

ALTERNATIVE READINGS OF TROUBLING TEXTS : RELIGION AS A FORCE AGAINST VIOLENCE pdf

1: Pope Francis's overlooked sentence: An important statement on Islam and violence | www.enganche

Such horrific violence stands against everything God stands for" (). So when one is reading a troubling Old Testament portrayal of God, the solution is to say "This is not God!" (). In the final two chapters, Seibert demonstrates how to become a "discerning reader" of these texts and to encourage others to become the same.

Toggle display of website navigation Argument: An FP debate about the roots of extremism. November 9, , Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now , and United States Institute of Peace acting Vice President Manal Omar , one of the foremost voices on peace and Islam, to debate what is behind this newest breed of extremism and how can it be defeated. In the age of al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and Boko Haram, is there a link between the violence these groups perpetrate and the faith they profess? With tracts of Syria and Iraq in the hands of the self-styled Islamic State, Libya and Somalia engulfed in anarchy, Yemen being torn apart by civil war, the Taliban resurging in Afghanistan, and Boko Haram terrorizing Nigeria, policymakers are farther away from eliminating the threat of violent Islamism than they were when they began the effort. In fact, Western countries are increasingly witnessing domestic attacks such as the murder of British military drummer Lee Rigby and the Boston Marathon bombings in , the shootings at Parliament Hill in Canada in , the attacks at satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo and at a Jewish supermarket in Paris this past January, and most recently the terrorist attack in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on a military recruiting center and naval compound. The socioeconomic, political, and cultural circumstances of Muslims are varied across the globe, but I believe that we can distinguish three different groups of Muslims in the world today based on how they envision and practice their faith. The first group is the most problematic – the fundamentalists who envision a regime based on sharia, Islamic religious law. They argue for an Islam largely or completely unchanged from its original seventh-century version and take it as a requirement of their faith that they impose it on everyone else. It is only after they have laid this foundation that they are able to persuade their recruits to engage in jihad. The second group – and the clear majority throughout the Muslim world – consists of Muslims who are loyal to the core creed and worship devoutly but are not inclined to practice violence or even intolerance towards non-Muslims. Although some are apostates, the majority of dissidents are believers, among them clerics who have come to realize that their religion must change if its followers are not to be condemned to an interminable cycle of political violence. To understand whether violence is inherent in the doctrine of Islam, it is important to look at the example of the founding father of Islam, Mohammed, and the passages in the Quran and Islamic jurisprudence used to justify the violence we currently see in so many parts of the Muslim world. In Mecca, Mohammed preached to his fellow tribesmen to abandon their gods and accept his. He preached about charity and the conditions of widows and orphans. This method of proselytizing or persuasion, called dawa in Arabic, remains an important component of Islam to this day. However, during his time in Mecca, Mohammed and his small band of believers had little success in converting others to this new religion. So, a decade after Mohammed first began preaching, he fled to Medina. Over time he cobbled together a militia and began to wage wars. There lies the duality within Islam. The key question is not whether Islam is a religion of peace, but rather, whether Muslims follow the Mohammed of Medina, regardless of whether they are Sunni or Shiite. Today, the West is still struggling to understand the religious justification for the Medina ideology, which is growing, and the links between nonviolence and violence within it. Two main viewpoints have emerged in the debate on the causes of violent extremism in Islam. The difference between them is reflected in the different terminology used by proponents of the rival views. If Islam is mentioned at all, it is to say that Islam is being perverted, or hijacked. They are quick to assert that Islam is no different from any other religion, that there are terrible aspects to other religions, and that Islam is in no way unique. All of these terms are designed to convey the religious basis of the phenomenon. The argument is that an ideological movement to impose sharia law, by force if necessary, is gaining ground across the Middle East, North Africa, Southeast Asia, and even in Europe. The fact is from Woolwich to Tunisia, from Ottawa to Bali,

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these murderers all spout the same twisted narrative, one that claims to be based on a particular faith. Now it is an exercise in futility to deny that. This school of thought understands that the problem of radicalization begins long before a suicide bomber straps on his vest or a militant picks up his machine gun; it begins in mosques and schools where imams preach hate, intolerance, and adherence to Medina Islam. But this has not amounted to meaningful ideological engagement. These so-called moderate representatives of Islam insist that violence has nothing to do with Islam and as a result the intolerant and violent aspects of the Quran and the Hadith are never acknowledged or rejected. There is never any discussion about change within Islam to bring the morally outdated parts of the religion in line with modernity or genuine tolerance for those who believe differently. Despotic governments, civil war, anarchy, economic despair – all of these factors doubtless contribute to the spread of the Islamist movement. But it is only after the West and, more importantly, Muslims themselves recognize and defeat the religious ideology on which this movement rests that its spread will be arrested. And if we are to defeat the ideology we cannot focus only on violent extremism. We need to confront the nonviolent preaching of sharia and martyrdom that precedes all acts of jihad. We will not win against the Medina ideology by stopping the suicide bomber just before he detonates himself, wherever he may be; another will soon take his or her place. We will not win by stamping out the Islamic State or al Qaeda or Boko Haram or al-Shabab; a new radical group will just pop up somewhere else. We will win only if we engage with the ideology of Islamist extremism, and counter the message of death, intolerance, and the pursuit of the afterlife with our own far preferable message of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now. Follow her on Twitter Ayaan.

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2: Islam Is a Religion of Violence – Foreign Policy

Confronting Genocide: Judaism, Christianity, Islam is the first collection of essays by recognized scholars primarily in the field of religious studies to address this timely topic.

The notion that a false witness threatens life and well-being appears in fuller form in the Psalter. They are also used both separately and in combination throughout the remainder of the Hebrew Bible describing robbing the poor Isaiah 3: Levine says Exodus Levine concludes this is one of several indications, including extra-biblical evidence, that herem was a later addition to Hebrew thought. Siebert says divine violence is "violence God is said to have perpetrated, caused, or sanctioned. But you shall utterly destroy ha-harem taharimem them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the Lord your God has commanded you". God curses Cain for this, and also grants him protection from danger. After the Flood, God promises to never again destroy all life by a flood. God promises Abraham that he will spare Sodom if as few as 10 righteous people can be found there. As Abraham is about to lay the knife upon his son, God restrains him, promising him numberless descendants. The Egyptians make the Israelites "serve with rigour" and their lives become "bitter with hard service". Pharaoh then orders his people to drown these children. He slays the Egyptian and flees Egypt. God hears the plight of the Israelites and sends Moses back to Egypt to bring them out of that land to Canaan. At one point during the journey back, God intends to kill Moses, but he is saved by his wife Zipporah Exodus Moses repeats his request several times as the Plagues of Egypt afflict the Egyptians, but God makes Pharaoh refuse until the tenth plague, when God kills all firstborn people and cattle in Egypt, apart from those of the Israelites, who are protected. God saves them from the army by drowning it in the Red Sea. These laws include thou shalt not kill, eye for an eye and laws about slavery and other things. Capital punishment is prescribed for some crimes. Animal sacrifice in the form of burnt offerings is mentioned, and it is prescribed that an ox that kills a person is to be stoned. The Code states that "And a stranger shalt thou not wrong, neither shalt thou oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. God is angered by this and intends to "consume them", but Moses persuades him not to do so. But ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and ye shall cut down their Asherim " Exodus The Holiness code, Leviticus, sets out a list of prohibitions, and the punishments for breaking them. Punishments include execution, sometimes by stoning or burning. Moses prays, and the fire abates. God hears Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses, and punishes Miriam with leprosy. In Numbers 15, a man is found working on the Sabbath. God orders him to be killed and he is stoned. The Israelites "murmur" about this, and God punishes them with a plague Numbers He does and they do. Moses prays for the people, and God helps them Numbers They take captive the women and children, and take all cattle, flocks and goods as loot, and burn all cities and camps. When they return to Moses, he is angered, and commands "Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children, that have not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves" Numbers When ye pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images, and demolish all their high places. And ye shall drive out the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein; for unto you have I given the land to possess it. And it shall come to pass, that as I thought to do unto them, so will I do unto you" Numbers Similar threats of destruction for disobedience, or idolatry more specifically, can be found in Deuteronomy 6, 8, On the other hand, God promises that if his people obey him he will give them victory in fighting their enemies in Deuteronomy 6, The Ten Commandments prohibit murder 5: Deuteronomy 13 insists that those who advocate the worship of other deities must be killed, and that a town that worships other deities must be entirely exterminated, including its livestock. Deuteronomy 14 forbids self-mutilation. Deuteronomy 17 punishes anyone who worships any deity or feature of the natural world with stoning to death, and likewise imposes the death penalty on anyone who disobeys the judicial decision of a priest. The Canaanites, on the other hand, are to be

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completely exterminated 20 exempting only the fruit trees. It also mandates the stoning to death of rebellious children. It also mandates the death penalty for a man who has sexual relations with a betrothed virgin, and of the virgin if she does not cry out for help when raped. Deuteronomy 28 contains blessing and curses: These curses include disease, famine, defeat and death in warfare, insanity, abuse and robbery, enslavement, and cannibalism due to extreme hunger. Similar threats appear in the following chapter 29 and in Deuteronomy The Jericho-woman Rahab aids two Israelite spies, and she and her family are promised to be spared in the coming conquest. A second attempt, advised by God, succeeds. The city is set on fire and all the inhabitants are killed Joshua 8. The Israelites defeat and kill them all. Joshua 11 commands the hamstringing of horses. There is a graphic description of the assassination of the Moabite King Eglon , who defecates while rolls of his fat suck in the blade used to kill him Judges 3: The Levite dismembers her, and has parts of her body distributed across Israel to inform people about what happened Judges The Philistines capture the Ark of the Covenant , but God makes his displeasure known, and they later return it [60]. The ark arrives at Beth-shemesh , where God slays fifty thousand men for gazing upon it 1 Samuel 6. The Philistines attack and are defeated at Mizpah. Samuel kills the captured Agag , king of the Amalekites. David becomes popular, witch makes Saul fear him and plot his death. War comes again, David is victorious. Saul again wants to kill David, and he flees with help from his wife. Saul searches for him and slays the inhabitants of the city Nob for aiding David 1 Samuel David defeats the Philistines at Keilah , then flees the city pursued by Saul 1 Samuel David and Saul reconcile. David seeks refuge with Achish , king of Gath , and claims he is raiding Judah but is actually raiding and killing in other places 1 Samuel The Philistines begins a war against Saul. Saul asks his armour-bearer to kill him, but is refused, so he takes his own life. The armour-bearer also takes his own life. David has him killed 2 Samuel 1. David demands and is granted the return of his first wife Michal, despite the public grief of her new husband Palti. Two men assassinate Ish-bosheth, and David has them killed 2 Samuel 4. David wars victoriously with the Philistines. While transporting the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, a man called Uzzah carelessly touches it and is killed by God 2 Samuel 6. David defeats and plunder several enemies, and "executed justice and righteousness unto all his people. In order to make Bathsheba his wife, David successfully plots the death of her husband. This displeases God, and David is told that "the sword shall never depart from thy house. She then gives birth to Solomon. David conquers and plunders the city Rabbah 2 Samuel Absalom , her full brother, in return has him killed 2 Samuel Absalom conspires and revolts against David. Absalom is finally defeated and dies in the Battle of the Wood of Ephraim , and David mourns him 2 Samuel Sheba son of Bichri revolts, but is ultimately beheaded 2 Samuel In 2 Samuel 21, David has seven of Sauls sons and grandsons killed, including "the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul", though he spares Sauls grandson Mephibosheth. More wars take place.

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3: Confronting Genocide: Judaism, Christianity, Islam - Google Books

Alternative readings of troubling texts: religion as a force against violence Getting rid of the G-d of Abraham: a prerequisite for genocide / David Patterson The Ten commandments, the Holocaust, and reflections on genocide / Paul R. Bartrop.

Nothing seemed to remove it so he decided to pour on a generous amount of gasoline. While the gasoline worked amazingly well at removing the stain, the fumes from the gasoline were ignited by the furnace pilot light and the ensuing explosion burned down his house. The lesson I learned is that sometimes the solution creates more issues than the problem. As a reader, one can be lulled into a sense of amazement as the problem dissolves away. However, if one backs up the lens, one can almost feel the explosion of the fumes and the ensuing burning down of the house. This reviewer certainly thinks so. Seibert has boldly confronted a problem and suggested a remedy, presumably knowing that it will be unpopular among many. Eric Seibert, an Anabaptist scholar and Old Testament professor at Messiah College in Pennsylvania, is conversant with a wide variety of scholarship, referring with seemingly equal familiarity to conservative scholars like Walter Kaiser or Tremper Longman III as to those of a much more critical leaning like Keith Whitelam or Phyllis Trible. He writes in an accessible and gracious manner, so the book could easily function as a textbook for a college level audience which seems to be one of his objectives. There are Anabaptists who advocate nonviolence on the basis that Jesus taught this as the proper stance for followers of God who were to leave all retribution and vengeance to God cf. God in his ultimate wisdom and unfathomable justice is the only one who can use what appear to be violent means rightly. The second type of Anabaptists are those who see this as fundamentally inconsistent and insist that followers of God should pursue nonviolence not simply because Jesus modeled and taught this while on earth but because nonviolence is and always has been the *modus operandi* of God. Therefore God completely rejects violence in his dealings with the created order both in past history and presumably as well at the end of the age. Seibert is an advocate of this second type of Anabaptism, and as a result, Old Testament images of Yahweh advocating and participating in violence are not only profoundly troubling but conflict with this core belief. This is what this book is fundamentally about—and the lengths someone will go to find that solution. These three statements should certainly encourage most readers to continue. The book itself is nicely divided into three parts of four chapters each with the addition of two appendices which are integral to the success of the thesis. In the second chapter, Seibert lists seven distinct groups who find this divine behavior problematic: That being said, Seibert is candid about how difficult the problem is specifically for him as a religious pacifist—a revelation that will help us make sense of the lengths he is willing to go to solve the problem: Such images seriously complicate their efforts to persuade people to engage in nonviolent peacemaking. How can we promote peace when God frequently seems to be at war? How can they claim it is inappropriate for Christians to participate in war when so much of the Bible seems to sanction it? Seibert goes on to demonstrate how Christians throughout history have responded to this problem. He begins with ancient approaches which include things like attributing troubling behavior to Satan rather than to God e. He then goes on to describe modern solutions to the problem and how they are clearly ineffective for the task at hand. Is genocide ever good? Is abuse ever moral? Can injustice ever be just? Regarding bad behavior as good simply because God is the one described as doing it strikes me as a very simplistic and extremely dangerous way of handling problematic portrayals of God. For example when God kills a group of people or an individual, this approach suggests that God was justified in doing so. Seibert notes that often the Bible provides just such an explanation e. However, Seibert disagrees with the biblical justifications and it is here where Seibert will likely lose many readers. Seibert acknowledges this is exactly what the Bible says cf. It is in this chapter that many readers will experience cognitive dissonance since Seibert asserted earlier that he valued and affirmed the authority of Scripture, but it is becoming increasingly clear that this must mean something different for him than it means for most Christians. Seibert then confronts

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and rejects the remaining two optionsâ€”God acted differently in the Old Testament e. Seibert will fundamentally reject this belief. It is hard to imagine that Seibert really expects readers to reject this core belief this quickly: What was I thinking? In order to demonstrate that Old Testament narratives did not necessarily happen historically, Seibert shows this to be the case for the book of Jonah and then attempts to demonstrate the same conclusion for the Conquest Narrative Josh. Seibert agrees with many critical scholars that Old Testament narratives cannot be trusted to be historically accurate in every case; they only provide evidence of the context of the presumably much later writer Seibert concludes by tying this discussion into his larger thesis: The two critical questions really surround the connection between faith and historical events and, secondly, the connection between historical veracity and biblical authority. It would be interesting to know which Old Testament eventsâ€”if anyâ€”would make this short list. Now it is at these times that the reader encounters some puzzling argumentation. No one should disagree that non-historical stories can be true if they communicate truth. These texts are not true historically, says Seibert, but he will also reject them as being true in the second sense. They are not communicating truth about God at all. These human efforts to write Old Testament narratives often have God doing disturbing things e. Since the Old Testament perspective on such topics as cosmology and polygamy were seemingly misguided, then one can also question and critique Old Testament theological perspectives: This provides a new freedom for Seibert who can now read 1 Sam. If one is tracking with Seibert so far, it would be logical to ask, How can one know when an Old Testament portrayal of God can be trusted and when it should be rejected? Or to use his language, when is the textual God like the actual God and how can one know? I will argue that the God Jesus reveals should be the standard, or measuring rod, by which all Old Testament portrayals of God are evaluated. For Seibert this silence is equated with rejection.

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4: Princeton Readings in Religion and Violence - Google Books

Alternative readings of troubling texts: religion as a force against violence --Getting rid of the G-d of Abraham: a prerequisite for genocide / David Patterson --The Ten commandments, the Holocaust, and reflections on genocide / Paul R. Bartrop --Coming to terms with Amalek: testing the limits of hospitality / Henry F. Knight --pt. 4.

Definition of religion Religion is a modern Western concept. The word "violence" can be defined to extend far beyond pain and shedding blood. It carries the meaning of physical force, violent language, fury, and, more importantly, forcible interference. But, certainly, violence is more than killing people, unless one includes all those words and actions that kill people slowly. We must insist that violence also refers to that which is psychologically destructive, that which demeans, damages, or depersonalizes others. In view of these considerations, violence may be defined as follows: Some of the most pervasive and most dangerous forms of violence are those that are often hidden from view against women and children, especially ; just beneath the surface in many of our homes, churches, and communities is abuse enough to freeze the blood. Moreover, many forms of systemic violence often slip past our attention because they are so much a part of the infrastructure of life e. He also notes that when discussing religious violence, one should also note that the overwhelming majority of religious people do not get inspired to engage in violence. This tendency provides considerable problems, one of which is the support of faulty associations. For example, he finds a persistent global pattern to align religious like Islam as a cause for violence and others like Buddhism as an explanation of peace. This is especially true of terrorism , which sees violence committed against unarmed noncombatants in order to inspire fear and achieve some political goal. Terrorism expert Martha Crenshaw suggests that religion is just a mask used by political movements to draw support. Crenshaw outlines two approaches in observing religious violence to view the underlying mechanisms. Increasing the costs of performing such violence will help curb it. Crenshaw suggests that threatening the internal stability of these organizations perhaps by offering a nonviolent alternative will dissuade religious organizations from performing political violence. A third approach sees religious violence as a result of community dynamics rather than religious duty. While religion can be used as a means of rallying support for violence, religious leaders regularly denounce such manipulations as contrary to the teachings of their belief. Not all religions have or use these four resources. He believes that religious violence is particularly untenable as these resources are never verifiable and, unlike claims to scare resources such a water or land, cannot be adjudicated objectively. The beliefs, affiliations, and behaviors of any individual are complex activities that have many sources including culture. Cavanaugh asserts that "the idea that religion has a tendency to promote violence is part of the conventional wisdom of Western societies and it underlies many of our institutions and policies, from limits on the public role of churches to efforts to promote liberal democracy in the Middle East. Religion is not a universal and transhistorical phenomenon. What counts as "religious" or "secular" in any context is a function of configurations of power both in the West and lands colonized by the West. The invention of the concept of "religious violence" helps the West reinforce superiority of Western social orders to "nonsecular" social orders, namely Muslims at the time of publication. The concept of "religious violence" can be and is used to legitimate violence against non-Western "Others". Peace depends on a balanced view of violence and recognition that so-called secular ideologies and institutions can be just as prone to absolutism, divisiveness, and irrationality. John Morreall and Tamara Sonn have argued that all cases of violence and war include social, political, and economic dimensions. Since there is no consensus on definitions of "religion" among scholars and no way to isolate "religion" from the rest of the more likely motivational dimensions, it is incorrect to label any violent event as "religious". Especially since people from different faiths constantly became allies and fought each other in no consistent fashion. She notes that the Western concept of separation of church and state, which was advocated first by the Reformer Martin Luther, laid a foundation for viewing society as divided when in reality religion and society were intermixed to the point that no one made such

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distinction nor was there a defining cut between such experiences in the past. During the Enlightenment, religion began to be seen as an individualistic and private thing and that modern secular ideals like equality of all human beings, intellectual and political liberty were things that were historically promoted in a religious idiom in the past. He describes the traditional response in defense of religion as "drawing a distinction between the religion and what is done in the name of that religion or its faithful. He asserts that "the secular was a way of living with the religious differences that had produced so much horror. Under secularity, political entities have a warrant to make decisions independent from the need to enforce particular versions of religious orthodoxy. Indeed, they may run counter to certain strongly held beliefs if made in the interest of common welfare. Thus, one of the important goals of the secular is to limit violence. Cavanaugh writes that what he calls "the myth of religious violence" as a reason for the rise of secular states may be traced to earlier philosophers, such as Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Voltaire. Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict. Secular violence[edit] Religion and secular[edit] According to John Carlson, excessive attention is often paid to acts of religious violence compared to acts of secular violence that do occur. This leads to a false essentializing of both religion as being prone to violence and the secular as being prone to peace, despite the abundant examples of secular violence that have occurred. People who wish to wage war and terror will find diverse ways to gather support. Secular ideologies have and will likely continue to use violence, oppression, and manipulation to further their own objectives, with or without the availability of religion as a tool. Wars that are secular in nature need no specifically religious endorsement and regularly operate with and without the support of non-religious ideologies. In addition, there exist few examples of wars waged for specifically religious reasons. He also notes that nationalism has been argued as being a secularized religion. Nowhere is the struggle between faith and violence described more vividly, and with more stomach-turning details of ruthlessness, than in the Hebrew Bible ". A genuine fundamentalist is also a radical, someone who tries to get to the root of the matter. Consequently many fundamentalists end up defending or acting upon beliefs which are not really at the heart of their doctrine. For example any religious fundamentalist who harms others in the pursuit of his or her radicalism is strictly out of order because no true religion ever encounters anything but love, tolerance and understanding. That trio comprehensively condemns intentional harm to others and to the self as well for whatever reason. Arguably, it is blasphemous to say that God needs an earthly army to fight His battles, or perform His revenge. God is quite capable of fighting His own battles.

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5: BIBLE VERSES ABOUT VIOLENCE

Sexuality & sexual violence in religious text 5. sexuality that contribute to sexual violence, the author formulates and affirms a Christian sexual ethic rooted in justice.

He turns them round and round upon the wheel of Maya. Take refuge utterly in Him. By his grace you will find supreme peace, and the state which is beyond all change. Yet it is a known fact that war and violence have often been undertaken historically, as well as at present, in the name of religion as is discussed further below. Yet religions profess to want peace. And how have religions historically helped to promote peace, and how might they help create a more peaceful world in the 21st century? These are a few of the questions that this paper will attempt to explore. Traditionally many people focus on how wars and conflicts are seemingly undertaken for religious reasons, or at least undertaken in the name of religion. Indeed, it is not difficult to find data and statistics in support of this hypothesis. Quincy Wright, in his monumental study, *A Study of War*, documents numerous wars and armed conflicts that involve a direct or indirect religious component, Wright, as does Lewis Richardson in his statistical treatise, *Statistics of Deadly Quarrels*. Richardson, *As the Cold War has ended and inter-ethnic conflicts have re-emerged in many parts of the world, it has indeed been a popular thesis of different writers to argue that these inter-ethnic conflicts often have a religious component. A few examples of such recent writing include: Ethnicity in International Politics; and R. The paper will have four parts: In considering the external aspects of religion, principles from the field of intercultural communication are used to explore the creation of tolerance, understanding and valuing of diversity concerning different aspects of socially learned behavior or culture, including religion. Fundamentalism or religious extremism or fanaticism--when religions claim their version of religion is the only one--are seen as an extreme form of the socially-learned aspect of religion and one not conducive to creating world peace. Here, three different topical areas are explored: The conceptual shift involved in moving from peace as absence of war through peace as absence of large scale physical and structural violence negative and positive peace respectively to more holistic definitions of peace that apply across all levels and include both an inner and an outer dimension, represents a substantial broadening of the peace concept in Western peace research. Part III then uses the above evolution in the concept of peace as a framework to explore different dimensions of "a culture of peace," as well as different dimensions of "nonviolence. An Agenda for Future Peace Research--Based on the Need to Focus on Both Inner and Outer Aspects of Peace Part IV argues that Western peace research has focused almost entirely on outer peace, but that in future it needs to deal with both inner and outer aspects of peace in a more balanced way. In order to do this, it is suggested that peace research elaborate on the different dimensions and levels of inner peace, just as it has done for outer peace, and that it expand its methodology to include other ways of knowing besides social scientific methods only. Finally, peace research needs to redress the imbalance between negative and positive images of peace by exploring not only what it wants to eliminate, for example war and starvation, but also what it wants to create in a positive sense. Please note that this paper is an ongoing project that will become a book. At present, some sections of the paper are developed more than others, but the basic framework is here. Please contact the writers in the future for later elaborations of this writing. We offer this version of the paper with humility, aware that further revisions and elaborations are necessary. First, there is religion as socially-learned behavior, i. At the other extreme are mystical traditions which are based on direct inner spiritual experiences. Given these considerations, it is possible to look at any religion as having a potential spectrum of different forms within it, each discussed separately in the paper, as follows: Spectrum of Potential Perspectives Within Any Religion It is interesting that mystics of all religions can usually communicate with each other and appreciate the spiritual or God force operating within each other--no matter what religious tradition the other mystics come from. Organized religion is often tolerant of different religious traditions, as seen in ecumenical movements around the world, but there can be misunderstanding between religions based on differing beliefs and practices. These misunderstandings can be*

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lessened by educational programs focusing on the appreciation and understanding of cultural and religious diversity. But fundamentalism often stresses how one particular interpretation--of religion, scripture, and religious practices--is right and other interpretations are wrong. This difficulty of fundamentalists, from any religion, in dealing with diversity in a tolerant manner presents a major problem for peaceful relations and understanding between religions and cultures and hinders the creation of a global culture of peace. In this way, religion is shared by a group of people, learned and passed down from one generation to the next, and is clearly reflected in both religious organizations and beliefs. The agents or institutions of socialization include language, a factor individuals are often least conscious of , politics, economics, religion, education, family, and media. While Anthropologists have often studied one culture, including its institutions, in depth, others have undertaken cross-cultural, comparative studies. While cross-cultural studies deal with comparing some aspect of life, such as religious institutions and beliefs, from one culture to another, intercultural communication deals with the dynamic interaction patterns that emerge when peoples from two or more different cultures, including religions, come together to interact, communicate, and dialogue or negotiate with each other. There are general principles of intercultural communication. There are also studies of particular cultures interacting, based on a belief that when persons from any two specific different cultures come together to interact with each other, that they will create their own dynamic interaction process, based on the underlying values of both groups, just as any two individuals will also create their own dynamic interaction process. A significant problem with organized religion and belief, as this relates to peace and conflict, is individuals and groups often confuse the map their socially-learned version of reality or culture or religion with the territory or ultimate reality , as elaborated below. Thus people believe that their personal or subjective version of reality or religion is valid, while other views are invalid. Instead it can be argued that the many maps are different, but possibly equally valid interpretations and attempts to understand the same underlying reality or territory. The term "fundamentalism" had its origins in "a late 19th and early 20th century transdenominational Protestant movement that opposed the accommodation of Christian doctrine to modern scientific theory and philosophy. With some differences among themselves, Christian fundamentalists insist on belief in the inerrancy of the Bible, the virgin birth and divinity of Jesus Christ, the vicarious and atoning character of his death, his bodily resurrection, and his second coming as the irreducible minimum of authentic Christianity. For example, radical Islamic groups, such as Islamic Jihad, are seen as examples of Islamic fundamentalism, although a different term is preferred. In the Islamic tradition the word fundamentalism, when translated into Arabic, has a completely different and positive meaning. In Arab countries the appropriate word for describing literal religious fanaticism is "extremism. Because fundamentalists in any religion turn the beliefs of their religion into dogma, and also tend to interpret the scriptures of their religion in a literal way only, thus missing the many subtle levels of meaning as well as analogies with teachings from other world religions, they can end up stressing primarily how they are different from other world religions, and even from different interpretations within their own religion, rather than stressing any commonalities they might share with other world religions. This more limited interpretation of their scripture can then lead to dogmatic views that their interpretation of religion, and reality, is correct and everyone else is wrong. Of the many possible explanations for this phenomena, two hypotheses will be explored here. The most obvious hypothesis would argue that people are overwhelmed by the increasing pace of change today, and are desperately seeking something that they can believe in as a mooring to help them through all this change in the outer world which is uprooting their lives and creating great insecurities in their lives. In the case of fundamentalism, this can involve returning to some over-idealized vision of their religious roots, which may never have existed in the idealized form that they remember, and trying to literally enforce that interpretation of reality on all the members of their group. In such situations, people may need time to try to go back to a stringently defined earlier way of life and see if they can make it work, and only when they see that the world has changed too much to return to the past will they then be ready to move forward into the future. This hypothesis is consistent with the view that any religious or spiritual tradition needs to be constantly adapted to

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the world in which it finds itself--if it wishes to remain a living, breathing, spiritual force that people experience in their lives, rather than become an outdated institution based on dogma or rules. A second related hypothesis, to explain the rise of fundamentalism in the world today, relates to the dual trend towards both globalism, as well as localism. The globalization process of the last 50 years has led to a dramatic increase in global governance structures, including an expansion of the multi-faceted United Nations UN system, an increase in scope of regional economic and political organizations, such as the European Community EC and the North American Free Trade Area NAFTA , and the continuing proliferation and development of International Governmental Organizations IGOs. The growth in IGOs and the increase in size and scope of United Nations activities, such as the expanded scope of United Nations Peace Keeping operations, has had a major impact on international relations. A similar expansion of activities can be seen in the work of various international scientific, educational and cultural organizations, as indexed by the continued growth in International Non Governmental Organizations INGOs. Millions of individuals are routinely engaged in the work of INGOs, whose activities span the whole range of human experience, including agriculture, art, communications, economics, education, environment, health, music, politics, religion, sport and transportation. Additionally, the world has witnessed the growth of an increasingly integrated global economy, as manifested in interdependent national economies and the evolution of multinational corporations MNCs and transnational corporations TNCs operating in just about every country worldwide. An apparently contradictory worldwide trend towards local identity and ethnicity has also emerged as a major factor shaping events in the world today. In the wake of the end of the old East-West Cold War confrontation, we are witnessing a worldwide increase in local ethnic conflict, sometimes nonviolent but too often violent and very bloody, and often involving a religious dimension. These "local conflicts" are often proving to be intense and intractable, embedded in centuries of mistrust and hatred, and too often crystallized around and sanctioned, implicitly or explicitly, by particular religious institutions. This localization process is every bit as profound as the overarching trend towards globalization, and in fact it is perhaps best conceived as neither in opposition to, nor separate from, that process. Globalization and localization are so interconnected and interdependent that localization is best conceptualized as an essential complement of the globalization process. This view suggests that the integration of the big system, the creation of a new world order, requires a sense of meaning at the local level, requires human beings to experience coherence and balance within the local socio-cultural context. The rise of fundamentalism, it can be argued, is associated with this interdependence of the globalization and localization processes and the resulting pressures to achieve coherence at the local level in the face of the vast scope of the global supersystems. Multicultural interpretations of the globalization - localization interdependency argue, as a consequence, that religion should not be the same in all societies, that it will and must have personal, local and global dimensions that manifest themselves in a rich variety of cultural forms and expressions. This paper will subsequently further argue that the diversity of organized world religions--if also recognizing a deeper spiritual unity that connects this outer diversity--is a necessary requirement for the creation of a new culture of peace in the 21st century. Individuals each carry around some different version of "reality" or culture in their heads, based on socialization or learning by the different agents or institutions of socialization in their culture, including religion, and based on different individual and collective life experiences. This worldview provides a sense of values and meaning about life. Unfortunately, perceptions based on evidence from one or more of the five senses are often distorted. Individuals also selectively perceive ideas and information, often accepting information which fits with their preconceived worldview and blocking out information which challenges that worldview--a worldview that they have spent a whole life time putting together. It is often the case that in everyday interactions individuals, even from the same culture, can misperceive each other. When they come from totally different cultures, including different religious traditions and belief systems, the danger is even greater. It is thus a basic tenet of intercultural communication that "The message sent is often not the message received" It is understandable that individuals tend to expect others to behave the way they would in a given situation or say what they would say in that same situation. A final step

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in this model involves a move to evaluation or judgment of that behavior, as good or bad, in turn often based on an incorrect interpretation. This description, interpretation, and evaluation sequence of events, which individuals do quite often without even realizing they are doing it, is often called DIE for short. In terms of conflict resolution, it can be argued that if an individual is not conscious of their own cultural or religious socialization or programming--which influences people to a much greater extent than most individuals realize, then their behavior will in many ways be preconditioned, and on automatic pilot: If an individual begins to become conscious of their own cultural or religious programming, often by exposing themselves to other cultures or religions, then they can for the first time come back to their own original culture or religion and begin to see it for the first time, since they now have some basis with which to compare it. Such an individual can begin to act consciously in the world and start to appreciate the rich diversity of the human experience, including the many different outward forms, rituals, and beliefs that have emerged in different religions as human beings have sought different paths for bringing a spiritual force into their lives. Becoming conscious of being socialized into different religions and cultures, coupled with an awareness that individuals as a consequence carry around different versions or maps of "reality" in their heads, can contribute to becoming more tolerant of the different maps or versions of reality that others also carry around in their heads, while also recognizing that something much more basic and essential underlies all the apparent outer diversity. In looking at diversity, it should also be noted that it is a basic principle of systems theory that the more complex a system is, the more diversity there needs to be within the system for it to maintain itself. The discussion of globalization and localization in the first part of this paper suggests the evolution of a more complex global system with increasing diversity within it. It is a thesis of this paper that such diversity is ultimately a strength, not a weakness, but only if it is consciously dealt with. Otherwise, we will expect people from different cultures to think and behave the way we do, and when they do not, we will tend to misinterpret and then judge their beliefs or behavior negatively the Description, Interpretation, Evaluation problem discussed above, thus creating misunderstanding and conflict between peoples. Nonetheless, cultural diversity in the global system, like ecological diversity within an ecosystem, is ultimately an asset, if it is valued and contributes to openness to learn from other groups and cultures. Another thesis of this paper is that every culture, just as every religion or species, has something important to contribute to the world, and no culture has all the answers. Thus every culture has both strengths as well as weaknesses. There are thus important things that we can each learn from each other--if we are open and humble enough to do so. The Inner, Mystical Path to Spirituality: Many Paths to God "There are many paths to God. Does this path have a heart? Via such an inner experience of enlightenment, God, oneness or spirit, one has an inner "knowing" that cannot be adequately described in words indeed, "the Tao that can be named is not the Tao". This experience totally transcends the world of outer beliefs--which we learn from our social and religious institutions. It is interesting that almost every one of the great religions of the world originated with someone who had such a direct, inner revelatory or enlightenment experience. Jesus who became the Christ, Buddha, Moses, Zoroaster, and various other evolved beings are obvious examples. After achieving enlightenment, such persons who usually did not themselves intend to start a new religion have always returned to society to minister, teach, and share their spiritual experiences and enlightenment as best they could with others.

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6: The Bible and violence - Wikipedia

While sacred texts are not infinitely malleable, there is a much broader spectrum of interpretive possibilities than a surface, literal reading might tend to suggest, and many religious traditions.

Still, there is one blockbuster sentence that most seem to have missed: But why is this line significant? Benedict XVI, for all his missteps with the Islamic community, noted that Christians and Muslims should be natural allies in the push-back against atheism and the secularization of the West. The first has to do with what must have been the case for Francis to make this claim in the first place. One can hardly imagine past popes engaging Islam in this depth. Critics might argue that this substantive interaction with Islam is the problem with the sentence, not its virtue. A more nuanced view recognizes that an apostolic exhortation does not rise to the level of a papal encyclical but remains part of the ordinary papal magisterium. Vatican II did not teach that each and every element of other religions is by definition good and holy; but to have the Catholic Church now unambiguously affirm, through the voice of the pope, that violence is in no way one of those bad or compromising elements when it comes to Islam, properly understood, goes to the heart of the matter. What Francis said confirms what Christians have already experienced, but such confirmation from the top is important. To my knowledge, no previous pope has made this explicit. The claim that Islam and the Quran are, at root, violent and corrupt can no longer be made with official Catholic support. And some conservative Christians might begin to understand that a political Islam is not the way Islam must exist. In our climate, to indicate to Catholics that peace is foundational to Islam and its sources expresses respect for Islam and allows Muslims to see themselves and their religion as more accurately represented by Catholicism than before. Some will say that there is, in fact, violence in the Quran, and they will be right. There is some bellicose language in the text, and instances or conditions that justify recourse to violence; namely, defense against aggression and resistance to grave oppression. Yet much the same thing can be said about the Bible and just war theory in Catholic social teaching, even though the non-violence of Jesus in the New Testament is unconditional. Neither the Quran nor the Bible can be understood without appreciating the historical context within which its particular texts came to be. I appreciate the dilemma. The Catholic Church is no longer sidestepping an important issue, whether the Quran is intrinsically violent. When the pope affirms for us on an official level that peace building, not violence, is integral to what Islam is as a religion as it is for us, the way forward becomes clearer. This is a web-only essay.

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7: Religious violence - Wikipedia

This groundbreaking anthology provides the most comprehensive overview for understanding the fascinating relationship between religion and violence--historically, culturally, and in the contemporary world.

Arlandson Does the Quran permit husbands to hit their wives, or not? She denies that Islam promotes domestic violence, concluding in her short article: To those of us who know Islam and the Quran, violence against women is so antithetical to the teachings of Islam that we look at those who use our religion against us as misguided, misinformed or malevolent. On the other hand, Saudi television aired a talk show that discussed this issue. Scrolling three-fourths of the way down the link, the readers can see an Islamic scholar holding up sample rods that husbands may use to hit their wives. Where is the truth between the two extremes? Unfortunately, the male Middle Eastern scholar is far closer to the truth than the American female Muslim activist and apologist defender, for Sura 4: It is true, as Hathout notes, that all societies have domestic violence; however, Islamic societies have it enshrined in their eternal word of Allah, unlike, say, the New Testament, which does not have even a faint hint of it. With such divine endorsement from Allah, can Islam reform on this matter? To demonstrate how domestic violence is embedded in the Quran, this article follows a specific method of exegesis detailed analysis of a text in four stages. First, translations from Muslim scholars are offered, so that they, not Westerners, speak for their own sacred text. Second, the historical context and the literary context of the targeted verse are explained, so the life of Muhammad and the early Muslim community can shed some light on the dubious practice. Third, we allow Muslims themselves to interpret the content of the Quranic verse. This stage is subdivided between the early traditions and four modern commentators, including Hathout. Finally, we ask a few questions about Islam and the possibility of reform, pointing out that Christians are allowed to doubt whether God would send down such a verse, especially when Islam claims to fulfill Christianity. Translations of Sura 4: If you fear high-handedness from your wives, remind them [of the teaching of God], then ignore them when you go to bed, then hit them. If they obey you, you have no right to act against them. God is most high and great. Pakistan, began his translation in and revised it a third time by As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them first, next, refuse to share their beds, and last beat them lightly Ahmed Ali was an author of fiction, and he translates the relevant line for Princeton University Press, rev. This translation flatly contradicts the two others cited here and many others: We allow reputable Muslim scholars to challenge this misinterpretation in the fourth stage, below. But for now it shows how far some not all Muslim apologists defenders of Islam will go to iron out the harsh words in the Quran. Historical and literary contexts of Sura 4: Muhammad is establishing his Muslim community in Medina in the face of opposition and adverse circumstances, though Islam manages to overcome them. Verse 34 fits into the framework of vv. For instance, in the aftermath of the Battle of Uhud in, in which the Muslims lost a lot of men, Muhammad says that orphans should be given their property and not to replace their good things with bad, which means to deal fairly and wisely with their assets vv. Then, if women or men in a segment of Muslim society commit lewd acts, they should be punished, unless they repent vv. Next, a large section deals with marriage rules, like not marrying mothers, daughters, sisters and so on vv. Finally, he lays down rules against greed and murder, and again returns to a law of inheritance vv. Thus, it is in this family environment that the targeted v. Interpretations of Sura 4: You have rights over your wives and they have rights over you. You have the right that they should not defile your bed and that they should not behave with open unseemliness. If they do, God allows you to put them in separate rooms and to beat them but not with severity. If they refrain from these things, they have the right to their food and clothing with kindness. Lay injunctions on women kindly, for they are prisoners with you having no control of their own persons. Bukhari and Muslim are two collectors and editors of hadith saying and deeds of Muhammad outside of the Quran and are considered completely reliable. They record this troubling pronouncement: Or does it prohibit whipping altogether? In any case, it does not disconfirm, that hitting "if not whipping" is permitted.

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Bukhari reports this incident about the wives in the early Muslim community in the context of marital confusion and an odd remarriage law: Her skin is greener than her clothes! How could it be otherwise when Allah permits husbands to beat their wives? Would the true God allow such a thing even when the Old Testament does not? Another collector and editor of hadith, Tirmidhi, a student of Bukhari, though not having as high a status as his teacher, records this tradition: You have a right in the matter of your wives that they do not allow anyone whom you do not like to come into your houses; if they do this, chastise them in such a manner that it should not leave an impression. The context of the line shows Muhammad sneaking out of the house, to visit a graveyard and pray over the dead. She returned just before he did, but he noticed she was out of breath and he asked her why. She told him, and apparently fearing for his life as he saw her in the shadows, he punished her. So Muhammad committed domestic violence on his young wife. The hadith collection Sunan Abu Dawud is also considered reliable. This passage records Muhammad first saying that husbands should not beat their wives vol. This passage is very revealing. First, it shows that Muhammad chose a bad path at the behest of one of his companions. To be blunt, what kind of leader is this? Second, the women complained, and this can only mean that they were getting hit. But no matter, for Allah revealed Sura 4: However, would the true God send down such a practice? Before leaving Sunan Abu Dawud, we should look at a short hadith, which says: Whether this asking is done at Judgment Day or here on earth, it is still troubling. This is the kind of passage that shocks many Westerners. If Muslims would assert that wife-beating was relevant for the seventh century alone, then that may be fine, though one would have the right to wonder whether the true God would say such a thing in the first place. But Muslims believe that this policy expresses the divine will of Allah for all times and places; it is needed to correct human nature—though no command was sent down for wives to beat their husbands to correct their human nature. Finally, Ibn Kathir, a highly respected Medieval commentator, references another passage from the hadith editor Muslim. Muhammad says this at his farewell pilgrimage: Fear Allah regarding women, for they are your assistants. You have the right on them that they do not allow any person whom you dislike to step on your mat. However, if they do that, you are allowed to discipline them lightly Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. Safiur-Rahman al Mubarakpuri, Riyadh: All in all, the earliest traditions, representing others, allow husbands to hit their wives, so the difficulties in Sura 4: Four modern interpretations We may now turn to four modern commentators, who seem uncomfortable with Sura 4: They cannot bring themselves to deny that it came down from God. Sometimes this section can get a little technical, but the reader should bear with this because the last three of the four interpreters reveal a larger agenda for unsuspecting Westerners who do not know the details of Islam. After outlining the first two steps in the verse itself admonition and no sex and reminding husbands to administer the steps in proportion to the offence and to do so only reluctantly, Maududi comes to the third step, beating: As to a beating, the Holy Prophet [Muhammad] allowed it very reluctantly and even then did not like it. But the fact is that there are certain women who do not mend their ways without a beating. In such a case, the Holy Prophet has instructed that she would not be beaten on the face, or cruelly, or with anything which might leave a mark on the body. Nevertheless, he sizes up the facts as he sees them: Surely it is this archaic idea about women that permeates the Muslim world. However, even if devout Muslims today do not go as far as Maududi, how can they deny this verse as written, especially since they believe that God through Gabriel brought down the Quran? What do two Muslim women interpreters think about this verse? Unwilling to deny the validity of such a dubious revelation as Sura 4: However, this is a misuse of language, for the context and the intent, when they are as straightforward as those in Sura 4: Her agenda guides her, rather than staying with the clear and plain meaning when the context and intent are straightforward. Rather, sexual relations happen only after the successful three-step process of dealing with a rebellious wife and her repentance: No reputable scholar denies this sequence and the remedial purpose behind it; hence the many translators cited above disagree with Ali, whose translation mixes up the order. His agenda guides him. As noted, according to the clear and straightforward three-step process in Sura 4: Hathout presents Islam only in the best possible light to Americans, even though this entails breaking down the natural interpretation of Sura 4: Her agenda guides her. Contrary to her thesis

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that domestic violence emerged outside of Islam as a struggle of the power elites to control things, seeds of violence have been planted in the very heart and core of the Quran and Muhammad himself. These seeds have grown up within Islam; they have not been transplanted to it. Haleem, whose translation we used above in our first stage, is the last of our modern Muslim scholars to interpret Sura 4: Unlike Wadud, Ali, and Hathout, he analyzes the verse head on without forcing the natural meaning into an artificial or convoluted one. After elaborating on the three-step process found in Sura 4:

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9: Domestic violence in Islam : The Quran on wife-beating

Summarising the state of modern scholarship on key debates concerning religion and violence, this article encourages the careful study of how individuals or groups in peculiar historical circumstances interact with their sacred texts and beliefs in a way that facilitates violence or oppression.

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