

Blindsided: 9/11 Was the Rule, Not the Exception

At 8:46 a.m. on Sept. 11, 2001, the first plane struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center, and America woke up to the terror of jihad. I use the words “woke up” because jihad existed long before that terrible morning. And it continues to cause much of the world’s violence today.

On 9/11, we were blindsided. But we never should have been.

The word *jihad* literally means “struggle,” but it’s often used to communicate the concept of holy war. It is on the lips of violent terrorists, but it is also shouted by Egyptian mobs who assault Coptic Christians. And it’s the first word that Palestinian children learn from their reading primers.

It is critically important to understand the permeating motivations of Islamic extremism. For that reason, I wrote *Blindsided: The Radical Islamic Conquest*, which is being released on April 1.

I was born in the Middle East. I was raised within its culture and return there often. I have had many long conversations in Arabic with Muslims, including Islamist hardliners. I have witnessed Islamic practices and understand the thought processes. Because of that, I know that jihad is an unavoidable and pervasive reality.

In *Blindsided*, I write:

Many scoff when jihad is declared by a small group of extremists from a tiny Islamic nation about which little is known. The imperative to subjugate non-Muslims, however, runs deep among Muslims around the world—not just in the hills and caves of Afghanistan or the remote sands of Yemen.

Jihad is an essential ingredient of Islamic philosophy, and all who truly love the Koranic faith are devoted to jihad. The concept of jihad is the nail on which hangs all rationales for the use of political power, military force, and terrorist violence to advance the Islamic cause.

Although the Koran decries murder and urges mercy in general, mercy is not to be extended to those who stand in the way of Islam's domination.

The Koran states: "When the sacred months are past, kill those who join other gods wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them with every kind of ambush; but if they convert and observe prayer and pay the obligatory alms, let them go their way" (Koran 9:5).

Sept. 11, 2001, turned over a rock to expose the horror of jihad against Americans—the "infidel crusaders." But the recent uprisings across the Middle East have exposed the everyday occurrences of jihad.

Its overthrown dictators, although ruthless and violent themselves, had kept a check on Islam's militant urges. But now, without that restraint, it is a very dangerous time to be a non-Muslim.

After 9/11, President Bush and others declared that Islam was a "religion of peace." But every day, that statement is proven to be false.

On March 4, 1,500 Muslim villagers, brandishing swords and knives, converged on a school in Egypt. Chanting Islamic slogans, they trapped nuns, who were volunteer teachers, and threatened to burn them alive.

Last week, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al-Asheikh, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, reportedly declared that it was "necessary to destroy all the churches" in the region. Al-Asheikh's words

supported the belief that no other religion except Islam should be tolerated.

Because of the constant stream of jihad-inspired attacks, Christians throughout the Middle East are fleeing for their lives. According to Raymond Ibrahim of the Stonegate Institute, half of Iraq's indigenous Christians have fled. Approximately 100,000 Christian Copts have escaped Egypt. And up to 95 percent of Nigeria's Christian population have left that country. Now, as al-Qaeda and others fight the Assad regime in Syria, Christians living there are coming under attack.

Norman Geisler, co-author of *Answering Islam*, writes: "What Islam engages in is consistent with the teachings of the [Koran] and Muhammad, while what some Christians did in the Crusades is contrary to the teachings of the Bible and Jesus Christ." Geisler says that although violence is the "illogical" result of Christianity, "Violence is the logical outworking of Islam"

That is why, in *Blindsided* I write:

Some Americans believe that by rounding up hundreds or thousands of Al-Qaeda leaders and fighters, we can end Islamic terrorism. But this would be like washing blood with blood. No matter how many terrorists you kill, there are always more lining up to take their place. Though the War on Terror is critically important to restraining the jihadist onslaught, war alone is not the answer.

We must also fight for the hearts and minds of Muslims. Jihad is at the core of Islam. It is the method through which militant Islam tries to rule the world. It is the rule, not the exception.

Until we confront that reality, victories over terrorism will be short-lived. Peace will be elusive.

Michael Youssef's expertise on the Islamic culture and the Middle East in today's post-modern world is actively sought by hundreds of thousands of followers around the globe. With a Ph.D. from Emory University in social anthropology, his Egyptian heritage gives him particular insight into the cultural and religious entanglements of international affairs. □It is estimated that over 10 million viewers/listeners around the world are tuned in every week through an international Christian media ministry founded by Youssef, . It broadcasts via radio and television to more than 200 countries and in more than 20 languages. Follow Youssef, a common sense intellectual and renowned author of 24 books, on twitter @michaelayoussef and through his news blog, .