

## Religious Fundamentalism and Terrorism

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### Abstract

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The study of terrorism is multidisciplinary, which includes fields like Religion, sociology, criminology, political science amongst others. There are diverse reasons and motivations for terrorist activities. Some can be attributed on the socio-political exigency that fosters authoritarianism, however religion fans the ember and gives it legitimacy. Religion which occupies a central position in human life becomes a medium of translating this socio-political conflict into a moral one. It is by religion that secular conflict acquires a cosmic nature. Any conflict understood in cosmic terms acquires stateless and timeless status and as such become recurring. This paper surmises that Religious terrorism which is executed by those whose motivations and aims have a predominant religious influence is rooted in the misinterpretation of theological epithets, or it could be the result of extreme forms of delusion that may alter reality, and thus subject an individual or a group of people to distorted versions of religious facts and episodes like the Crusades. I survey three major religions Judaism, Islam, Christianity and one sect Zionism and a case study of Crusades.

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**Keywords:** Terrorism, Religion, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Zionism and Crusades

### Background

The more we understand of the human being in its entirety (e.g. individual, social, political, religious, psychological, bodily), the more theoretical and practical avenues of human research are being explored, the closer we can get to possible theoretical as well as practical solutions to the complex phenomenon of terrorism.

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It is crucial to understand possible root causes underlying terrorism “because terrorist insurgencies do not emerge in a political, socio-economic, religious or even psychological vacuum.” Root causes consist of “multiple combinations of factors and circumstances, ranging from general to specific, global, regional or local, governmental-regime, societal or individual levels, structural or psychological, dynamic or static, facilitating or triggering, or other possible variations, some of which may be more important and fundamental than others” (Sinai, 2005).

Another argument is that the role of religion in society today is overestimated and that religion in essence is “really politics under a different name (Jameson, 2002). This argument negates the deepest makeup and purpose of religion, namely that it is a search for human “roots” and meaning, and it provides “wings” to deeper, higher, beyond the limitations of suffering experiences to transcend everyday realities (Krüger et al., 2009). This is not to deny that almost all religions have an extremely violent component as well. It is because religion cannot be separated from other spheres of human life (e.g. politics, culture).

However, religion should not be treated as identical to other facets of human life. Because of the integrated nature of human life these different spheres do overlap or influence each other. In many cases religion is being implemented to influence political violence today and cannot be ignored or played down (Sinai, 2005). Therefore, when the expression “religious terrorism” is used in this research, the notion of political terrorism strongly complemented or inspired by religion is meant.

The Scriptures and traditions of all three monotheistic religions under discussion are full of bloody conflicts, sometimes showing that God elected certain people and rejected others. These accounts of holy or just wars present a variety of causes, motivations, surrounding circumstances, and strategies that are being absorbed by subsequent generations who read these accounts (Neusner & Graham, 2002). Role models such as Samson, David, Mohammad and their war stories become part of our faith and metaphorical expressions and can inspire a believer to carry out similar actions of violence as these role models in specific circumstances. “These archetypal hostilities are engrained in our cultures, and at the deepest level influence the sense we make of unfolding crises” (Cobb, 2002).

There are bodily based roots of violent metaphors for God utilized by terrorist adherents of the three related Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Islam and Christianity). Both Judaism and Zionism are culturally (the first also religiously) spoken direct offshoots from ancient Israel, whereas Christianity and Islam derived from ancient Israel historically. All share to a large extent the same metaphors but from different religious and cultural angles (Volf, 2008).

Ancient Israel's metaphor of the "one and only God," the ultimate, complete body, which developed from henotheism to monotheism through the history of Israel, was inherited by the later Judaism, Christianity, and also Islam. The metaphor "God is the one and only God" goes hand in hand with "God is on our side," both being key metaphors for God used by the three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Both these metaphors are projections from the human body. Because the human being (body) is essentially one, a single unity, it is obvious that the metaphor of "God is the one and only God" can be derived from human experience of oneness. Within the broader social context where relationships between individuals exist and communion and compassion are bodily based, "God can be on our side," part of the in-group.

This is a very strong metaphor implemented by both sides of religious terrorist conflicts. For example in the Hebrew Bible war is assumed from the outset as an essential part of the world in which the people of antiquity lived. The depiction of "God as a warrior" who leads his people in battle is foundational for most of the understanding of war in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Ex 14-15) (Hess 2008, 19). The role of God as a warrior is the model against which all other fighters such as Gideon (Jd 6-8), Samson (Jd 13-16), and David (2 Sm 8-10) are measured. This metaphor developed through the history of Israel from traditions regarding divine acts of salvation on behalf of God's people, to a God who acts against his own people due to their sin, and finally to a God who is the embodiment of righteous judgment (ibid., 24). The metaphor affirms God's superiority over all other gods and nations. It is evident that the human warrior is metaphorized onto the domain of the divine as the ultimate warrior (Juergensmeyer, 2008).

Human struggle and the telic demand of the individual and the societal bodies to overcome their struggles against foreign nations form the basis for this metaphor for their God.

It is based upon ancient Israel's bodily experience of vicious wars and their belief that God saved them. This metaphor played a major role in the history of the occupation of the Promised Land. The ancient belief was that no war was entirely secular and that battles amongst nations simultaneously involved battles amongst their gods a cosmic war (Weiss, 2002).

## **Introduction**

Terrorism is one of the most disputed terms and has no comprehensive definition. The problem of defining the term 'terrorism' is well known and has been examined extensively (Schmid, 2004). Terrorism is a subfield of peace and Conflict Studies that analyses the interactions between states and other actors in their engagement with each other over legitimacy (Onkware *et al*, 2010). The United Nations General Assembly's Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, set out in its resolution 49/60, stated that terrorism includes "criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes" and that such acts "are in any circumstances unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that may be invoked to justify them" (United Nations, 1994).

Religious terrorism which is executed by those whose motivations and aims have a predominant religious influence is rooted in the misinterpretation of theological epithets, or it could be the result of extreme forms of delusion that may alter reality, and thus subject an individual or a group of people to distorted versions of religious facts and episodes like 'just war theory', liberation theology, Inquisitions and the Crusades. Religious terrorism consists of acts that terrify; the definition of which is provided by the witnesses the ones terrified and not by the party committing the act; accompanied by a religious motivation, justification, organization, or world view (Juergensmeyer, 2004).

## **Methodology**

This study utilized library research where secondary data on the subject drawn from books, journals, Conference proceedings and Internet was critically analyzed.

The findings and analysis are presented under the sub headings of: Terrorism, Religious terrorism, Two Types of Religious Terrorism, Precedence of Religious Terrorism, Judaism and Zionism, Islam and Terrorism, Christianity and Terrorism and Christian Crusades.

## **Terrorism**

'One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter', is often used to highlight the problem of implying a moral judgment when classifying the term 'terrorism'. If one identifies with the victim of the attack, then it is considered terrorism, but if one can identify with the perpetrator he or she is seen as a hero (Jenkins, 1999). The problem of differentiating terrorism from other un-conventional warfare like civil unrest, insurgents, guerrilla warfare and genocide is still lacking. According to Laqueur (1987) "a comprehensive definition of terrorism does not exist nor will it be found in the foreseeable future". There are at least 212 different definitions of terrorism in use throughout the world, with 90 of them used by governments and other institutions (Simon, 1994). Any definition of terrorism one might use, politicians, some scholars and government security institutions claim that since the mid 1990s 'terrorism' has changed into an inherently new form with new characteristics. They have articulated a 'new' concept, which involves different actors, motivations, aims, tactics and actions, compared to the 'old' concept of terrorism used in the mid twentieth century (Aubrey, 2004). The adjective 'new' means 'not existing before' or 'discovered recently or now for the first time' (The Oxford Dictionary of English, 2005). The term 'new' implies that there is something 'old'. Scholars use the term, 'new' to mean counter-terrorism measures like development employed from 1990s to now. They are time dependent concepts and one considers there to be something different between old and new and that there is a clear distinction or break between the two (Odhiambo *et al*, 2011).

## **Religious terrorism**

Religious terrorism is intertwined to current forces of geo-politics. Hoffman, (1998) has characterized religious terrorism as having three traits:

- a) The perpetrators must use religious scriptures to justify or explain their violent acts or to gain recruits.
- b) Clerical figures must be involved in leadership roles.
- c) Apocalyptic images of destruction are seen by the perpetrators as a necessity (Hoffman, 1998&1999, Jenkins, 1999).

The role of religion in terrorism, and the various justifications that are provided by those who nurture such forms of violence has its roots far back in history.

### **Two Types of Religious Terrorism**

There are two types of religious terrorism namely; religious terrorism that aims for a political goal, for instance insurgents like Lord Resistance Army led by Joseph Kony in Uganda that use religion as a way to attract followers and justify its actions. Second religious terrorism that doesn't have such a 'worldly' goal and that strives for a higher abstract sacred goal that is impossible to reach (Wilkinson, 1992). The first I call Political religious terrorism, the second milleniaristic terrorism. It is this latter type that triggers most fear. It is generally in retaliation of something somebody or a society has done hence everybody is a possible target. The perpetrators are not personally affected (except in their honor) by the events in the name of which they commit terrorism. It is this shift away from hard specially chosen targets that makes that milleniaristic religious terrorism trigger such fear into a society, everybody is a legitimate victim even if you don't agree with the 'policy' of society (Piazza, 2008).

### **Precedence of Religious Terrorism**

As a measure to counter-revolutionaries against the weak government, French Republic coined the term 'terror' in 1795 as a policy to protect itself (Sinclair, 2003). Sicarii a religious Zealot sect is one of the earliest Religious Terrorist groups that fought against the Roman rule in Palestine between AD 66-73 (Waldmann, 1998). Ismailis and Nizari called 'Assassins' were a Religious Terrorist sect in the Middle Ages who fought against the empire of Saladin. Ottoman Empire forces were resisted in the sixteenth century by Religious Terrorist groups in Albania.

By the mid-nineteenth century to the First World War revolutionaries and anarchists used mercenaries, bombings and assassinations as frequent weapons in their struggle against autocracy. After the Second World War terrorism became an important part of the anti-colonial struggles (Wilkinson, 1992). Scholars have argued that the period between the late 1960s and the late 1980s is marked by terrorism', which can be divided as left and right-wing and ethno-national separatist. Although categorized by the underlying causes, all types of terrorism have some general characteristics (Enders & Sandler, 2000).

### **Judaism and Zionism**

Judaism holds the view that Yahweh is the one and only God with whom they have a covenantal relationship as the elect. Because of this covenantal relationship, the Jews assert that "their enemies are Yahweh's enemies" (Neusner & Graham, 2002). Whenever they were conquered the Jews in Diaspora thought that Yahweh was humbling them because they had gone astray and they developed into "effeminate" which gave rise to Zionist ideology (Weiss, 2002).

Zionism denotes theological convictions because at the centre of messianic redemption (Rabkin, 2006). The theology of redemption is present in most versions of Zionist ideology but translated into secular concepts. Zionism eliminates the metaphysical content of Judaism but uses the social function thereof, as well as the Torah and the historical narrative of ancient Israel to unite the people the Jews (ibid, 26). The orthodox Jews, whose interpretation of the messianic texts was spiritual in nature, were opposed by Eastern European Zionists who were the majority and who favoured the literal interpretation (Coetzee, 2009).

The book of prophet Isaiah chapter eleven (11) anticipates the Jewish messiah who will gather all the Jews in Diaspora in Zion and institute a social order of perfect justice as well as perfect peace in the world (Weissbrod, 2002). Today's Zionism utilizes this messianic metaphor for its own secular purposes, for example reclaiming the land (Canaan) Yahweh promised to patriarch Abraham their fore-father and to establish, according to their interpretation, a "perfect just society", which is a bodily based metaphor. The Bible a sacred text encourages virtues like peace, mercy and justice which is a metaphor based on bodily experiences which are also moral obligation of humanity.

“Civil and criminal justice are founded upon a basic notion of equilibrium,” and “justice itself is conceived as the regaining equilibrium that has been upset by an unlawful action.” Both the individual and the societal bodies strive towards avoiding damage and will perform various physical and psychological acts, based on the justice metaphor, to protect them or to regain equilibrium (Johnson, 1987).

In this context, Zion which is God’s dwelling amongst his elect the Jews, and a symbol of his redemption, has acquired a new metaphorical meaning in secular Zionism in the form of political and military self-redemption. The main offshoot of this shift is a highly tensed territory in which vicious terrorist attacks from both the Israeli and Arab sides are executed on a regular basis. The current and past terrorist violence in the Middle East originate from this messianic metaphor of hope, based on the telic demand for salvation of a body in distress, as realized in the return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel.

### **Islam and Terrorism**

The core of Muslim faith is “one God alone” while the ummah is God’s chosen people and Qur’an is God’s revelation of his will and his dealings with his creation. God’s justice and his omnipotent sustenance of his creation form the foundation of the world order. An important message of the Qur’an is that God is revealed to all human beings not only in the Qur’an but all over in the natural world, where his signs are plentiful (Neusner and Graham. 2002). The Qur’an urges Muslims to see the world as an epiphany, signs and messages of God which must be deciphered and interpreted (Armstrong, 1993). This, of course, can be fertile soil for religious terrorist violence when a charismatic terrorist leader imposes his/her own metaphors subjectively onto the realm of the divine while interpreting a specific socio-political context.

The structure of political loyalty among Muslims, has been the opposite of that of the countries like U.S.A (Huntington, 1996) for the latter, the nation state has been the apex of political loyalty. In the Islamic world, the structure of loyalty has been exactly reverse. In Islam, faith and the ummah have been the principal foci of loyalty and commitment, and the nation state has been less significant. In addition, the idea of sovereign nation states is incompatible with belief in the sovereignty of Allah and the primacy of the ummah (Bjørge, 2005).

Like Christianity, Islam occasionally allows for force while stressing that the main spiritual goal is that of nonviolence and peace. The Qur'an contains a proscription very much like the biblical injunction "Thou shall not kill." The Qur'an commands the faithful to "slay not the life that God has made sacred" (Qur'an). Hence Muslim activists have often reasserted their belief in Islamic nonviolence before defending their use of force. Even so, Islam has a history of military engagements almost from its beginning. Scarcely a dozen years after the Prophet Muhammad received the revelation of the Qur'an in 610 A.D., he left his home in Mecca and developed a military stronghold in the nearby town of Medina. By 630 A.D., Prophet Muhammad and his Muslims had conquered Mecca and much of western Arabia and had turned the ancient pilgrimage site of Kaaba into a centre of Muslim worship (Fuller, 2003).

The Caliphs who succeeded the prophet as the temporal leaders of the Muslim community after Muhammad's death in 632 A.D. expanded both the military control and spiritual influence of Islam, and over the years the extraordinary proliferation of the Islamic community throughout the world has been attributed in no small measure to the success of its military leaders in battle. Perhaps no writer has had greater influence in extending the concept of jihad than the Egyptian writer Abd al-Salam Faraj. The author of a remarkably cogent argument for waging war against the political enemies of Islam is the pamphlet *Al Faridah al-Gha'ibah* (The Neglected Duty), Faraj stated the religious justifications for radical Muslim acts (Jeurgensmeyer, 2004).

Faraj opined that the Qur'an and the Hadith were fundamentally about warfare. The concept of jihad, struggle, was meant to be taken literally and not allegorically. He regarded anyone who deviates from the moral and social requirements of Islamic law to be the targets for jihad. Perhaps the most chilling aspect of Faraj's thought is his conclusion that peaceful and legal means for fighting the nonconformists are inadequate. The true soldier of Islam is allowed to use virtually any means available to achieve a just goal. Deceit, trickery and violence are specifically mentioned as options available to the desperate soldier. The reward for doing so is nothing less than a place in paradise (Ibid, 81).

The experience of transcendence by Muslims when reciting the Qur'an makes the reading thereof in the sacred language of Arabic a spiritual experience (Armstrong, 1993). Their belief in and reciting of the mantra that "God is one," points to more than a numerical designation of God. This belief is culturally conditioned (ibid., 176) and is embodied as a driving factor of one's own life and society. The daily prayers in a specific direction and with a specific body posture are bodily based acts and experiences which form the basis for mental image schemata and related metaphors that describe both "human humbleness" and the "greatness of God." Zuesse (quoted in Leder *Absent Body*, 168) writes the following with reference to religious ritual: "Ritual centers on the body, and if we would understand ritual we shall have to take the body seriously as a vehicle for religious experience. Much ritual symbolism draws on the simplest and most intense sensory experiences, such as eating, draws on the simplest and most intense sensory experiences, such as eating, sexuality, and pain. Such experiences have been repeated so often or so intimately by the body that they have become primary forms of bodily awareness. In ritual, they are transformed into symbolic experiences of the divine, and even into the form of the cosmic drama itself" (Johnson, 2008).

It is thus evident that religious terrorists (of whatever faith) who regularly perform such religious rituals can easily metaphorize their bodily experiences of unification with God in such a way that their metaphors serve their terrorist purposes. For example one can then understand why the late Osama bin Laden, made the following exhortation in his fatwa in February 1998. "In compliance with God's order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims: The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies, civilians and military is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque (Mecca) from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the words of Almighty God, and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together, and fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in God (Rashid, 2002). "We with God's help call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it" (Horgan, 2005).

The late Bin Laden's firsthand experience of God and his direct knowledge of God's will are embodied experiences through ritual and Scripture reading. It was God's command, according to the late bin Laden, to kill the Americans. He was only God's herald, the messenger of al-Qahtar, the war name for God in the Qur'an, which means "he who dominates and breaks the back of his enemies" (Armstrong, 1993). The late Bin Laden's experience of communion or oneness with God, the ground of being, complemented by his bodily based negative emotions towards and experiences of America and the West, enable him to make such a statement from authority in order to involve Muslims individually and as the corporate ummah (Muslim community). Because he experienced communion with all Muslims, he attempted to involve the ummah in his terrorist activities (Riswold, 2008).

The intolerance that Muslims are often condemned for, especially by the West, does not always spring from a rival vision of God but from their intolerance of injustice (Armstrong, 1993). The doctrine of jihad shared by all Muslims stems from the fact that the Qur'an is very clear that "God is a just God" and that a Muslim's first duty is to create a just and classless society in which poor people are treated with respect. This demands a jihad or struggle on the spiritual, social, personal and political spheres of life (Mamdani, M (2004). The so called greater jihad is a struggle against personal weaknesses where the personal body plays a fundamental role. The lesser jihad is about self-preservation and self-defense, which, when directed outwardly, can take on the form of a just war. Both the greater and the lesser jihad thus relate directly to the personal body as well as to the societal body or Ummah (Rennie and Tite, 2008).

As stated above, justice is a moral value, a metaphor based on bodily experiences of balance. It is implemented in order to restore the imbalances brought about by illegitimate action. When a person or a society is in danger or is humiliated, attempts to rectify the imbalance can take on violent forms because injustice is experienced. Bjørgo (2005) is of the opinion that the experience of social injustice is a main motivating cause behind social-revolutionary terrorism and that a charismatic ideological leader is capable of transforming widespread grievances and frustrations into a political agenda for violent struggle, sometimes by implementing religious rhetoric.

In the case of the late Osama bin Laden it is not so much that he attempts to politicize his religion, but rather that he draws socio-political struggles into the sphere of cosmic battle, based on the metaphor of a just God who commands a just war (Juergensmeyer, 2008). A charismatic political leader such as the late bin Laden was able to mobilize his own bodily based metaphors in such a way that they served his personal socio-political needs and then transformed them into appropriate actions to fulfill the explicit needs of his followers (Sinai, 2005). He is able to transfer his experiences and metaphors onto a group or groups of people sharing the same or similar negative experiences, sentiments and ideologies. Eventually it is the group or organizational pathology that provides a sense-making explanation to the youth that he drew into his group (Post, 2005).

### **Christianity and Terrorism**

Christianity like Judaism claims that their God is the only God. Like the Jews, the church (*ekklesia*) is a "called out" people of God after salvific work of Christ and it is monotheistic and exclusive in nature. The ethical dualism in which the "armies of light" oppose the "armies of darkness" frequently surfaced from church history. These metaphors are founded upon human experiences of war. The crusades of the 11th through the 13th centuries and the resultant terror suffice on this (Griffith, 2002). The praxis between the crusades and modern day Christian terrorism is minimal. When Christian employ just war theory, liberation theology, Inquisitions and the Crusade to legitimize terrorism, they see "themselves as God's soldiers" and they claim that "God is on their side" these two biblical war metaphors is always employed to justify Christian terrorism (Volf, 2008).

Christian fundamentalists operate with a model of clear-cut right and wrong, good and evil which are bodily based experiences that are metaphorized onto the moral sphere and they involve emotionality. Emotionality is based in the visceral of the human body (Leder, 1990). This can be morally metaphorized as "bad" or "evil." Good and evil can be personified by applying them to specific persons depending on whether they are one's rivals or one's friends. Within the context of terrorism, the labeling of someone as "evil" or "the devil," makes that person evil from the perspective of the speaker.

In the dichotomy of cosmic dualism, therefore, that which is not part of “us”, is metaphorized as evil (Larsson, 2004). As opponents become demonized and regarded as “forces of evil,” the world begins to make sense to those who label their rivals. The vulnerable and oppressed can now understand the forces behind their humiliation. The ultimate way out in times of such despair is to commit oneself (or the society) to cosmic war where good and evil, darkness and light, God and Satan, fight the real battle. Acts or counteracts of religious terrorism display symbolically the depth of such a struggle in worldly terms (Juergensmeyer, 2003).

The New Testament alludes to the fact that at least two of Jesus’ disciples were members of the Jewish party The Zealots. It is debatable whether the Jesus movement was considered anti-government at that time, but the New Testament records that the Roman colonial government charged Jesus with sedition, found him guilty, and executed him for the crime (Brandon, 1967).

It has been controversial whether Christianity sanctions terrorism. This is due to acts of violence attributed to its followers. I argue that Christians were expected to follow Jesus’ example of selfless love, to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (The Holy Bible, Matthew, 5:44). Those who support that Christianity and Violence are intertwined cite incidents as Jesus driving the moneychangers from the Temple with such enigmatic statements as Jesus’ dark prophecy: “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have come not to bring peace but a sword” (The Holy Bible, Matthew, 10:34; Luke, 12:51 – 52).

Origen and Tertullian early Church fathers argued that Christians were prohibited from killing since human life is sacred, a principle that prevented Christians from serving in the Roman army. Thus, the early Christians were essentially pacifists (Juergensmeyer, 2004).

In the fourth century, Christianity became a state religion, Church leaders rejected pacifism and accepted the doctrine of ‘just war’, a theory founded by Cicero and developed by Ambrose and Augustine. This idea justified the use of military force under certain conditions, including proportionality and legitimacy, the notion that undertaking must be approved by an established authority (Juergensmeyer, 1987). The abuse of this concept in justifying adventures and violent persecutions of heretical and minority groups led St.

Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century to reaffirm that war was always sinful, even if it was waged for a just cause. The just war theory still stands today as the centre piece of Christian understanding concerning the moral use of violence (Potter, 1969; Ramsay, 1968; Merton, 1968).

Some modern Christian theologians have adapted the use of just war to liberation theology, arguing that the Church can embrace a 'just revolution' (Brown, 1987; Biggar, 2004; Cook, 2004). In addition to the just war, there are other examples of religious violence from Christianity's heritage, including the Inquisitions and the Crusades. The thirteenth-century Inquisitions were the medieval Church's attempt to root out heresy, involving torture of the accused and sentences that included burning at the stake. The Spanish Inquisitions in the fifteenth century were aimed largely at Jews and Muslims who had converted to Christianity but were investigated to see if the conversions were sincere; again, torture and death were standard features of these spurious trials (Juergensmeyer, 2004).

### **Christian Crusades**

Crusade is derived from the French term for taking up the cross (Asbridge, 2005). The Crusades were a series of religious wars by the Christians against the Muslims who were referred collectively as Saracens with the objective of reclaiming the Holy Land. It was also used to describe religiously motivated campaigns conducted between 1100 and 1600 in territories outside the Levant usually against heretics, pagans, and those excommunicated by the church for a mixture of religious, economic, and political reasons (Crusades in The New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1966).

In the modern usage the term "crusade", can be used without religious connotations, for example Crusade against malnutrition on children, but when used with Christian connotations it means having open air preaching with the aim of winning souls for Christ (Wright,2009).

The Christian launched at least nine invasions; the first Crusade was between 1095–1099. Alexius I the Byzantine emperor in 1095 sent emissaries to plead for military help at the Council of Piacenza (Jonathan, 1999). His empire was threatened by the Seljuk Turks. Later that year, at the Council of Clermont, Pope Urban II called upon all Christians to join a war against the Turks, promising those who died in the endeavour would receive immediate remission of their sins (Munro, 1906).

The Second Crusade 1147-1149; The Third Crusade 1189-1192; The Fourth Crusade 1202-1204; The Fifth Crusade 1218-21; The Sixth Crusade 1228-1254; The Seventh Crusade 1248-1254; Eighth Crusade 1270; Ninth Crusade 1271–1272 (Tyerman, 2006).

Pope Urban II call for the Christian to join the first Crusade was answered by Christian knights and soldiers who were promised Land, booty, glory and spiritual rewards, that fighting and dying in the name of the Cross would ensure martyrdom and thereby guarantee a place in heaven. Liberation of the holy lands would bring eternal salvation” this religious ideology was reflected in the war cry of the early Crusades “Deus lo volt” (God wills it). When Jerusalem was captured in July 1099, Frankish knights massacred thousands of Muslim, Jewish, and Orthodox Christian residents. An embellished Crusader letter sent to Pope Urban II in Rome boasted that the blood of the Saracens reached the bridles of the Crusaders’ horses (Thomas, 2005).

Not all the Christian Crusades were fought to reclaim the holy land, the Western Church also purged its territories of Jews and divergent religious beliefs that were denounced as heresies. The zealotry and violence of these purges became legendary. During the brutal Albigensian Crusade in southern France during the 13th century, the story was told that concerns were raised about loyal and innocent Catholics who were being killed along with targeted members of the enemy Cathar sect. The pope’s representative, Arnaud Amaury, allegedly replied, “Kill them all, God will know his own” (Thierry, 2009).

The popes sanctioned invasions and atrocities were deemed to be in accordance with God’s wishes and therefore perfectly acceptable. An extreme and unquestioning faith in the cause led to a series of campaigns of terror against Muslims and sometimes the Orthodox Christian residents of conquered territories (Stephen, 2006).

## **Conclusion**

Terrorism has often found recourse to twisted religious thought in order to justify its rampages.

The popular belief in the Manichean concept of "us" and "them" may find its sympathizers in religion based terrorist groups that wish to use it as a means of gaining political power like the case of Lord Resistance Army led by Joseph Kony in Uganda or to wreck vengeance over innocent civilians, but it will never find justification in major world religions that essentially preach the doctrines of peace and non violence. It is time that both the policy makers as well as theologians realize that terrorism has no rationale, be it religious or otherwise. Those who commit religiously motivated acts of terrorism might be insane and driven by the pursuit of political ends. They are motivated by religious figures who deliberately misinterpret portions of sacred texts to justify their acts of terrorism.

## Recommendations

- A. The ideological battle cannot be waged only among adults. My analysis emphasizes the importance of childhood exposure to religious ideas and concepts and the importance of early ritual activity in fostering long term belief. Alternative forms of religious expression that are publicly perceived as traditional must be fostered and made available to children and adolescents. This will mean funding and developing youth activities, creating job opportunities that will deter the unemployed youths from being recruited as terrorist.
- B. I concur with the finding that the best defense against terrorism is to prevent potential recruits from joining terrorist organizations (Atran, 2003). My analysis further points to the importance of adolescence as the critical time in which individuals will be receptive to such groups. To prevent adolescents from joining terrorist organizations alternative adolescent youth activities must be developed, funded, and encouraged. I view this as essential
- C. Religion can be seen as an adaptive proximate mechanism for creating cohesive, cooperative groups. Modern nation-states with educational, economic, and political policies that equitably integrate their multicultural constituencies and effectively sanction policy transgressions reduce the competitive need for religious fundamentalism and increase the opportunity costs such fundamentalism incurs. Building the economic resource base of developing nations, and creating equitable and effective political structures to ensure equal access to that base are fundamental steps in eradicating religious terrorism throughout the world.

- D. Though religious emotions run deep, once conflicts have been framed in religious terms, religious groups and NGOs as peace builders must be represented in negotiations. I echo the warning that religious groups “are more complicated and dangerous negotiating partners” (Bloom, 2005). However, without their participation and endorsement of a solution, negotiated peace between secular groups will not satisfy aggrieved parties and will not endure.

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Religious terrorism is terrorism carried out based on motivations and goals that may have a predominantly religious character or influence. In the modern age, after the decline of ideas such as the divine right of kings and with the rise of nationalism, terrorism has more often been based on anarchism, and revolutionary politics. Since 1980, however, there has been an increase in terrorist activity motivated by religion.