



"Of the twenty-two civilizations that have appeared in history, nineteen of them collapsed when they reached the moral state America is in today."
—Arnold Toynbee

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Peaceful Is as Peaceful Does

Since September 11, 2001 - and frankly since long before then - the Western and Islamic worlds have increasingly collided. These clashes have sometimes produced sparks, sometimes brushfires, and sometimes raging infernos, but always something fiery - even the words that fly from them are hot and angry. At the base of this conflict is opposition, not just the fact that the West is one side and Islam is another, but also that at their most fundamental levels these two antagonists are polar opposites in nearly every respect. Due to this deep-seated difference, there is little [hope](#) of any individual or any nation bringing this conflict to a peaceful resolution.

As time progresses through the asymmetrical war that pitches these two major civilizations against each other, those of us here in the West are beginning to learn more about the Muslim mind. This is the best we can do; we can never hope to understand it because it is just too alien to us. It would be like a dog trying to fathom a cat's rationale. We can certainly *try* to understand why Muhammad's disciples act as they do, but we will never truly grasp the calculus of the Islamic mind. We may know *what* but never *why* to our satisfaction.

However, we have learned a few facts through tragic experience with Islamic fundamentalism. Generally, radical Muslim fundamentalists:

- believe Allah requires them to conquer [the world](#) and place it under Islamic law, called *Shariah*. In other words, *jihad* is a major component of their religion, and they will not stop until it is accomplished or they are dead. In fact, their latest thinking is that *wherever*

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Muslims build a mosque, Islam has *de facto* claimed the region for itself, and *jihad* will proceed there through whatever means necessary.

- cannot be taken at their word, as they will lie to non-Muslims with impunity to further *jihad*. Sadly, due to self-interest, most people in the West share this trait with them, making "constructive dialogue" a futile exercise.
- set a low value on human life, even their own, which they will seemingly gladly sacrifice in Allah's service.
- place *no* value on Western lives, as we are infidels. To them, killing a Westerner has the moral equivalence of stamping on a cockroach.

After 9-11, the Bush administration engaged in a public relations offensive to curry favor with the American Muslim community. The key message of that campaign was "Islam is a religion of [peace](#)," an idea that has correctly been maligned and lampooned ever since. Perhaps the promise of peace appears in the pages of the Koran, but only for adherents of Islam - and there is little evidence that even they have experienced it throughout Islam's 1,400-year existence. A brief examination of Muslim history shows a series of wars, infighting, and general mayhem ever since Muhammad sent his hordes out of the Arabian desert to slay the infidel.

Unfortunately, too many Americans - in fact, too many Westerners as a whole - fail to realize the life-and-death struggle in which our civilization is engaged. We are complacent, thinking nothing in this conflict affects our daily lives, and besides, the Islamofascists best efforts are only bee stings compared to the full might of Uncle Sam. We forget that under the right circumstances, even bee stings can be fatal. Many more of us need to wake up to the fact that our societies have a relentless enemy who is full of pent-up hatred, motivated by religious fanaticism, and unfazed by the Western values of life, liberty, fair play, tolerance, and compassion. He spits on these as proofs of Western weakness.

Why, then, are we vulnerable to the attacks of radical Islamic fundamentalists? Because we are spiritually weak, blind, and complacent! We are retreating before the Islamic thrust into our nations because we do not have the internal fortitude to resist with force and conviction. Our leaders, political and spiritual, have led us down paths of liberalism and humanism, and we have blithely followed. We have come to the point in our downward spiral that we cannot even differentiate between peaceful and bellicose attitudes among our bitterest foes!

Many of our leaders are like those who proclaim, "Peace, peace! when there is no peace" ([Jeremiah 8:11](#); [6:14](#); [Ezekiel 13:10](#), 16). [God](#) speaks this to the [prophets](#) and priests - the leaders - of Israel and Judah who failed to warn the people about their

backsliding and the coming punishment in the form of national invasion. This failure in leadership has been the norm in our Western nations for many decades now, and society has backslid just as Israel's did. And what do we have to look forward to? The same imminent punishment they expected - and received. Notice [Jeremiah 8:14-15](#), 17, where the prophet says:

"Why do we sit still? Assemble yourselves, and let us enter the fortified cities, and let us be silent there. For the LORD our God has put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD. We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and there was trouble! . . ."

"For behold, I will send serpents among you, vipers which cannot be charmed, and they shall bite you," says the LORD.

If fundamentalist Islam were a religion of peace, its adherents would behave peacefully. They do not. Their religion motivates them to kill themselves and others to advance Islam. Therefore, Islam is not a religion of peace but one of war and death. It is time we recognized this and turned to God for [forgiveness](#) for allowing ourselves, our cultures, and our civilization to descend into immorality, relativism, and spiritual lethargy. It is the only true way to avoid the coming conflagration and to find the way to real peace.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Checklist for Overcoming](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

John Ritenbaugh examines the problem of empty externalism (accompanied by no inward change) extant in the greater church of God- a problem which led to its scattering. All of us, individually and collectively were responsible for its demise. God has promised to hear our prayers if we humble ourselves and turn from our sins. Having the right doctrines is of no avail unless they are acted upon. After our conversion, our minds become a perpetual battleground against our prideful human nature, requiring that we sacrifice and humble ourselves in God's service. Romans 12-16 provide a checklist for overcoming and promoting positive relationships, developing tender affection toward one another. We must realize that we are mutually dependent upon one another, and that God has given gifts so that all may benefit or profit.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Clash of Cultures](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Immigration is not just a problem in America. The nations of Europe have seen millions of migrants, mostly Muslims, stream into their nations over the past decade—the point that it has become a primary topic politically. What will Europe do? Richard Ritenbaugh suggests this migration dilemma may presage the fateful "push" from the King of the South.

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