self-defence. The sixth Guru said: 'In the Guru's house, religion and worldly enjoyment should be combined - the cooking pot to feed the poor and needy and the sword to hit oppressors'. The tenth and last Guru, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708), was also a general. In order to strengthen the courage and military discipline of the Sikhs at a time of great persecution, he organised the Khalsa – the Sikh brotherhood. Guru Gobind Singh expressed the idea of just war as follows:

'When all efforts to restore peace prove useless and no words avail, Lawful is the flash of steel, It is right to draw the sword.'

But the idea of 'Holy War' as a war of conversion is not found in Sikhism. A central teaching of Sikhism is respect for people of all faiths.

At the end of the day what counts here is not whether a person making war could successfully justify the action in some court of theology against the best religious scholars or religious judges of his or her tradition. In many cases, as suggested above, the argument cuts both ways and the leaders of war are rarely put to such a test. What concerns us is the way in which leaders can use the a religious justification for war in a way that people will follow them to war, to the killing of others and to the possible death of themselves, or their loved ones, including possibly their children, all in the name of God.

## IV.   RELIGIOUS WARS IN HISTORY: THE WAR AUDIT

Table 1 provides a list of major wars of the three and a half thousand years up to the end of the nineteenth century and indicates in the columns to the right on a scale of 0 to 5, the degree to which religious ideas or justifications were central to the purpose of the war. Table 2 provides a list of major wars of the twentieth century and similarly indicates in the columns to the right on a scale of 0 to 5, the degree to which religious ideas or justifications were central to the purpose of the war. The judgments are necessarily subjective, and in particular cases, certain historians might disagree. But the general trend across all of the wars is in our opinion beyond debate. The main conclusions we draw from these tables are presented below.

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[22] 'World Religions War and Peace', http://www.ppu.org.uk/learn/infodocs/st_religions.html

TABLE #1: ROLE OF RELIGION IN MAJOR WARS BEFORE 20th CENTURY

Increasing intensity of religious factors as motivation →
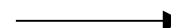
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Megiddo, First Battle of 1469 BC	■					
Zhou defeats the Shang in China ca. 1027 BC	■					
Persian Empire Formed 550-530 BC	■					
Magahda Wars in India 490-350 BC	■					
Greek-Persian Wars 499-488 BC	■					
Roman Conquests 498-272 BC	■					
Chinese Warring States Period 481-221 BC	■					
Peloponnesian War 460-445 BC	■					
Great Peloponnesian War 431-404 BC	■					
Conquests of Alexander the Great 336-323 BC	■					
First Punic War 264-241 BC	■					
Second Punic War 218-201 BC	■					
Gallic Wars, Campaigns of Julius Caesar 58-51 BC	■					
Great Roman Civil War 49-44 BC	■					
Wars of the Second Triumvirate	■					
Conquests of the Huns 350-453	■					
Arab Conquests 632-732						■
Crusades 1097-1291						■
Mongol Conquests 1190-1297	■					
Establishment of the Ottoman Empire 1302-1326	■					
Hundred Years' War 1337-1453	■					
Fall of Constantinople 1453		■				
Italian Wars 1494-1559	■					
Japanese Civil Wars 1560-1584	■					
Moghul Conquest of India 1503-1529			■			
Reformation Wars						■
Thirty Years' War 1618-1648				■		
Manchu Conquest of China 1618-1650	■					
Spanish Conquests in North and South America			■			
War of the Grand Alliance		■				
Great Northern War		■				
War of Austrian Succession		■				
Seven Years' War		■				
War of the American Revolution			■			
Wars of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars 1792-1815	■					
Latin American Wars of Independence 1808-1828	■					
Italian Unification Wars 1848-1866	■					
American Indian Wars			■			
US Civil War 1861-1865		■				
European Colonial Wars Africa, Asia, Pacific 1870-1945			■			
Franco-Prussian War 1870-1871	■					

TABLE #2: ROLE OF RELIGION IN MAJOR WARS OF 20th CENTURY

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905	■					
Mexican Revolution 1910-1920	■					
World War I	■					
Russian Civil War 1918-1922		■				
Italo-Ethiopian War 1935-1936	■					
Spanish Civil War 1936-1939			■			
World War II		■				
Chinese Civil War 1945-1949	■					
Ant-Colonial Liberations Wars 1945-1999	■					
Arab-Israeli Wars 1947-1982			■			
US-Soviet Cold War 1948-1991			■			
Korean War 1950-1953	■					
Vietnam War 1961-1975	■					
Northern Ireland 1968-1998		■				
India-Pakistan War Bangladesh 1971	■					
Vietnam-Cambodia War 1978-1989	■					
China-Vietnam War 1979	■					
Afghanistan – Anti-Soviet War 1979-1989				■		
Iran-Iraq War 1980-1988		■				
Falkland Islands War 1982	■					
Grenada - American Invasion 1983	■					
Panama - American invasion 1989	■					
Persian Gulf War 1991	■					
Bosnia (1994-1995)		■				
Rwanda-Burundi (1993-1994)	■					
Democratic Republic of Congo Civil War (1994 et seq.)	■					
Chechen Wars (1994 and 1999 to date)		■				
Sudan Civil War (1983 et seq.)			■			
Al Qaida Terror War (1992 et seq)					■	
Kosovo (1999)	■					
US and allied invasion of Afghanistan (2001 et seq.)		■				
US and allied invasion of Iraq (2003 et seq.)				■		

In calculating the role of religion in major wars we focused on five components:

- q religion as a mobiliser
- q religious motivation and discourse by political leaders
- q attacks on symbolic religious targets
- q conversion goals
- q strong support from religious leaders

The presence or lack of these five factors was the determinant of the role of religion in the given conflict. Due to the nature of this methodology these are debateable findings. For instance one leader may declare simply 'May God bless us and watch over us' whereas another may declare that 'God calls us, his chosen people, to annihilate our enemies'. Both are employing a religious discourse yet there is clearly a difference in severity. Measuring this difference is difficult and our findings had to reflect this. Some components are more straightforward such as religion as a mobiliser. Of the five levels outlined in the table, 0 represents a minimal or virtually nonexistent religious element to the conflict. For instance, in the Korean War religion was marginal to what was a primarily ideological struggle. Whether a conflict is rated 1-5 represents a broad application of the five criteria above. Some conflicts

may have all these elements in spades whereas others have some but not others and perhaps all but not to a great extent. These realities had to be represented in the tables above.

Ultimately this table is meant to stimulate discussion rather than provide the final word on the role of religion in violent conflict over time.

Based on the analysis presented in Tables 1 and 2 and our understanding of the main religious texts, we conclude as follows:

q   There have been few genuinely religious wars in the last 100 years. The Israel/Arab wars were wars of nationalism and liberation of territory.

q   The Islamist fundamentalist terror war is largely about political order in the Arab countries, and the presence of US forces in Saudi Arabia. It is not about religious conversion or a clash of religions. Nevertheless, bin Laden claims a religious duty in executing the war.

q   The US and allied invasion of Iraq is a war that has arguably been caused by religion: the religious conviction of one man, President George W. Bush. This is discussed later.

q   Leaders use differences in confessional faith as a way of sewing hatred and mobilising support for political wars, and it is mainly in this way that religion becomes a factor in war.

q   At a philosophical level, the main religious traditions have little truck with war or violence. All advocate peace as the norm and see genuine spirituality as involving a disavowal of violence. Most religious traditions regard war as a failing to achieve genuine spirituality and impose special constraints on its conduct.

q   It is mainly when organised religious institutions become involved with state institutions that people begin advocating religious justifications for war.

q   We need to go back to the wars of Arab expansion, the Crusades and the Reformation Wars for genuine wars over religion. Some internal wars in the last 100 years have been more closely tied to religious identity. These include the Hindu/Muslim clashes in Gujarat India and the Christian Muslim clashed in Maluku Indonesia in the last few years. But even these have political explanations.

A brief sketch of the way religion was used to justify these wars, and their immediate impact, is provided later in this section.

One reason for conducting the war audit was to address some of the over-simplifications that have crept into media reporting about the prominence that war occupies in one religion or another. Boxes 2 and 3 contains a list of broad fatality estimates (people killed) lists for major wars in four different categories: the twentieth century 'hemoclysm'; major wars and atrocities; secondary wars and atrocities; and mid-range wars and atrocities. This material in Boxes 2 and 3 is not the original work of the current authors. It summarises the work in the 'Historical Atlas of the Twentieth Century' available online at http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/20centry.htm.

The purpose of including the material in Boxes 2 and 3 in the audit of religious wars is to show that the overwhelming majority of wars and the overwhelming majority of the victims of such wars cannot be classified primarily according to religious causes or religious beliefs. There have been horrific examples though where particular communities have been targeted because of their religious faith, and these atrocities have been perpetrated by the three most

vicious and blood-thirsty regimes ever to hold power: Stalin's Russia, Mao's China and Hitler's Germany.

Based on the material in Boxes 2 and 3, and other information in this article, we can make some superficial conclusions:

q There have been more devastating wars among so-called Christian states (fighting each other) in the past 1000 years than between so-called Christian and so-called Muslim states.

q Predominantly Christian states have killed more Jews and Muslims than predominantly Muslim states have killed Christians or Jews.

q Atheistic totalitarian states (Stalin's Russia and Mao's China) have perpetrated more mass murder than any state dominated by a religious faith. Hitler's Germany, nominally a predominantly Christian state, but a totalitarian one, was responsible for the single most devastating genocide in history of a group identified by their religion: six million Jewish people.

BOX 2: ESTIMATED DEATH TOLLS:
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY HEMOCLYSM

Hemoclysm: the string of interconnected barbarities that have made the Twentieth Century so miserable for people. Here is the body count for the Big Five -- the First and Second World Wars, Russian Revolution, Communist China and the Soviet Union -- which together account for maybe 75 per cent of all deaths by atrocity in the 20th Century.

First World War (1914-18)	**8.5 million military** **6-9 million civilian**
Russian Civil War (1917-22)	**5 million**
Soviet Union, Stalin's regime (1924-53)	**9-60 million**
Second World War (1937-45)	**50 million**

> Haywood: *Atlas of World History* (1997): 50M
> Keegan, J., *The Second World War* (1989): 50M
> Messenger, *The Chronological Atlas of World War Two* (1989): 50M
> *The Times Concise Atlas of World History* (1988): 50M
> J.M. Roberts, *Twentieth Century* (1999): >50M
> Brzezinski:
> > Military: 19M
> > Civilians, "actual byproduct of hostilities": 20M
> > Civilians, Sino-Japanese War: 15M
> > Hitler's murders: 17M
> > TOTAL: 71M
>
> Rummel:
> > European War Dead (1939-45): 28,736,000
> > Sino-Japanese War Dead (1937-45): 7,140,000
> > War-related Democides
> > Hitler: 20,946,000
> > Stalin: 13,053,000
> > Japanese: 5,964,000
> > Chinese Nationalist: 5,907,000
> > Allied Bombing: 796,000
> > Croatian: 655,000
> > Tito: 600,000
> > Romanian domestic democide: 484,000
> > Chinese Communist: 250,000
> > Hungarian democide in Yugoslavia: 78,000
>
> [TOTAL: 48,733,000]
> [TOTAL (1937-45): 84,609,000]

Chinese Civil War (1945-49)	**6 million**
People's Republic of China, Mao regime (1949-1975)	**30-40 million**

BOX 3: ESTIMATED DEATH TOLLS

MAJOR WARS AND ATROCITIES

The following events, however, all killed more people than the American Civil War, which cost approximately 620,000 lives.

Congo Free State (1886-1908)	2.5-8 million
Mexican Revolution (1910-20)	1 million
Armenian Massacres (1915-23)	2 million
China, Warlord Era (1917-28)	800,000
China, Nationalist Era (1928-37)	3.1 million
Korean War (1950-53)	2.7 million
North Korea (1948 et seq.)	1.6 million
(Not including deaths from famine)	
Rwanda and Burundi (1959-95)	1.2 million
Second Indochina War (1960-75)	1.7 million
Nigeria (1966-70)	1 million
Bangladesh (1971)	1-1.25 million
Cambodia, Khmer Rouge (1975-1978)	1.6 million
Mozambique (1975-1993)	700,000
Afghanistan (1979-2001)	1.4 million
Iran-Iraq War (1980-88)	1 million
Sudan (1983 et seq.)	1.5 million

SECONDARY WARS AND ATROCITIES

These events cost fewer lives than the American Civil War (620,000) but more than the number of murders committed in America during the five years from 1990 through 1994 (119,700).

Philippines Insurgency (1899-1902)	200,000
Brazil (1900 et seq.) Indian Genocide	235,000
Amazonia (1900-12)	250,000
(Rubber companies in Peru and Brazil, worker deaths)	
Portuguese Colonies (1900-25)	325,000
French Colonies (1900-40)	200,000
Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)	120,000
Maji-Maji Revolt, German East Africa (1905-07)	200,000
Libya (1911-31) resistance to Italian rule	200,000 +
Balkan Wars (1912-13)	140,000
Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922)	50,000 KIA
	250,000 civilians
Turkey (1925-28)	250,000
Spanish Civil War (1936-39)	365,000
Abyssinian Conquest (1935-41)	120,000
Yugoslavia, Tito's Regime (1944-80)	200,000
First Indochina War (1945-54)	500,000
Colombia (1946-58)	250,000
India/Pakistan (1947) rioting accompanying partition	250,000 +
Romania (1948-89)	400,000
Burma/ Myanmar (1948 et seq.)	100,000
Algeria (1954-62)	260,000 +
Sudan (1955-72)	500,000
Guatemala (1960-1996)	200,000
Indonesia (1965-66)	500,000
Vietnam, post-war Communist regime (1975 et seq.)	430,000
Angola (1975-95)	500,000

BOX 3 (continued): ESTIMATED DEATH TOLLS

East Timor (1975-99)	150,000 – 200,000
Lebanon (1975-90)	150,000
Cambodian Civil War (1978-91)	1.1 million
Iraq, Saddam Hussein (1979-2003) regime murders	300,000
(Not including the million dead in the Iran-Iraq War)	
Uganda (1979-87)	120,000
Kurdistan (1980s, 1990s)	120,000
Liberia (1989-97)	200,000
Iraq UN sanctions (1990 et seq.)	500,000 – 1 million
	Excess deaths
Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-95)	150,000 – 250,000
Somalia Civil War (1991 et seq.)	350,000
Zaire (Dem. Rep. Congo), Civil War (1997)	250,000

MID-RANGE WARS AND ATROCITIES

These cost more lives than the American losses in Vietnam (58,135), but not as many lives as five years of murder in America (119,700 killed 1990-94). Or another way of looking at it, each atrocity on this page killed roughly the same number of people as a single year of medical mistakes in the USA (44,000 to 98,000).

Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901)	115,000
(In North China, 32,000 Chinese Christians killed, plus 200 missionaries)	
Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902)	50,000 to 70,000
Colombia (1899-1902)	100,000
Mad Mullah Jihad (Somalia 1899-1920)	100,000
Herero War, German Southwest Africa (1904-07)	30,000 to 80,000
Russo-Polish War (1918-1920)	100,000
Mongolia (1926-1991)	100,000
(one mass grave contained the bodies of 5,000 Buddhist monks)	
Chaco War (Paraguay/Bolivia) 1932-35)	85,000
Russo-Finnish War (1939-1940)	90,000
Greek Civil War (1943-49)	150,000
Israel/Arab (1948 et seq.)	100,000 -125,000
War of Independence, 1948	*21,000*
Suez War, 1956	*3,000*
Six Day War, 1967	*19,000*
Yom Kippur War, 1973	*11,000 – 16,000*
Israel/Palestine Civil Strife	2,600 (1986-2001)
Bulgaria (1948-89)	200,000
East Germany (1949-89)	100,000
Iraq (1960s)	100,000
Angola (1961-75)	55,000 – 100,000
Mozambique Anti-colonial war (1961-75)	60,000
North Yemen (1962-70)	100,000
Nicaragua (1972-91)	60,000
Philippines Guerrilla Wars (1972-)	70,000
(35,000 in Muslim secessionist war in South)	
Colombia (1970s, 1980s, 90s)	90,000
El Salvador (1979-92)	70,000
Algeria (1992 et seq.)	80,000

A. Christianity's Conversion from Pacifism to Militarism

Early Christians believed in nonviolence. They certainly had little truck with Rome's wars and most Christians refused to join the army and fight. Following the conversion of Constantine in the fourth century, when Christianity became identified with the state, this situation changed dramatically: 'When the power of the empire became joined to the ideology of the Church, the empire was immediately recast and reenergized, and the Church became an entity so different from what had preceded it as to be almost unrecognizable.'[23] Constantine's conversion led to the militarization of the Christian movement – no longer guided by the compassionate teachings of Christ, but rather spearheaded by the Emperor's goals of political and geographical conquest. Christians, including the Emperor were compelled to find religious justifications for war. As the audits above show, predominantly Christian states have been responsible for mass atrocities against Jews, Muslims, indigenous peoples, and other Christians. It is yet another thing though to suggest that most of these wars and atrocities undertaken by predominantly Christian states were justified by religious principles or purposes.

B. Islamic Expansion

In the history of Islam, particularly in the period known as the Age of Conquest, war played an important role in spreading the new faith, quickly establishing Muslim rule throughout the Mediterranean and beyond. The prophet Muhammad was himself a warrior, as one source describes him:

> 'He sent out many expeditions and himself commanded forces 28 times. Fighting took place in almost half of all the military campaigns he organized during his mission, which number about 80, and only around 1,000 people lost their lives in all on both sides. Around 250 Muslims were martyred and 750 non-Muslims were killed. This means that God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, established his Message and brought absolute security to the whole of the Arabian peninsula for the first time in its history, and opened the way to global security, at the cost of only 1,000 lives.'[24]

During the reign of the second caliph,[25] Umar I (634-644), the Arabs conquered Syria, Palestine, Egypt, part of North Africa, and the Sasanid Empire, which was centered in what is now Iran. Here is an account of a later eastern campaign in this war of expansion:

> In 663, the Arabs in Iran launched their first attack on Bactria. The invading forces captured from the Turki Shahis the area around Balkh, including Nava Vihara Monastery, causing the Turki Shahis to retreat southward to their stronghold in the Kabul Valley. Soon, the Arabs were able to extend their control northward and make their first inroads into Sogdia by taking Bukhara from the Western Turks.
>
> The Arab military policy was to kill all who resisted, but to grant protected status to those who submitted peacefully and to exact tribute from them in either money or goods. They guaranteed the latter arrangement through making a legal covenant (Arab. *'ahd*) with any city that submitted by treaty. Strictly following Islamic law that

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[23] James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews*, Mariner Books, New York, 2002, p. 171.
[24] http://www.fethullahgulen.org/infinitelight/inf2pg8.htm
[25] The word 'caliph' means 'successor' (to Muhammad).

once given, a covenant or contract is binding and cannot be retracted, the Arabs gained the trust of potential new subjects so that there was less resistance to their takeover.

Religious policy followed the military one. Those who accepted Arab rule by treaty were allowed to keep their religions by paying a poll tax. Those who resisted faced conversion to Islam or the sword. Many, however, voluntarily accepted Islam. Many wished to avoid the poll tax, while others, particularly merchants and artisans, saw additional economic advantages that would come from conversion.' [26]

Muslim forces conquered Jerusalem in 638 and Egypt in 641. Within a few decades, Muslims took control of Syria, North and parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and Spain in the west (reaching as far north in Europe as Tours, France), Central Asia in the east, and parts of the Indian subcontinent in the southeast. [27]

Here is one account of an attack in the eastern campaigns:

'The first two attempts to take Sindh were unsuccessful. However, in 711, at about the same time as they took Samarqand, the Arabs finally achieved their aim. At that time, Hajjaj bin-Yusuf Sakafi was the governor of the easternmost provinces of the Umayyad Empire, which included modern-day eastern Iran, Baluchistan (Mukran), and southern Afghanistan. He decided to dispatch his nephew and son-in-law, General Muhammed bin-Qasim, with twenty thousand troops, to launch a double-pronged invasion of Sindh by land and by sea. The initial target was the coastal city of Debal, near present-day Karachi.

Sindh, at this time, had a mixed population of Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains. Xuanzang reported more than four hundred Buddhist monasteries there with twenty-six thousand monks. The Buddhists constituted the majority of the urban mercantile and artisan class, while the Hindus were mostly rural farmers. The area was ruled by Chach, a Hindu brahmin with a rural basis, who had usurped control of the government. He supported agriculture and was not interested in protecting trade.

The Hindus had a warrior caste who, along with their political and religious leaders, fought the huge Umayyid force. The Buddhists, on the other hand, lacking any martial tradition or caste, and discontent with Chach's policies, were willing to avoid destruction and submit peacefully. General bin-Qasim's troops won the victory, and reportedly massacred large numbers of the local population, inflicting heavy damage on the city as punishment for their stiff resistance. It is hard to know how exaggerated that report was. After all, the Arabs wished to preserve a financially viable Sindh in order to increase and profit from the trade that passed through it. Nevertheless, the Umayyids razed the main Hindu temple and erected a mosque on its site.

The Umayyid forces then set out against Nirun near present-day Pakistani Hyderabad. The Buddhist governor of the city surrendered voluntarily. However, to set a further

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[26] Alexander Berzin, 'The Historical Interaction between the Buddhist and Islamic Cultures before the Mongol Empire', http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/historic_interaction_buddhist_islamic/history_cultures_03.html

[27] Palmer Fernandez, *Encyclopedia*.

example, the triumphant Muslims constructed here as well a mosque on the site of the main Buddhist monastery. They spared the rest of the town.'[28]

C.   Crusades 1096-1270

The Crusades represent one of the bloodiest periods in the history of European Christianity. These military expeditions were first launched in 1096 by Pope Urban II, who entreated Christian kingdoms throughout Western Europe to recapture Palestine (the 'Holy Land') from Muslim control. The crusaders organized eight major military expeditions, spanning almost two whole centuries between 1096 and 1270.

Before the Crusaders left Europe, they had killed more than 10,000 Jews. The killing of Jews in Europe was an unintended repercussion of the original goal:

> 'With the blessings of Pope Urban II, two very different forces, knights and popular pilgrims set out to liberate the Holy Land from the infidel. Unprepared for the tremendous difficulties of the trek to the Near East and frustrated by the hardships, many of the pilgrims listened to calls to eliminate the unbelievers Jews) along their route. The result was a terrifying outburst of pogroms.'

> 'What Pope Urban II had in mind when he preached the First Crusade was, I think, a variety of quite practical things. He hoped for the reunion of Christendom, which at that time was divided between the Latin Church and the Greek Church. He hoped also to recapture Jerusalem, which had been under Muslim rule for many centuries. And it was also a matter of giving the largely unemployed and over-aggressive nobility of France something to do, get them out of Europe and stop them devastating the ... lands. All these factors played a part in his mind. Whether he himself had any particular beliefs about the imminence of the End, that's really doubtful. But that is what was read into his speech by many uninformed people. ... He undoubtedly wanted the knights to go on this great military expedition. He had not foreseen that they would be followed by a mass of upstart peasantry. That, however, is what happened. And it was the peasantry which wreaked the great destructions, the murder of the Jews all down the Rhine and the savage assaults on Muslims by those who got to Jerusalem.'[29]

After capturing Jerusalem in July 1099, the soldiers of the First Crusade launched a large-scale massacre, described by two contemporary sources as follows:

> Fulcher of Chartres: 'They desired that this place, so long contaminated by the superstition of the pagan inhabitants, should be cleansed from their contagion.'[30]

> Raymond of Aguilar: 'it was a just and splendid judgment of God that this place should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers '[31]

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[28] Alexander Berzin, 'The Historical Interaction between the Buddhist and Islamic Cultures before   the   Mongol   Empire',   http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/historic_interaction_buddhist_islamic/history_cultures_04.html
[29] http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/apocalypse/explanation/crusades.html
[30] http://www.understanding-islam.org/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=1143
[31] http://perso.wanadoo.fr/julia.thompson/crusades_2h3b.htm

The Crusaders slaughtered almost all Muslims and Jews in Jerusalem, including women and children. The death toll has been reasonably estimated as reaching up to 10,000.

D. Reformation Wars

Having spread its power to most parts of Europe, the Christian Church with its headquarters in Rome was by the sixteenth century the most powerful source of political legitimacy and moral authority across the territory ruled by the kings and queens of the day. Through the doctrine of 'divine right', the notion that a monarch ruled by the disposition of God,[32] the Christian Church positioned itself at the centre of the political order. This had not always been a comfortable relationship, and the Popes at the head of the Church fought wars or engaged in other political intrigue and oppression, on occasion against rival 'Popes', to maintain their power. Through the course of the sixteenth century, a number of religious scholars, political groups and even monarchs challenged the authority of the Church. The resulting political turmoil over 150 years or so, called the Reformation', became a battle both for the authority of Rome's interpretation of the Bible, and simultaneously therefore, a battle by Rome to maintain its political authority. The wars of the Reformation, particularly bloody and vengeful, were wars of religion, because religion of the day was politics. They were inseparable.

The period saw wars and peasant rebellions from Ireland in the West to Hungary in the East, either in support of the authority of Rome and its loyal monarchs and priests or in direct opposition to this authority. Thus, protestant England beginning with Henry VIII became the mortal enemy of Catholic Spain, only to find itself in a religiously configured Civil war between the protestant republicans of the parliamentary forces and the supporters of the Catholic King, Chares I.

The worst atrocity, among many, of this period was in France, on 24 August 24, 1572, the day before St. Bartholomew's Day. Forces of the French king 'hunted down and executed over three thousand Huguenots, including Coligny, in Paris. Within three days, royal and Guise armies had hunted down and executed over twenty thousand Huguenots [protestants]. The massacre was a turning point in both French history and the history of the European Christian church. Protestants no longer viewed Catholicism as a misguided church, but as the force of the devil itself'.[33] This massacre was the 'single most bloody and systematic extermination of non-combatants in European history until World War II'.

V. WHERE ARE WE IN THE 21ST CENTURY?

A. Most Recent Examples (Gujarat and Al Qaida)

The most recent examples of religiously motivated violence in the twenty-first century confirm the results of the war audit of the previous centuries. That is, what many represent as religious wars have more convincing explanations as manifestations of policies, not religion,

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[32] See http://capo.org/premise/96/mar/p960304.html 'Government *per se* is divinely ordained by God in the Scriptures; bad rulers were sent by God to chastise the nation for their sins; rebellion causes more harm to innocents than to the guilty.' 'God hath made the king in every realm judge over all, and over him there is no judge. He that judgeth the king judgeth God, and he that layeth hand on the king layeth hand on God . . . If the subjects sin, they must be brought to the king's judgement. If the king sin, he must be reserved unto the judgement, wrath and vengeance of God.'
[33] See http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/REFORM/WARS.HTM

and that religion is more likely to be a cause of war when religion and the state authorities become closely allied or intertwined. This can be demonstrated by reference to the events in Gujarat, India in 2002 and by the attacks of Al Qaida on the USA and its allies.

During the spring of 2002 in the state of Gujarat on the western coast of India, the tragic memories of the 1992 destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya in North India by Hindu fundamentalists were rekindled. Following an attack in the Gujarati city of Godhra, presumably by Muslims, on a train of Hindu activists returning from a pilgrimage to the disputed site at Ayodhya, the calls for retaliation were swift. Thankfully the effects of this event were limited to Gujarat and did not spread throughout India. Rumours circulated including one propagated by the state government that Pakistani intelligence was behind the attack; this declaration fed the already powerful anti-Pakistan feeling after violence in Kashmir and the 2001 terrorist attack on the Indian parliament. All told, fifty-eight Hindus had been burned alive when the train was set alight and their bodies were transported, on the instructions of the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi, to a hospital in central Ahmedabad. His original demand was to continue the train forward but he abandoned this position on the strong advice of police officials that this was sure to cause violence. Either way, angry Hindus lined the procession route and, far from discouraging rioting, the Chief Minister's actions almost assured a bloody reprisal.

Over the next few days, Hindu mobs roamed the city targeting Muslim families, neighbourhoods and businesses. There is evidence that this reaction was pre-planned and certainly some government officials and police officers were complicit in the violence[34]. These arsonists, rapists and murders sent a clear and unambiguous message that violence will be reacted to in kind. Ironically Gujarat was once the home of Mahatma Gandhi who famously recognised: "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind". Muslims accounted for most of the final death toll of over 2,000 across the state and the violence continues through displacement, discrimination and intimidation. Some writers[35] have argued that this was not a spontaneous communal riot but rather a state-sponsored pogrom designed to decimate the Muslim population. This could potentially be a dangerous new development now that Hindu nationalists control many state governments and the national government in Delhi.

The violence in Gujarat was not particularly motivated by religious feelings and was clearly motivated more by political pragmatism. Though the Hindu rioters shouted and made their Muslim victims repeat 'Jai Shri Ram' ('Hail Lord Ram') this was the limit of their religiosity in relation to the violence. More important to the Hindutva activists was purging Muslims from Gujarat and ethnically cleansing the state or at the very least weakening Muslims economically and politically vis-à-vis Hindus. Arguably like most of the religious violence perpetrated by all communities in India there was a political agenda at play. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by Modi had a tenuous hold on power in Gujarat and faced potential defeat in the 2002 state elections. Therefore they needed something to ensure their electoral success in upcoming elections. The Godhra train attack provided them with a symbol to unite the Hindu vote behind them and Modi was returned to power in December 2002.

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[34] For a detailed analysis please see Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP), 'Harvest of Hatred: The Concerned Citizens. Tribunal Report on Gujarat, 2002', *South Asian History Academic Papers 7*, University of Leicester: 1-181. [Online] Accessed July 29, 2003 http://www.le.ac.uk/hi/centres/plur/publications/harvest_report.pdf

[35] Ashutosh Varshney, 2002. 'Lumpen Logistics', *India Today* March 25, 2002. 27(12): 49, Singh, Tavleen. 2002. 'Pogrom Politics', *India Today,* 18 March 2002. 27(11): 28.

The influence of religion on the violence perpetrated by Osama bin Laden and Al Qaida is much more direct than in the Gujarat case, but even for bin Laden, there are important political issues at stake.

The Arab jihadists who follow bin Laden share hostility to the USA, Israel and governments of certain states like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which they see as repressive and un-Islamic, even anti-Islamic. They see these governments as having abandoned the law of Islam, as having squandered the potential of pan-Arabism. In almost all cases, this hostility is linked in their rhetoric to the US military presence in Islamic countries, especially Saudia Arabia;[36] repeated US military attacks on Islamic countries (Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan) over a number of years; US military support for Israel; Israel's occupation of Palestine[37] (especially Jerusalem); and the military alliance between the USA and the Saudi government (which they see as 'un-Islamic'). They share a commitment to use of deadly violence against civilian and military targets and other terrorist tactics. They cloak their political sentiments and ideals in a legitimating mantle of fundamentalist Islam[38] and defence against infidel aggressor-occupiers. Beyond these commonalities, it is less clear that they have a common political view of deeper issues, such as globalisation or the economic future of the Islamic world, or Saudi Arabia in particular. There is also the important psychological dimension to their motivations – a fundamental spiritual revulsion against (or at least confusion toward) what they see as a collision between Islamic values and Western 'civilisation'.

The root causes of the Arab jihadist movement cannot be understood without reference to the resurgence of politicised Islam and the link that radical Arab activists and extremists have made between it and Arab nationalism, one element of which is support (however nominal) for Palestinian aspirations to statehood. This is discussed later in the section on Islamic fundamentalism.

The principal message of the public statements and declarations by Osama bin Laden is the strategic goal of expelling the American presence – military and civilian – from Saudi Arabia and the whole Persian Gulf region.[39] In this respect, the emergence of the threat from bin Laden and his sympathisers can be seen as a consequence in part of the Gulf War which left

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[36] US air forces had been based there from 1946 to 1962. Other very small-scale deployments of air assets occurred in crisis occurred in 1963 and 1980. After Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the US began one its largest operational deployments since the Korean War, when it deployed 400,000 military personnel to the country. See Congressional Research Service Country Study, Saudi Arabia, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field(DOCID-sa0105) Some 6,000 troops remained there as of 1996. See 'CRS Issues Brief 93113: Saudi Arabia: Post-war Issues and US Relations', updated 2 December 1996, available at www.fas.org/man/crs/93-113.htm

[37] This view does not depend on any precise view of what is Palestine, except that it is Arab territory. Whether it includes the territory inside the state of Israel is not a distinction always made.

[38] According to a number of observers, such as Edward Said, there is such diversity in religious beliefs and practices between fundamentalists from different national backgrounds that a claim to commonality rooted in religion gives no greater commonality than that between mystical Catholicism of Spain and austere and highly intellectualised Protestantism of northern Europe.

[39] Dr. Ely Karmon 'Bin Ladin is out to get America!', October 29, 1998, International Institute for Counter-Terrorism website, www.ict.org.il Karmon mentions bin laden's 'Declaration of War' published in August 1996, his interviews with various Islamic journals, CNN and ABC News, and the two *fatwa* [religious rulings] published in February 1998 in Afghanistan. See also the US District Court indictment of bin Laden also mentions as a principal goal of Al Qaida the expulsion of US forces from Saudi Arabia. The US indictment against bin Laden can be found at www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/nyfo/pressrels/1998/11041998.htm See paragraph three of the Background section.

US forces deployed in Saudi Arabia.[40] In a *fatwa* written in August 1996, bin Laden describes the US military presence (and that of its allies)[41] as the 'latest and greatest' of the 'aggressions incurred by the Muslims since the death of the Prophet'.[42] He says 'there is no more important duty than pushing the American enemy out of the holy land'. But bin Laden also issued several *fatwa* in 1992 or 1993 calling for attacks on US personnel in Somalia.[43]

But the history of bin Laden's activities in the early 1990s, when he was in Saudi Arabia mobilising political opposition to the regime, and the text of his first *fatwa*, make very plain that a principal target is also the Saudi regime, which he chastises for many failings, above all its suppression of religious scholars, for its plundering and mismanagement of the country's wealth, and its acceptance of US bases. Bin Laden says the 'regime has torn off its legitimacy' because of its 'suspension of Sharia law, its bloody confrontation with Ulama and righteous youths, its other repressions', and for lying to religious leaders in 1991 that US forces would only be in the country for a few months.

The *fatwa* makes a curious logical leap when it comes to questions of use of violence against the Saudi regime, thereby giving credibility to later claims that bin Laden was convinced or paid off by Saudi leaders not to attack Saudi targets in the country. (That bin Laden's family is a bulwark of the regime may also have something to do with it.) The document says that the Saudi regime is the lesser of two evils (compared with the USA), and that the 'Islamic principle' of repelling the greater of two dangers should be observed. It goes on to say that cooperating with 'non-righteous leaders' to fight the greater evil is also acceptable. This exception made for the Saudi government is also extended to the oil wealth of the Islamic world. Of some note, Karmon reports that though the liberation of Arab lands under 'Zionist' occupation is a goal of bin Laden's, he has not shown much attention to the Palestinian question and 'has in the past even been criticised for his inactivity in this field'.[44]

The August 1996 *fatwa* of bin Laden notes the need for guerrilla and terrorist warfare because of the overwhelming conventional military power of the USA. It links the right to use terror to the US military presence ('Terrorising you while you are carrying arms on our land is a legitimate and morally demanded duty'.) According to the US District Court indictment, in 1998 bin laden issued a statement called 'The Nuclear bomb of Islam', in which he said that 'it is the duty of the Muslims to prepare as much as force as possible to terrorise the enemies of God'.

Al Qaida had been attractive to recruits in the thousands because it was highly organised and well supported. According to US official sources reporting prior to 11 September 2001,[45] Al Qaida had a ruling council and a military committee, chaired by bin Laden. The group maintained contact with members of other terrorist groups, notably Egyptian Jihad, in various countries, including the UK.[46] The group also relied on links with national jihad groups in other countries: Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Somalia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Afghanistan,

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[40] Former US Secretary of Defence, William Perry, said that to understand why terrorists had attacked US forces in Saudi Arabia in 1995 and 1996, 'you need to go back in time about six years to the Gulf War'. See Remarks, by William J. Perry to the American bar Association, Orlando FLA, 6 August 1996.
[41] UK air force units regularly deploy to the Prince Sultan airbase.
[42] For text, see www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A4342-2001Sep21.html
[43] See District Court indictment.
[44] Ely Karmon, 'Terrorism against Jews by Radical Islamic Organisations and Groups', 30 September 2000, ICT website: http://www.ict.org.il/articles/articledet.cfm?articelid-139
[45] See for example the District Court indictment.
[46] ibid.

Pakistan, Bosnia, Croatia, Albania, Algeria, Tunisia, Lebanon, the Philippines, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Kashmir and Chechnia. The group also maintained cells in Kenya, Tanzania, the UK, Canada and the USA. In 1994, bin Laden established a media office in London, which was used, inter alia, to provide cover for recruitment and financing of terrorists.[47] Al Qaida has operational experience dating from the war against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The group began training terrorists to kill US forces in Somalia in 1992 and in 1993, Al Qaida conducted a successful operation that resulted in the death of 18 US military personnel.[48] It is almost certain that Al Qaida planned the attack on the *USS Cole*.[49] Moreover analysts believed, although have not yet confirmed, that bin Laden might have planned the bomb attack on the World Trade Centre in 1993.

According to several sources, it is far from clear just how the ends link up with the means in bin Laden's case. Some believe he is a religiously conservative Arab patriot who believes that to kill infidels aggressing against Arab countries or occupying Arab lands is to do God's will (a bit like those of the Christian right in the USA who murder abortionists) but otherwise lacking a political agenda. Others believe he is somehow functionally motivated – that having seen himself to have the capacity to bring down one superpower, he felt he should try to do the same with the other. Few observers believe that he has any plan in respect of Saudi politics other than seeing a rejection of the pro-Western sentiment that dominates the current regime. All observers agree that he is angry 'in the extreme' with the USA. In his own words describing the September 11 attacks: 'Almighty hit the United States at its most vulnerable point. ... I swear by Almighty God ...that neither the United States or he who lives in the United States will enjoy security before ... all the infidel armies leave the land of Muhammad'.[50]

B.   Christian fundamentalism

In our purview of militant religiosity, it is most appropriate that we turn our focus to Christian fundamentalism in America, for the modern term of 'fundamentalism' originated in the US in the 1920s. Modern Americans are a God-fearing society. An American journalist, Mark Hertsgaard reports, 'a remarkable 94 percent of Americans believe in God. The vast majority of us – 85 percent – are Christians, and half of those call themselves 'born again' Christians'.[51] Christian fundamentalism in the USA has 'turned Christian myths into facts, and had created a hybrid that was neither good science nor good religion'.[52]

In the seminal work, *The Battle for God*, Armstrong remarks that all 'fundamentalisms':

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[47] ibid.

[48] ibid.

[49] According to *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 24 September 2001: 'By targeting the two US embassies in East Africa in 1998, Al-Qaida demonstrated its intention and capability both to conduct mass casualty attacks and to co-ordinate simultaneous suicide strikes on separate targets in two countries. Furthermore, by ramming an explosives-laden suicide boat into the USS Cole in 1998, Al-Qaida demonstrated that it could apply its land technology and techniques to the maritime environment. In conducting four airborne suicide attacks, Al-Qaida has become the first group to perform land, sea and airborne suicide attacks.'

[50] http://www.truthout.org/docs_01/0657.Bin.Laden.Stmt.htm

[51] Mark Hertsgaard, *The Eagle's Shadow: Why America Fascinates and Infuriates the World*, Bloomsbury, London, 2003.p 120

[52] Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism*, Ballatine Books, New York, 2001, p. 3: 355.

are embattled forms of spirituality, which have emerged as a response to a perceived crisis. They are engaged in a conflict with enemies whose secular policies and beliefs seem inimical to religion itself. Fundamentalists do not regard this battle as a conventional political struggle, but experience it as a cosmic war between the forces of good and evil.[53]

Analysis of the speeches of President George W. Bush, especially those commenting on the war on terrorism, show that many are laced with religious language and imagery. For example, terrorists have been repeatedly referred to as 'evildoers'. However, Bush's description of the war on terrorism as a 'crusade' is the most alarming. Amplifying this fundamentalist rhetoric, Lt. General William G. Boykin, the deputy undersecretary of Defense for US intelligence, described the war on terrorism as a 'clash between Judeo-Christian values and Satan'.[54]

Prior to September 11, the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing was the largest terrorist attack on American soil, claiming the lives of 168 people. Timothy McVeigh, who served in the US military and was stationed in the Persian Gulf during the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, claimed the act as one of revenge for the United States Government's aggressive actions in Waco. In 1993, the government raided the Branch Davidian compound, and killed most of the group's members including women and children. Before carrying out his mass murder in Oklahoma, McVeigh reportedly visited Elohim City, the Christian Identity encampment, where he was 'exposed to the militant theology of the Christian Identity movement, which is based on racial supremacy and biblical law'.[55]

Operation Rescue (OR) is radical anti-abortion movement, whose founder Terry Randall has advocated the use of violence in order to prevent the deaths of unborn children. Now known as Operation Save America, the group holds protests outside abortion clinics in towns and cities across both Canada and the United States. Flip Benham, who headed Operation Rescue in 1994, characterised clinic protests as 'bringing the gospel to the gates of hell'.[56] Stretching the bounds of protest, several members of OR have been charged with harassment of abortion clinic doctors and workers. In Buffalo, NY, James Kopp was convicted of murdering Dr. Barnett Slepian, who was an obstetrician and gynaecologist (and also a Jew). Slepian was shot in his kitchen with a single bullet after returning from a synagogue with his wife and four sons, aged seven to 15.[57] Hoping his actions would prevent further killing of innocent children, Paul Hill shot an abortion doctor, John Britton, in northern Florida in 1994. Hill called it 'justifiable homicide'. His story ends with morbid irony. On 3 September 2003, the State of Florida executed Hill who had killed a doctor for killing babies.

All forms of religious fundamentalism have 'cultivated theologies of rage, resentment, and revenge'.[58] But, with further observation, the lines that separate militant religiosity and the

[53] Ibid. xiii.
[54] Richard Cooper, 'General Casts War in Religious Terms', *Los Angeles Times*, 16 October 2003, p. A1, [Online] Available at: http://www.latimes.com
[55] Jay Gary, 'Unmasking Religious Terrorism', *Presence Ministries International*, 30 March 2001, [Online] Available at: http://www.presence.tv/cms/terrorism.shtml
[56] Montana Human Rights Network News, 'Dangerous Dogma: Radical Anti-Choice Movement Increases Montana Presence', May 2002, [Online] Available at: http://www.mhrn.org/news/0502antichoice.html.
[57] Michael Fletcher, 'Sniper Kills Abortion Doctor Near Buffalo', *Washington Post*, 25 October 1998, p. A1, [Online] Available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/abortviolence/stories/sniper.htm.
[58] Armstrong, *The Battle for God,* p. 366.

mainstream become blurred, if not disappear, when we think of such examples as military chaplains, or the use of religious iconic imagery in state propaganda, such as those featured during World War II. The infusion of militarism and faith is not unusual. It seems to be more of a matter of degree to which one attributes violent acts to divine inspiration. Several newspapers reported Eucharistic services being even held for military staff while stationed in the field during the Gulf War II. Is it any more "extreme" for an individual or group to invoke God's name in waging a battle, than it is for a state to claim their cause is divinely sanctioned? Aren't we really just speaking about shades of grey?

C.   Islamic fundamentalism

A specific variant of resurgent, fundamentalist Islam that gave both moral and material support to bin Laden and al Qaida was the Taliban in Afghanistan. The movement arose to oppose and put an end to the lawlessness of the 'warlords' in the city of Kandahar in the failed state of Afghanistan. The founding spark for the movement has been traced to an attack by a Kandahar cleric, Mullah Umar, leading a group of 30 religious students (*taliban*) armed with 16 rifles, against a military camp to free two teenage girls who had been abducted and raped by soldiers.[59] The movement grew in local prominence as Mullah Umar and his followers undertook similar actions, claiming religious authority, to stop the abuse of power by local warlords and armed groups.

A good account of the origins of Taliban is provided by Barnett Rubin, in which he highlights the local origins of the Taliban movement in the 'chronic insecurity' in the city of Kandahar in 1994.[60] The string of attacks to put an end to crime culminated in the assertion of Taliban control over the whole city of Kandahar, but this was made possible in part by provision of material support from Pakistan, which had decided to switch its loyalties in the Afghanistan imbroglio. By August 1998, the Taliban had taken military control of almost all of the country. The Taliban's assertion of control of large parts of Afghanistan was also based on popular appeal. As Rashid points out, for a couple of years after the fall of Kandahar, many in Afghanistan turned their political allegiance to the Taliban because its cause seemed a worthy one: restoring order and the rule of law.[61] By the fall of Kabul in 1996, the Taliban had declared their aims to be the taking of power over all of Afghanistan and to rule in the name of the entire Afghan people, claiming in the process a broad ethnic diversity in their ranks.

Rubin points out that in spite of their expansion beyond their original home base, the Taliban leaders 'remain a group of mainly Kandahari mullahs trained in madrasas affiliated with the Deobandi[62] movement in both Afghanistan and Pakistan'. Rubin also highlights the co-

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[59] Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Asia*, I. B. Tauris, New York NY, p. 25.

[60] United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan, Barnett R. Rubin, Director, Center for Preventive Action, Council on Foreign Relations, October 8, 1998.

[61] Rashid, *Taliban*, p. 95.

[62] Rubin describes the Deoband as follows: 'During the 19th century Indian Muslims were split between the followers of Aligarh, home of the Aligarh Muslim University, which provided a Western-style higher education to Indian Muslims, and Deoband, where the madrasa provided a conservative education focused on Islamic law (sharia) and jurisprudence (fiqh). Deobandis looked back for inspiration to Shah Waliullah, an 18th-century Indian thinker influenced by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab of Arabia (whose followers are called Wahhabis by their opponents), the Shah's contemporary, who provided the ideological legitimacy for the dynasty of Ibn Sa'ud. Hence the Taliban's Saudi connection, like their antipathy to Iran, has roots several centuries old. Deobandis reject all forms of ijtihad, the use of reason to create innovations in sharia in response to new conditions. The revival of ijtihad is a key plank in the platform of the Islamic modernists. Deobandis oppose all forms of hierarchy within the Muslim community, including tribalism or royalty, favour excluding Shia from participation

existing regional and ideological components of Taliban politics. But he cautions that the Taliban are not simply a reassertion of the traditional conservative code of the Pashtun tribes of southern Afghanistan but an, 'Islamic ideological radicalization of elements of that code under the impact of war and mass displacement'. He also notes: 'The Kandahari character of the movement is not tribal but a version of ethno-regionalism ... In the Taliban case the social network of the elite at the core of the coalition is formed from Kandahari mullahs who studied in the same set of *madrasas* in Pakistan and participated in the jihad (against the USSR). Hence the movement has a strong ethnic and regional characteristic, though its leaders had no intention of forming such an ethno-regionalist movement, and it has therefore attracted support from many who seek a Pashtun ethnic movement capable of ruling Afghanistan.'[63]

The emergence of Taliban gave new life to the concept of a unified, militant and militarily victorious Islam, a historical memory from the military victories that spread Islam from Mecca to Spain in the West and India in the East. In this respect, the symbolic appeal to Islamic militants of the Taliban as a victorious and righteous army of avenging angels of Allah cannot be under-estimated. Such a historical memory has been prominent in the post-colonial politics of some Islamic countries. Nevertheless, as a political vision in the 21st century, any universality of the appeal of militant and victorious Islam on the march is immediately undercut by the many schisms that have occurred in 'orthodox' Islam since the time of the military conquests in its name centuries ago. These changes have occurred as much under the influence of local politics as under the influence of differences in theological understanding or religious vision. These schisms are marked at the most visible level in the differences between Sunnis and Shiites, but apart from this division of the Islamic faithful, there are a great number of other sub-groups in Islam akin to the various denominations of the Christian religion.

The rise of Taliban and the policies it implemented demonstrated fairly convincingly, yet again, that political groups claiming the mantle of some Islamic orthodoxy are at least as heavily influenced by local politics and traditions as by the claimed orthodox Islam, and that the claimed orthodox Islam is shared by few outside the immediate circle of believers. Iranian fundamentalism as advocated by Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran in 1978 was not Taliban fundamentalism as advocated by Mullah Umar in 1994 or 2001.

There are two important political implications to draw from the above. First, the emergence of religious fundamentalism as a dominant political force is foremost a political and social event that occurs in reaction to local conditions, especially sustained deprivation, sustained repression, sustained violence or sustained social disorientation (as with Christian fundamentalism in the USA). Second, the acts of governments of Muslim countries in allying with a fundamentalist movement will be in essence acts of political expediency in which the religious mantle or religious aspects are secondary considerations.

But there are three other features of resurgent orthodox Islam that need to be considered. First, it is a popular movement whose appeal has been growing since the 1970s. In this context, it is not – as the *Economist* and other sources have crowed – a positive virtue for the conduct of the war on terrorism if 'virtually every Muslim government' has rejected the terrorists' interpretation of Islam.[64] Virtually every Muslim government is a dictatorship,

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in the polity, and take a very restrictive view of the social role of women. All these characteristics of the Indian and Pakistani Deobandis are found in exaggerated form among the Afghan Taliban.'

[63] See Rubin testimony.

[64] *The Economist*, 17 November 2001, p. 10.

traditional monarchy or oligarchy,[65] and the *Economist* itself also noted that many were authoritarian, 'deservedly unpopular, and manifestly incompetent'. But one needs to go further. As discussed below, some of these governments represent a root cause of terrorism.

Second, because resurgent Islam is a popular movement, it is highly variegated and incoherent. One of the most serious manifestations of this is that there are no reference points outside the self for what the religion might legislate as right or wrong. As Olivier Roy describes astutely, the new orthodox Islamic intellectual can all too often be an 'autodidact', a tinker who creates a montage of bites from religion, the media and his or her own head to create an idiosyncratic vision of right and wrong, a vision which must be right to that individual simply because he or she is a devout Muslim.[66] But regardless of this incoherence, each and every member of the fundamentalist resurgence believes it to be unified around a common set of precepts of Islam.

Third, as far as many in Arab countries are concerned, the resurgent orthodox Islam has an overlay of Arab nationalism or pan-Arabism. Though political forms of this are almost dead, after being quite popular for many decades, there is still – at a social or personal level in Arab countries – a close identification of 'brotherhood' among Arabs relative to non-Arabs. A sense of Arab solidarity underpins the feelings of hurt or injustice that people in one Arab country feel toward people in another, even in Iraq, when they suffer at the hand of non-Arabs.

D.   Hindu fundamentalism

The expression of Hindu fundamentalism is undoubtedly manifested in the family of Hindu nationalist organisations known as the Sangh Parivar. Though it has no formal structure the Sangh Parivar's basic membership is composed of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), currently the leader of the coalition government in Delhi and the government in several Indian states, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), devoted to training cadres and developing ideology, and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the Hindu cultural and religious organisation with international links to the Indian Diaspora. These complementary groups all share a political commitment to the doctrine of Hindutva. Under this philosophy, Hinduism as the 'indigenous' faith of India must be dominant and 'foreign' religions subject to the will of the majority. Muslims are specifically labelled as invaders, and like Christians, are seen to have loyalties to distant lands. According to one of the earliest Hindu nationalists, VD Savarkar: 'A Hindu means a person who regards this land of *Bharat Varsha*, from the Indus to the Seas, as his Fatherland as well as his Holy-Land, that is, the cradle of his religion'. Another aspect of Hindutva is a condemnation of secularism, which Hindu nationalists view as discriminatory against Hindus in favour of India's many minority communities.

The high point of Hindu fundamentalism occurred in December 1992 when Sangh Parivar-organised activists destroyed a 16th century mosque in the small north Indian town of Ayodhya. Hindu nationalist leaders declared that the mosque had been built on a razed temple to the Indian epic hero, Ram who was an incarnation of the revered god Vishnu. The lack of preventative action by the police demonstrates the growing power of Hindu nationalists that now sees them controlling the national government in Delhi.

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[65] Exceptions include Indonesia, Malaysia and Turkey – all countries on the geographic fringe of the Islamic world, and none in the Arab world.
[66] Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, I. B. Tauris, New York, 1995, p. 97.

Ram has played a central role in the Sangh Parivar's discourse. First as an incarnation of the most revered god in India, Vishnu the Sangh Parivar's presentation of their family as his defender has won them renown in north India. Second he represents an active form of Hinduism as in his epic, the Ramayana he is quick to defend the honour of his wife against demons using whatever means necessary. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the mobilisation to rebuild his temple at Ayodhya was led by LK Advani and the BJP. A procession travelled across north India in makeshift chariots building support for the demolition of the mosque and the building of the temple. It played on the warrior imagery of Ram and Davis notes that the Ramayana was recast to reflect modern realities: 'Rama slays the great demon Ravana in order to rescue his wife Sita and restore world order, the Sangh [Parivar] casts these Muslim invaders, and by extension all Indian Muslims, into the role of demons'.[67] In this example a religious epic was used to initiate violence on a national scale.

Religion plays a major role in the Sangh Parivar's agenda. However God does not have the same centrality as in Islamic or Christian fundamentalism. Hinduism is a varied and complex religion with many local peculiarities from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. There are countless gods, avatars and practices and certainly no central authority. The communal violence perpetrated by Hindu fundamentalists does not flow from a belief in God nor is it divinely sanctioned as such but rather it flows from largely political necessities. Leaders, who are not always religious themselves, play the communal card, for instance, to win votes and distract people from their corruption. Superficially, the communal violence in India may seem like a religious conflict based on fundamental differences but on closer inspection, it appears more the case that religion-related discourses behind the violence are merely a tool of less-principled opportunistic leaders.

E.   Towards and index of the most militant religious states

One of the issues that arose in undertaking the war audit was whether certain states, depending on their religious traditions and current religious practices and beliefs, were more disposed to war than others. We posed the question whether it was possible to come up with a list of the ten states most likely to go to war over religion. We wondered whether such a list might be based on quantitative indicators, such as the number of times a president invokes God in his speeches, or the number of laws a state has governing religion, or how many times the state has justified its wars in the name of God. We believe that such detailed study would produce a very telling and compelling list. However, a detailed study of that nature was beyond the scope of this study. In the end, we felt a more simple approach could be warranted to compile a provisional list as long as it was acknowledged that much more work needed to be done to see if the initial, superficial and provisional list was justified. We felt this approach was right because of the main conclusion of the war audit: that where the religion and the state were most closely identified, then there was likely to be the greater disposition to go to war in the name of God. So, for us, the provisional list to be further examined became a list of the states where religion on the one hand and politics and state order on the other are most closely inter-twined.

We believe that there are three orders of magnitude here: states where the link is intimate and religion can be said to dominate (Category I); states where the link is contested but where religion is not dominant (Category II); and states which are predominantly secular (Category

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[67] Richard H. Davis, 'The Iconography of Rama's Chariot', in David Ludden (ed), *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Identity in India,* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996, pp. 27-54.

III). We decided to categorise the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council for comparison's sake, other major powers, and states currently engaged in major international confrontations or domestic disturbances. Our list of categories of states according to their potential disposition to religious war is as follows:

Table 3: Categorisation of States according to Influence of Religion on Politics in 2003

Category I *(Role of religion is dominant)*	Category II *(Role of religion is contested)*	Category III *(Politics is secular)*
Iran Saudi Arabia USA	Israel India Indonesia Egypt Russia Pakistan UK Turkey Algeria	France China North Korea Burma Sierra Leone Liberia Canada Japan Democratic Republic of Congo

The above categorisation highlights the position of three states where we believe religion dominates politics: Iran, Saudi Arabia and the USA. In the case of Iran, the claim is not likely to be contested because the country's constitution protects the power of the religious hierarchy through a formal institution called the Guardian Council. In respect of Saudi Arabia, the claim is also equally obvious, and is acknowledged in most sources.[68] It is Saudi Arabia that financed in large part the jihad in Afghanistan against the USSR's invasion and occupation through the 1980s. Saudi Arabia maintains a police force that enforces religious practice.

The case of the USA is more open to challenge. It is the case, as the historical events canvassed in this article reveal, that the influence of religion over politics rises and falls. In the case of the politics of the USA, the religious influence has been profound from its earliest days. The US Declaration of Independence appeals to the 'the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions'. There were a host of revolutionary declarations and manifestos that, at the time, justified the revolutionary war against Britain as a religious duty. For many in America at the time, the separation of the colonies from Britain was either a religious duty ordained by God or a way of settling religious differences, by war if necessary. As one of the drafters of the Declaration of Independence, John Jay, noted in 1776: 'You may be told that your Forts have been taken, your country ravaged, and that your armies have retreated, and therefore that God is not with you. It is true that some Forts have been taken, our country ravaged, and that our Armies have retreated, and that our Maker is displeased with us, but it is also true that the king of Heaven is not like the King of Britain, implacable. If his Assistance be sincerely implored, it will surely be obtained. If we turn from our Sin, he will turn from his anger. Then will our arms be crowned with success.'

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[68] See for example, the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Politics*: 'The Saudi official view was that the kingdom needed no written constitution, legislature, and political parties since the Koran, the sacred book of Islam, served as the basis of the state and the political system. Religious education dominated the formation of values in the schools and universities, and the *ulama* (scholarly men of religion) provided legitimacy to the ruling elite. In return, the kings and the expanding bureaucracy maintained the supremacy of conservative religious values in law, social customs, gender roles, the media, and in culture generally.' This text is available at http://www.cqpress.com/context/articles/epr_saudi.html

In respect of the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln noted: 'In great contests, each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, but one must be wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time'.

Now the Administration of George W. Bush has returned religion to a dominant position at the highest level of politics and foreign policy. This can be seen in the White House rhetoric following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks and prior to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Bush stated to a joint session of Congress on 20 September 2001: 'The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them'.[69] In another quote on the eve of the US-led invasion of Iraq, Bush declared: 'Behind all of life and all of history, there's a dedication and purpose, set by the hand of a just and faithful God'.[70] Clearly these lines envision God standing with the US and its allies in combating evil and the implication is that the wars fought subsequently have been divinely sanctioned.

To many Americans, these statements do not seem unusual or worthy of comment in any way that might link their country with religious militancy. However this may mean that militant religiosity in the US is more insidious because it goes unnoticed – woven into the political culture of the nation. The link is clear when one ties it in with other information. According to a close personal friend of the President who is a member of his Cabinet, Bush went to war with Saddam because he believed God called him to that mission.[71] This tendency of Bush to make decisions based on his religious faith has been criticised by some in the USA who see it as rejection of secularism that was supposed to be built into the constitution. Barry Lynn, the Executive Director of Americans United, an organisation promoting the separation of church and state, has commented: 'The presidency, remember, is a secular job. We select a president not to be our pastor or preacher or a prophet, but a person who uses both the Constitution and the secular principles of the country to make decisions. And many times recently, the president seems to have the belief that he is both divinely inspired and that he wants Americans to understand that if you're not with him on the issues, you're probably not right with God. That's a very disturbing trend'.[72]

F.   The Comparison with Secular and Atheistic States

The discussion of god-invoking, militantly religious states in connection with a propensity for war raises the question of whether atheistic or secular states, such as China, are less prone to war or large scale violence. The information contained in Boxes 2 and 3 on death tolls from major wars is a fairly strong indication that atheism is not by itself any indicator in this direction. Atheist governments in the USSR, China and Russia were in fact the biggest perpetrators of mass violence that the world has ever seen, with both governments individually responsible for many more deaths than the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler. The presence of the millenarian ideology of Communism (like Nazism) gave the rulers the justification for mass murder, in much the same way that religion had been used by other rulers before them the world over to justify war. The common thread here linking the

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[69] http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html
[70] http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030206-1.html
[71] Judy Keen, 'Strain of Iraq War showing on Bush, those who know him say', *USA Today*, 2 April 2003, http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2003-04-01-bush-cover_x.htm
[72] Cited in Jenni Keene, 'Bush. God and War', Religion Beat, 21 April 2003, http://courses.washington.edu/com361/Iraq/religion/bush_god.html

disposition to war of religious and atheistic states is absolutism: the more absolutist the state, the more likely it is to go to war. Thus we can conclude that a genuinely secular (atheistic) state may be less inclined to go to war than a state in which religion is very prominent, only as long as the secular state is one which is not pursuing a millenarian or totalitarian ideology (such as Communism or Nazism) and as long as the state is one in which pluralism and tolerance of diversity are the norm.

It may be interesting to test the proposition whether states are more likely to revert to religious absolutes in external policy (such as war) when the domestic order is seen to be in some sort of crisis around issues of diversity and tolerance.

VI: INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY: IDENTITY, SPIRITUALITY, FUNDAMENTALISIM AND FANATICISM

Certainly it is the case that at a personal level, a turn to absolutism offered by religious fundamentalism has been linked to individual psychological crises both at a theoretical level and in particular cases.

Fundamentalism is a 'rebellion against the hegemony of the secular'[73] but fundamentalisms of all stripes 'are embattled forms of spirituality, which have emerged as a response to a perceived crisis'.[74] The fundamentalist sees enemies whose 'secular policies and beliefs seem inimical to religion itself. Fundamentalists do not regard this battle as a conventional political struggle, but experience it as a cosmic war between the forces of good and evil.' As Armstrong notes, all forms of religious fundamentalism have 'cultivated theologies of rage, resentment, and revenge'.[75] Fundamentalists 'fight and kill in the name of religion and strive to bring the sacred into the realm of politics and national struggle'.[76]

Psychologists such as Carl Jung saw the pressure of modern civilisation as contributing to a certain psychotic tendency emerging from a sense of loss of life as it was in the 'good old days', a presumed glorious past. 'I am not denying that great gains have resulted from the evolution of civilised society. But these gains have been made at the price of enormous losses, whose extent we have scarcely begun to estimate'.[77] 'In fact, the terrors that stem from our elaborate civilization may be far more threatening than those that primitive people attribute to demons. The attitude of modern civilized man sometimes reminds me of a psychotic patient in my clinic who was himself a doctor'.[78]

This theory of a turn to fundamentalism or fanaticism in response to a dislocation of some sort was one of the main contributions of the work of Erik Erikson. He believed that in the transition from adolescence to young adulthood, a person suffering an identity crisis was prone to fanaticism. He saw identity crisis as being unable to mold oneself it into a unified self-image, one that the social milieu or community finds meaningful.

Erikson calls this maladaptive tendency fanaticism. A fanatic believes that his way is the only way. Adolescents are, of course, known for their idealism, and for their tendency to see things

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[73] Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, p. 367.
[74] Ibid. xiii.
[75] Ibid. p. 366.
[76] Ibid. xi.
[77] Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, p. 36.
[78] Ibid. p. 31.

in black-and-white. These people will gather others around them and promote their beliefs and lifestyles without regard to others' rights to disagree. There can also be a tendency to repudiate their membership in the world of adults and, even more, they repudiate their need for an identity. Some adolescents allow themselves to 'fuse' with a group, especially the kind of group that is particularly eager to provide the details of your identity: religious cults, militaristic organisations, groups founded on hatred, groups that have divorced themselves from the painful demands of mainstream society.

Interestingly, one of Erikson's main subjects of study, on which he based his conclusions, was Martin Luther, the man who led the theological revolt against the religious and secular authority of Rome in the sixteenth century.

The individual psychology of leaders such as Martin Luther should be of interest to individuals learning more about religion and conflict. Complicating matters, perhaps the workings of individual leaders' minds can have a major impact on the expression of their stated missions. If one looks at psychological assessments of Osama bin Laden, one can find resonances of Erikson's work. One assessment found:

> Bin Laden's blend of Ambitious and Dauntless personality patterns suggests the presence of Millon's "unprincipled narcissist" syndrome. This composite character complex combines the narcissist's arrogant sense of self-worth, exploitative indifference to the welfare of others, and grandiose expectation of special recognition with the antisocial personality's self-aggrandizement, deficient social conscience, and disregard for the rights of others.

> A major implication of the study is that bin Laden does not fit the profile of the highly conscientious, closed-minded religious fundamentalist, nor that of the religious martyr who combines these qualities with devout, self-sacrificing features; rather, it suggests that bin Laden is adept at exploiting Islamic fundamentalism in the service of his own ambition and personal dreams of glory.[79]

Immelman has concluded that bin Laden, far from being a selfless Muslim, is actually motivated by his own personal aims which do not necessarily mesh with other Islamists or a literal reading of the Koran.

When one looks to the religious motivation of other leaders to see what role psychology may have played in their religiously-inspired decisions, we find equally interesting assessments of President George W. Bush. One psychologist has offered this assessment:

> however much Bush may sometimes seem like a buffoon, he is also powered by massive, suppressed anger towards anyone who challenges the extreme, fanatical beliefs shared by him and a significant slice of his citizens - in surveys, half of them also agree with the statement "the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word".

> Bush's deep hatred, as well as love, for both his parents explains how he became a reckless rebel with a death wish. He hated his father for putting his whole life in the

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[79] Aubrey Immelman, 'The Personality Profile of Al-Qaida Leader Osama Bin Laden', Paper presented at the Twenty-Fifth Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, Berlin, Germany, 16-19 July 2002, http://www.csbsju.edu/uspp/Research/binLadenProfile.html

shade and for emotionally blackmailing him. He hated his mother for physically and mentally badgering him to fulfil her wishes. But the hatred also explains his radical transformation into an authoritarian fundamentalist. By totally identifying with an extreme version of their strict, religion-fuelled beliefs, he jailed his rebellious self. From now on, his unconscious hatred for them was channeled into a fanatical moral crusade to rid the world of evil.

As Frum put it: "Id-control is the basis of Bush's presidency but Bush is a man of fierce anger." That anger now rules the world...[80]

As the commander in chief, Bush dominates US foreign policy especially in regards to the war on terrorism that is presently the US government's major military commitment. His plans, however influenced by advisors, arise from his personal view of the world and his concepts of justice, retribution and peace. Clearly his past and his relationships impact these views and ultimately help shape those of the American state. Therefore individual leaders' psychology is perhaps an underrated area of study in the debate on God and war and could do with further analysis.

Another of Erikson's works, *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence* presents a contrasting analysis to those of Bush and bin Laden above. This book reflects on Mahatma Gandhi's psychological development and the impact that it had on his beliefs and practices as one of the leaders of the Indian freedom struggle. Gandhi could be called a nonviolent religious militant but an interesting comparison would involve contrasting his development with a Bush or bin Laden who, despite similar close associations with religion, have chosen a violent path. What sets these individuals apart?

VII.   GOD AND PEACE

There should be no doubt that, for most humans, religion plays a central role in their lives. Most of the world would not subscribe to the maxim that religion and politics are separable as is the common view in most Western countries like the United Kingdom. Religion can act as a guide in finding meaning in life. Similarly war can give meaning to one's life, giving one a motivation and goal that, like spirituality, might be unattainable. To this end, religion and war have something in common. However the question remains: can humans and specifically religious actors find meaning in nonviolence and peaceful living?

This article has concentrated on the link between war and religion. However according to one writer: 'when people begin to use religion to justify hatred and killing, and thus abandon the compassionate ethic of all great world religions, they have embarked on a course that represents a defeat for faith'.[81] As such we believe it is also necessary to acknowledge the more dominant strain of religious tradition that sees spirituality and mystical encounter with divinity as synonymous with peace and harmony, not with war and discord. Although we can point to several accounts in which religion has been the sole source of conflict or has exacerbated conflict (which is usually the case more often than the former), we can also highlight countless instances in which God and religion have worked to create peace.

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[80] Oliver James, 'So George, How do You Feel about Your Mom and Dad?', *Guardian Unlimited*, 2 September 2003, http://www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0,12271,1033904,00.html
[81] Armstrong, *The Battle for God,* x.

Nonviolent religious activists challenge the voices of religious fundamentalists, who wish to use God's name to condone and inflict violence on others. Often these opposing groups share a commitment to dealing with issues such as social and political justice, freedom and morality but differ on their methods. To remain relevant to their audiences both groups must shape their arguments for or against violence with clear appeals to their religious traditions. Nonviolent religious actors, however, must cultivate those traditions of peace and tolerance present in their faith's sacred scriptures and teachings, which violent extremists often seek to undermine; the glorification of war and struggle through religious discourses is conversely the goal of violent actors. Both readings are possible and ultimately it is up to the individual or community to choose between them. This conversation raises difficult yet fundamental questions about the character of God and humans.

The twentieth century was by far the most violent period in human history, riddled by more than 100 major armed conflicts around the world. At the same time, probably out of necessity and surely demonstrating the ambivalence of religion, this same period gave rise to revolutionary peace leaders and dynamic peace movements. Some of the most prominent examples include the Indian freedom struggle, the US civil rights movement, and the nonviolent transformation of apartheid into democracy in South Africa.

Three major religions with their roots in India (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism) share the idea of nonviolence (*ahimsa,* which means 'avoiding harm to others'), though these three religions approach it differently. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) coined the term 'nonviolence' in English in 1920 as a direct translation of 'ahimsa'. The idea of nonviolence was very important to Gandhi's thinking and actions as an Indian nationalist leader during India's march to independence in 1947. He wrote: 'I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent.'

Inspired by Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. integrated nonviolence into the US civil rights movement. As a Baptist minister, King also built upon the teachings of Christ developed in the Sermon on the Mount. He said: 'Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him.'

South Africa serves as a prime example of how religion can be used to inflict systemic violence and suffering and, conversely, to heal and restore social wounds. Under the apartheid government of South Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduiste Gereformeerde Kerk, or DRC) supported the structural and direct violence of apartheid by providing a 'theological rationale'[82]. But in making the transition from apartheid to integration, South Africans turned to religious and cultural traditions to forgive and reconcile tremendous grievances such as murder, torture, rape and other dehumanising acts.

In his book, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who chaired the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, discusses the cultural concept of *ubuntu* embraced by South Africans. The Archbishop explains that *ubuntu*:

> speaks of the very essence of being human. … It is to say, 'My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours.' We belong in a bundle of life. We say, 'A person is a person through other persons.' It is not, 'I think therefore I am.' It says rather: 'I

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[82] Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, London: Rider, 1999, p 275.

am human because I belong. I participate, I share.' … Anything that subverts, that undermines this sought-after good, is to be avoided like the plague. Anger, resentment, lust for revenge, even success through aggressive competitiveness, are corrosive of this good. … What dehumanizes you inexorably dehumanizes me[83].

These three examples are probably the most visible of the twentieth century. However countless other nonviolent religious actors and organisations are active as well, often in a much smaller context. Furthermore creating spaces for peaceful actors from different faiths to meet and debate is becoming more of a priority. Three examples include the Assisi Decalogue for Peace, the Parliament of World Religions and the World Conference of Religions for Peace. This dialogue is an important response to the divisive and often intolerant face of violent religious extremists.

The Assisi Decalogue for Peace brought together more than 200 faith leaders from around the world representing all the major faiths. They unanimously endorsed the Decalogue for Peace, a 10-point moral blueprint to replace war. Point one condemns recourse to violence and war in the name of God or religion. Point five enjoins all people "to engage in dialogue with sincerity and patience, without considering what separates us as an insurmountable wall."

First held in 1893 in Chicago, the Parliament of World Religions is next being held in Barcelona in the summer of 2004. The mission of the Parliament of the World Religions is to cultivate harmony between the world's religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world and its other guiding institutions in order to achieve a peaceful, just, and sustainable world.

A practical example of inter-religious dialogue is the World Conference of Religions for Peace. Motivated along similar lines to the other examples above, the World Conference has been very active around the world. Some of Religions for Peace's recent successes include mediating dialogue among warring factions in Sierra Leone; building a new climate of reconciliation in Bosnia and Kosovo; organizing an international network of religious women's organisations; and launching an extraordinary program to assist the millions of children affected by Africa's AIDS pandemic, the Hope for African Children Initiative.

In presenting this opposing argument to violence this paper concludes positively that there is hope for the future. More and more examples of religious actors and organisations addressing vital issues in a nonviolent and peaceful manner (frequently together) are becoming apparent. In addition this study has concluded that very few if any wars in the past 100 years have been purely religious wars. Looking at the casualty figures for the past ten years, despite genocidal atrocities in Rwanda and Yugoslavia, there is clearly a transformation away from the levels of mass death reached during the great wars and revolutions of the early twentieth century. Despite the negativity around the role of religion in violent conflict, this study has demonstrated that the picture is much more complicated.

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[83] Ibid. p 31.

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