

**Religion as a Weapon of War:
Understanding Individual and Collective Aspects of Religion and their
Implications for the Concept and Practice of *Design***

By LTC Prisco Hernandez

“The Lord has given you the city! The city and everything in it must be totally destroyed as an offering to the Lord.”¹

“Believers, make war on the infidels who dwell around you. Deal firmly with them. Know that God is with the righteous.”²

Part I: Religion and Politics

Religion and “the Other”

Our purpose is to examine the human roots and social roles of religion, its adoption as a weapon of war, and the implications of this knowledge for the effective application of the concept and practice of *Design*. Although arguably all religious beliefs have been or may be used as a weapon of war to further political, social, or religious aims, this discussion will focus on the three monotheistic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—because these religions tend to be exclusivist in the sense that they divide the world into believers and non-believers, thus creating an “us versus them” mentality. This exclusivist mentality may in turn set the conditions to justify the use of force against those who have not accepted “the truth.”

Judaism originated as the particular religion of an ethnic group—the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Throughout its history it has retained its tribal character. As such, it has not been especially keen in attempting to convert others. Rather, it has concentrated on preserving the purity of its beliefs and the integrity of its traditions against an often hostile environment.³

In stark contrast, Christianity has been a missionary religion from the beginning.⁴ As an outgrowth of Judaism it depended for its growth on converting others to its views; first, from within the Jewish community; but soon, from among outsiders—the Gentiles. Similarly, Islam has been a missionary religion from its very beginning.⁵ The missionary aspect of these religions is important because it demonstrates a desire to convert the unenlightened “other” to the true faith. This means that there is a tendency not to accept “the other” as he is but to change him for his own good. If “the other” cannot be converted, followers of missionary religions have historically demonstrated a tendency to dismiss, reject, or even attempt to destroy this “other.”

Belief, Reason, and the Individual

The beliefs and practices of a given religion, in and of themselves are not amenable to rational proof. Just as significantly, these beliefs and practices are neither amenable to rational disproof. Religious axioms are held as true through the process of belief. This process is neither rational nor irrational. It may be fairly described as supra-rational; since its object—knowledge of the absolute—and its means—perception through faith—lie beyond the scope of reason.⁶ Reason, however, does have its role in religion. Once the basic axioms of faith are accepted, reason may be used both in its inductive as well as its deductive modalities to speculate, expand, clarify, comment, question, and affirm these axioms—among other things. Reason may also serve to justify using violence and war in the name of religious faith.

Along with a rational element, religion includes non-rational components. These include what some anthropologists have named the inherent religious nature of man. By

this they mean that when human beings attain conscience of their own limitations and their own mortality, there is an internal mechanism inherent in human nature that compels us to posit a supernatural realm which provides explanations to our human paradoxes, and our quest for the absolute—including eternal values.⁷ Of course a purely religious explanation of these transcendental desires is possible—namely, that God himself has created man with the desire for the Divine implanted in his soul. This idea was expressed famously by St. Augustine of Hippo when he wrote: “...you have made us for yourself; and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”⁸ Bet his as it may, religion is a nearly universal phenomenon. This means that it will likely be a factor, in some cases a very significant factor, in situations involving national security.

Religion and Society

In contemporary American society, religious faith is mostly a personal matter. Thus, Americans find it difficult to conceive of religion as a motivating factor in warfare. However, when considered in the long historical perspective, the social dimension of religious belief is enormous. If we examine the patterns of world history, it becomes very clear that humanity in its social dimensions has been and continues to be deeply informed by religious belief. The present state of affairs that has characterized “Western Culture” from the nineteenth century onward where secularism and an attitude of indifference or hostility to religious belief prevail is atypical of human history as a whole. Even Marxism with its condemnation of religion as “the opium of the masses” failed to eradicate the inherent need for belief and instead inaugurated a period where millions practiced a kind of materialistic and godless “religion” characterized by its own dogmas, orthodoxies,

heresies, and saints. On the other hand, capitalism, with its emphasis on mindless consumption and lack of any ideal other than profit and material wealth offers even less religious satisfaction than socialism. Although some Western intellectuals have famously declared that God is dead, and have accepted to live with the resulting angst, this has not been a generally accepted solution to the problems of human existence.⁹

Religion is primarily significant because it offers answers to the primordial questions of human existence. However, beyond this eschatological aim, religion provides moral and ethical norms for both individual and collective life. In addition, many religions incorporate social norms into its practices and these in turn gain an almost religious moral weight. It is this aspect of religion that is significant from the collective perspective. Many would argue that the position of women in Islam, and to a lesser degree in Judaism and Christianity, is based on cultural norms that have gained quasi-religious force. But it is important to note that others consider these norms as integral parts of their system of belief.

In addition to theological tenets, most religions, and certainly the three great monotheistic religions, have either developed or adopted a particular world-view, a cosmology, as well as an anthropology, and one or more models for social life. These form the context into which new ideas are accepted, rejected or modified by the religious tradition. Discoveries in the physical and biological sciences in particular have, historically, proved to be a challenge to religion because they have provided explanations for natural and human phenomena that do not depend on a religious world-view. The conflict between religiously-based world-views and science is greatest when the religious

view adheres to a fundamentalist interpretation of scripture. An example is the continuing controversy between the theory of Evolution and some Christian groups.¹⁰

How is Religion Mobilized as a Force for War?

Religion as such is generally regarded as a force for peace. However, throughout history, it has also served as a force or even a weapon of war. As we have seen, religion is almost always a significant element in culture. In its many aspects it may pervade a given society. How then is religion, as it were, “mobilized” for war? Certain conditions must exist if religion is to be used effectively as a weapon of war.

First, there must be a community of believers who are willing to take collective action based on their common belief. Religious identity is only one among many identities that humans may possess. However, for religion to become a weapon of war, the religious identity of a group must be ranked very high among that group’s scale of values. A historical example of this is the situation that existed in the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages where people identified themselves, not by ethnicity but primarily by their religious affiliation—as Christians, Muslims or Jews.¹¹ Indeed one of the commonly recognized virtues of Islam is that very seldom discriminated on the basis of race or ethnicity—although the accepted Islamic world-view is based on religious discrimination between, believer, non-believer, and “People of the Book.”¹²

Another necessary condition is that the group be affected by conditions of real or perceived oppression. Note that the key is that the group in question must perceive itself as oppressed. In this connection, perception is truly reality. It is important to observe that,

although the conditions discussed are necessary for the effective use of religion as a weapon, their existence is not sufficient; that is they do not guarantee that the use of religion as a weapon will occur. They merely create this possibility. The emergence of a particular instance of use of religion as a weapon comes as the result of a human decision, or more precisely a series of decisions whose combination serves as a catalyst to this outcome.

Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation

Religions that accept that there are certain writings that are uniquely inspired by God and thus have an inherent and eternal authority are often preoccupied with the interpretation, of these writings. The interpretation of sacred texts is one of the aspects of religion most amenable to reason. Indeed, throughout the history of the three great monotheistic faiths, religious scholars have made their name based on specific interpretations of their tradition.

Scriptural interpretation in the monotheistic religions is an enormously complicated subject that is also tied to cultural developments and the history of ideas. In general terms scriptural interpretation takes one of two forms. One of these posits that scripture is, as a minimum, inspired by God. In extreme cases it is considered as the very utterance of God.¹³

The other main interpretative option is the belief that, although scripture may be divinely inspired, it neither final nor infallible, and thus is subject to interpretation, development, and contextualization.¹⁴ Note that both these positions are hermeneutical or interpretational frameworks. They both have internal logic, so that their acceptance is a

matter of belief. As such, they are not subject to rational confirmation or denial. Once either position is accepted deductive and inductive logic may be applied to its interpretation and commentary.

The first of these positions is commonly known as a fundamentalist position—referring to the belief that it seeks to retain the fundamentals of the faith. Fundamentalist interpretations exist in all three monotheistic religions. The second position is the belief that scripture is subject to interpretation.

The Problem of Inflammatory Texts

The texts of the Jewish scripture, particularly the Torah and the Psalms, as well as the Koran contain many passages where God prescribes violence against the unfaithful. Many of the Psalms explicitly invoke God's wrath upon the enemies.¹⁵ Others make use of bellicose imagery.¹⁶ (See for example the two texts from the Bible and the Koran quoted at the beginning of this study.) Obviously advocates of a fundamentalist interpretation of scripture place themselves at odds against all other competing positions; both within their own faith tradition and especially against outsiders. In purely religious terms many advocates of fundamentalism deny the possibility of salvation to those who do not accept their interpretation of their faith; at worst they may advocate violence against "the other." In its extreme, this position is one of the historical sources for wars based on religion.

Today the Salafist and Wahhabi schools of Koranic interpretation have been identified as ideological sources of the modern call for "external" jihad and the restoration of the Islamic theocracy—the Caliphate. Fundamentalist Judaism also calls

for the restoration of the Temple of Jerusalem and of the territory of “Greater Israel” in the manner of a theocracy. These two positions are obviously irreconcilable, and if unchecked, would make any compromise needed for peacemaking in Palestine impossible. Unfortunately, advocates of these two positions are currently active and influential in the Middle East.

Christianity too has not been and is not free from various forms of fundamentalism. The Christian texts themselves—the gospels and the books of the New Testament—are remarkably free from violent pronouncements. Indeed, Jesus himself advocated what seems to be an extreme form of pacifism and insisted that “my Kingdom is not of this world.”¹⁷ However, most Christians accept the Jewish scriptures which they call the “Old Testament” as a valid—although imperfect—revelation from God. Thus, Christians have also on occasion used these texts to justify violence in the name of religion.¹⁸ Despite this tendency, Christianity was in its origin and for over four hundred years a truly a pacifist religion that abhorred all violence as sinful; its followers choosing martyrdom over the most basic right of individual or collective self-defense.

Only with the advent of official status as the religion of the Roman Empire were Christians forced to wrestle with the concept that collective violence in the form of war, may, in some instances, be morally justified. The classic proponent of the idea of the “Just War” was Augustine of Hippo.¹⁹ This idea was developed by Thomas Aquinas and to this day is the leading Christian justification for war.²⁰ The idea of the “Just War” also serves as the basis for the modern western “humanitarian” theory of war. Despite very sharp theoretical limitations on both the justification for war and on moral behavior in war (*Jus ad bello* and *jus in bello*), Christian practice did not follow theory, and vicious

wars against enemies of a different religion, unorthodox Christians, and even between Christians of the same persuasion have bloodied the course of human history.

Fundamentalism and Proselytism

The two main tendencies that facilitate the use of religion as a weapon are fundamentalism and proselytism. Fundamentalism, based on a literal interpretation of scripture, promotes a rigid, inflexible frame of reference that accentuates the differences between believers and “the other.” It also promotes a literalist and inflexible mentality that genuinely believes that truth may be grasped and understood as an objective fact.²¹

Proselytism actively seeks to change “the other” through conversion. In some cases the zeal for converting the other may result in offering the vanquished “other” the alternatives of either conversion or death. These two forces have been at work for centuries in the complex relationships between the Islamic and Christian worlds. After the “Age of Enlightenment” in the West the concept of “secular democracy” has largely replaced that of Christendom. Thus, today the conflict between religions has been transformed into one of democracy versus Islamic theocracy. Note, that until the creation of the state of Israel, the Jews have not been independent participants in Christian and Muslim wars of religion. This is because after the various diasporas they have had neither the requisite numbers nor independent political power to pursue their own agenda. Obviously, In the West aggressive proselytism of secular democracy is not only part of national agendas but many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) promoting “human rights” may also fall under this category. Rather than being viewed as a religiously

neutral stance, the active promotion of democracy, a secular mentality separate from religiously-based ethics, and abstract “human rights” is viewed in many Muslim societies as an alien ideology that competes directly against Islamic moral and religious values. Democracy and the promotion of secular human rights have become for many an anti-religious “other.”

Religious Tolerance and Intolerance

Historically, religious intolerance has been much more prevalent than religious tolerance. This does not mean that individuals and groups of a different religion have always been persecuted or killed by the majority. It means that these individuals and groups have been left more or less on their own so long as they have formed a very small and inconspicuous minority. In some cases members of these groups with rare and useful skills have been accepted and even promoted within these societies so long as they provided necessary services and conformed to the prevailing social mores—including the dominant religious-social complexes.²²

Although the concept of religious tolerance is now taken as an “article of faith” by most Western democracies, it is a relative newcomer on the world scene when observed against the canvass of human history. Historically, most societies have insisted on the practice of their majority religion with toleration of other religions being limited to

isolated cases and a few outsiders.²³ In Hellenistic times and during the Roman Empire many religions were tolerated, although the civil authorities normally imposed the official cult of the emperor on all citizens with very few exceptions granted. Indeed, refusal to worship the emperor became a major cause for martyrdom for the early Christians. The modern Western concept of freedom of conscience is a product of the Enlightenment and flourished only after the Peace of Westphalia put an end to the terrible wars of religion in Europe.²⁴ It is also closely associated with the gradual secularization and democratization of Western Europe and America. This perspective shows the rarity and youth of the concept and explains why it is not as generally accepted as Westerners would like by many societies.

Despite its newness and its rarity freedom of conscience and religious toleration have been embraced by the “international community” under the leadership of the West and the world media. These ideals are certainly contrary to ideas of religious absolutism. It is important to recognize that theocracy is a perfectly valid and rational alternative if one accepts a world-view which places enormous importance on a particular religious system and a society ordered around specific religious and moral values. This recognition, however, does not need justify the use of religion as a weapon of war.

Part II: Religion and Design

Recently, the US Army has recognized the need for a broader understanding of the complex environments in which it is called to operate. In response to these realities, it is currently institutionalizing a more holistic process that seeks to understand situations in greater breadth and depth with an aim to find deeper and more durable solutions to

complex problems. This process, *Design*, seeks to understand by “framing” a given situation within a context. When the situations changes, planners will “reframe” the situation against what may be a more relevant context. Practitioners of *Design* include not only the traditional military, political, and environmental factors in their analysis and synthesis, but also broader areas of human endeavor such as history, culture, society, and religion.²⁵

The process of *Design* is useful to strategic planners only if it provides models that allow for better understanding of reality and therefore allow for the purposeful modifications of this reality to their advantage. It is important to note that truly understanding the role of religion in a given situation or event goes beyond simple *rational* understanding. It includes accepting and apprehending other modes of human perception, exchange, and discourse. These modes include emotional empathy, consideration of other opinions—even those opinions who lie outside the parameters of traditional western logic—judgments, perceptions, and intuitions.

Planners tend to approach their work in a very logical, methodical manner. This methodology is best exemplified by formalized military staff processes such as the Joint Operations Planning Process (JOPP) and the US Army’s Military Decision Making Process (MDMP). A methodical approach can be very good; but not always. If planners seek to understand a human system in which religion plays a significant part they must remember the inherent complexity of the individual religious experience and its many social dimensions. Specifically, planners and thinkers involved in the *Design* process would do well to bear in mind the following thoughts regarding religion.

1. Accept the Reality of Religion. Religion is neither rational nor irrational; it is supra-rational—beyond the reach of reason. However, once the basic tenets of a given religion are accepted, many religions are amenable to rational understanding and its precepts may be discussed rationally.²⁶ Moreover, a person's or group's religion can have, and often has had, a profound influence on individual and collective actions. Thus, a person's or group's religion must be accepted and recognized as a significant reality; but one that is not reducible to rational explanation alone. The acceptance that religion has its own specific category separate from logical reason is very important to the understanding of any situation in which religion plays a part.²⁷

From a planners' perspective all religions must be granted validity, if not from the individual observer's philosophical point of view, at least from the human perspective of the observer. Otherwise, understanding, always an elusive concept, becomes impossible. For religious persons, granting validity to another religion—"the Other"—may be a difficult emotional and/or intellectual task. For non-believers or those for whom religion is not a significant part of their psychic or emotional makeup, recognizing the reality and significance of religious belief may be even more challenging. A useful reminder for planners is this: "Even if you do not accept the tenets of a particular religion; they are real to believers." This means that religion *is* a reality and *must* be treated as such.

2. Religion deals with Absolutes—this is its most Intractable Quality. The fact that many religions affirm knowledge of absolute truth makes them much more intractable to interactions that require moderation and compromise than other belief systems that do not

pretend to know the absolute. Diplomacy requires that those who hold conflicting positions meet somewhere in a middle ground. This requires flexibility and a willingness to compromise—at least in part. However, many religious figures are revered precisely because of their zeal and their uncompromising belief. Indeed, many who are regarded as saints by their followers are viewed as fanatics by their opponents. It is important to recognize to what extent participants in a given interaction may be willing to compromise. Otherwise, much time and effort may be wasted in a fruitless pursuit of a goal not shared by the parties involved.

3. Understand that Religion has both Personal and Social aspects. Religion is a complex concept. It has both personal and social aspects. The personal aspects may be significant when they mold the thoughts and actions of key players in the political or cultural spheres since these individuals may exercise great influence over their followers. The social aspects are even more significant because they may be influential in motivating collective actions. In many places and situations religious identity is either the most significant or one of the most significant sources of collective identity.

4. Understand that Religion consists of Theological Beliefs and Cultural Norms. The word religion encompasses a wide range of meanings and refers to more than theological concepts. It also provides moral norms for personal and collective conduct. In addition, many religions include ancillary norms that dictate patterns of behavior, dress, diet, etc. Some religious interpretations treat these with much the same rigor as the essential theological tenets; other interpretations recognize these aspects as cultural or traditional

accretions which do not have the same force as theological beliefs. Since most people are not overly reflective in their day to day interactions and use of language, the complex admixture of cultural-religious traditions are not always adequately distinguished and the richness and ambiguities inherent in language only add to the problem.

When religiously inspired norms combine with cultural attitudes or mores the result may be thought of as a religious-cultural complex. An example of the impact of cultural customs may be seen in the various practices on the veiling of women. The Koran mandates that Muslim women must observe modesty in dress.²⁸ This has been interpreted variously in the Islamic World to mean the covering of the entire body as in the Pashtun *burqa*; or in the simple veil worn around the head worn by many Indonesian women.

5. Religion exists in Context with other Religions and Non-Belief. In today's world, a given religion does not normally exist in isolation from other religions or modes of thought. A religion normally exists in context. This context often shapes and influences what is emphasized in a religious tradition. When a religion or a sect within the religion is in the minority, it may take a defensive and sometimes militant attitude toward the majority faith. Conversely, members of a majority religion may decide to squelch all opposition and persecute other minority faiths. This attitude may also occur in the confrontation of modern secularism—either of the western humanist variety or totalitarian Marxism—and religious values.

6. Religion may be used as a Tool for other Purposes. As is true of all cultural constructs, religion may serve purposes other than its avowed spiritual role. Thus, it may take on political, cultural, social and other roles. Leaders of all types recognize the power of religion and leverage it to their own purposes.

7. Ethical Dimension. The use of religion as a weapon, and the defense against the use of religion as a weapon, both present challenging ethical implications. This is a complex issue for which powerful arguments may be made from many perspectives. Just as the use of medical or psychological knowledge to leverage personal or group advantage is fraught with ethical perils, so does the use of religion.

Questions that May be Asked to Clarify the Role of Religion in a Given Situation

The process of *Design* uses the concepts of framing and reframing a problem or situation in order to better understand its complexities and how it may have changed in time. When framing a problem the designer asks the questions:²⁹

What is going on? What appears to be the situation and what are the dynamics involved?

Why has this situation developed? Is religion a root cause of the problem? Is it being used as a way to garner support? Are there historical precedents?

What's the real story? Is religious motivation a principal cause of the situation? Is it a cover for something else?

What does this mean? You may ask: What does religion mean in this particular context? What religious interactions are occurring in this region/city? Why are people identifying with religion or religious leaders in a particular way? What does religion mean for the majority of the population involved? What does it mean for significant minorities? What does it mean for specific sectors of society?

If the present situation is unacceptable the process of *Design* seeks to find ways or mechanisms which will turn the situation into an acceptable one. To do this the practitioner may ask the following questions:

What needs to change?

What doesn't need to change?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the actors?

What are the opportunities and threats?

What conditions need to exist for success?

Can I leverage religion to turn the situation to my advantage?

What are the ethical implications of this line of thought?

What may we conclude from the examination of the various possible roles religion plays in human affairs and how could we use the concept of *Design* to frame and

reframe problems involving religion? Historical examples from various cultural contexts suggest that all those involved in *Design* should consider the following aspects of religion:

Religion matters. As one of the most ancient, universal, and persisting individual and collective human behaviors, religion has played and will continue to play a significant role in human affairs—including issues of war and peace.

The effects of religion vary greatly. The effects of the religious factor vary greatly based on, among other things, on whether the prevalent interpretation is a fundamentalist or a more open one, the intensity of belief, the role of religion in a society or a group or groups within a society, and whether there is a central or hierarchical authority.

Words do not mean the same thing to various groups. The wide variety of interpretations of religious texts results in a wide variety of religiously-motivated behaviors. Savvy *Design* practitioner may recommend using a particular interpretation as a way to modify an unacceptable situation or influence a particular leader or target-group. In addition, the meaning of words changes over time and also each language adds various subtle shades of meaning to a word or phrase. This may be the reason that Islam is so insistent that a translation of the Koran is not really a translation but only an approximation to the original. While not as strict, many Christian translations of the Bible must also be approved by religious leaders in order to gain legitimacy.

Relative values change over time. Even within a rather uniform religious tradition, the position of religious values in a given spiritual or social hierarchy may vary considerably.

For example, even in the remarkably consistent and uniform Roman Catholic tradition the relative value of certain dogmas, devotional practices, and scriptural emphases have changed considerably over comparatively short time spans. Cultural adaptation also exerts enormous influence over the hierarchy of values and the interpretation of a religious tradition. For example, practices associated with Holy Week in an Irish Catholic context are very different from practices associated with Holy Week in a Hispanic Catholic context.

Religious tolerance may be a desirable universal value but alternative world-views should not be dismissed as irrational or less valid. The instinctive acceptance of religious tolerance as a universal value stems from the post-Westphalian Western world-view and the American experience. This view, which arose out of the desire to avoid religiously-based violence, has now become the dogma of the “international community” and the international media. Other intellectual positions hold the view that religion and religious values are so important that they override the advantages of religious tolerance. In this thinking what is at stake is the eternal salvation of the members of the community—thus the use of force to enforce religious values is preferable to freedom of conscience.

Any use of religion either offensively or defensively is charged with ethical implications. Just as the use of medical or psychological knowledge is inextricably bound with ethical decisions, the application of religious knowledge or practices to non-religious situations, and specifically to conflict and war, necessarily involves ethical choices.

Religion or even varieties of religions are not monolithic—they encompass enormous variations. This is perhaps the most often ignored or unacknowledged aspect of religion. If religious variations are not noticed, acknowledged, and understood, a *Design* practitioner may reach conclusions that do not reflect reality.

The Second and Third Order effects of religion are expressed in what may be termed Religious-Cultural Complexes. I borrow this term on an analogy from Jungian psychology to indicate the “constellation” or accretion of various attitudes, ideas and patterns of behavior around religious beliefs. These religious-cultural complexes are extremely important in understanding how religion “works” within a culture.

Finally, it is important to remember that religion is but one factor among many: When framing and re-framing it is important to determine its relative importance to other operating factors

In conclusion, everything points toward the fact that religion will continue to be a very significant factor in human affairs and that it will be used to motivate war and violence into the foreseeable future. This means that religion and the values, attitudes, and cultural practices associated with it will be significant to all those engaged in the process of *Design*.

Part III: Appendices

Appendix I: Historical Origins of Christian-Muslim Warfare

The evolution of the three monotheistic religions has created an environment in which particularly fierce wars may be waged in the name of religion. A short historical survey of their evolution explains why this has been so.

The Chosen People—Us against the “Other” What has become known as Judaism began as the religion of a group of nomadic Semites known as “The Twelve Tribes of Israel.” The tribalistic nature of their monotheistic faith, which stood in stark contrast to the prevailing polytheism, ensured the emergence of a classic “us against the other” mentality. As the Israelites became more powerful they had to fight for their existence in their wanderings through the Sinai wilderness and later they had to fight to possess the land promised them by God. The Jewish Torah describes how Yaweh was a warrior God who expected obedience to his will by his chosen people and directed his wrath against their enemies. Indeed, some of the most bellicose passages of the Jewish Scriptures record God’s injunction to slay all heathen and to avoid marrying outside the community of Israel. The bellicose nature of the Israelite religion continued through a long history of successes and defeats at the hands of various enemies. Defeat at the hands of the Gentiles was interpreted by Jewish prophets as the just anger of God when his people were unfaithful to their sacred covenant. After the deportation and near destruction of ten of the twelve original tribes, the Israelitic religion came to be known by the name of its largest surviving tribe—that of Judah.

Defending “The Christian World” The adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire created the first Christian commonwealth. As Christians faced the reality of a worldly state based on religion they had to come to grips with the responsibilities inherent in its defense and preservation. As far as the citizens of the Roman and now Christian state were concerned their society was “the world.” Thus, they were called to defend this world against outside barbarism. With the division and then the demise of the Ancient Roman Empire, the mantle of defender of the faith passed to the Eastern or Byzantine Empire. Despite the inevitable role of personal ambition and political motives, for centuries, the Emperor of the East was also the defender of Christendom, first against the barbarians, and after the rise of Islam, against the rival faith. When Charlemagne received the crown of the re-established Western Empire from the Pope at the beginning of the ninth century he inaugurated a new “Holy Roman Empire.” The growing disagreements and schism between the Eastern and Western Churches weakened the ancient unity of the church and caused Christendom to weaken in the face of external threats. In addition, the western emperors and the popes had many disagreements between the limits of each others’ temporal and spiritual powers.

Jihad. A survey of the panorama of world history shows that the rise of Islam introduced a new element into the dynamics of religion as a motive for war. From the beginning the Prophet Mohammed was a political and military leader as well as a religious leader. He personally used war to defend his followers and expand his realm. The Koran recognizes

the need for jihad—struggle. It distinguishes between the “greater jihad”—inner struggle waged by each believer to overcome temptation and remain faithful to the will of God from the “lesser jihad”—the struggle of the Muslim community against attack from non-believers. Of the two the “greater jihad” is regarded as the most noble; but the “lesser jihad” is also deemed praiseworthy to protect the community of believers. Mohammed saw Islam as the ultimate revelation of God that superseded both the Jewish and the Christian revelations. The Koran and the Hadith also have their share of “inflammatory” texts that are hard to explain away in merely allegorical terms since Mohammed was engaged in actual fighting against those that would destroy Islam and the Muslims. In the century following the Islamic revelation, the faithful extended the domain of Islam from India in the east to Spain and southern France in the west; from the steppes of central Asia in the north into sub-Saharan Africa in the south. Muslim armies overran the Christian territories in Palestine, North Africa and Anatolia—including three of the five oldest patriarchal sees of Christendom—Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch.

Appendix II: Historical Examples which call for Framing and Re-Framing the Role of Religion

The abstract concept involved of evaluating the significance of religion in a given context may be better appreciated by using historical examples. Although more recent examples are available, the examples chosen are from a more remote past. This provides the benefits of a longer historical perspective and may also serve to dispel present-day bias. Another advantage of using historical examples is that they provide a long perspective on some of the most intractable and persisting issues that have caused religiously-based conflict.

Christians, Andalusians, and Almoravids

The importance and changing value of religious factors in the overall scheme of things may be illustrated by the changing relationships between competing groups in the Iberian Peninsula—what is today Spain and Portugal—toward the end of the eleventh century.

By the fourth century A.D. the Iberian Peninsula had evolved as one of the most civilized and settled areas of the Roman Empire. As such, its population had accepted Christianity in its late Roman form. The Germanic invasions brought the Visigoths to power. At first the Visigoth ruling minority practiced the Arian version of Christianity. They were considered heretics by the orthodox Christian majority. In time, the entire peninsula became an orthodox Christian Kingdom with a flourishing monastic culture. This situation changed dramatically when a Muslim army invaded the Peninsula in 711. These Muslims were descendants of the initial wave of conquerors that left Arabia with a zeal to spread their faith. They overran the old Roman-Hellenistic Egypt and the Christian Berber areas of North Africa. Crossing the Strait of Gibraltar, they quickly defeated the Visigoths, conquering almost the entire Iberian Peninsula and threatening Western Europe to the north.

The Muslim invasion marked the beginning of nearly eight centuries of conflict, interaction, and cultural exchanges between Christians and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula, a process that would forever shape Spanish and Portuguese culture in a very distinct way. By the eleventh century the initial zeal of the Muslim conquerors had waned and the Crusades were still in the future. Thus, wars between Muslims and Christians were not necessarily governed by religious imperatives, they were complex affairs in which Muslim and Christians not only fought each other; but Muslims also fought other Muslims allied to Christians and Christians would do likewise—for a fee. Indeed, after the dissolution of the great Caliphate of Cordoba, Al-Andalus—the Muslim area of the Peninsula—divided into various small emirates that were continuously in conflict with each other and with the small Christian kingdoms to the north.

This complex world of power struggle and changing alliances favored the rise of independently-minded warlords who made a living out of warfare. These men would often fight to carve out large fiefdoms for themselves, but also served as commanders for various rulers. The foremost of these was Rodrigo Díaz de Bivar—known as “El Cid” from the Arabic Al-sayyid or lord. Interestingly, the figure of this warlord has been subject to varying interpretations throughout the years. He has been regarded as a

“Spanish nationalist,” before there was such a thing as a Spanish nation, a champion of Christendom, a paragon of chivalry, a hero of the common man, an opportunistic warlord among other things. What is evident is that, in common with others, his primary motivation was certainly not religious but personal ambition.

Thus, although religious animosity was certainly a factor in Iberian warfare between the eighth and the late eleventh centuries, it was not cause of conflict in and of itself. But the dynamics that had dominated the situation in Iberia changed dramatically with the arrival of the Almoravids—a group of militant Muslims from Africa.

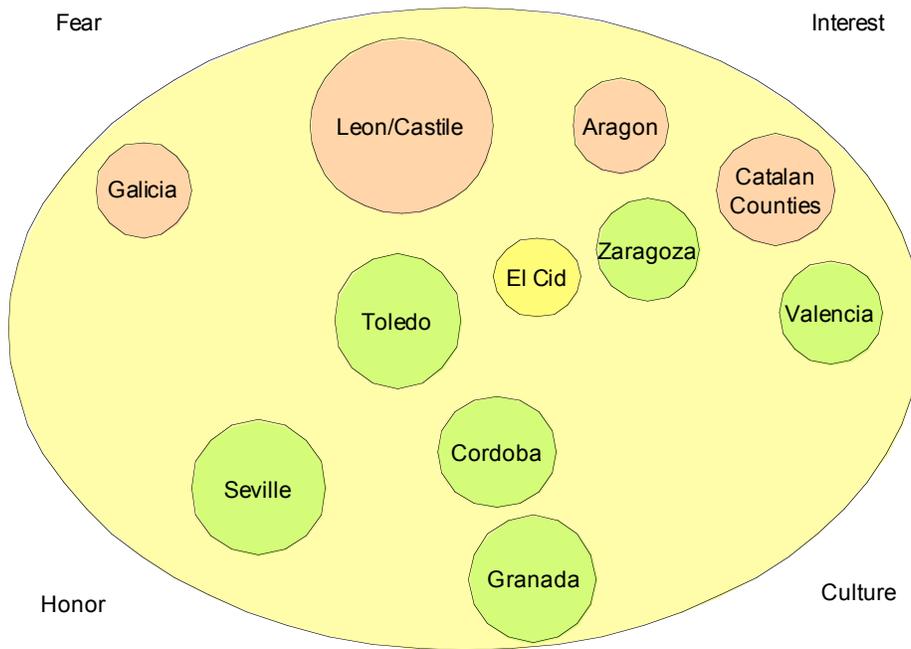
The Almoravids (al-Murabitn) were Berber tribesmen from the central and southern reaches of the Sahara. They were unified under Ysuf ben Tashufin, a devout tribal strongman, and their energies were canalized into the desire for religiously-inspired conquest—jihad. The coming of the Almoravids exposed the degree of laxity into which many of the emirs of al-Andalus had fallen. Many practices expressly forbidden in the Koran, such as the drinking of wine, pederasty, and “tolerance” for the “infidel,” were widely accepted. None of these things were acceptable to the Almoravids. Thus, the coming of a “fundamentalist” orthodoxy served to polarize a situation where religion was an important, but not the main issue of contention and elevated religion and its practice to the fundamental source of division.

From the point of view of *Design*, the new situation would call for reframing. It is important to point out that the polarization process was neither easy nor did it necessarily eliminate alliances of convenience across religious lines. Fundamentalists normally direct their anger primarily at members of their own faith deemed lukewarm or heretical. Thus, the Almoravids directed their greatest wrath against the emirs and Muslim aristocracy of Al-Andalus. The desire for self-preservation caused these leaders to either revert to more orthodox forms of behavior or ally themselves with the Christian “Other.” Similarly, Christian leaders had to put aside their personal agendas and unite against a formidable foe. For example, El Cid and the King of Leon and Castile reconciled with each other after a long period of estrangement.

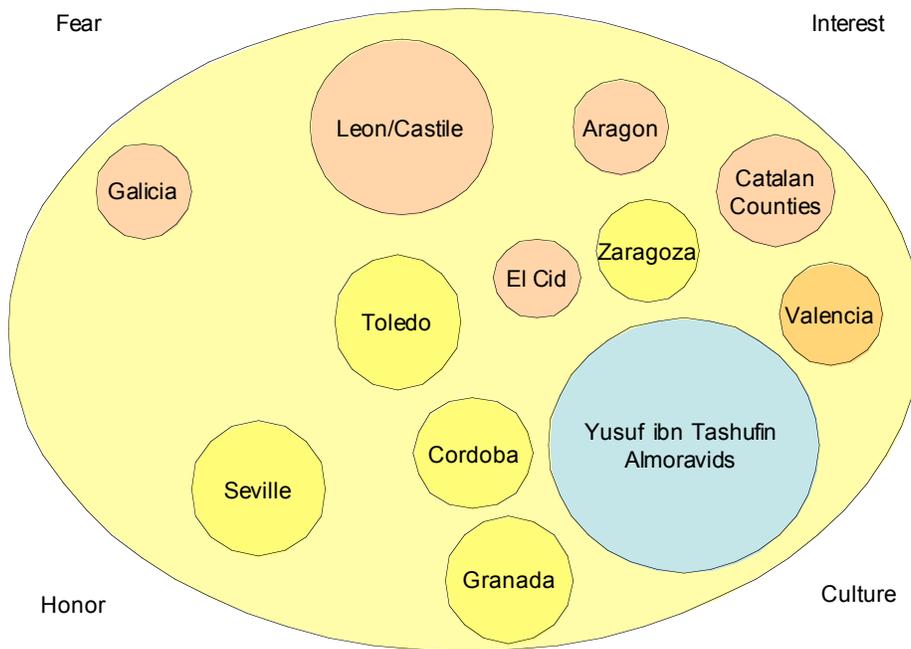
At the same other external forces were pointing toward significant changes in the prevailing cultural climate. For example, Pope Urban II was calling for a Crusade—a holy war or armed pilgrimage—to liberate the Christian Holy places from the Muslims. Thus, the religious-cultural complexes of the time pointed toward militant religious polarization which would express itself in warfare. A reframing of the changed situation is shown in the diagram below.

The pattern of polarization observed in the aftermath of the Almoravid invasions continued with the western Crusades into Palestine. The ideal of Crusade remained important in the West long after the failure of all the Crusader states in Palestine. It was present in such actions as the various defenses of Vienna against the Turks and the Battle of Lepanto. Its appeal waned only in the aftermath of the change of attitude that pervaded Western Europe after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.

Framing the Situation in Iberia ca. 1070



Reframing the Situation in Iberia ca. 1095



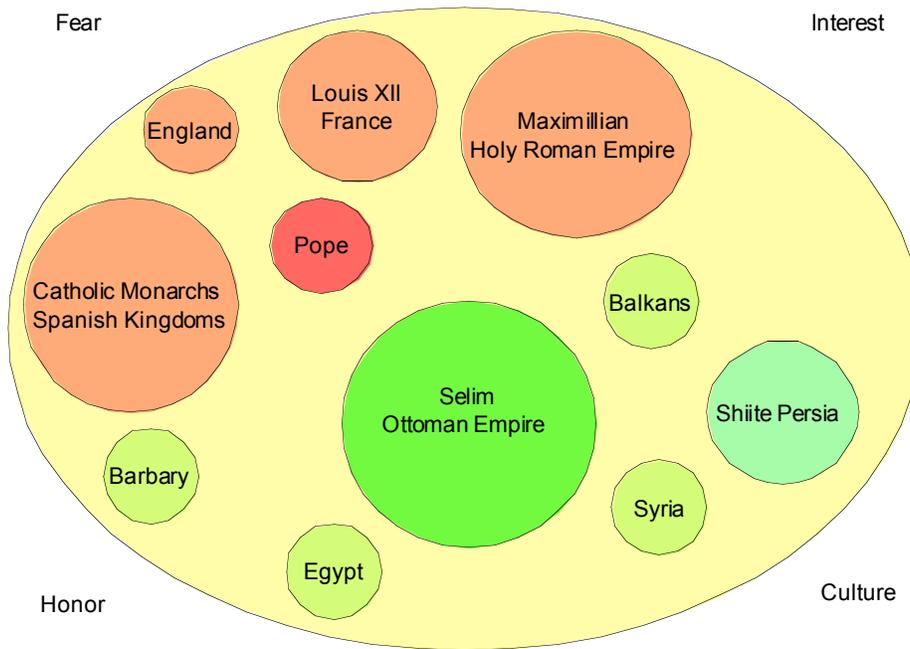
The Sultan, the Emperor, and the King

In the early sixteenth century, the religious factor played a very complicated role in the long relationships between the three leading rulers of the Mediterranean World—Charles V, King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor, his European rival, King Francis I of France, and the Ottoman Sultan Suleyman. The conflict between these rulers occurred within a rich cultural context. Suleyman—known as “The Magnificent”—had assumed the mantle of Caliph—the successor to the Prophet. As such, he was the Paladin of Islam; a role that carried an enormous weight of authority, tradition, and expectations. As the “Sword of Islam” Suleyman would carry out his role of expanding the House of Faith against the “other.” His natural opponent would have been the Byzantine Emperor. But Suleyman’s grandfather had already destroyed this Empire and killed its ruler. The Pope had never been as powerful in the temporal world as he was in the spiritual realm and the prestige of the papacy was at a low ebb. Thus, the mantle of spiritual and temporal leadership fell naturally on the western Emperor—the ruler of the Holy Roman Empire. But at this time the Holy Roman Emperor was also the King of the newly-united Kingdom of Spain—the very kingdom that had endured and emerged triumphant after almost eight centuries of conflict with Islam.

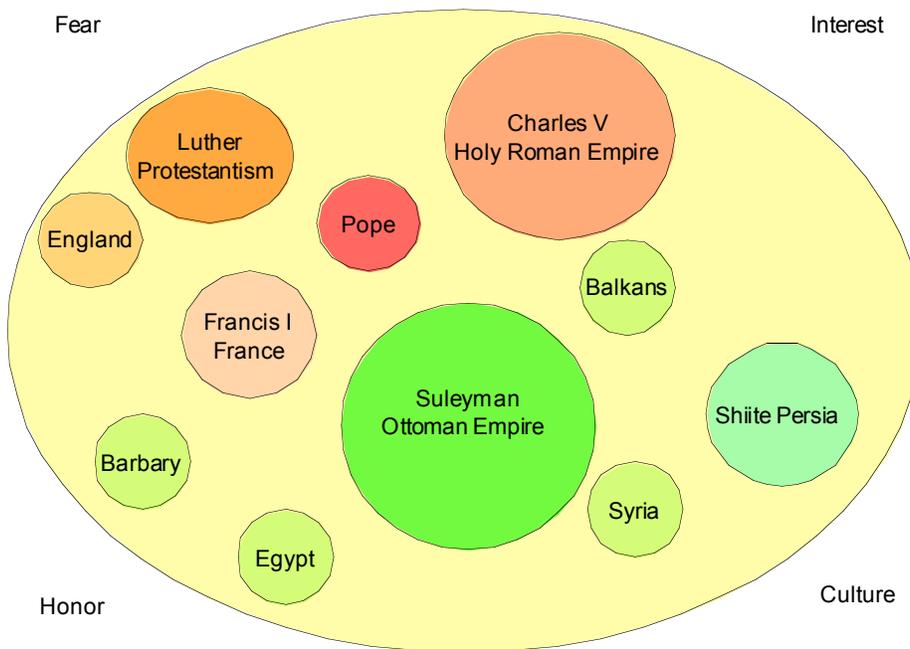
France had traditionally been the foremost western European power, but the union of the Empire with a strong Spanish state had pushed it from this position. The ambitious French King did not accept this situation. Out of desperation and political expediency he allied himself with the arch-enemy of Christendom—the Sultan.

To further complicate matters, the tension the old monolithic entity known as Christendom was rent by the dissent of Luther’s Reformation. The Protestants were willing to use force to maintain their beliefs and found political support among independent minded German princes. Suleyman, for his part had to look east over his shoulder to Shiite Persia, which the Sunni Ottomans considered as heretic, and could not devote all his attention to westward expansion. Thus, a very complex network of changing relationships emerged between the three rulers vying for control of the Mediterranean. These relationships were subject to change at any moment based on the internal problems faced by each ruler and his own personal inclinations. In the tensions and power struggle between three able and powerful rulers religion played an important role; but its relative value when compared to other influential factors tended to change according to the circumstances. This may be illustrated by the framing and reframing shown below.

Framing the Situation in the Mediterranean ca. 1500



Reframing the Situation in the Mediterranean ca. 1530



Appendix III: Glossary of Useful Terms

Absolutism—Authoritarian form of government in which power is concentrated in the hands of one person or a small group of people.

Christendom—a term used during the Middle Ages to denote the community of believers in Christ under the Roman Catholic Church; roughly equivalent to Western Europe.

Clash of Civilization—Polemical phrase used by Samuel Huntington to conceptualize the clash between large human groups which for the most part consist of related ethnic and cultural groups and including different languages on the basis of religious affiliation.

Conscience—inner psychic entity or process that allows a person to discern between moral choices.

Cultural Awareness—recognition and respect for other cultures—including the religious belief and practices of others.

Cultural Relativism—the belief that all cultures are fundamentally equivalent; there is no one superior culture.

Cultural Understanding—a deeper appreciation of the elements and the totality of a culture than mere cultural awareness reached through study and immersion in a given culture.

Culture—the totality of a human group’s collective adaptation to nature, the environment, and the psychic realities of being human. It includes, language, artistic expression, technology, philosophy, religion, and material culture

Crusades—military expeditions launched to recover the Holy Land for Christendom beginning in the late eleventh century. Later the term was extended to include expeditions against all manner of “infidels” including Muslims, heretics, and pagans.

Dar al-Islam—the “House of Islam” i.e. the realm of the faithful.

Dar-al-Harb—the “House of War” i.e. the world of those who have not accepted Islam.

Design—a holistic approach used by the US Army to understanding complex problems or situations. It is defined as “... an approach to critical and creative thinking that enables a commander to create understanding about a unique situation and to visualize and describe how to generate a change.” (*Design Issue Paper* 29 Mar 2009, p. 1-1.)

Emotion— psychic feelings or states of being; may be manifested by external behaviors.

Enlightenment—an intellectual movement that flourished in eighteenth-century Europe which promoted the use of reason and logic above all other modes of human thought and discourse. It originated the ideals that led to the development of western secular democracy.

Ethics—a branch of philosophy that deals with moral valuation and choice.

Framing/Re-Framing—concepts used in the practice of *Design* which sets parameters for the evaluation of particular situations or systems. The word refers to frame of reference or point of view.

Freedom of Conscience—the freedom to allow each person to follow the dictates of his/her own conscience without being persecuted or penalized in any way.

Heretic—a person or group that willingly deviates from established religious orthodoxy.

Holy War—a war waged specifically on behalf of God, religion, or religious aims.

Infidel—a person or group that is not faithful to a given religion. Often used for “the Other.”

Jihad—Arabic word for “struggle.” The Koran recognizes a greater or internal jihad which the believer wages against his own evil tendencies and a lesser or external jihad that may be waged to establish justice in this world or against the enemies of Islam.

Logic—a type of reasoning which requires that conclusions be consistent with the premises of the arguments and with external facts.

Monotheism—belief in one deity.

Orientalism—the study of oriental cultures, including Middle Eastern ones, by Westerners—particularly Europeans. This study has been characterized by an implied superiority of Western culture over its objects of study.

Other/The Other—how members of a given human group view those that are outside the group.

People of the Book—according to the Koran Jews and Christians deserve special consideration since they share many of the same holy scriptures accepted by Muslims.

Proportionality—a principle that demands that methods used in warfare be proportionate to the ends.

Proselytism—the desire to bring others to the true faith. It is inherent in all missionary religions.

Relativism—the belief that there is no absolute value—all value is variable.

Religion—a complex system of belief which usually includes belief in one or more deity, ritual practices associated with the deity or deities, a moral code, and an eschatology.

Religious Absolutism—the belief that only one particular religion is true.

Religious-Cultural Complex—the accretion of a variety of religious and cultural images, symbols, traditions, and practices into a complex cultural and individual and collective psychic structures.

Religious Fundamentalism—the belief in the literal/tangible truth of religious scriptural texts.

Reason—human faculty that allows humans to connect cause and effect, make assumptions, and extract consequences from objects and situations that apply objectively.

Secularism—the separation of politics and other worldly affairs from religion.

Secular Humanism—a complex of beliefs that places great value on the individual human being and posits certain “inalienable rights” independent of any religious system.

Symbol—the visual representation of a complex idea or reality.

Taboo—a ritually forbidden act or object.

Theocracy—government based on religious principles and led by religious leaders.

Totem—a symbol of a clan or tribe. It usually has magical or mythical properties.

Treaty of Westphalia—the treaty that formally ended the Thirty Years’ War in 1648.

Values—core principles that guide a person’s ethical choices.

West/The West—the nation-states founded on secular democratic ideals and a primarily capitalistic economic model led by the United States and Western Europe.

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¹ Joshua 6: 16-17 as given in *Bible: Today's English Version with Deuterocanonicals and Apocrypha*, (New York: American Bible Society, 1993), p.187.

² *The Koran*, Trans. by N.J. Dawood, 6th Rev. Ed. (London: Penguin, 1997), p. 146.

³ "In exile, the Jews felt the harshness of the surrounding world; this sense of presence helped them to feel enveloped by a benevolent God." Karen Armstrong, *A History of God: The 4,000-Year Old Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, (New York: Ballantine, 1993), p. 76.

⁴ "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age." Matt. 28: 19-20.

⁵ "Therefore call men to the true Faith, and follow the straight path as you are commanded." *Koran*, p. 340.

⁶ In this connection Rudolf Otto has identified the human capability to apprehend supra-rational objects as the feeling for the "numinous," and the object of this apprehension the *mysterium tremendum*—the awesome mystery, which leads to the idea of God as the "wholly other." Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923), pp. 25-30.

⁷ "Indeed, there is a case for arguing that *Homo sapiens* is also *Homo religiosus*. Men and women started to worship gods as soon as they became recognizably human; they created religions at the same time as they created works of art." Karen Armstrong, *A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, (New York: Ballantine, 1993), p. xix.

⁸ St. Augustine of Hippo, *The Confessions*, trans. by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 3.

⁹ The French revolutionary government inaugurated the reign of "Reason" and the end of official Christianity in the new Republic. Later Nietzsche declared the death of God and the dawning of the era of the Superman. Marx called religion the "opium of the masses. In this century scientific positivism and communism have capitalism has ignored or bypassed religious concerns. Philosophers such as Sartre and have attempted to construct a morality that does not depend on God. Despite all these trends religion has survived and promises to be a powerful force into the twenty-first century. Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, pp. 365-366.

¹⁰ "Darwin's name has become a byword for atheism in fundamentalist circles, yet the *Origin* was not intended as an attack upon religion, but was a sober, careful exposition of a scientific theory." Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism*, (New York: Ballantine, 2000), p. 94.

¹¹ "Before calling themselves Leonese, Castilian, or Aragonese, those who fought against the Moors and who lived intermixed with the Jews, called themselves Christians Américo Castro, *La realidad histórica de España*. (Mexico City, Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1982), p. 25."

¹² "He [God] has revealed to you the Book with the Truth, confirming the scriptures which preceded it; for He has already revealed the Torah and the Gospel for the guidance of mankind, and the distinction of right from wrong." *The Koran*, pp. 42-43. "The only true faith in God is Islam." *The Koran*, p. 44. "Had the People of the Book accepted the Faith, it would surely have been better for them. Some are true believers, but most of them are evil-doers. [...] Yet they are not all alike. There are among the People of the Book some upright men who all night long recite the revelations of God and worship Him; who believe in God

and the Last Day; who enjoin justice and forbid evil and vie with each other in good works. These are righteous men: whatever good they do, its reward shall not be denied them. God well knows the righteous.” *Koran*, p. 52.

¹³ In the Koran God speaks thus: “We have revealed the Koran in the Arabic tongue that you may understand its meaning. It is a transcript of the eternal book in Our keeping, sublime, and full of wisdom.” *The Koran*, p. 343. “Those that suppress any part of the Scriptures which God has revealed in order to gain some paltry end shall swallow nothing but fire into their bellies.” *Koran*, p. 27.

¹⁴ “Since the late eighteenth century, German scholars had applied the new techniques of literary analysis, archaeology, and comparative linguistics to the Bible, subjecting it to a scientifically empirical methodology.” Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, p. 91

¹⁵ “What my enemies say can never be trusted: they only want to destroy. Their words are flattering and smooth, but full of deadly deceit. Condemn and punish them, O God; may their own plots cause their ruin. Drive them out of your presence because of their many sins and their rebellion against you.” Ps. 5: 9-10.

¹⁶ “Then the Lord thundered from the sky; and the voice of the Most High was heard. He shot his arrows and scattered his enemies; with flashes of lightning he sent them running.” Ps. 18: 13-14.

¹⁷ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your friends, hate your enemies. But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become the children of your Father in heaven.” Matt. 5: 43-45.

¹⁸ This is true to this day as shown by Preston Jones and Cody Beckman in *God’s Hiddenness in Combat: Toward Christian Reflection on Battle*. (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2009).

¹⁹ Even when acknowledging the social necessity of the “just war,” Saint Augustine laments its violence. “For it is the wrongdoing of the opposing party which compels the wise man to wage just wars; and this wrongdoing, even though it gave rise to no war, would still be matter of grief to man because it is man’s wrongdoing. Let everyone, then, who thinks with pain on these great evils, so horrible, so ruthless, acknowledge that this is misery.” Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God against the Pagans*, pp. 617-618.

²⁰ “Christians can use violence when they have a duty to do so; in other words, when they are soldiers (or policemen). Such Christians respond to violence from enemies that threaten peace and order—not passively, but with force. [...] Christians fight in the army and pray for victory because they are formed by the perfect virtue of charity. Charity is the ruling virtue in the moral life.” Alexander F.C. Webster and Darrell Cole, *The Virtue of War: Reclaiming the Classic Christian Traditions East and West*, (Salisbury, Massachusetts: Regina Orthodox Press, 2004), p. 150

²¹ “Jewish and Muslim fundamentalists had turned their *mythoi* into pragmatic *logoi* designed to achieve a practical result. Protestant fundamentalists had perverted myth in a different way. They had turned the Christian myths into scientific facts, and had created a hybrid that was neither good science nor good religion. This had run counter to the whole tradition of spirituality and had involved great strain, since religious truth is not rational in nature and cannot be proved scientifically.” Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, p. 355.

²² Here the author has adapted the concepts of complex and the constellation of such a complex used in Jungian psychology and applied them to a larger social context. “Some collective complexes, circling around issues of sex, religion, money, or power affect almost everyone to some degree and can lead to fierce discharges of energy, even to war, if provoked severely enough.” p. 76. Murray Stein, *Jung’s Map of the Soul: An Introduction*, (Chicago: Open Court, 1998), p. 76.

²³ “... up until the 1680s, much of Europe, while religiously diverse, nonetheless had no real freedom of religion in the sense that we understand it today. Being the wrong kind of Christian could still lead to one’s

death, and sometimes a horribly violent one—countless thousands were burned alive at stakes, and Anabaptists, because they believed in baptism by immersion, were often killed by drowning, in a macabre and deliberately ironic method of execution.” Christopher Catherwood, *Making War in the Name of God*, (New York: Citadel Press, 2007), p. 119

²⁴ Christopher Catherwood, *Making War in the Name of God*, p. 127.

²⁵ “Design enables commanders to conceptualize the operational environment. They can visualize the environment in terms of not only enemy, adversary, friendly, and neutral systems across the spectrum of conflict, but also in the context of the political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment and time (PMESII-PT, FM 3-0). Jack Kem, *Design: Tools of the Trade*, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College), p. 12.

²⁶ “...expositions of religious truth in language inevitably tend to stress the ‘rational’ attributes of God. But though the above mistake is thus a natural one enough, it is none the less seriously misleading. For so far are these ‘rational’ attributes from exhausting the idea of deity, that they in fact imply a non-rational or supra-rational Subject of which they are predicates.” Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 2.

²⁷ “But the object of *religious* awe or reverence—the *tremendum* and *augustum*, cannot be fully determined conceptually: it is non-rational, as is the beauty of a musical composition, which no less eludes complete conceptual analysis.” Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 59

²⁸ “Enjoin believing women to turn their eyes away from temptation and to preserve their chastity; not to display their adornments (except such as are normally revealed); to draw their veils over their bosoms and not to display their finery except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands’ fathers, their sons, their step-sons, their brothers, their brothers’ sons, their sisters’ sons, their women-servants, and their slave-girls; male attendants lacking in natural vigour, and children who have no carnal knowledge of women. And let them not stamp their feet when walking so as to reveal their hidden trinkets.” *Koran*, p. 248.

²⁹ These questions are formulated in Jack Kem, *Design: Tools of the Trade*, p. 12.