

# The Liberal Mind

*Kerby Anderson tries to understand the liberal mind from a biblical perspective. What are the assumptions the liberals make? How do those assumptions square with the Bible?*

As we begin this discussion, I want to make a clear distinction between the terms “liberal” and “leftist.” We often use the terms interchangeably but there is an important difference.



Dennis Prager wrote about this and even described those differences in a PragerU video.[\[1\]](#) His argument is that traditional liberalism has far more in common with conservatism than it does with leftism. Here are some examples he uses to make his point.

Liberals and leftists have a different view of race. The traditional liberal position on race is that the color of one's skin is insignificant. By contrast, leftists argue that the notion that race is insignificant is itself racist. Liberals were committed to racial integration and would have rejected the idea of separate black dormitories and separate black graduations on university campuses.

Nationalism is another difference. Dennis Prager says that liberals always deeply believed in the nation-state. Leftists, on the other hand, oppose nationalism and promote class solidarity.

Superman comics illustrate the point. When the writers of Superman were liberal, Superman was not only an American but also one who fought for “Truth, justice, and the American

way.” The left-wing writers of Superman comics had Superman announce a few years ago that he was going to speak before the United Nations and inform them that he was renouncing his American citizenship.

Perhaps the best example is free speech. American liberals agree with the statement: “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend your right to say it.” Leftists today are leading a nationwide suppression of free speech everywhere from the college campuses to the Big Tech companies.

Capitalism and the free enterprise system would be yet another example. Dennis Prager says, “Liberals have always been pro capitalism,” though they often wanted government “to play a bigger role” in the economy. Leftists oppose capitalism and are eagerly promoting socialism.

Liberals have had a love of Western civilization and taught it at most universities. They were promoters of the liberal arts and fine arts. In fact, one of the most revered liberals in American history was President Franklin Roosevelt who talked about the need to protect Western Civilization and even Christian civilization.

Today Western Civilization classes are rarely if ever taught in the university. That’s because leftists don’t believe Western Civilization is superior to any other civilization. Leftists label people who attempt to defend western values as racist and accuse them of promoting white supremacy. And attempts to promote religious liberty are dismissed as thinly disguised attacks on the LGBT community.

In conclusion, liberals and leftists are very different.

## **Ethics and a Belief in Right and Wrong**

The philosophical foundation for most liberal perspectives is secularism. If you don’t believe in God and the Bible, then

you certainly don't believe in biblical absolutes or even moral absolutes. Dostoyevsky put it this way: "If God is dead, then everything is permitted."

Even atheists admit that a view of God affects human behavior. Richard Dawkins recently expressed his fear that the removal of religion would be a bad idea for society because it would give people "license to do really bad things."

He likens the idea of God to surveillance, or as he puts it, the "divine spy camera in the sky."[\[2\]](#) People generally tend to do the right thing when someone is watching them. They tend to do bad things when no one is watching. He goes on to add that the "Great Spy Camera theory" isn't a good reason for him to believe in God.

It is also worth mentioning that more and more young people aren't making decisions about right and wrong based on logic but instead based on feelings. I began to notice this decades ago. College students making a statement or challenging a conclusion used to say "I think" as they started a sentence." Then I started to see more and more of them say "I feel" at the start of a sentence. They wouldn't use reason to discuss an issue. Instead, they would use emotion and talk about how they felt about a particular issue.

The liberal mind also has a very different foundation for discussing right and wrong. Dennis Prager recently admitted that he had been wrong. All of his life, he has said that the left's moral compass is broken. But he has concluded that "in order to have a broken moral compass, you need to have a moral compass to begin with. But the left doesn't have one."[\[3\]](#)

He doesn't mean that conclusion as an attack. It is merely an observation that the left doesn't really think in terms of good and evil. We assume that other people think that way because we think that way. But that is not how most of the

people on the left perceive the world.

Karl Marx is a good example. He divided the world by economic class (the worker and the owner). One group was exploiting the other group. Good and evil aren't really relevant when you are thinking in terms of class struggle. Friedrich Nietzsche, for example, operated "beyond good and evil."

To the Marxists, "there is no such thing as a universal good or universal evil." Those of us who perceive the world from a Judeo-Christian worldview see ethics as relevant to the moral standard, not the person or their social status.

A biblical view of ethics and morality begins with the reality that God exists and that He has revealed to us moral principles we are to apply to our lives and society. Those absolute moral principles are tied to God's character and thus unchanging.

## **A Naïve View of Human Nature**

In this article we are talking about the liberal mind, while often making a distinction between liberals and the left. When it comes to the proper view of human nature, both groups have a naïve and inaccurate view.

You can discover this for yourself by asking a simple question: Do you believe people are basically good? You will get an affirmative answer from most people in America because we live in a civilized society. We don't have to deal with the level of corruption or terror that is a daily life in so many other countries in the world.

But if you press the question, you will begin to see how liberals have difficulty explaining the holocaust and Muslim terrorism. Because the liberal mind starts with the assumption that people are basically good. After all, that is what so many secular philosophers and psychologists have been saying

for centuries. Two world wars and other wars during the 20th century should have caused most people to reject the idea that people are basically good.

The Bible teaches just the opposite. Romans 3:23 reminds us that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” This statement about the deceitfulness of our heart may seem extreme until we realize that Jesus also taught that “out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander” (Matthew 15:19).

This naïve view of human nature should concern all of us. Young people, two generations after Auschwitz, believe people are basically good. One reason is biblical illiteracy. Another reason is historical illiteracy. A recent survey found two thirds of young people did not know six million died in the Holocaust and nearly half could not name one of the Nazi death camps.[{4}](#)

This naïve view of human nature may also explain another phenomenon we have discussed before. One of the untruths described in the book, *The Coddling of the American Mind*, is the belief that the battle for truth is “us versus them.”[{5}](#) If you think that people are basically good and you have to confront someone who disagrees with you, then they must be a bad person. They aren’t just wrong. They are evil.

Tribalism has been with us for centuries. That is nothing new about people joining and defending a tribe. But that has become more intense because of the rhetoric on university campuses and the comments spreading through social media. We don’t have to live this way, but the forces in society are making the divisions in society worse by the day.

A biblical perspective starts with the teaching that all are created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27) and thus have value and

dignity. But all of us have a sin nature (Romans 5:12). We should interact with others who disagree with us with humility (Ephesians 4:2) and grace (Colossians 4:6).

## Big Government

We will now look at why liberals and the left promote big government. The simple answer relates to our discussion above about human nature. If you believe that people are basically good, then it is easy to assume that political leaders and bureaucrats will want to do the best for the citizens.

Christians agree that government is necessary and that it is one of the institutions ordained by God (Romans 13:1-7). There is a role for government to set the rules of governing and to resolve internal disputes through a legal system. Government is not God. But for people who don't believe in God, then the state often becomes God.

Friedrich Hayek wrote about this drive toward big government and the bureaucratic state in his classic book, [\*The Road to Serfdom\*](#). He argued in his book that "the most important change which extensive government control produces is a psychological change, an alteration in the character of the people."[\[6\]](#)

The character of citizens is changed because they yield their will and decision-making to a more powerful government. They may have done so willingly in order to have a welfare state. Or they may have done so unwillingly because a dictator has taken control of the reins of power. Either way, Hayek argues, their character has been altered because the control over every detail of economic life is ultimately control of life itself.

Friedrich Hayek wrote *The Road to Serfdom* to warn us that sometimes the road can be paved with good intentions. Most government officials and bureaucrats write laws, rules, and regulations with every good intention. They desire to make the

world a better place by preventing catastrophe and by encouraging positive actions from their citizens. But in their desire to control and direct every aspect of life, they take us down the road to serfdom.

He argued that people who enter into government and run powerful bureaucracies are often people who enjoy running not only the bureaucracy but also the lives of its citizens. In making uniform rules from a distance, they deprive the local communities of the freedom to apply their own knowledge and wisdom to their unique situations. A government seeking to be a benevolent god, usually morphs into a malevolent tyrant.

The liberal mind is all too willing to allow political leaders and bureaucrats to make decisions for the public. But that willingness is based on two flawed assumptions. First, human beings are not God and thus government leaders will certainly make flawed decisions that negatively affect the affairs of its citizens. Second, liberals do not believe we have a sin nature (Romans 3:23), and that includes government leaders. Even the best of them will not always be wise, compassionate, and altruistic. This is why the founders of this country established checks and balances in government to limit the impact of sinful behavior.

## Tolerance?

If there is one attitude that you would think would be synonymous with the liberal mind, it would be [tolerance](#). That may have been true in the past. Liberalism championed the idea of free thought and free speech. That is no longer the case.

Liberals have been developing a zero-tolerance culture. In some ways, that has been a positive change. We no longer tolerate racism. We no longer tolerate sexism. Certain statements, certain jokes, and certain attitudes have been deemed off-limits.

The problem is that the politically correct culture of the left moved the lines quickly to begin to attack just about any view or value contrary to the liberal mind. Stray at all from the accepted limits of leftist thinking and you will earn labels like racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic.

Quickly the zero-tolerance culture became the cancel culture. It is not enough to merely label an opponent with a smear, the left demands that an “enemy” lose their social standing and even their job and livelihood for deviating from what is acceptable thought. A mendacious social media mob will make sure that you pay a heavy penalty for contradicting the fundamental truths of the liberal mind.

One phenomenon that promotes this intolerance is the use of smears and negative labels. For example, patriotism and pride in your country is called xenophobia. Acknowledging the innate differences between males and females is labelled sexist. Promoting the idea that we are all of one race (the human race) and that all lives matter is called racist. Questioning whether we should redefine traditional marriage is deemed homophobic. Arguing that very young children should not undergo sex assignment surgery is called transphobia. Pointing out that most terrorist attacks come from Muslim terrorists is labelled Islamophobic.

Should Christians be [tolerant](#)? The answer is yes, we should be tolerant, but that word has been redefined in society to argue that we should accept every person’s behavior. The Bible does not permit that. That is why I like to use the word [civility](#). Essentially, that is the Golden Rule: “Do to others whatever you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12).

Civility requires humility. A civil person acknowledges that he or she does not possess all wisdom and knowledge. That means we should listen to others and consider the possibility that they might be right, and we could be wrong. Philippians 2:3 says, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but



with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself." We can disagree with other without being disagreeable. Proverbs 15:1 reminds us that "A gentle answer turns away wrath."

This is an important principle as we try to understand the liberal mind and work to build bridges to others in our society.

## Notes

1. Dennis Prager, Left or Liberal?, <https://www.prageru.com/video/left-or-liberal/>.
2. David Sanderson, "Ending religion is a bad idea, says Richard Dawkins," *The Times*, October 5, 2019, [www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ending-religion-is-a-bad-idea-says-richard-dawkins-sqqdbmcpq](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ending-religion-is-a-bad-idea-says-richard-dawkins-sqqdbmcpq)
3. Dennis Prager, "The Left's Moral Compass Isn't Broken," September 15, 2020, [townhall.com/columnists/dennisprager/2020/09/15/the-lefts-moral-compass-isnt-broken-n2576225](http://townhall.com/columnists/dennisprager/2020/09/15/the-lefts-moral-compass-isnt-broken-n2576225).
4. Ryan Miller, "Almost two-thirds of millennials, Gen Z don't know that 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust, survey finds," *USA Today*, September 16, 2020, [www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/09/16/holocaust-history-millennials-gen-z-cant-name-concentration-camps/5792448002/](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/09/16/holocaust-history-millennials-gen-z-cant-name-concentration-camps/5792448002/).
5. Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff, et al., *The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting Up a Generation for Failure*. New York City: Penguin Press, 2018, [probe.org/coddling-of-the-american-mind/](http://probe.org/coddling-of-the-american-mind/).
6. F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom: Text and Documents, the Definitive Edition*, ed. Bruce Caldwell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 48.

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# The Thought Police Are Here

Recently, in the same week, I watched two strikingly polar opposite events unfold on my Facebook feed. One was the long-awaited, long-prayed-for birth of a precious baby girl whose daddy had left homosexuality and repented of a gay identity as he pursued intimacy with Christ. After several years of sexual sobriety and spiritual growth, he was actually quite surprised to find himself starting to be attracted to girls. I remember him saying, "If you think puberty is rough the first time, you should try it at 28!" I was privileged to watch him weep with gratitude through his wedding to a beautiful lady, and pray for him as he became a pastor of an inner city church. And finally, after a failed pregnancy and several failed adoptions, God gave him and his wife the desires of their heart when their little one was born.

This happened the same week that Amazon banned a number of books offering hope for people struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions or gender confusion, people like my friend. A gay activist convinced Amazon that the books by a clinical psychologist who had successfully treated hundreds of men who did not want to be gay, and other books presenting a biblical view of sexuality, are dangerous. He said they cause LGBT people to hate themselves and inflict grave psychological damage. Because no one should be able to say there's anything wrong with same-sex relationships and behavior.

It's really not any different than if a coalition of distilleries, vintners and brewing companies went after Alcoholics Anonymous to shut them down, proclaiming that it's dangerous and even wrong to support people who want to stop drinking. And there's something wrong with people not wanting alcohol to control or even destroy their lives, because

drinkers are who they are and they need to embrace this reality.

Critics use the pejorative labels “gay cure” or “conversion therapy” to shut down the voices of those offering help to those who want it. No reputable therapist, counselor, or pastoral care person will attempt to force change on someone who doesn’t want it, but what about those who *do* want help? What about another friend of mine, who sought help when he was deep in the weeds of his gay life? When I asked what made him reach out for help over 20 years ago, he answered, “God-induced misery. If the Holy Spirit truly lives within, there is no peace, there is no stability, there is no hiding. As James says, The double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

But technology has allowed “the Thought Police” to shut down the voices they don’t like, like those of my friends. The stewards of high tech hold the power to decide what they want people to hear and see.

- John Stonestreet’s recent Breakpoint commentary<sup>{1}</sup> relates how Facebook deleted a pro-lifer’s post quoting Saint Augustine, about focusing on the sins of others to avoid examining our own. Facebook says St. Augustine’s comment violated community standards.
- YouTube has restricted a quarter of Dennis Prager’s conservative videos, including one on the Ten Commandments (because it mentions murder).
- Smarter Every Day’s resident engineer (and winsomely outspoken Christ-follower) Destin Sandlin created three powerful videos explaining how YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook are being manipulated to control what we see.<sup>{2}</sup>
- A single pro-LGBT activist convinced Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, and Google to remove the [Living Hope Ministries](#) app, grossly misrepresenting LHM’s mission and activity as

dangerous and even “life-threatening.” The app was filled with expository teachings of various books of the Bible, weekly devotions, and personal testimonies of God’s transformational work. The app had happily resided on all platforms for more than three years.

This app was removed for supposedly being life-threatening to LGBTQ youth, yet the same hosts offer more than a dozen pro-gay apps that are designed to encourage sexual exploration and provide a means for individuals to hook-up for anonymous sex—an activity that has proven to be dangerous and even life-threatening.[\[3\]](#)

These are examples of the Thought Police in action.

This is why it is more important than ever before for our thinking to be more shaped, more informed by the truth of the Word of God than by the gatekeepers of Big Tech.

For example, we need to embrace the truth of 1 Corinthians 6, describing the first century church that had former homosexuals in it:

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you.** But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (vv. 9-11, emphasis mine)

I keep thinking about personal friends of mine, and their families, that the Thought Police don’t want the world to know about: men and women who have turned from a gay identity to finding their identity in Christ, who have reconciled their faith and sexuality to honor and glorify God in it. Some have developed an attraction to their now-spouse, and are happily

living faithful lives of service in their churches and in the world. Some report that their same-sex attractions haven't changed, but instead of a blaring, controlling force, they have retreated to white noise in the background of their lives. Their stories are real, and life-giving, and fulfilling.

But you won't know about it if the Thought Police have their way.

## Notes

1. [www.breakpoint.org/2019/07/the-point-saintly-censorship/](http://www.breakpoint.org/2019/07/the-point-saintly-censorship/)
2. [www.smartereveryday.com/](http://www.smartereveryday.com/)
3. [www.livehope.org/2019/04/23/lightintodark/](http://www.livehope.org/2019/04/23/lightintodark/)

This blog post originally appeared at  
[blogs.bible.org/engage/sue\\_bohlin/the\\_thought\\_police\\_are\\_here](https://blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/the_thought_police_are_here)  
on July 23, 2019.

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# Islam and Terrorism

*Kerby Anderson provides various perspectives on the link between Islam and terrorism, including how Americans and Christians can think about its encroachment on our culture.*

## Clash of Civilizations

In this article we will be looking at Islam and terrorism. Before we look at the rise of Muslim terrorism in our world, we need to understand the worldview conflict between Islam and western values. The Muslim religion is a seventh-century



religion. Think about that statement for a moment. Most people would not consider Christianity a first century religion. While it began in the first century, it has taken the timeless message of the Bible and communicated it in contemporary ways.

In many ways, Islam is still stuck in the century in which it developed. One of the great questions is whether it will adapt to the modern world. The rise of Muslim terrorism and the desire to implement sharia law illustrate this clash of civilizations.

In the summer of 1993, Samuel Huntington published an article entitled "The Clash of Civilizations?" in the journal *Foreign Affairs*.[\[1\]](#) Three years later Samuel Huntington published a book using a similar title: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. It became a bestseller, once again stirring controversy. It seems worthy to revisit his comments and predictions because they have turned out to be remarkably accurate.

His thesis was fairly simple. World history will be marked by conflicts between three principal groups: western universalism, Muslim militancy, and Chinese assertion.

Huntington says that in the post-Cold War world, "Global politics has become multipolar and multicivilizational."[\[2\]](#) During most of human history, major civilizations were separated from one another and contact was intermittent or nonexistent. Then for over 400 years, the nation states of the West (Britain, France, Spain, Austria, Prussia, Germany, and the United States) constituted a multipolar international system that interacted, competed, and fought wars with each other. During that same period of time, these nations also expanded, conquered, and colonized nearly every other civilization.

During the Cold War, global politics became bipolar, and the world was divided into three parts. Western democracies led by

the United States engaged in ideological, political, economic, and even military competition with communist countries led by the Soviet Union. Much of this conflict occurred in the Third World outside these two camps and was composed mostly of nonaligned nations.

Huntington argued that in the post-Cold War world, the principal actors are still the nation states, but they are influenced by more than just power and wealth. Other factors like cultural preferences, commonalities, and differences are also influential. The most important groupings are not the three blocs of the Cold War, but rather the major world civilizations. Most significant in discussion in this article is the conflict between the Western world and Muslim militancy.

## **Other Perspectives on Radical Islam**

In the previous section, we talked about the thesis by Samuel Huntington that this is a clash of civilizations.

Bernard Lewis sees this conflict as a phase that Islam is currently experiencing in which many Muslim leaders are attempting to resist the influences of the modern world (and in particular the Western world) on their communities and countries. This is what he had to say about Islam and the modern world:

Islam has brought comfort and peace of mind to countless millions of men and women. It has given dignity and meaning to drab and impoverished lives. It has taught people of different races to live in brotherhood and people of different creeds to live side by side in reasonable tolerance. It inspired a great civilization in which others besides Muslims lived creative and useful lives and which, by its achievement, enriched the whole world. But Islam, like other religions, has also known

periods when it inspired in some of its followers a mood of hatred and violence. It is our misfortune that part, though by no means all or even most, of the Muslim world is now going through such a period, and that much, though again not all, of that hatred is directed against us.{3}

This does not mean that all Muslims want to engage in jihad warfare against America and the West. But it does mean that there is a growing clash of civilizations.

William Tucker believes that the actual conflict results from what he calls the Muslim intelligensia. He says “that we are not facing a clash of civilizations so much as a conflict with an educated segment of a civilization that produces some very weird, sexually disoriented men. Poverty has nothing to do with it. It is stunning to meet the al Qaeda roster—one highly accomplished scholar after another with advanced degrees in chemistry, biology, medicine, engineering, a large percentage of them educated in the United States.”{4}

His analysis is contrary to the many statements that have been made in the past that poverty breeds terrorism. While it is certainly true that many recruits for jihad come from impoverished situations, it is also true that the leadership comes from those who are well-educated and highly accomplished.

Tucker therefore concludes that we are effectively at war with a Muslim intelligentsia. These are essentially “the same people who brought us the horrors of the French Revolution and 20th century Communism. With their obsession for moral purity and their rational hatred that goes beyond all irrationality, these warrior-intellectuals are wreaking the same havoc in the Middle East as they did in Jacobin France and Mao Tse-tung’s China.”{5}



# Threat from Radical Islam

It is hard to estimate the extent of the threat of radical Islam, but there are some commentators who have tried to provide a reasonable estimate. Dennis Prager provides an overview of the extent of the threat:

Anyone else sees the contemporary reality—the genocidal Islamic regime in Sudan; the widespread Muslim theological and emotional support for the killing of a Muslim who converts to another religion; the absence of freedom in Muslim-majority countries; the widespread support for Palestinians who randomly murder Israelis; the primitive state in which women are kept in many Muslim countries; the celebration of death; the honor killings of daughters, and so much else that is terrible in significant parts of the Muslim world—knows that civilized humanity has a new evil to fight.[\[6\]](#)

He argues that just as previous generations had to fight the Nazis and the communists, so this generation has to confront militant Islam. But he also notes something is dramatically different about the present Muslim threat. He says:

Far fewer people believed in Nazism or in communism than believe in Islam generally or in authoritarian Islam specifically. There are one billion Muslims in the world. If just 10 percent believe in the Islam of Hamas, the Taliban, the Sudanese regime, Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism, bin Laden, Islamic Jihad, the Finley Park Mosque in London or Hizbollah—and it is inconceivable that only one of 10 Muslims supports any of these groups' ideologies—that means a true believing enemy of at least 100 million people.[\[7\]](#)

This very large number of people who wish to destroy civilization poses a threat that is unprecedented. Never has civilization had to confront such large numbers of those would

wish to destroy civilization.

So, what is the threat in the United States? Let's take one number and one percentage for an estimate. There are about 4 million Muslim-Americans in the U.S., and we are often told that nearly all are law-abiding citizens. So let's assume that percentage is even as high as 99 percent. That still leaves one percent who believe in jihad and could pose a threat to America. Multiply one percent by 4 million and you get a number of 40,000 individuals that Homeland Security needs to try to monitor. Even if you use a percentage of one-tenth of one percent, you still get about 4,000 potential terrorists in America.

That is why it is important to understand the potential threat we face from radical Islam.

## Islamic Tipping Point

When the Muslim population increases in a country, there are certain social changes that have been documented. Peter Hammond deals with this in his book, *Slavery, Terrorism, & Islam*. Most people have never read the book, but many have seen an email on one of the most quoted parts of the book.[\[8\]](#)

He argued that when the Muslim population is under five percent, the primary activity is proselytizing, usually from ethnic minorities and the disaffected. By the time the Muslim population reaches five percent or more, it begins to exert its influence and start pushing for Sharia law.

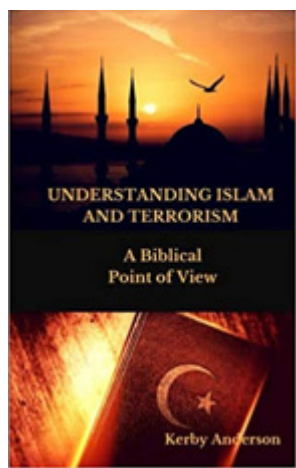
Peter Hammond sees a significant change when a Muslim population reaches ten percent (found in many European countries). At that point, he says you begin to see increased levels of violence and lawlessness. You also begin to hear statements of identity and the filing of various grievances.

At twenty to thirty percent, there are examples of hair-

trigger rioting and jihad militias. In some countries, you even have church bombings. By forty percent to fifty percent, nations like Bosnia and Lebanon experience widespread massacres and ongoing militia warfare. When at least half the population is Muslim, you begin to see the country persecute infidels and apostates and Sharia law is implemented over all of its citizens.

After eighty percent, you see countries like Iran, Syria, and Nigeria engage in persecution and intimidation as a daily part of life. Sometimes state-run genocide develops in an attempt to purge the country of all infidels. The final goal is “Dar-es-Salaam” (the Islamic House of Peace).

Peter Hammond would probably be the first to say that these are generalizations and there are certainly exceptions to the rule. But the general trends have been validated through history. When the Muslim population is small, its leaders focus on winning converts and working to gain sympathy for Sharia law. But then their numbers increase, the radical Muslims leaders takeover and the Islamic domination begins.



In this article we have been looking at the challenge of Islam when it comes to jihad and terrorist activity. I document all of this in my new book, *Understanding Islam and Terrorism*. The book not only deals with the threat of terrorism but also takes time to explain the theology behind Islam with helpful suggestions on how to witness to your Muslim friends. You can find [more information](#) about my book on the Probe Ministries website.

## Sharia Law and Radical Islam

A foundational practice of Islam is the implementation of Sharia into the legal structure. Sharia is a system of divine

law, belief, or practice that is based upon Muslim legal interpretation. It applies to economics, politics, and society.

Sometimes the world has been able to see how extreme the interpretation of Sharia can be. Muslims have been put to death when they have been accused of adultery or homosexuality. They have been put to death for leaving the religion of Islam. And these are not isolated examples.

Sharia law is very different in many respects from the laws established through the U.S. Constitution and the laws established through English Common law. In an attempt to prevent Sharia law from being implemented in America, a number of state legislatures have such bans on Sharia law. Voters in other states have approved a ban that has been struck down by a federal appeals court.

Although opponents argue that these Sharia law bans are unnecessary, various studies have found significant cases of Sharia law being allowed in U.S. courts. One report with the title, "Sharia Law and the American State Courts"[{9}](#) found 50 significant cases of Sharia law in U.S. courts just from their small sample of appellate published cases. When they looked at state courts, they found an additional 15 cases in the trial courts and 12 more in the appellate courts. Judges are making decisions deferring to Sharia law even when those decisions conflict with the U.S. Constitution and the various state constitutions.

How should we respond to the increased use of Sharia law in America? One simple way to explain your concern to legislators, family, friends, and neighbors is to remember the numbers 1-8-14. These three numbers stand for the three amendments to the U.S. Constitution that prevent the use of Sharia law.

The First Amendment says that there should be no establishment

of religion. Sharia law is based on one religion's interpretation of rights. The First Amendment prohibits the establishment of any national religion (including Islam).

The Eighth Amendment prohibits "cruel and unusual punishment." Most Americans would consider the penalties handed down under Sharia law to be cruel and unusual.

The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees each citizen equal protection under the Constitution. Sharia law does not treat men and women equally, nor does it treat Muslims and non-Muslims equally. This also violates the Constitution.

These are just a few ways to argue against Sharia law. As Christians, we need discernment to understand the religion of Islam, and boldness to address the topic of radical Islam with biblical convictions.

## Notes

1. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, 22-49.

2. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 21.

3. Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990, [www.theatlantic.com/doc/prem/199009/muslim-rage](http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/prem/199009/muslim-rage). Accessed 7/8/2018.

4. William Tucker, "Overprivileged Children," *American Spectator*, 12 Sept. 2006, [spectator.org/46473\\_overprivileged-children/](http://spectator.org/46473_overprivileged-children/). Accessed 7/8/2018.

5. Ibid.

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# Islam in the Modern World: A Christian Perspective

*Islam is a global threat unlike anything ever seen before in the history of the world. Its frighteningly different paradigm of conquest and disrespect for any non-Muslim people and cultures needs to be grasped in order to deal with it. When contrasted with the biblical worldview of Christianity, Islam presents a radically different view of God and mankind. Kerby Anderson highlights some of the radical differences between the Christianity of the Bible and the Islam of the Koran.*

## Islam and the Clash of Civilizations

Islam is a seventh century religion. For a moment, think about that statement. I doubt anyone would consider Christianity a first century religion. You might acknowledge that it began in the first century, but you wouldn't probably describe it as a religion of the first century because the timeless principles of the gospel have adapted to the times in which they are communicated.

In many ways, Islam has remained stuck in the century in which it developed. One of the great questions of the twenty-first century is whether it will adapt to the modern era. Certainly many Muslims have done so, but radical Muslims have not.

Perhaps the leading scholar on Islam in this country is the emeritus professor from Princeton University, Bernard Lewis. This is what he had to say about Islam and the modern world:

Islam has brought comfort and peace of mind to countless millions of men and women. It has given dignity and meaning to drab and impoverished lives. It has taught people of different races to live in brotherhood and people of different creeds to live side by side in reasonable tolerance. It inspired a great civilization in which others besides Muslims lived creative and useful lives and which, by its achievement, enriched the whole world. But Islam, like other religions, has also known periods when it inspired in some of its followers a mood of hatred and violence. It is our misfortune that part, though by no means all or even most, of the Muslim world is now going through such a period, and that much, though again not all, of that hatred is directed against us.[\[1\]](#)

This certainly does not mean that all Muslims want to engage in jihad warfare against America and the West. But it does mean that there is a growing clash of civilizations.[\[2\]](#)

Bernard Lewis continues:

In the classical Islamic view, to which many Muslims are beginning to return, the world and all mankind are divided into two: the House of Islam, where the Muslim law and faith prevail, and the rest, known as the House of Unbelief or the House of War, which it is the duty of Muslims ultimately to bring to Islam.

It should by now be clear that we are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and

the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations—the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both. It is crucially important that we on our side should not be provoked into an equally historic but also equally irrational reaction against the rival.[{3}](#)

This is the challenge for the twenty-first century. Will Islam adapt to the modern world, or will there continue to be a clash of civilizations?

## Muslim Intelligentsia

Not everyone accepts the clash of civilizations analysis. William Tucker, writing in the *American Spectator*, believes that the actual conflict results from what he calls the Muslim Intelligentsia.

He says that “we are not facing a clash of civilizations so much as a conflict with an educated segment of a civilization that produces some very weird, sexually disoriented men. Poverty has nothing to do with it. It is stunning to meet the al Qaeda roster—one highly accomplished scholar after another with advanced degrees in chemistry, biology, medicine, engineering, a large percentage of them educated in the United States.”[{4}](#)

This analysis is contrary to the many statements that have been made in the past that poverty breeds terrorism. While it is certainly true that many recruits for jihad come from impoverished situations, it is also true that the leadership comes from those who are well-educated and highly accomplished.

William Tucker believes that those who wish to engage in jihad warfare against the U.S. and the West bear a striking resemblance to the student revolutionaries during the 1960s on



American universities. He calls them “overprivileged children” who he believes need to prove themselves (and their manhood) in the world. He also believes that “this is confounded by a polygamous society where fathers are often distant from their sons and where men and women barely encounter each other as young adults.”

Tucker says that our current conflict with Islam is not a war against a whole civilization. He point out that the jihad warriors are despised as much in their own countries as they are in the West. “Egyptians are sick to death of the Muslim Brotherhood and its casual slaughter. The war between Fundamentalists and secular authorities in Algeria cost 100,000 lives.”[\[5\]](#)

He concludes that we are effectively at war with a Muslim intelligentsia. These are essentially “the same people who brought us the horrors of the French Revolution and 20th century Communism. With their obsession for moral purity and their rational hatred that goes beyond all irrationality, these warrior-intellectuals are wreaking the same havoc in the Middle East as they did in Jacobin France and Mao Tse-tung’s China.”

Certainly we are facing a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West. But it is helpful to understand Tucker’s analysis. In any war it is important to know who you are fighting and what their motives might be. This understanding is one more important piece of the puzzle in the war on terrorism.

## **Extent of the Radical Muslim Threat**

What is the extent of the threat from radical Muslims? This is hard to guess, but there are some commentators who have tried to provide a reasonable estimate. Dennis Prager provides an overview of the extent of the threat:

Anyone else sees the contemporary reality—the genocidal Islamic regime in Sudan; the widespread Muslim theological and emotional support for the killing of a Muslim who converts to another religion; the absence of freedom in Muslim-majority countries; the widespread support for Palestinians who randomly murder Israelis; the primitive state in which women are kept in many Muslim countries; the celebration of death; the honor killings of daughters, and so much else that is terrible in significant parts of the Muslim world—knows that civilized humanity has a new evil to fight.{6}

He argues that just as previous generations had to fight the Nazis and the communists, so this generation has to confront militant Islam. But he also notes something is dramatically different about the present Muslim threat. He says:

Far fewer people believed in Nazism or in communism than believe in Islam generally or in authoritarian Islam specifically. There are one billion Muslims in the world. If just 10 percent believe in the Islam of Hamas, the Taliban, the Sudanese regime, Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism, bin Laden, Islamic Jihad, the Finley Park Mosque in London or Hizbollah—and it is inconceivable that only one of 10 Muslims supports any of these groups' ideologies—that means a true believing enemy of at least 100 million people.{7}

This very large number of people poses a threat that is unprecedented. Never has civilization has to confront such large numbers of those would wish to destroy civilization.

So what is the threat in the United States? Columnist Douglas MacKinnon has some chilling statistics. While he recognizes that most Muslims in the U.S. are peace-loving, he begins to break down the percentages. He says:

[I]f we accept the estimate that there are 6 million Muslim-Americans in our country, and 99% of them are law abiding

citizens who are loyal to our nation, then that means that there may be—may be—1% who might put a twisted version of Islamic extremism before the wellbeing of their fellow Americans. When you stop to think that 1% of 6 million is 60,000 individuals, that then seems like a very intimidating one percent. Let's go to the good side of extreme and say that 99.9 percent of all Muslim-Americans would never turn on their own government. That would still leave a questionable 1/10th one percent—or 6,000 potential terrorist sympathizers.[\[8\]](#)

You can see that even the most conservative estimate of possible jihad warriors in this country results in a scary scenario for the future.

## Women in Islam

One of the areas where Islam has had difficulty in adapting to the modern world has been in its treatment of women. While some Muslim leaders actually claim that Islam actually liberates women, contemporary examples prove otherwise. Women who lived under Taliban rule in Afghanistan or who live under Sharia law in many Muslim countries today do not enjoy equal rights.

While it is true that many Muslims do respect and honor women, it is not true that those ideas can be found in the Qur'an. Here are just a few passages that illustrate the way women are to be treated. According to the Qur'an, women are considered inferior to men: "Men have authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other" (Sura 4:34). The Qur'an also restricts a woman's testimony in court. According to Sura 2:282, her testimony is worth half as much as that of a man.

Polygamy is sanctioned in Islam, and practiced in many Muslim countries. Sura 4:3 says, "If we fear that ye shall not be

able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if we fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with them, then only one, or a captive that your hand possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice.”

Women in many Muslim countries cover their faces. The justification for that can be found in the Qur'an that teaches that women must “lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what must ordinarily appear thereof: that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers” (Sura 24:31).

Women in many Muslim countries cannot leave their house alone. Again, this is part of Islamic law. It states that a “husband may forbid his wife to leave the home.”[{9}](#) It also places other requirements. For example, “a woman may not leave the city without her husband or a member of her unmarriageable kin accompanying her, unless the journey is obligatory, like the hajj. It is unlawful for her to travel otherwise, and unlawful for her husband to allow her to.”[{10}](#)

Not only was this practiced in Afghanistan under the Taliban, it is found in countries like Saudi Arabia. In that country, women cannot drive nor can they leave their home without being accompanied by a male family member. Amnesty International reports that women in Saudi Arabia “who walk unaccompanied, or are in the company of a man who is neither their husband nor close relative, are at risk of arrest on suspicion of prostitution” or other moral offenses.[{11}](#)

## **Church and State in Islam**

Islam and the West differ on many fundamental issues, but one of the most significant is whether the institutions of church and state should be separated. Hundreds of years of Western

tradition have demonstrated the wisdom of keeping these institutions separated and the danger that ensues when the ecclesiastical and civil institutions are melded into one.

Bernard Lewis explains that no such separation exists in Islam:

In [the Islamic] world, religion embraces far more than it does in the Christian or post-Christian world. We are accustomed to talking of church and state and a whole series of pairs of words that go with them—lay and ecclesiastical, secular and religious, spiritual and temporal, and so on. These pairs of words simply do not exist in classical Islamic terminology because the dichotomy that these words express is unknown.[{12}](#)

Since the words (and the concepts) do not exist in Islam, it becomes difficult to see how to form democracies in the Muslim world. Essential to the functioning of these governments is a belief in the separation of powers. This would not only include a horizontal separation of powers (executive, legislative, and judicial), but a religious separations of powers (ecclesiastical and civil).

Chuck Colson says that “Islam is a theocratic belief system. It believes in not just a state church, but a church state. And so, it doesn’t advance like Christianity does. These are radically different views of reality.”[{13}](#)

This leads to another fundamental difference between Islam and Christianity. As we have discussed in previous articles,[{14}](#) Islam historically has advanced by force or compulsion. Chuck Colson puts it this way: “Christianity advances by love, it advances by winning people over, it advances by the grace of God; radical Islam advances by force.”[{15}](#)

Even within Muslim countries, Islam advances by compulsion. But it is important to point out that the Qur’an (2:256) says “there is no compulsion in religion.” But that really depends

upon your definition of compulsion.

A closer look at Islamic law demonstrates a veiled threat that many believe is tantamount to compulsion. For example, Muhammad instructed his followers to invite non-Muslims to accept Islam before waging war against them. If they refused, warfare would follow or second class status. They would be inferiors in the Muslim social order and pay a special tax. This tax (known as the jizya) is required in Sura 9:29. If they pay it, they may live, but if they refuse to pay it, warfare will ensue.

While those of us in the West would consider this compulsion, the traditional Muslim interpretation of this would be that this would fit into the category of "no compulsion."

## Notes

1. Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990, [www.theatlantic.com/doc/prem/199009/muslim-rage](http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/prem/199009/muslim-rage).
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9. "Umdat al-Salik, (manual of Islamic law), m 10.4
10. Ibid., m 10.3
11. Amnesty International, "Saudi Arabia: End Secrecy End

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[www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE23/016/2000/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE23/016/2000/en/).

12. Bernard Lewis, "Window on Islam," *Dallas Morning News*, 9 July 2006, 4P.

13. Interview with Chuck Colson, "Worldviews in Conflict: Christianity & Islam," *Intercessors for America Newsletter*, September 2006, Vol. 33, No. 9.

14. See Don Closson, "[Islam and the Sword](http://probe.org/islam-and-the-sword/)," Probe Ministries, 2002. [probe.org/islam-and-the-sword/](http://probe.org/islam-and-the-sword/).

15. Colson, "Worldviews."

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