

CHAPTER 5

Religious Intolerance and Aggression

Introduction

In the world today, violence associated with religion, whether on a small or large scale, seems almost like a normal part of life. However, this was not always the case. Conventionally, we believe that the Romans persecuted Christians for their faith, but such is not exactly correct. Rather, the Romans perceived the Christians as a threat to their political hegemony, because the Christians refused to acknowledge the emperors (usually when deceased) as gods. Although it is true that the Christians did refuse to acknowledge the emperors as gods, they were not any more or less disloyal than their pagan contemporaries. By the fourth century, Christians served ably in the imperial legions, and eventually, as presented in Chapter 2, Christianity became the religion of the empire and thereafter reshaped Western civilization.

Yet today, we find that religious intolerance and aggression have become part of every major religion. Although a small part, intolerance and violence influence religion beyond their prevalence because they often produce dramatic and horrific acts, such as the destruction of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995 (Image 5.1) and the destruction of the World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001. These are among the most infamous events, but there have been many others. We should also not imagine that religious violence takes the form only of terrorism, or that terrorism only takes the form of a quick, one-time event. Like war, terrorism can occur over long periods of time—sometimes spontaneously, sometimes systematically.

While intolerance may seem more the outcome of monotheism in that the one god tolerates no others, recent history shows that polytheistic Hinduism can produce intolerance and violence, and so can nondeistic religions like Buddhism.



Image 5.1 The Bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, April 19, 1995

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, Staff Sgt. Preston Chasteen.

If Hinduism allows for innumerable gods, and Buddhism has no god, why do they sometimes develop forms based on intolerance? As always, we must think sociologically. Religion is far more than just a set of beliefs; it is also a lifestyle, a worldview, and a culture, and is often connected to political and economic interests. As we will see with the example of “Hindutva” (Hinduness) movements, polytheism can produce intolerance and violence if supporters understand their religion in cultural, political, and patriotic terms.

In this chapter, we will first trace the origins of religious violence in Western civilization, and then consider contemporary Western and non-Western examples, including the attacks of September 11 (see Table 5.1).

Exclusive Monotheism

With the rise of Christianity and its concurrent grip on political power, the one God, or at least His representatives on earth, could not tolerate dissent. Whereas the paganism indigenous to Europe and the Mediterranean celebrated polytheistic plurality, the universe was no longer big enough for multiple gods. The one God expects one set of beliefs and one manner of worship. All competing

approaches are heresy. Thus, the political and religious struggle began to define and enforce an official and exclusive version of Christianity. In 451 CE, the Council of Chalcedon, named after the city in Asia Minor where it took place, set forth various foundations of Christian doctrine, and in so doing, established the official basis of Christianity until the Great Schism of 1054, when Pope Leo IX and Michael I, Patriarch of Constantinople, excommunicated each other. This mutual excommunication established their respective Western Church and Eastern Church, both known officially as the One Holy and Apostolic Church, but commonly differentiated as the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, respectively.

Yet controversy began much earlier. At the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, as mentioned earlier, church scholars wrote the official statement of faith, now known as the Nicene Creed. It was revised in 381. In the original 325 and 381 versions, it stated that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father.” Over the years, however, the Western Church began to insert “*and from the Son,*” which placed Jesus as separate and equal to God the Father. This is known as the filioque clause, and it constituted an unacceptable change of doctrine to the patriarchs of the Eastern Church. In an attempt to

Table 5.1 Religious Intolerance and Violence: Selected Examples

<i>Event</i>	<i>Religion(s) Involved</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
1095–1272, the Crusades— European invasion of the Middle East	Christianity and Islam	Exact death toll unknown, but at least 1 million Destruction of several centers of civilization, including Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, Edessa, and Jerusalem Radicalization of Christianity and Islam
1618–1648, Thirty Years’ War, Western Europe	Christianity—Internecine conflict Catholic side—Austria, Bavaria, Spain, Holy Roman Empire, Prussia Protestant side—Bohemia, Denmark, Sweden, England, Flanders (afterward Holland and Belgium), France (although a Catholic state)	Exact death toll unknown, but at least 1 million Widespread disease and famine Mass persecutions, including the Inquisition and the witch burnings
1983–2005, Civil War, Sudan, Africa	Islam in the North against Christianity and Indigenous Animism in the South	1.9 million people killed 4 million refugees
March 20, 1995, Sarin nerve gas attack, Tokyo subway	Buddhism, with elements of Christianity and Science Fiction	12 people killed 54 seriously injured. thousands with injured eyesight
April 19, 1995, Bombing of Murrah Federal Building, Oklahoma City	Christianity—White Supremacist variant	168 people killed 800 injured
September 11, 2001, destruction of the World Trade Center, New York City	Islam	2,749 people killed Thousands injured Extensive and obdurate environmental contamination
February–May 2002, Hindu– Muslim conflict, Gujarat State, India	Hinduism and Islam	790 Muslims killed 254 Hindus 2548 injured

reunite the increasingly divergent East and West, the Council of Chalcedon developed the Creed of Chalcedon in 451.

Theologically, the Eastern Church never fully accepted the Creed of Chalcedon. Although it seemed to resolve the filioque issue, the key phrase, “in two natures,” recognized the *duophysite* belief over and against the *monophysite* belief. The

Nicene Creed, 381 CE

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and born of the Father before all ages. God of God, light of light, true God of true God. Begotten not made, consubstantial to the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. And was incarnate of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary and was made man; was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried; and the third day rose again according to the Scriptures. And ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, and shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, of whose Kingdom there shall be no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, *and from the son*, who together with the Father and the Son is to be adored and glorified, who spoke by the Prophets. And one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen. [*italics added*]

former term is the belief that Christ consisted of two complete natures, one wholly divine, the other wholly human, and both resided in Christ totally and perfectly. He was both divine and human, equally. The monophysite tradition held that Christ was of one nature only—purely divine—with no human essence. Monophysites believed that there is only one God, who exists in three forms—God the father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit. The Chalcedon Creed states that Jesus is consubstantial with the father (which Monophysites could accept) yet also says, “consubstantial with us,” as consistent with his human aspect. Monophysites could not accept this. While both sides accepted the notion of the Trinity, the issue of Christ’s humanity still divided the Church. The disagreement over the nature of Christ fomented centuries of conflict.

Of course, the battle was as much political as theological, with the various popes in the West and patriarchs in the East fighting for supremacy. Each side commanded great resources, though of different types. In the East, the orthodox patriarchs stood as office holders within the unified and centralized Byzantine state. As such, they worked cooperatively and with great cohesion with the emperors, using a combination of money—as the Byzantine Empire generated vast amounts of wealth for most of its history—and the professional military of the Byzantine state.

In the West, the pope and the church hierarchy stood outside and separately from the numerous and constantly changing, constantly fighting feudal lords and their estates. The Western Church relied principally on force of arms to conquer and then convert new territories. Divided into innumerable feudal states, the economy in the West rarely rose above subsistence levels, and the vast majority of people, including the nobility, were unwashed, illiterate, and superstitious. Consequently, they lacked the means to effectively manage conquered territory. Whereas the Byzantines extended their governmental administration and their culture, the West looted and moved on. The Eastern Church spread more readily and established itself more thoroughly in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, the Levant, and Russia by introducing economic opportunity as well as the organization of advanced civilization. From 476 CE (the fall of the Roman Empire in the West), the Eastern Church remained ascendant until the decline of the Byzantine state following their monumental defeat at the battle of Manzikert in 1071.

Despite the political, economic, and cultural differences between East and West, the greatest religiously motivated violence occurred within each church, not between them.

In the East, one of the most intense conflicts concerned iconoclasm. Literally, iconoclasts seek to “smash the idols” because the Bible clearly prohibits their use. However, Byzantine culture was the continuous and direct descendent of ancient Roman civilization, which the even earlier Greek civilization greatly influenced. As a result, Byzantine culture embraced centuries of artistic development, which featured quite famously sculptures and other physical representations of divinity, first in the long pagan period beginning around 480 BCE, and then in the Christian period, especially after the fall of the West in 476 CE.

Icons: Intolerance of Religious Images

Byzantine civilization produced churches of magnificent grandeur and impressive magnitude, the greatest of which—Saint Sofia—still stands in Constantinople, now known as Istanbul, although as a mosque after the Turkish conquest of 1453, and now as a museum. Throughout the Byzantine world, which for centuries encompassed most of the eastern Mediterranean, devout Christians built lavish churches adorned with gold, silver, precious gems, intricate carvings, fine metalwork, statues, tapestries, mosaics, and icons. The icons in particular served as the focus of devotion, and Christians in the East customarily kiss the icons and direct their prayers to them. The icons always depicted religious scenes, often Jesus, but also martyrs, disciples, apostles, and—especially in Constantinople—Mary, the mother of Jesus. Emperors also appear in icons as God’s sacred representative on earth.

Orthodox and Islamic historians throughout the Middle Ages describe great multitudes of icons and other religious representations, but most have since been destroyed. In the medieval period, iconoclasts considered them to be blasphemous, and destroyed them whenever possible. Between 740 and 842 CE, the Orthodox Church, united with competing factions within the Byzantine Empire, fought over the issue of iconography. When the iconoclasts gained power during this period, the first iconoclast emperor, Leo III, issued a decree that all icons in his empire should be destroyed. After his death, his son, the emperor Constantine V, continued his aggressive program of destruction, and killed anyone suspected of iconodule (pro-icon) sympathy as well. Although the icon-venerating Nikephoros I reigned briefly,

Chalcedonian Creed, 451 CE

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood;

truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body;

consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood;

in all things like unto us, without sin;

begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood;

one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably;

the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ;

as the prophets from the beginning concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.



Image 5.2 One of the Most Famous Icons, the Theotokos of Vladimir, c. 1131

from 802 to 811, the subsequent emperors, Leo V, Michael II, and Theophilos, continued the icon-bashing until Michael III restored the icons in 843. From that point on, the iconoclasts never regained significant power.

Sociologically, important forces underlie the icon controversy. First, conflict with the Western Church intensified during this time, and iconoclasm clearly demarcated the Eastern Church theologically from the icon-loving West (Barraclough [1968] 1979:36). Second, the Byzantine Empire faced increasingly strong challenges from Islam, which also prohibits icons, and thus iconoclasm within Christianity pacified the various and diverse cultural groups within the Empire, both Christian and Islamic, that rejected icon veneration. In other words, it diffused an issue that might have otherwise contributed to greater rebellion from within as Islam pressed in from the East. Despite these rather practical political and cultural effects, the energy and enthusiasm that powered the leaders and armies on both sides arose from devout, perhaps even fanatical devotion, especially on the iconoclast side. Theological commitment is one thing, but it requires far more commitment to fight great battles over belief. Although politics clearly played a part, iconoclasm represented the

battle over something far greater—salvation. Icon veneration was finally triumphant, but the struggle had killed thousands in battle, disrupted populations, destroyed centuries of religious art, and depleted the treasury.

As with most issues prior to modern times, it is difficult to ascertain how the common people felt about the icon issue. Likely, it made little difference to them (Norwich 1989). As a type of high art, icons represented the views and especially the tastes of elite strata, both religious and secular. Icons and other impressive works such as major buildings represented the power of the ruling class, and as such, common people had little say about them. By tradition, armies fought for the commitments of their leaders; individual soldiers were not expected to commit their loyalty to a cause, but rather to their commander. For this reason, Christians fought loyally for pagan commanders, as in the case of Julian, the last pagan emperor (Murdoch 2004). One of his most able and trusted commanders—Jovian—was a devout Christian who would ascend to the throne after Julian's death in battle. As emperor, Jovian restored Christianity as the favored religion of the empire.

In conclusion, numerous and sometimes conflicting loyalties inspired many sides in the icon wars. While religion was always central, personal loyalty, political rivalries, cultural hegemony, and money also contributed. Nevertheless, virtually every war in the Middle Ages included religion; no one could conduct a campaign of any kind without church endorsement and a religious purpose, even if somewhat

specious, to all endeavors—especially those that required battle against a supposedly evil enemy in the form of heresy.

The Cathars: Intolerance of Heresy

In the West, about the same time the East battled iconoclasm, the Catholic Church warred against and typically crushed numerous heresies as well. Among the more notable heretics were the Cathars, also known as Albigensians. The Cathars originated in southern France sometime around 950 CE and gained converts rapidly. They eventually attracted the attention of the Catholic hierarchy at the Synod of Toulouse in 1056, which officially condemned the Cathars.

Beliefs

The Cathars believed that Satan, not God, created the earth, and thus the god of the Old Testament was actually Satan, and the world he created is inherently evil. They taught that all physical objects are inherently tainted by evil, a theological view called *diocetism*. Furthermore, they believed that Jesus was of one nature, entirely divine, because the human essence, being of this world, is inherently evil. Similarly, Jesus appeared to us in spectral form, with no physical substance at all. Therefore, they believed that the soul was the only spiritually important aspect of human existence, and that the physical body was irrelevant. The body not only contained the soul, but for the Cathars, the body also imprisoned the soul. They believed that the soul reincarnates forever, and thus remains forever imprisoned, unless the individual can break the cycle by achieving perfection. One achieves perfection by renouncing the physical world entirely—a belief that often manifests in religion, including Christianity, Islam, paganism, Hinduism, Taoism, Shintoism, Confucianism, and others. In practice, denial of the world is called asceticism, and also sometimes Puritanism. Beyond simply a denial of pleasure, full asceticism condemns anything that produces sensory stimulation or emotional excitement. An ascetic repudiates as much of the world as possible in order to avoid excitement in all its forms, including pleasure, but also surprise, tragedy, and anything else that might excite an emotional reaction of any kind. The Cathars taught and practiced this total form of asceticism.

Practices

The particular Cathar theological beliefs inspired certain unique social practices. First, since the body is irrelevant, the Cathars adopted the radical notion that women and men are entirely equal in all spiritual matters. Second, they expected everyone in their communities to strive for perfection, that is, a fully ascetic lifestyle. Those most successful in their ascetic pursuits became leaders in the Cathar sect, known as Perfects. They corresponded more or less to priests in

Catholicism and orthodoxy. Perfects lived an extremely frugal and ascetic lifestyle, often subsisting on nothing more than gruel (a thick mash of wheat or barley and water). Perfects performed the one and only sacrament, called *consolamentum*, or the wiping away of sins (Weis 2002). A person received this just before the moment of death. Cathars also practiced vegetarianism, as a result of the belief that plants contained less life force, and Cathars particularly avoided anything perceived as the result of or pertaining to sexuality, especially eggs and milk (Markale 2003). They did, however, eat fish, which they believed Jesus had blessed.

Perhaps most strangely, and what must have seemed especially appalling to non-Cathars, they advocated nonprocreative sex, conducted through nonintercourse techniques. If a person could not refrain from temptation, at least the individual would not imprison another soul in a physical body by bringing a child into the world. Abdication of life force was commendable, and when a person believed himself or herself ready, the person would starve himself or herself to death. All of these practices destabilized established feudal society, and thus the Cathars constituted not only a theological challenge, but a social one as well. The Cathar beliefs and practices destabilized society in that they rejected most systems of hierarchy that ruled throughout feudal Europe. Not only did the Cathars ignore the secular nobility, but they also ignored the theological hierarchy of the Catholic Church. As we have seen, the Cathars held to a very simple theology of purity as one worked toward perfection. All other concerns—indeed, the world in general—represented a corrupted and evil influence that would only pollute the individual with lust, greed, power, and craving of all sorts. There was no time or justification for noble privilege, feudal servitude, or Church dogma.

Intolerance and Conflict

Of course, the Catholic hierarchy regarded all of these beliefs as heretical. Over time, the established Catholic Church and the Cathars faced each other on the battlefield. Just like the iconoclasm issue in the East, various power interests within Western society joined one side or the other for reasons other than religious devotion. Northern nobles and the Church fought the Cathars and the nobles of southern France who were trying to maintain independent estates. By the time Innocent III became pope in 1198, he resolved to annihilate the Cathars once and for all. With the First Crusade already under way, which his predecessor Urban II had declared in 1095, Innocent III found that he lacked substantial military resources, as most of the knights were now in the Levant, having just captured Jerusalem. So at first he reluctantly attempted diplomatic means and appointed several legates (ecclesiastical emissaries) to meet with and bring Cathar leaders back to the Church. The Cathars, as well as sympathetic nobles, and even many local Catholic clergy opposed the pope's entreaties. Despite the fact that most nobles regarded themselves as devout Catholics, they also regarded themselves as autonomous nobles who could freely offer and freely withdraw their loyalty as they saw fit. They resented the attempts of the Church and the most powerful nobles to impose their

will. Local church officials saw the decline of their own authority should the Church tolerate any degree of Cathar legitimacy.

With the failure of diplomacy, Innocent III resorted to the tried-and-true means of direct military attack. This led to several more battles throughout France, with the Catholic nobles of the North pitted against the Cathars and their noble sympathizers in the South. In 1209, Catholic forces achieved a major victory and slaughtered the defeated Cathar army and their towns (O'Shea 2001). When the victorious Catholic knights asked Arnaud Amalric, the Abbot of Citeaux, how to distinguish between the Catholics and Cathars after the siege of Beziers, he allegedly answered, "Kill them all; God will know his own" (S. Martin 2005). Although broken militarily and politically, the Cathar movement survived and after only a short time seemed to prosper once again.

In 1229, the Church brought the dreaded Inquisition to France, which exterminated the remaining Cathar towns using the most vicious and cruel methods of torture and execution. One particularly horrible event occurred on March 16, 1244, when the Inquisition built a massive fire pit near the town of Montségur and tossed several hundred Cathars into it, who died in a grisly tumult of fire, blood, and mayhem. The slaughter continued, with thousands more burned alive, until the last Cathar Perfect, Guillaume Bélibaste, was executed in 1321 (Barber 2000; Weis 2002).

Discussion

The story of the Cathars thus poses important and fascinating sociological questions. Why did the movement persist so vehemently, even under the most violent and persistent persecution? Why did people find the religion so compelling, given its strict asceticism and morbid view on life? We might readily explain the political interest among lesser nobles of southern France of using a breakaway sect as a reason to defy rival political authority, but how do we explain the strong popular support?

As usual, let us consider the material factors. We can assume that people found this unusual doctrine compelling, but why did it speak to them so powerfully? Why sacrifice their lives for it? If we consider the time in which they lived, and their location in southern France, we find that they had little to live for in the first place. Exploited by ruthless feudal obligations and with no prospects for improvement, Catharism offered salvation—an escape from the oppressive and miserable material conditions in which most people lived. Again, this was not a democratic society, nor one with a dynamic economy that offered opportunities beyond where one was born. Tradition ruled, and tradition dictated that people maintain their place in life—at least in this life—and fulfill their obligations to serve the nobles above them. Given that the nobles were engaged in more or less constant warfare, they drained the region of its produce and of its people. Those who survived found compensation in commitment to the unusual doctrines of Catharism, which exalted not only poverty, but also intentional deprivation as the holy and the only path to salvation. Of course, Christianity historically offered a better life in the

beyond, in the Kingdom of Heaven, but the path to the Kingdom of Heaven has differed historically as well, even in Christian times (McDannell and Lang 2001; A. McGrath 2003). Now, only the lowest of the low, and especially those with nearly nothing in this world and who then intentionally rejected even minimal existence, would receive salvation.

Needless to say, few nobles ever converted to Catharism (Sumption 2000). Although they used it as a political tool against the Catholic Church and its allied monarchies elsewhere in France, the wars and other social disruptions generated a large class of disenfranchised peasants who already had nothing, and nothing to live for. Wealthy nobles ruled the church, and many church officials lived quite opulently. Seemingly, they had long ago stretched their vows of poverty to include ease and luxury. In this social and economic context—grand opulence next to grinding poverty—and a bleak perception of the future, the people who embraced Catharism had nothing left to lose. Compared to this life, death was welcome. Desperate people will fight tenaciously for something, for anything that offers some degree of consolation, perhaps even the possibility of triumph in the next life. We will see this in modern times as well.

Let us consider the concept of compensation. Developed by rational choice theory, it argues that the revealed religions in particular offer compensatory rather than direct benefits from one's investment in the religion in terms of time, money, devotion, and other forms of personal sacrifice. For example, salvation promises a future with the divine—in the next life, not in this life. Although religion can improve a person's earthly life, the main draw is the compensatory promise of salvation after death. This also tends to mitigate the likelihood and impact of free riders, who seek the benefits of a collective group without devoting their time, effort, and so on. In other words, they want the benefits without the costs. In the case of Catharism, the personal sacrifice was great, which the circumstances of life forced most of the members to make anyway. Thus, a person either lived the life already, or stayed away from Catharism entirely. As we will see throughout this chapter, extremist forms of religion typically have an inherent means of reducing free riders, because these forms require great personal sacrifice and offer little in return—in this life, that is (see Figure 5.1).

However, there is more to religion than materiality. As Yuri Stoyanov (2000) argues, beliefs also matter, and as he traces throughout history, wherever dualism develops in a religion, it almost always results in violence. In this case, the Cathars represented the Other, the exact opposite of the "good" Church in Rome. They were perceived as not just different, but a directly opposite and evil manifestation of Christianity that threatened the Church. Evil must be eliminated at all costs. Although the Church annihilated the leadership and thousands of members, Stoyanov argues that the Church assimilated, rather than obliterated, the so-called Cathar heresy—specifically, the demonization of the Cathars and the assimilation of their clear division of good and evil. "Cathar dualism was to play an important role in the very shaping of the medieval concept of witchcraft, as charges brought against the heretics were to be transferred to the alleged devil-worshipping witches" (p. 220). Malcolm Barber (2000) and Otto Rahn (2006) make the same

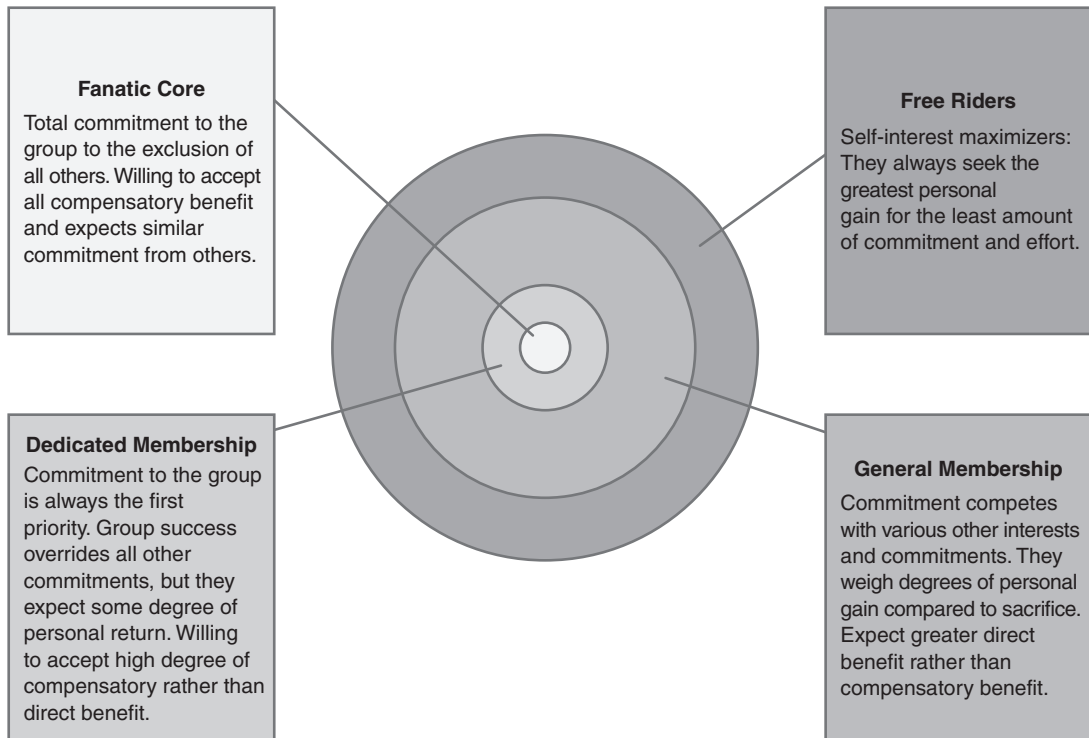


Figure 5.1 Rational Choice Theory and Group Commitment

conclusions, that dualistic notions of pure good versus pure evil shaped the Cathar crusades, as well as the crusades against Islam, and nearly every other mass persecution of the Middle Ages. Thus, dualism played a double role. First, the Cathars' dualistic theology on one side and the Catholic Church's dualism on the other segregated all aspects of the world into clearly defined categories of good and evil. This brought both sides into irreconcilable conflict. Second, the basic existence of the Cathars constituted a challenge to the social and political authority of the Church in Rome. As inherent oppositions, the existence of one necessitates the demise of the other.

The extermination of the Cathars is just one example of religious intolerance prior to modern times. We could have considered many others. In each case, though, it was the established authorities who exercised intolerance against otherwise peaceful groups who sought merely to live their lives, however unusual their lives might appear to outsiders. In the case of the Cathars, as well as Lutherans, Puritans, and other Protestants, as well as Muslims and Jews, the established religious authority, often in conjunction with the secular nobility, enacted laws against, and often actively persecuted, denominations they considered heretical, which from a sociological perspective means precisely any beliefs or practices that challenged the established hierarchy or hegemony.

Intolerance and Aggression in Modern Times

In this section, we will look at some religious groups who not only differ from mainstream versions of their own faith, but actively seek to harm others, for purposes related to their beliefs. Arguably, *essentialism* stands as the basis of all religious violence and terrorism in modern times, which often

takes the form of fundamentalism—a modern expression of dualism. Essentialism refers to any belief system that declares a basic, irreducible essence—a basic property that cannot be broken down into smaller pieces. Essentialism can sometimes be prosocial, as for example in the Declaration of Independence: All people have certain essential rights, which are self-evident, and the belief that we all share an essential humanity becomes the basis of unity and of liberation. These essential rights are “unalienable”; they cannot be taken away. However, essentialism can also establish clear demarcations between essentially “good” and “bad” people. In such cases, essentialist belief becomes the basis of intolerance and violence. Fundamentalism is one type of religious essentialism. Before we proceed with case examples, let us clearly conceptualize fundamentalism.

Declaration of Independence

(First several sections)

In CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When, in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the Causes which impel them to the Separation.

We hold these Truths to be self-evident: that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism can mean many things and carry many connotations in common usage. The exact conceptualization is important, however, and warrants a discussion. Imprecision has resulted in vague analysis concerning religious movements and beliefs.

Broadly, fundamentalism refers to a perspective that reads sacred texts (scripture) word for word, literally, and accepts them as inerrant. Although this may seem like an ancient view of scripture and belief, it is in fact a specifically modern perspective, as we saw in Chapter 2.

If we can agree as stated above that a sociological perspective considers more than just belief, we must

do so here as well. All reading involves interpretation, in that any given word, phrase, image, reference, and so on, can mean many things, and we could reduce nearly any text to lesser and lesser degrees of complexity, or expand indefinitely. Sociologically, we must conceptualize fundamentalism within its context of occurrence. In this regard, Riesbrodt (1990) offers the clearest and most analytically discerning view.

Specifically, fundamentalism consists of universal and statutory truth, supported by textual literalism (Riesbrodt 1990:16). Given that this truth is not only universal

but ordained by a universal higher power that claims dominion over all (typically God), the statutory truth and its law applies to all, willing or not. Fundamentalism thus claims authority over all people, times, and places. The fundamentalist individual or group sees itself as the exclusive holder of truth. Riesebrodt thus defines fundamentalism as a social process, dependent on time and place (p. 19), in that social conditions determine the type of truth (for example, that creationism is true) and the extent to which people or institutions violate the divine truth (for example, why is homosexuality seen as such a dire threat today, but not greed?). In any case, fundamentalism allows no room for negotiation or compromise. God's law is viewed as absolute. We can, of course, argue intellectually about what the proper "literal" reading of scripture would be. In the book of Genesis, for example, does God create Eve as Adam's equal companion, or as a subordinate? It doesn't

actually say that she is created as a lesser human; one must look at the imagery, not simply the word-for-word denotation, to interpret that a human created from a rib is a lesser being than one who is created from earth. Indeed, the first creation story says they were both created in the image of God. Only later as punishment does God declare that woman shall be subordinate to man. Her subordination then seems more the consequence of action than of essence, and this raises the issue of original sin, also not mentioned as such. Must women still suffer for Eve's mistake?

Building on Riesbrodt (1990), literalism only justifies what a person or group has already constructed as truth from its social context, and the veracity of the truth claim depends on high levels of religious commitment (religiosity) and emotional commitment, in particular over processes of reason and empirical reality. Although the origins are individually emotional and a reaction to particular sociohistorical circumstances, the application is almost always socially reactionary—an attempt to use the word of God to prevent progressive social change, or on the other hand to actively steer society toward institutions and policies that appeal to people with the same emotional orientation. In other words, the goal is to feel morally righteous about society, not primarily to create a functional society in practical terms.

Fundamentalism differs from one religion to another, and one time and place to another. In all cases, though, it is a response to contemporary (and specifically modern) social conditions, and thus fundamentalist movements selectively cultivate some aspects from the past (whether real or imagined) and disregard others. This strategic selectivity proves true in research regarding Christianity (Ammerman 1987), Judaism (Shalvi 2002), Islam (An-Na'im 2002; Hassan 2002), Buddhism (Seneviratne 2002), and Hinduism (Ram-Prasad 2002; Udayakumar 2005). Sociologically, fundamentalist movements are a response to modernity, not the descendant of once-great theocratic civilizations or the rediscovery of universal divine truth (Haar 2002).

Sociological Conceptualization of Fundamentalism

- Scriptural literalism
- Absolute devotion to absolute truth, which clearly demarcates pure good and pure evil
- Tireless efforts to enforce divine truth, without negotiation or compromise
- Eradication of evil
- Culture based on a cosmic battle, in which particular issues of the present become moments in the larger battle between pure good and pure evil
- The temporal world becomes a battleground, not meaningful in itself. Success is measured not in practical terms, but in terms of emotional gratification.
- Restoration of a glorious past

With this conceptualization, religious devotion as such (religiosity), no matter how strong, does not indicate fundamentalism; neither does textual literalism by itself indicate fundamentalism. Rather, all seven factors (listed in the sidebar) together indicate a type of religiosity premised on the exalted fundamentalist view. Any one factor may be significantly stronger than the others, but all are usually present to some degree.

In this way, science and reason in particular become enemies because they prove utterly useless in recognizing or serving the divine truth, and indeed lead people astray. More broadly still, secularism in general, which includes anything not specifically dedicated to the Divine Plan, constitutes a sacrilegious defiance of Divine Order. For strong fundamentalists, something is either part of God's plan or against it; there is no neutral ground. In terms of institutions such as education and government, fundamentalism embraces faith-based policies and programs, and specifically rejects scientific and secular forms. It is in its foundation antimodern, although it may use modern technology to further its cause. Nevertheless, fundamentalism premises restoration of an idealized past rather than forward progress (Khan and Langman 2005; Marty et al. 1997; McCarthy 2005).

Also, this is a sociological conceptualization, and any particular person or group may or may not acknowledge one or more of these factors. They are analytical concepts, not simply a description of what fundamentalists consciously believe. Lastly, this conceptualization applies to fundamentalism in all religions, not just Christianity and Islam, the two religions most commonly covered in the news media.

Islam

In reference to Islam, scholars usually refer to fundamentalist versions as Islamism or political Islam. Notice that this corresponds to the conceptualization of fundamentalism developed above. Fundamentalism includes an entire worldview and a way of life, not just for oneself or one particular group, but for everyone. Hence, in Islam as in other religions, fundamentalism often takes on political agendas.

As is well known, Islamicist terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001, hereafter referred to as 9/11. Nineteen hijackers commandeered four commercial passenger aircraft—two were flown into the World Trade Center towers in New York City, one hit the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and one crashed in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The operation was planned and executed by Al Qaeda, which means “the base” in Arabic, and its leader, Osama bin Laden. According to a high-ranking Al Qaeda leader now in custody, Khalid Sheik Muhammad (KSM), the fourth plane was targeted at the Capitol building in Washington, D.C., and not the White House. The official *9/11 Commission Report* (2004) says that passengers on the fourth plane fought the hijackers for control, and consequently, the hijackers crashed the plane rather than surrender control. The two towers in New York collapsed completely, which caused fires and damage to nearby buildings, such that five buildings all together collapsed.

As of this writing, there is still considerable confusion about the hijackers' identities. Of the alleged nineteen, at least four have been discovered alive—meaning false identities were used by the actual hijackers, all of whom perished in the

attacks. According to the BBC World News Service (“Hijack ‘Suspects’ Alive and Well” 2001), Waleed Al Shehri, purportedly the pilot on American Airlines Flight 11 (9/11 Commission Report 2004), which hit the World Trade Center’s north tower, was in Casablanca, Morocco, at the time of the attacks, where he lives permanently. Also, Abdulaziz Al Omari, another named hijacker, lost his passport while a student in Denver, according to the BBC report, and at least four from Saudi Arabia used stolen identities (Maier 2003). As of 2006, the identity of hijackers “Al Shehri” and “Al Omari” remain uncertain, although the FBI believes it has positively identified all 19 (Herrmann 2006). The FBI may be correct, given that the two men still in question have relatively common names in the Arabic-speaking world. Interestingly, this uncertainty has led some people to posit various conspiracy theories that the U.S. government, Israel, or both were behind 9/11. No hard evidence supports this, however.

Contrary to popular belief in the United States, none of the hijackers were from or had ever trained in Iraq. The majority—15—were from Saudi Arabia. This is crucial if we are to sociologically understand the events of 9/11, especially the religious elements.

People in rural areas of Saudi Arabia are descended from communities that were nomadic until the early twentieth century. Now agriculturally bound, primarily around animal herding, they are impoverished. Islam arose in these regions around Mecca (where the prophet Muhammad was born) and Medina (where he died), and other places within the Hejaz region in modern-day Saudi Arabia. It was here that Muhammad received the word of God during the years 610 CE until his death in 632. Today, the main city in the region, Jeddah, is a center of cultural life in the Arab world and internationally. It contains the largest total collection of open-air public art displays in the world. As a center of international business and commerce, people from all over the world and from many different cultures populate its streets. Jeddah enjoys general economic prosperity that results from its integration in the world economy and cosmopolitan culture, and has become a focus for Saudis who favor a more modern and secular state (Al Rasheed 2007). The rest of the Hejaz region, however, still endures grinding poverty, like much of rural Saudi Arabia. The most ardent terrorists in Islam come from such areas, in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere.

Saudi Arabia provides a more intense atmosphere to foster violent versions of Islam than most other impoverished areas. In addition to religious fundamentalism (discussed below), the kingdom faces many internal conflicts, each represented by various competing factions: religion versus modernism, wealth versus poverty, and the legitimacy of its hereditary monarchy (Abukhalil 2004). On the religion front, not only is the Hejaz region the birthplace of Islam and the center of some of its most sacred sites, but Saudi Arabia furthermore practices Wahhabism, an especially strict and ascetic form of Islam. Named after Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab (1703–1792), the movement, now the official version of Islam in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, seeks to reestablish traditional Islam—that is, what Wahhabist authorities see as the high form of Islam from the sixteenth century. Many proponents prefer to call it Salafism, after the Arabic word *Salaf*, which means “predecessors,” a name that suggests an invocation of the ways of the ancestors. Among other things, they require men to wear beards and traditional

Islamic/Arabic clothing, and they enforce bans on modern entertainment, nontraditional education, and the knowledge that arises from it. Women are strictly second-class and must remain covered in public at all times. They may not work outside the home, operate machinery, or engage in public conversation (Commins 2006). These restrictions have been consistent since the inception of Islam, and likely derive from earlier Arab culture (Buergethal and Howland 2001). Other than in Jeddah, Saudis adhere strictly to Wahhabist stipulations.

For example, 15 girls died in a fire at a school in Mecca in 2002, because the Mutawaa'in (religious police) officers refused to let them leave the burning building without proper headcover (Bradley 2006). Charged with enforcing Islamic standards, the Mutawaa'in are officially known as the Committee for Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice. They operate separately from but alongside secular criminal police units.

In addition to specifically religious stipulations, Wahhabism represents a particular cultural order that rejects most things that are products of the modern world, or more specifically, the Western modern world. Wahhabism demonizes such things as secular education and cosmopolitan attitudes, viewing them as corrupt and irreligious. Whatever a person needs to know is in the Quran, and whatever a person needs to live day to day should be found in one's local and devout community. Thus, rural Saudis, especially, interpret the world through their localized Wahhabist perspective, which valorizes their own devout if impoverished way of life, and demonizes the foreign, especially the Western, way of life—the strongest embodiment of modernity and the version that most ominously threatens the Arab-Islamic Middle East.

Certain events in particular produce uniquely hostile reactions from severe and devout Wahhabists. Many in the Arab world, and throughout much of the developed world as well—such as in Western Europe, for that matter—find U.S. politics and actions in the Middle East to be problematic. Unwavering and often unqualified support for Israel over and against the Palestinians, as well as support for the central Saudi government—seen as corrupt by Wahhabist purists—and support for other corrupt governments in oil-rich states, such as Kuwait, enrage people of devout Wahhabist commitment. U.S. military bases in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and now Iraq portend even greater intrusions from the fundamentalist Islamic perspective. These intrusions are not just military, but strike at the very essence of Arab-Islamic existence.

Furthermore, the Wahhabists in Saudi Arabia are not the only fundamentalist version of Islam. In fact, we may speak generally of extreme Islamic fundamentalism that consists of influences from a variety of founders and promoters. In addition to Wahhab, most scholars agree that Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), an Egyptian, founded the notion of modern Islamic fundamentalism. Working with the writings of Wahhab and others, Qutb formulated a doctrine that closely mirrors a fundamentalist version of Christianity, as we will see. Yet Qutb might never have become radicalized had he not visited the United States in the 1950s. During this time, Qutb attended Colorado State College (now the University of Northern Colorado) and traveled widely.

Two things horrified Qutb on his travels. The first was American racism, which he saw as systematic, widespread, and vicious. Numerous lynchings, for example, took place during and just prior to his years in the United States, many of which appeared on popular postcards (see Image 5.3).

The second was the emancipation of women, and in particular the mixing of the sexes in public, such as at movie theaters and sock hops (high school dances), popular at the time.

Considering these factors, Qutb concluded that the modern world was morally corrupt and devoid of God's influence. Even worse, he saw it as contrary to God's will (Moussalli 1993). At the time, these and other Western influences, namely secularism, were exported around the world, including to the Middle East and his



Image 5.3 A postcard showing the burned and lynched body of Jesse Washington, Waco, Texas, 1916. Washington was a 17-year-old mentally impaired farmhand who had confessed to raping and killing a white woman. It is not known if he understood the charges, or if he actually committed the crime as there was no trial. He was castrated, mutilated, and burned alive, in that order, by a cheering mob that included the mayor and the chief of police. A newspaper account stated that "Washington was beaten with shovels and bricks. . . [he] was castrated, and his ears were cut off. . . Wailing, the boy attempted to climb up the skillet hot chain. For this, the men cut off his fingers."

The person who mailed this postcard wrote on the back: "This is the barbeque we had last night. My picture is to the left with a cross over it. Your son, Joe" (Wikipedia.org).

native Egypt. At the time, Gamel Abdel Nasser had established the modern and secular nation of Egypt.

Generally, the Middle East has assimilated the negative aspects of modern society without the positive benefits. Namely, the various totalitarian kingdoms have imported modern wage relations and foreign capital investment, which benefit the elites. As in the West, the transition from traditional feudal obligations and village life to modern wage employment and cosmopolitan (global) culture and trade destroyed the personal sense of community in the Middle East. At the same time, the moral suppression of consumerism, democratic culture, and gender liberation prevents many of the key benefits of modern life—a higher standard of living, social mobility, and individual freedoms. In other words, the Middle East has imported many of the oppressive and exploitive elements of modernism, such as low wages and the destruction of tradition, without the benefits, such as consumer goods, social mobility, and democratic political systems (Langman and Morris 2002). Thus, the conflict with the United States and the West is far more complex than a so-called clash of civilizations (An-Na'im 2002), and is rather a conflict over the ways and means by which the Islamic Middle East will fully enter the modern global system. It is, at the local level, about who benefits and who suffers.

In response, Qutb and contemporary Islamic fundamentalists argue that Muslims must protect themselves from Western and modern corruption. The evils of racism and secularism, as well as the most foul mixing of sexes, personal liberties, and open discourse must be prevented. Qutb argued that Nasser's secular state was evil and thus must fail, but likely, Muslims of true faith will require aggression and violence to stop it. Furthermore, Muslims must adopt a strict interpretation of scripture and implement it directly and completely, leaving no trace of modern civilization behind. Qutb argued that the Islamic world reached its zenith in the 1500s–1600s, a time during which Islamic civilization enjoyed great economic prosperity and political power (Musallam 2005). Improvement, he believed, lies in the past, not in the future. In the United States, Qutb had seen all he needed to see of Western modernity.

However, Qutb explained that the fall of the Islamic caliphate (a ruling council of clerics) and the Islamic civilization over which it presided did not result from the economic transformation of the West into modern capitalism, as sociologists argue, but rather, because Muslims turned away from the true path of God. Only intense devotion to a pure form of Islam could restore Arabic prosperity and greatness. Qutb applied the ancient concept of *Jahiliyyah*—which refers to a pre-Muslim state of ignorance, before God revealed the final revelation to Muhammad—to modern Islamic-Arabic societies (Khatab 2006). They had fallen from grace into a new state of ignorance, away from the glorious Islamic civilization of the past, which only a fundamentalist adherence to Islam could restore.

Modern fundamentalist Islam began with Wahhab, and continued through Sayyid Qutb, and his brother Muhammad Qutb, who became professor of Islamic studies in Saudi Arabia and theological mentor to Ayman al-Zawahiri. He in turn became mentor to Osama bin Laden (Al Zayyat et al. 2004), which brings us to the present day. Al-Zawahiri and bin Laden met in Afghanistan in the 1980s, as both men went there to fight against the Soviet invasion. Both served under Abdullah

Yusef Azzam, and bin Laden, using his wealth from the family's construction business, established a base for the various fighters—the Makhtab al Khadamat or Bureau of Services—for whom the battle against the Soviet invasion had become a holy war (*jihad*) (Coll 2004). The fighters, known as the *Mujahadeen* (holy warriors) came from throughout the Islamic and especially the Arab world. The war lasted from 1979–1988, and at least 1 million Mujahadeen died, but they were ultimately successful in ousting the Soviet invasion and its puppet government. After the war, al-Zawahiri and bin Laden determined to hold the vast Mujahadeen army together, along with other financial supporters and political sympathizers, in order to oppose anti-Islamic forces elsewhere in the region. To do this, they established a database, known simply as The Base—or in Arabic, Al Qaeda.

Many of those in The Base were former Mujahadeen from the Afghanistan war, who came of age during the long campaign against the Soviet invasion and thus knew nothing else except the life of the battlefield. Others were new ideologues, anxious to strike against the enemies of Islam as the movement expanded both in ambition and power (Coll 2004). We should note that the leadership, such as bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and others—like 9/11 hijacker mastermind KSM and ring-leader Muhammad Atta—all come from educated and prosperous backgrounds, but the rank-and-file fighters do not. Atta's father, for example, is a lawyer, and Atta himself studied architecture in Germany. Bin Laden's family, who owns the Bin Laden Construction Group, is among the wealthiest families in the world. But the rank and file come from the previously discussed rural areas (or urban slums) of Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the Islamic world—men and some women committed to strict fundamentalist versions of Islam, from tough rural backgrounds of grinding poverty and bitter resentment toward the West and its illicit prosperity. Despite the existence of an extremely wealthy few, the economic conditions of the Islamic world are sobering: the GDP of the world's 57 Muslim-majority countries combined is less than that of France (Haqqani 2005).

In the teachings of bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and others, common fighters find God and the strength and certainty of fighting a righteous cause on a cosmic scale. Through Al Qaeda, their lives transform from impoverished insignificance to divine significance. Yet economics alone does not explain religious extremism in Islam or other religions. Also at stake is existential significance, and this explains the attraction of Islamism for educated Muslims and those with professional prospects. Those 57 countries are home to about 500 universities, compared to more than 5,000 in the United States and 8,000 in India. Fewer new book titles are published each year in Arabic, the language of 300 million people, than in Greek, spoken by only 15 million. More books are translated into Spanish each year than have been translated into Arabic in the last century (Haqqani 2005). Indeed, research shows that the vast majority of reforms in the Islamic world, especially the Arab world, are purely superficial and have only intensified economic, political, and cultural conflict (Ottaway and Choucair-Vizoso 2008).

This lack of economic, intellectual, cultural, and technological progress in the Islamic world has left a vacuum that has been filled by “a culture of political anger . . . that keeps Muslims in a constant state of fear that Islam and Islamic culture are in danger of being snuffed out . . . by both external and sectarian enemies”

(Haqqani 2007–2008:19). This fear and anger pervades Muslims from all walks of life—the sense that one has no meaningful place in this world, whether in one’s home country or, like Atta and others, abroad in modern countries. They feel like strangers in a strange land at home, and those living abroad feel as if they were forced into exile for purposes of education or career. These social forces and feelings are not unique to Muslims, as we will see.

Women seem to have the same capacity for extremism and violence as men, whether in a religious context or not (Bachetta and Power 2002). In the Moscow Theater takeover on October 23, 2002, women constituted 19 of the 41 terrorists. In the school hostage takeover at Middle School #1 in Beslan, Russia, in September

2004, at least 10 women joined approximately 30 men and eventually blew up the school, killing 250 people (Chivers and Myers 2004b). The day before, an unknown female suicide terrorist detonated a bomb that killed 13 other people (Chivers and Myers 2004a). Although very little literature exists that documents the role of women in religiously motivated terrorist attacks, a recent book by Jessica Stern (2003) finds that women conduct at least 30%–40% of all suicide attacks, and that groups like Hamas no longer recruit women because they are swamped with female volunteers that require no indoctrination (p. 52). Working independently, Juergensmeyer (2003) estimates the same frequency of female suicide attacks, and further notes the peculiar gender roles in Islamic terrorism—that is, women commit their actions primarily to inspire men to greater courage, not to serve God directly (pp. 199–200). Despite such active participation, their motivation derives directly from a religious worldview that regards men as decisive and their own female actions as auxiliary.

Stern and Juergensmeyer say little more than this in their respective books, both of which are otherwise theoretically and empirically well argued and supported. Moreover, neither draws connections between militant women in American fundamentalist Christianity, violent or not, and larger social issues. Although Juergensmeyer discusses abortion clinic bombings and shootings in the United States, he sees this violence as separate from nonviolent militancy. Yet the beliefs are basically identical, and Christian fundamentalist militants share the same goals—the unification of the fundamentalist church with the state.

Christianity

Certainly, Islamic radicals destroyed the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001. Their motivations were religious, and their goals both religious

From CNN, September 14, 2001, 2:55 AM

On the broadcast of the Christian television program *The 700 Club*, Jerry Falwell made the following statement:

“I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way, all of them who have tried to secularize America. I point the finger in their face and say ‘you helped this [9/11 attack] happen.’”

“I do believe, as a theologian, based upon many scriptures and particularly Proverbs 14:23, which says ‘living by God’s principles promotes a nation to greatness; violating those principles brings a nation to shame,’” he said.

Proverbs 14:23: In all labor there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury (King James Version of the Bible—Author’s Note: This is the version Falwell used.)

and political. In response, far-right American evangelical Jerry Falwell (1933–2007) blamed our internal evil enemies for the tragedy (see text box).

Recently, many fundamentalist leaders, including Timothy and Beverly LaHaye, James Kennedy, the late Jerry Falwell (died in 2007), Pat Robertson, and others, have rallied around a central dogma, called *dominionism*. Presently, dominionism is becoming the unifying theology and agenda of the fundamentalist movement. It is also known as dominion theology and Christian reconstructionism, the latter based on the belief that the United States was once a true Christian theocracy, and has since fallen from grace. Prominent theologians include the late Roushas John (R. J.) Rushdoony (died in 2001) and Gary North. Prominent activists include Gary Bauer and Pat Robertson, and prominent organizations include Concerned Women For America, the Family Research Council, and the Institute for Christian Economics. The goal is to convert the United States into a fully theocratic state, according to the model shown in Figure 5.2.

As Katherine Yurica (2005) chronicles in great detail, theocracy under dominionism would use the Bible for the basis of all law and all conduct in general. Blasphemy, adultery, homosexuality, and heresy would receive the death penalty. All other crimes would be subject either to the death penalty or to restitution, depending on the motive. As the model illustrates, society would consist of three main institutions, which the church encompasses. The patriarchal family and the state, although to some degree autonomous, must at all times conform to religious law. Religious law derives from correct reading of the Bible, such that the only issue in law is reading the Bible correctly.

Some institutions, long since outlawed, would be reestablished according to biblical law, as dominionist theologian David Chilton explains about slavery (see sidebar).

Slavery in Dominionist Theology

The Bible permits slavery. . . . But the biblical laws concerning slavery are among the most beneficent in all the Bible. . . .

1. *Obtaining slaves.* Kidnapping is forbidden as a method of acquiring slaves, and deserves capital punishment (Exodus 21:16). Basically, there are only four legal ways to get slaves. They may be purchased (Leviticus 25:44–46), captured in war (Numbers 31:32–35; Deuteronomy 21:10–14), enslaved as punishment for theft (Exodus 22:1–3), or enslaved to pay off debts (Leviticus 25:39; Exodus 21:7). We should especially note God's merciful justice here. Heathen slaves who were purchased or captured in war were actually favored by this law, since it placed them in contact with believers. They received the relatively lenient treatment of the biblical slavery regulations, and they were also able to hear the liberating message of the gospel. . . .

2. *The care of slaves.* Slaves have no economic incentive to work, since they cannot improve their situation regardless of how hard they labor. Therefore the master is allowed to provide that incentive by beating them (Exodus 21:20–27). Obviously, the slave is not regarded as having equal rights as a free man. . . . Slavery has certain benefits (job security, etc.), but it has serious drawbacks as well. Slavery was not allowed to become irresponsible welfare or paternalism. The law limited the master, however. If he murdered his slave, he was executed (Exodus 21:20). On the other hand, if the slave survived a beating and died a day or two later, there was no punishment (Exodus 21:21); there was no evidence that the master had actually intended to murder him. Again, this risk was a serious incentive against enslaving oneself. God did not want men to heedlessly abandon their freedom, and this law would tend to keep men working hard and living responsibly in order to avoid the threat of losing their liberty and civil rights. Relatively minor but permanent injuries (such as the loss of an eye or a tooth) resulted in the slave's freedom (Exodus 21:26–27). This was also an economic incentive to keep the master from hitting the slave in the face, since a heavy blow could mean the loss of his "investment." (Chilton 1981:61–62)

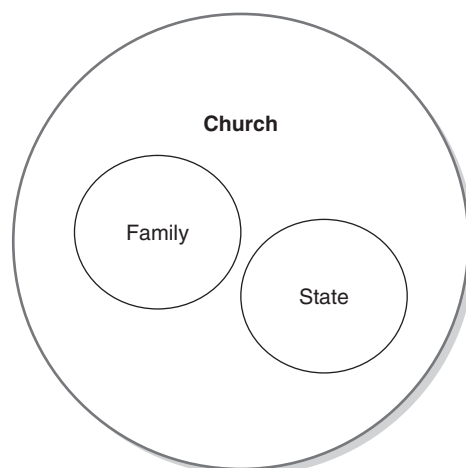


Figure 5.2 Model of Theocratic Society

Once in power, Rushdoony maintains that the righteous Christian government, now anointed by God, has the full right and obligation to annihilate competing religions, including other Christian denominations, and their members. There can be no mercy for this, since “by His birth of God, and of the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ is head of the new race, as the new Adam, to provide earth with a new seed to supplant the old Adamic race” (Rushdoony 1973:210), and “as the second and last Adam, Christ undoes the work of the first Adam and begins the dispossession of the fallen race from the world and the re-establishment of the earth as the Kingdom of God under His new race” (Rushdoony 1983:287). As the mainline Presbyterian scholar Bruce Prescott notes, some elected officials openly eulogize Rushdoony and embrace dominionism, such as U.S. Representative Bill Graves from Oklahoma, and dominionist John Whitehead serves as official religious advisor to President George Bush (Prescott 2002). Alabama Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore, in the news for placing the Ten Commandments in the statehouse and refusing a court order to remove them, also embraces dominionism. Senators from Oklahoma—Don Nickles (1981–2005), Tom Coburn (2005–present), and James Inhofe (1994–present)—publicly declared their support for Moore.

In addition to political views and aspirations, these beliefs underlie the political goals, but also the culture, of the Christian right in the United States. The work of Timothy LaHaye provides an illustrative example. LaHaye cofounded the Moral Majority with Jerry Falwell in 1978, and in the 1990s began and continues to write an extremely popular series called *Left Behind*. This series, although often sold as science fiction, draws nothing from science, and LaHaye intends it as a vision of reality, not of fiction. The premise is that the Rapture has just occurred, an event in which fundamentalists believe God immediately takes the righteous up to heaven. These people will simply disappear from whatever they are doing and ascend to heaven. Everyone else remains on earth for a period of tribulation, in which they

must earn their worthiness for heaven while in battle against the forces of Satan. Among the forces of evil, LaHaye includes the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the United Nations. Indeed, the last of these becomes the center of power for the Antichrist. The series collectively has sold nearly 20 million copies.

Other notable dominionists include Bob Riley, governor of Alabama (2002–present); Ellen Sauerbrey, the chair of the United States Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; Phill Kline, the current district attorney for Johnson County, Kansas (terms ends 2009) and former Kansas attorney general (2003–2007); and Janet Parshall—far-right Christian broadcaster, popularly known for her rallying cry, “Take up your spiritual bayonet and take this country back for God!” (Pollitt 2005:11).

Nowhere else in the West does Christian fundamentalism enjoy such widespread popularity as in the United States. The Christian right refers collectively to many different organizations, churches, and individuals who work toward a legal system based in scriptural law and an American culture premised on conservative Christian religion, to the exclusion or at least subordination of others. Although notable organizations beginning in the 1970s such as the Moral Majority, the Christian Coalition, Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council, the Eagle Forum, and the 700 Club are all male-dominated, women have found ample voice and power in female auxiliary organizations, many of which have become powerful in their own right. These and other faith-based organizations have received about \$500 million in funds between 2002 and 2006 (U.S. Government Accountability Office 2006:11). The Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) distributes money through many federal agencies, including the Agency for International Development, Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Homeland Security, Dept of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Small Business Administration, and Department of Veterans Affairs (OFBCI Web site).

As in the Middle East, women play a significant role. Among the leading organizations, Concerned Women For America (CWFA), founded in 1978 by Beverly LaHaye (wife of Moral Majority cofounder Timothy LaHaye) as a women’s auxiliary to the Moral Majority (Diamond 1998), has since long outlasted that organization, which officially disbanded in 1986. At its founding, CWFA joined the battle against the Equal Rights Amendment for women (the ERA), which in 1981 failed to garner the three-fourths state ratification necessary to become a U.S. constitutional amendment.

Since then, the CWFA organization has grown from a few volunteers to a staff of several hundred, with 500,000 members and a self-generated budget of \$14 million in 2004. The organization also receives \$38 million in direct grant money from the United States government, under President George Bush’s Faith-Based Initiatives. In 2001, CWFA created a spin-off organization, the Culture and Family Institute, which gives out grant money for research on “cutting-edge social issues with particular emphasis on the homosexual activist movement and other forces that threaten to undermine marriage, family and religious freedom,” as stated on their Web site.

However, CWFA is not the only fundamentalist Christian organization to receive such money and power in the Bush administration. Others, such as Family Life, Focus on the Family, Family Policy Network, the Traditional Values Coalition, and others received a total of nearly \$80 million in direct federal money in 2003, all of which pertain to reproductive issues, family planning, and sexuality. All the aforementioned organizations operate as 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organizations.

This current surge in fundamentalist resources and power arrived only recently, with the election of George W. Bush as the decisive factor. Yet fundamentalists had been organizing for decades, contributing to a culture in which an agenda that seeks to explicitly blend religion and politics becomes viable, and representatives are able to move such legislation through Congress. I have traced the rise of the religious right in American politics and culture elsewhere (see Lundskow 2002), but suffice it to say that their ascent developed over decades of time since World War II. Contrary to their claims, they are not rediscovering America's religious heritage, but have in fact created something new in the late twentieth century.

To be sure, the founding fathers were religious, but not in the way that some imagine. For example, Thomas Jefferson edited his own version of the Bible to make it more compatible with Enlightenment values (Prothero 2003), and James Madison dismissed the Bible almost entirely (Ketcham 1990). Though a Deist, Madison regarded most of scripture simply as ancient text that reflected the values of the people who wrote it. No religious representative of any kind attended George Washington on his deathbed. Washington asked for no prayers, nor spoke any himself. Rather, he took his own pulse, and sighed that the end was drawing near (Ellis 2004). All three founders celebrated the Enlightenment spirit that energized their life and times.

The success of the Christian right, and especially its women's organizations, might seem at first glance oxymoronic. On the one hand, their primary goal is to ultimately remove women from being in public life, which they feel threatens everything else about Christian society. Yet on the other hand, women like Beverly LaHaye play an increasingly assertive role in public life; they manage large organizations and now influence political decisions directly at the highest levels. Their own answer is that they must commit a lesser evil to combat a greater evil, and their own intentions are pure and motivated to please God. In contrast, they see feminists and secularists as being motivated only by evil—and not even a motivation of self-interest, according to fundamentalists (Almond, Appleby, and Sivan 2003), but the total destruction of Christian America and Christianity in general. Thus, women fundamentalists justify their own participation in public life in that good people may commit a lesser evil in order to prevent a greater evil and serve the greater glory of God.

Since the stakes are so high, in their view—the survival of correct Christian civilization (Buss and Herman 2003)—nearly any means are appropriate. Although CWFA is not associated directly with committing violence in pursuit of their goals, the organization, along with Operation Rescue president Randall Terry, refused to condemn Michael Griffin in 1993, and Paul Hill in 1994, for murdering abortion doctors in Pensacola, Florida (Kaczor 2003; Royse 2003). Thus, although fundamentalist Christian organizations have not engaged in violence, individuals allied in terms of belief have.

It is important to realize, however, that although violent acts and sensationalist statements garner far more media attention, most fundamentalist women apply themselves to local groups and politics on a less sensational basis. Notably, most curriculum movements that seek to marginalize or replace evolution with creationism in the schools engage in battle through local PTAs. Recently, for example, several public school districts in suburban Birmingham, Alabama, have shifted curriculum to creationism by utilizing PTA networks to establish “review boards” to actively intimidate science teachers (Dean 2005). Biology teachers at the primary and secondary levels often avoid even mentioning evolution, as the PTA has proven that it can influence retention and promotion decisions.

Local networks persevere toward a faith-based system, as evidenced recently in several public school districts that now openly defy the long-established separation of church and state. In Kansas, Pennsylvania, Mississippi, Georgia, Ohio, and other states, school boards have placed warning stickers on biology textbooks that teach evolution, and some require creation theory to be taught alongside evolution, or else the latter cannot be taught at all (“2 School Boards Push on Against Evolution” 2005). In other cases, the fundamentalist group Focus on the Family publicly argued in 2004 in front of the assembled leaders of the Republican Party that the cartoon *SpongeBob SquarePants* is an insidious and covert attempt to corrupt children by teaching pro-gay, evolutionary, and anti-Christian values (Kirkpatrick 2005). If one can see such agendas in *SpongeBob*, presumably one can see them anywhere and everywhere.

Yet the Christian right is not estranged from popular culture; it functions much more seamlessly within mainstream culture now than in the 1950s and 60s, and effectively uses the rhetoric of the left to serve its own agenda. Indeed, many far-right fundamentalists self-identify as hippies, radicals, punks, metalheads, and countercultural activists (Shires 2007). Regarding women specifically, Brasher (1998) finds, in her ethnography of women in a fundamentalist congregation, that none of them oppose feminism in general, and they are certainly not antiwoman. The issue is rather the roles that women play and their position in society. As Buss and Herman (2003) note, as well as Diamond (1998), far-right evangelical women distinguish what they call “radical” or “antifamily” feminism from “godly” women. Thus, fundamentalist women do not contest women’s rights, but rather, what they see as a specifically anti-Christian women’s agenda, that is, the sinful and ungodly aspects—in particular, abortion and lesbianism. Rather than argue against women’s rights, they argue in favor of truly moral and godly women over and against evil women, who deserve no quarter.

Furthermore, Brooks and Manza (2004) find that the religious right has exerted increasing influence on Republican Party politics over the past 30 years. Within the context of the wider history of this time period (Eisgruber and Sager 2007; Lundskow 2002), the religious right has moved from the margins to the mainstream of American politics and social life. This reduces the need for radical, militant, or terrorist action, given that the religious right exerts sufficient political and cultural capital to achieve its goals through established institutions. Let us be clear that the religious right remains highly active politically, and their quest for control

of American society undiminished (Rudin 2006); rather, their success in the mainstream supersedes the need to act illegally and violently.

Overall, evangelicals have become far more consistently conservative in voting trends over the past 20 years (Brooks and Manza 2004), even as their denominations remain unchanged and roughly equally divided between religious and secular perspectives in politics. As a bloc, evangelicals vote primarily on moral issues, and they accept only those candidates who sincerely represent those views, which includes faith-based education and biblical foundations for law. The success of the religious right arose from local grassroots movements. If the Bush administration, like many politicians, is beholden to major corporations, especially oil, utilities, the defense industry, the insurance industry, and banks, the capitalists only supply money; common people supply the votes, and fundamentalists strongly support Bush and other discernably authentic religious conservatives. In other words, their success is not an aberration, but a predictable outcome of social change over the past several decades that has, at least for the present, allied Christian conservatives and fundamentalists with big business (Wallis 2008; Wilcox and Larson 2006).

Christian Violence

On September 11, 2006, the fifth anniversary of the terror attacks that devastated the United States, a man crashed his car into a building in Davenport, Iowa, hoping to blow it up and kill himself in the fire. Except for Keith Olbermann on MSNBC, no other national newspaper, magazine, or network newscast reported this attempted suicide bombing, though it was sent out on the Associated Press newswire (Pozner 2006). According to the local newspaper, *The Des Moines Register*, David Robert McMenemy, 45, of Sterling Heights, Michigan, was charged with second-degree arson. He was accused of driving his car into the Edgerton Women's Health Center at about 4:30 AM.

The center does not perform abortions and does not provide abortion referrals, said Tom Fedje, the president of the clinic. He said the clinic does advise pregnant women on the various options available to them (Pozner 2006).

Since 1977, casualties from such attacks have included 7 murders, 17 attempted murders, 3 kidnappings, 152 assaults, 305 completed or attempted bombings and arsons, 375 invasions, 482 stalking incidents, 380 death threats, 618 bomb threats, 100 acid attacks, and 1,254 acts of vandalism, according to the National Abortion Federation (cited in Pozner 2006). Abortion providers and activists received 77 letters threatening anthrax attacks before 9/11, and since then, Planned Parenthood and abortion rights groups have received 554 envelopes containing white powder and messages like this one: "You have been exposed to anthrax. . . . We are going to kill all of you." They were signed by the Army of God, a group that hosts scripture-filled Web pages for "Anti-Abortion Heroes of the Faith," including minister Paul Hill, Michael Griffin, and James Kopp, all convicted of murdering abortion providers, and a convicted clinic bomber, the Reverend Michael Bray (Pozner 2006).

Another of their members (or martyrs, as they call themselves) is Clayton Waagner, who mailed anthrax letters while a fugitive on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted list for antiabortion-related crimes. "I am a terrorist," Waagner declared on the

Army of God's Web site. Boasting that God "freed me to make war on his enemy," he went on to say, "It doesn't matter to me if you're a nurse, receptionist, book-keeper, or janitor, if you work for the murderous abortionist, I'm going to kill you" (www.armyofgod.com).

In addition to Paul Hill and Michael Griffin, the movement has produced violent women activists as well. Perhaps foremost among these is Rachelle Shannon, who participated in numerous abortion clinic blockades until November 17, 1992, when she decided to take more direct action. Beginning the next day, Shannon started firebombing clinics. She credits God with giving her the knowledge necessary to make firebombs:

God, if you really want me to do this, you're gonna have to show me how, because I can't even get the fire started in my fireplace. The ideas kept coming, including thoughts from people who had accomplished Big Rescue. My plan was to fill five plastic milk cartons (the kind with the pop-off tops) with gasoline, throw them through the window, throw in a lit torch (a stick with oil-soaked rags tied on the end), and scam. I had to know for sure I had God's how, when, and where before I would act. If I was going to spend what's left of my life in prison or die in an explosion, I was at least going to do so in the will of God! (www.armyofgod.com)

The logic is similar to that of all terrorists, in that the faithful may commit violent acts provided it serves the greater will of God. Indeed, Shannon rejoiced when she heard that Griffin, and later Hill, had each killed an abortion doctor. In retrospect, today, she remains fully unrepentant:

He [Griffin] didn't shoot Mother Teresa, he shot a mass murderer such as Saddam Hussein or Hitler. I don't even think it is accurately termed "murder." God is the only one who knows whether Gunn would ever have repented or if he would have killed another 5,000 babies and probably 3 or 4 more women who probably weren't Christians either. (www.armyofgod.com)

Shannon decided to imitate Griffin and Hill's example, and in December of 1994, the state of Kansas convicted Shannon of the attempted murder of George Tiller, an abortion doctor. She was sentenced to 11 years in prison, and in 1995, to another 20 years for several counts of arson.

Shannon is not the only woman in the United States to commit violence in the name of God. Others include Brenda K. Phillips, who opened fire with a shotgun in 2003 at the Femcare Women's Clinic in Asheville, North Carolina. Fortunately, no one was injured.

Hinduism

Like Muslims and Christians, the vast majority of Hindus favor peaceful coexistence with people of other faiths. Also like Islam and Christianity, however, the Hindutva (Hinduness) movement assumes an essential Hindu foundation to people and living, and like their essentialist counterparts in other religions, Hindutva activists

equate Hinduness with broader cultural factors beyond just belief. Although polytheistic, Hindutvas assume a fundamental essence that true Hindus possess inherently, compared to pretenders and non-Hindus. Many in India regard the Hindutva movement as a nationalist movement rather than a strictly religious movement.

In 1925, the Hindutva perspective first appeared as Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)—the National Volunteers Union—founded by Keshava Baliram Hedgewar. Founded in 1980, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)—the Indian People's Party—is one of two major parties in India today and is closely associated with the RSS, as are the Vishva Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council), the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (All India Students Council), and other Hindutva organizations. The BJP recently held power, from 1998 to 2004, and is now the main opposition party.

Hindutva parties and organizations see themselves as great nation builders, but they exclude Muslims and Christians, who are inherently anathema to Hinduness. Secular democracy, the current system in India, implies pluralistic tolerance of all religions, languages, and cultures, and thus Hindutvas oppose it in favor of a true Hindu system. As the RSS motto states, "Sangathit Hindu, Samartha Bharat," that is, "United Hindus, capable India." The RSS worldview holds that human civilization began in India, which in turn created the great civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Far East, including China. While India certainly influenced these civilizations, the human species did not originate in India as Hindutvas contend (Elst 2001), and as civilization advanced, each influenced the others (Thapar 2004). China is not Indo-European, for example, and indeed the Indo-Europeans, as we saw in Chapter 2, section I, were not indigenous to India. Consequently, the Hindu language, religion, and civilization are themselves the result of invasion and blending (Basham 1999). Like its Christian counterparts, Hindutva challenges many contemporary historical and anthropological theories about migration, language, and culture. Mainstream scholars in India, however, find little or no evidence to support Hindutva claims, and point out that such views derive from ethnocentric and nationalistic sentiment, not scientific fact (Sharma 2004; Udayakumar 2005). In reaction, Hindutva supporters counter that the educational establishment betrays a Western and foreign bias, with further anti-Hindu influences from Islam, as Arun Shourie (1999, 2005) argues. We see a counterargument in the sociological and social historical approaches of Robert Stern (2003) and Romila Thapar (2004), that Hindutva support derives from opposition to capitalist invasion, with Western culture tagging along behind. While India has long assimilated various cultural influences, Hindutva ethnocentrism and nationalism respond to modern economic forces, which entered with British imperialism, and which tend to destroy cultural distinctiveness entirely. In this regard, Hindutva resembles fundamentalism everywhere.

Hindutva influences have contributed to Hindu violence against Muslims, the religion of India's greatest rival—Pakistan. Muslims constitute about 15% of the population of India, and relations with Hindus have generally been peaceful. Notable outbreaks of violence have accelerated in recent years, however. In 1992, Hindus razed the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya. Muslims retaliated with bombings in Mumbai and Calcutta in 1993, which killed 317 and wounded over 1,400. With tensions simmering for the next 10 years, any innocuous scuffle would set off more violence.

On February 27, 2002, a train carrying Hindus was returning from a convention to raise money to build a temple at the site of the Babri Mosque—a highly inflammatory

goal. While stopped at a station in Godhra—a city in Gujarat State that has a sizeable Muslim population—a scuffle started between some Hindu passengers and Muslim vendors. At this point, the confrontation amounted to only name-calling and some minor jostling. The station master decided to depart the train early in order to avoid any escalation. As the train slowed at a signal a ways down the track, it caught fire. Some claimed that Muslim militants hurled Molotov cocktails at the train, while others claim the militants actually boarded the train as it slowed and ignited the fire from inside. Either way, 59 Hindus died. Images of the gutted train appeared throughout India.

In response, various Hindutva-inspired groups rampaged through Muslim neighborhoods in the Gujarat State in February and March 2002. Their purpose was clear: to kill Muslims. Muslims also organized to defend themselves and then retaliate. When the rioting finally ended, official sources declared 790 Muslims and 254 Hindus were killed, 223 people missing, 2,548 injured, 919 widowed, and 606 children orphaned (“Gujarat Riot Death Toll Revealed” 2005). Most of the Muslims were killed in the manner of the train deaths. They were barricaded in their homes, which were then doused with gasoline, and set alight.

Parliament empowered A. C. Bannerjee (an Indian Supreme Court justice) to lead a committee to investigate the Godhra train incident. The Bannerjee Report concluded that, while the fire definitely started from the inside, the conflagration most likely resulted from attempts to cook food in passenger compartments. There was no evidence of malicious incendiary devices (“India Train Fire Not Mob Attack” 2005). The BJP and its Hindutva allies declared the report “a disgrace” and insisted that Muslims had perpetrated a premeditated terrorist act.

Discussion and Analysis

We are here concerned with the worldview and social psychology of religious intolerance. We are also concerned with the perpetrators of religious violence who set their beliefs above all other concerns, and who act on these beliefs at all possible moments, by force and violence if necessary, but always aggressively.

In fundamentalism, belief transcends this reality, which also means that conventionality and traditions can be legitimately, and not just opportunistically, suspended. Desperate times call for desperate measures, and even apparently routine times in this reality are vital moments in the larger cosmic struggle. All traditions, laws, customs, worldly values, reason, logic, and even gender roles may be sacrificed. In sociological terms, Max Weber identifies this power as “charismatic authority,” a concept he borrows from Rudolf Sohm (Weber 1978:216), such that charisma represents the belief in a power or force, and hence authority, that transcends and supersedes this reality—usually understood as God, nature, the nation, and so forth. Using the concept of charisma, Weber juxtaposes it with reason, its exact opposite. Although both seek to change the world, and both hold the necessary authority to render change in established systems or to create order from social breakdown, the means are opposite. Specifically, “reason works from without: by altering the situations of life and hence its problems, finally in this way changing attitudes towards them” (p. 245). In contrast, charisma seeks to “effect a subjective or internal reorientation born out of

suffering, conflicts, or enthusiasm” (p. 245). In other words, reason seeks to understand the world in objective (that is, logical-empirical) terms, whereas charisma seeks to reorient the person or group based on perception of the world, primarily through emotional perception and reaction. Both affect and guide behavior, but reason seeks to alter the conditions of life, whereas charisma seeks to make a person feel a certain way about the world.

With the destruction of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia remains as an illustrative example of a scripture-based and routinized charismatic state system—it has created a faith-based society in terms of social hierarchy and education. We know this system as Wahhabism, a fundamentalist version of Islam discussed earlier. Scripture is the sacred (charismatic) guide to all things, such that if something does not appear in the Bible or the Quran, then it is not necessary to know. Although such a system achieves emotional fulfillment for the devout, it also renders Saudi Arabia especially incompatible with global culture and economy. The nation imports the vast majority of its technical experts because its educational system teaches Islamic studies and little else (Khan and Langman 2005; Langman and Morris 2002, 2004). However satisfyingly self-righteous Saudi faith-based society may feel, it is inherently impractical in the modern global world.

For Christian fundamentalists, the daily battles over particular issues are only instances of a much larger battle between ultimate good and ultimate evil on a cosmic scale. Mark Juergensmeyer (2003:150–151) finds that fundamentalist activists view the cosmic war quite literally, and given the good-versus-evil perspective, no compromise is ever possible or desirable—the true believer must be forever willing to do anything to defeat ultimate evil. Extremists find in the Book of Genesis, from the beginning of creation (Pagels 1988), a battle between good and evil that is repeated throughout the Bible, including in the Gospels, where the life of Jesus is part of the larger cosmic battle (Pagels 1995). Specifically, the Gospel of Luke suppresses all Roman initiative and even interest in prosecuting Jesus, and instead depicts the Jews not only as unjust and corrupt, but as essentially evil (Pagels 1995:94–98). The Gospel of John goes further still to portray the Jews as the active servants of Satan. As Pagels (1995) explains, John’s frame of reference in the struggle of Light and Dark from Genesis “informs the reader that both Jesus’ coming and all his human relationships are elements played out in a supernatural drama between the forces of good and evil” (p. 100). In John, we see both the ultimate good (Jesus, the son of God) and the ultimate evil (the Jews as the children and servants of Satan). This view constitutes the original model for the social process of demonization, and has persisted, against Jews and others, for 2,000 years.

Yet it would be a mistake to conclude that fundamentalist extremists have no sense of real time or history. On the contrary, the leadership and most rank and file are keenly aware of historical and ongoing policies, injustices, and wars. They do not grow up in isolation, in closed communities in which one particular extreme religious view dominates and stands in isolation from larger national or global forces. Indeed, as Burgat (2003) finds in a recent empirical study, fundamentalist organizations have a keen sense of factual history, both in terms of military events, but also moments of great injustice that define the battle between good and evil. For fundamentalists, the enemy takes many forms, and Juergensmeyer is instructive

here. The conflict rages eternally. Particular issues may come and go, various real people live and die, but the struggle continues. In this perspective, “the war cannot be won in real time” (Juergensmeyer 2003:165). Rather, the religious extremist fights in cosmic time, simply as one true believer in a vast, ongoing battle for all of existence. Yet at any given moment, real people, practices, organizations, governments, or lifestyles—nearly anything—can acquire the status of Enemy. When this happens, all available means must be applied to defeat it, with no exceptions.

Michel Wieviorka (1993) glimpses the central significance of this social-psychological orientation, in that religious violence occurs when the group subconsciously perceives, but cannot admit, that the cause is already lost in this reality, and they have in fact abandoned their religious beliefs, such that transcendence “has become a substitute for a movement which has either become imaginary or incapable of achieving the goals pinned on it” (p. 291). I would specify that this applies to achieving the goals *in this reality*. Fundamentalists are not insane, but rather, they willfully choose a substitute reality, one measured in cosmic time, and one in which acts in this world are really measured by their contribution to the eternal struggle of good versus evil, and not in terms of their ability to achieve measurable political or cultural goals.

Learning creationism rather than evolution does not prepare a person for a career in the global economy, but it might make a person feel more existentially secure, and certainly provides the authority of self-righteousness. The increasing popularity of fundamentalism arises from personal insecurity, which results from social decline—both economic and status decline. Fundamentalist movements, especially at the grassroots level (creationism in schools, for example), has nothing to do with facts or logic, but with power. The believer willfully disregards logic and evidence, and instead embraces a belief, which he or she then attempts to force on the school board. The believer receives emotional gratification from this, because it feels good to force the school board, and the intelligentsia more generally, to submit. It provides emotional gratification in place of real personal and social improvement. Creationism in science classes will not improve education, but it will make some parents feel more important.

Furthermore, Mike Davis (2002) identifies a central aspect of American culture—the tendency to negate reason and embrace what he calls “uncanniness.” As the World Trade Center (WTC) towers fell, for example, they signified that the American quest for “a bourgeois utopia of a totally calculable and safe environment has paradoxically created great insecurity” (p. 8). The perfection Americans seek is inherently impossible, and thus creates dissatisfaction and ongoing disappointment. Extraordinary events thus trigger a panic, which arises from the inherent and underlying insecurity, which in turn feeds feelings of uncanniness. This orientation defines the world in terms of the extraordinary, rather than the ordinary. The facts and dangers (and the joys) of the mundane give way to transcendent myths. The spectacular attack on September 11, 2001, killed 2,752 people (New York City District Attorney’s Office, www.manhattanda.org). That same year, 42,900 people died in common car crashes (National Highway Transportation Safety Administration data, www.nhtsa.gov); there were also 15,980 murders and 1,436,611 total violent crimes (FBI Uniform Crime Report, www.fbi.gov). Yet the WTC attack received all the media attention, and it captured the public imagination.

Perception of the world based on the extraordinary allows people to abandon reason in favor of emotional gratification. The solutions to mundane crime, for example, are complex and require careful study and policy formation that must be implemented within competing political interests. Comparatively, the extraordinary event has a simple solution—attack and destroy the enemy. Above all, then, the transcendent worldview requires an enemy that embodies all that threatens the perfection of the dream. That is, a world constituted by the designs of an extraordinary authority (namely, God) requires an extraordinary enemy—a Great Evil. As Sartre ([1948] 1976) argues, this has historically taken the shape of the Jew, which the anti-Semite conjures from his own imagination: “Far from experience producing his idea of the Jew, it was the latter which explained his experience. If the Jew did not exist, the anti-Semite would invent him” (p. 13). This does not refer to real-life Jews, but rather, a transcendent Jew, as depicted for example in the *Left Behind* series (the apocalyptic fiction series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins)—an enemy of extraordinary evil that is everywhere yet nowhere specifically, embodied as any one person, but essentially a great cosmic entity. Gavin Langmuir (1990) conceptualizes this fantastical social-psychological creation as a chimera, a monstrous beast constructed from real-life creatures (a lion, a goat, and a snake), but which in combination is impossible. Such is the Jew that the anti-Semite imagines. Today, fundamentalists conjure terrorists, homosexuals, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Americans, Arabs, and science as among the great chimerical evils. All exist, but not in combination as embodiments of a great evil conspiracy that is at all times both obvious and devious, evil and powerful, yet perverse and weak, crude yet sophisticated, intelligent yet bestial, and virtually any manner of impossible dualistic combinations.

The supremely righteous require a supremely evil enemy, and we have seen various enemies in this chapter—Cathars, Muslims, Christians, Jews. Indeed, the in-group identity can exist without a productive element, but not without a nihilistic evil enemy that demands eternal vigilance and often eternal battle (Adorno et al. 1950; Worrell 2005). The fundamentalist right, in fact, has a long history of charismatic motivation, typically expressed as attacks on the Great Evils of modern times, including rock music, homosexuality, feminism, and anything secular. This is well-documented elsewhere. In charismatic fashion, their zealous, faith-based worldview and prescriptions create an inner emotional satisfaction. Substantive changes in society, or actual social improvement on a variety of issues, is irrelevant except to the extent that policy change, curriculum change, and so on demonstrate fulfillment of faith-based (charismatic) direction. In the simplest terms, it feels good to throw out evolution in favor of creationism. It replaces the cold, dispassionate, and secular views of human biology with an intense, passionate, and religious fervor premised on the directives of a loving but also harshly judgmental God.

Faced with a relentlessly evil enemy, marginalized men (and sometimes women) take on the role of holy warrior, and with it “the grand spiritual and political struggles in which their movements envision themselves . . . [which] impart a sense of importance and destiny to men who find the modern world to be stifling, chaotic, and dangerously out of control” (Juergensmeyer 2003:193). For religious radicals of any denomination, an otherworldly battle supplants this-worldly advancement.

Yet how can self-imposed denial, rejection of the world, and sacrifice of one's life create emotional satisfaction? A theory of charismatic rationality cannot fully answer this. We must turn to a correlate, suggested by Weber but developed fully by critical theory—the concept of the authoritarian personality.

Authoritarianism

On of the most thoroughly researched but also widely misunderstood concepts, authoritarianism means simply the desire to submit to anyone or anything perceived as superior, and it also refers to the desire to dominate anyone or anything perceived as inferior. The authoritarian accepts authority uncritically, including all manner of illogical and impossible notions, provided that such surrender of the intellect produces emotional satisfaction. Developed initially by Erich Fromm (1936), the concept of authoritarianism received extensive empirical research in the mid-twentieth century (Adorno et al. 1950; Bettelheim and Janovitch 1950; and Massing 1949, among others). Altemeyer (1997) counts at least 744 separate published studies between 1950 and 1974, followed by many in the late twentieth century including his own quantitative studies throughout the 1980s and 1990s (with a sample of nearly 50,000) that finds religious fundamentalism as the strongest predictor of authoritarian aggression. Hunsberger (1995, 1996), using similar analytical statistics, finds that religious fundamentalism is the strongest predictor of authoritarian submission and aggression among fundamentalist Christians, as do Tsang and Rowatt (2007) and Watson et al. (2003), both in cross-cultural (non-Christian) contexts. On the qualitative side, social-historical research by Zafirovsky (2007) also confirms this connection.

In essence, authoritarianism intensifies when people feel insecure—not in a vague or transitory sense but insecure regarding the great existential issues: Who am I? Why am I here? How should I live? What happens when I die? (P. Berger [1967] 1990). As Peter Berger (1999) has discovered recently, however, secularism in whatever form has difficulty in answering these questions. More profoundly, Fromm ([1955] 1990) argued that a *nomos*—a worldview that explains the meaning of life—must connect emotional fulfillment with material fulfillment and reality in general. People and civilizations cannot prosper if beliefs and feelings exist separately from actual lived experience. As Fromm and Maccoby ([1970] 1996) discovered empirically in a study of a Mexican village that was rapidly transforming from a local and traditional-based community to a modern industrial economy, the destruction of tradition often includes the destruction of the meaning of life. They found that the destruction of tradition also replaced cooperation with competition as a virtue, and also rewarded aggressiveness with social prestige and rescinded prestige from friendliness.

Similarly, economic modernization and Western cultural influx into the local and traditional communities of the Islamic Middle East are not inherently perceived as evil. In India as well as Western society, modernism brings prosperity, and also existential crisis. Yet this predates modern society, in that the Cathars appealed to disenfranchised peasants who had little hope for a better future. To the extent social forces destroy the accepted *nomos*, they not only disrupt established ways of

life (even if it means greater economic opportunity and political freedom), but in the transition, destroy the meaning of life as well. Under such circumstances, the most disrupted members of society establish and submit to authoritarian promises of eternal life, eternal righteousness, and eternal meaning in the eternal struggle against eternal evil. The Great Evil has arrived at the godly societies of the Middle East and of the United States, and only submission in service of an even Greater Good can save us. In exchange for total and eternal meaning and purpose, one need only surrender to the leader and the cause. Yet authoritarian submission requires negation of the self. In this way, the individual thinks and feels as he or she is told, and thereby gains a feeling of security and purpose, but only so long as reality can be ignored, avoided, or manipulated, and crucially, only so long as the leader-follower relationship enthralls the person emotionally.

In the Middle East, the Islamic world has been struggling with the forces of modernization for 100 years. As modern forces marginalize and discredit Islamic tradition, especially regarding the subordination of women, only the fundamentalists offer a powerful replacement vision premised on religious intensity and the glories of the fifteenth- to sixteenth-century caliphate. If women are the last and most oppressed group in Islam, then their emancipation, which modernism promises, must be opposed. Such emancipation would signify the final fall of the fundamentalist vision.

This applies equally to the United States, where it is no coincidence that religious conservatism and fundamentalism thrive in the so-called red (Republican and conservative) states, as opposed to the blue (Democratic and more liberal) states. Modernization has completely disenchanting the world and destroyed our traditions. Modern developments such as women's freedom and equality signify the death of tradition, including moral and religious tradition—the old *nomos*. What shall replace it?

And what of the position of women? Consider Table 5.2. In terms of their decision-making power, how do women in the United States compare to other first world countries and the Islamic Middle East?

Table 5.2 Percent of Public Offices Held by Women: Top Ten Middle Eastern Islamic and Non-Islamic Countries

<i>Non-Islamic Countries</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Islamic Countries</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Sweden	45.3	Pakistan	21.6
Denmark	38.0	Uzbekistan	7.2
Finland	37.5	Iran	4.5
Netherlands	36.7	Turkey	4.4
Norway	36.4	Egypt	2.4
Cuba	36.0	Kuwait	0.0
Spain	36.0	Saudi Arabia	0.0
Argentina	34.0	Oman	0.0
South Africa	32.8	United Arab Emirates	0.0
Germany	32.2	Bahrain	0.0
United States	14.3		
Average (non-USA)	36.49	Average	4.01

Source: "Where Women Rule." *Ode Magazine*, September 2004:36.

As the chart indicates, there are substantial differences between Middle Eastern Islamic countries and Western countries, with the obvious exception of Pakistan.

Yet just as clearly, the United States is far behind several major Western countries, although in no country in the world have women yet breached the 50% mark. Still, the United States is the only Western country with a significant and politically salient fundamentalist and reactionary movement that seeks to reduce women's rights and sociopolitical power. Since the bottom five countries on the Islamic side provide no legal basis to protect women's rights, no particular freedom thus exists for women, and consequently, women have no legal recourse or independent means of income, so they engage in activism at great risk. Yet of the top five Middle Eastern countries, all exhibit strong fundamentalist reactionary movements, just like the United States.

And what of opportunity and quality of life? We would perhaps not lament the loss of tradition if rational modernity delivered a stable quality of life. Is life more uncertain in the conservative states? Consider this: the highest rates of personal bankruptcy claims in the United States—90% of which result from only two sources: unexpected major medical bills, or unexpected job loss—are (in order) in the following states: Utah, Tennessee, Georgia, Nevada, Indiana, Alabama, Arkansas, Ohio, Mississippi, and Idaho (Labaton 2005)—all politically or culturally conservative states. Except for Ohio, these are the same states with the lowest standard of living; the lowest rates of college attendance; the least amount of welfare, educational, and Medicaid support; the highest rates of teen pregnancy; and the lowest literacy rates (U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov). Does religious extremism promise a better life, or instead a psychological reorientation, as social-scientific research on authoritarianism over the last 58 years concludes?

Conclusions

Certainly, the situation requires more study to prove a connection between social uncertainty and authoritarian versions of religion. Yet also clearly, it is a worthwhile direction in which to proceed. Today's global world requires advanced education, broad knowledge, and critical thinking skills to advance beyond low-wage slavery, frequent job changes, and layoffs. Even the educated classes experience increasing disillusionment and uncertainty (Mishel, Bernstein, and Allegretto 2005). Yet most of the American South since the Civil War and the Midwest since the 1970s have experienced consistently uncertain opportunity, especially in the South, with only the bare minimum levels of institutional support in health and education. The only consistent opportunity is ideological and faith-based, not economically based. The illusion of charisma and authoritarianism cannot long endure without real accomplishment, but it can inflict significant social and psychological harm in the meantime.

As Wieviorka (1993) argues, this is really a last stand, a final attempt to retain the familiar and strict traditional worldview and anti-intellectual simplicity that has already passed. The modern age has long since triumphed.

Or has it? Rejection of scientific cosmology, especially regarding the origin of the universe and subsequently the origin of species, seeks to replace evolution with

creationism. Now in its early stages, this antiscientism will likely expand to challenge such basic theories as plate tectonics and glaciation with creationist beliefs that the continents do not move, and assert instead that large geological change occurred only during Noah's flood. Ultimately, if it's not in the Bible, or the Quran, or any other scripture, then you don't need to know it. This sentiment is popular and gaining official legitimacy through local and state school boards in the United States, and already official in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere.

To what extent fundamentalism will transform American education and government requires empirical research to predict. Can individuals, families, and social networks survive under perpetually uncertain social forces? Yes. Can they live fulfilling lives, and even more, develop as free-thinking, critically aware, creative, and compassionate individuals under perpetual uncertainty? Past research says decisively no, but we need to research these questions. Authoritarian submission to charismatic figures is one way to address insecurity, but an ultimately futile way, because it cannot produce real material changes or reinstate values that have already lost their meaning. Other ways exist, but American culture includes a powerful dislike and distrust of intellectualism and reason, which are arguably necessary prerequisites to realistically address today's social problems.

Yet neither reason alone nor the expanded opportunities of social mobility have brought peace and prosperity to all. However much one may disagree with Qutb's response to the problems of modernity, the racist violence he observed was real, and poverty remains a significant problem. Modernity has also failed to produce a new system of meaning, and although idealized visions of a supposedly religious past may not be the answer, neither does the course of the present suggest likely existential improvement, however much we may manage to redistribute wealth or guarantee just enforcement of civil rights. Although not a solution, religious intolerance and violence may be a harbinger of changes yet to come.