Thomas Hritz

REL1003: Intro to World Religions

April 15th, 2016

Judaism has always been seen as a religion of uniting people, as stated earlier they did face their oppressions and hardships but that is what stemmed their violent progression. Even during the times when it was not frowned upon to kill all of those who refused your fate, the Jewish people had "laws such as the prohibition against destroying fruit trees and, indeed, the unwarranted destruction of any property, that do exist". This began to show the companionship for the people around them. Rather than take arms against men who only see you as a heathen for denouncing their god, men who have killed you family, you are an army would never harm the innocent or ruin the crops that so many live for. This is where it is finally notice how interlocked these entire religions are. The Jewish people understand unjust exploitation of other religions. It is even more important to note that "For most of Jewish history after the biblical era, the laws of combat were merely theoretical", which proved how most of the violent threats and action made by the Jewish faith were merely tactics to only scare off the more violent religious movements. Ultimately, the Jewish faith used a much more "mother" approach to expansion. They were accepting, understanding, and helpful religious group that only sought for the irradiation of the oppression see mostly with their culture.

Finally the topic of Judaism has also been a religion ridden with oppression, and persecutions from all stages of history. Yet, does this mean that there was never a violent time period during the faith's history. This is simply not true, even in the stories off the Old Testament proved the violent natures of the Jewish faith, "Israelites are about to leave the desert, Moses speaks to them about war. The guidelines he provides are of practical significance. The Israelites are slated to occupy the land of Canaan (biblical Israel) through military force". This very quote shows how the Jewish faith were willing to take extreme action to preserve and expand the Jewish faith. Even the officials those in power pressured their men to slaughter those who did not believe, to shun those who did not believe. Ultimately early Judaic cultures promoted the expansion through a violence and ultimatums. "The first rule of Jewish war is to avoid it whenever possible. Prior to attacking an enemy, a Jewish army must offer peace. If that offer is not accepted, however, the Torah mandates that every male should be killed and the women, children, and livestock should be taken as booty" was a quote taken from an article. This furthered the correct notion that violence was always at the heart of early Judaic movements, and that even through persecution plague them for years they have taken care of themselves over others.

After making a conscious effort to understand the progression of Islamic culture, I had to make an effort to disprove the blog, prior, discussing the generally violent ways of Islamic expansion. As most would incur a religion with scripture that generally promotes violence cannot promote peace. This soon became wrong with research. I was noted that the word Islam, which translated becomes surrender, is related to Arabic peace. When

Muhammad brought the Qur'an to the Arabic's his devout goal was to end the mass slaughters seen between several tribes. This showed how in the beginning of the expansion of Islamic culture the motives were pure. Muhammad wants to help with disputes between tribes and unnecessary killing. It was important to note that the Qur'an was "revealed in the context of an all-out war, several passages deal with the conduct of armed struggle." Which lead to and misrepresent text, because current Islams promote the movement of uniting all sub cultures. Ultimately, the expansion of Islam was not all violence, from the beginning of the expansion of Islamic faith stemmed for the Prophet Muhammad's goal to reunite and change the relations between different Islamic tribes. This truly helped open my eyes to the misunderstood religion; groups of people solely label radical extremists. Islam has a peaceful background with progressively more extremist values seen today, the complete opposite of the Christian religion. To finalize, Islam derived from the love to help bringing the religious groups together, unlike Christianity's goal to expand through violence and then peace.

Violence has and always will be a form of expansion for empires, tyrants, and countries. Yet, faith, one would assume, could not fall to such a fate as other. According to Danish linguist Tina Magaard, this is certainly not the case, and in many respects violence is a product of faith itself. After examining the texts of the ten largest religions, Ms. Magaard found the texts of Islam did incite a higher degree of violence than any other religion she had encountered. An example taken straight from the Qur'an text, "So when you meet those who disbelieve, strike their necks until you have inflicted slaughter upon them", the very piece embodies violence. Therefore it is easy to see how the

religion was mitigated to this extreme public view. People today say the Islamic faith is generally misunderstood and that all Muslims are not radical extremists, but even now it is apparent that their views and the writing of the Qur'an do promote this violent expansion. The more dangerous matter is that this expansion deals with the irradiation of those who oppose this belief, which has resulted in "Muslims since September 11, 2001, have committed more than 27,000 deadly terrorist attacks in the name of Islam". These men and women commit acts terror, most of which result in death, in the name of their faith, in the name of expansion. They justify their actions through their scripture and abuse the ideals of Islam towards a very misguided goal of growth and power.

As stated in the prior post Christianity stemmed from a belief in compassion, tolerance, acceptance, and forgiveness, which still holds true even after the events of crusades. The Christian faith does have its dark times like almost all religions, just as seen in the crusades, a murderous rampage throughout Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Fortunately, the crusades could not last and therefore a new means of expansion had to be made to for the faith. Though Missionary work was around before the times of the crusades, their importance and effectiveness could be called into question. Therefore it has been inferred that the bulk of Christian expansion stemmed from Christian mission trips, post crusades. After the final crusades in the late twelveth century, Christian missionaries were sent all over the world. "Ramon Llull opens training center to send missionaries to North Africa, friars begin mission work in China, a Dominican monk arrives in India as the first resident Roman Catholic missionary", each of these documented missionaries all within a decades time reaching the farthest corners

of the world to spread the Christian word. It is important to note that these missionaries were also witnesses to some of the greatest achievements in history, "In 1493, Christopher Columbus takes Christian priests with him on his second journey to the New World" and only a year later there are missionaries in the Dominican Republic. At this point the church has spread its beliefs across continents and oceans. These priests and priestess would come help the sick, weak, and helpless and then preach the word of God, and begin to convert. Even though less blood would be shed and lives could be saved that never mattered, it was never the prerogative. There was always one goal and that never changed, expand Christian faith, expand Christian power.

Christianity has always been praised as a religion built upon compassion, tolerance, acceptance, and forgiveness. Yet, history does not always paint the same picture as the words inscribed in the Holy Bible. Many people forget that actions speak louder than words, and the direct actions of past Popes, the papacy, and "good" Christians have portrayed a much crueler religion. During the seventh century, Jerusalem was taken over by Muslims and the persecution of Christians began to take place. Towards the late eleventh century Christians began to formulate plans to take action for their persecuted brothers in faith. This was the birth of the Christian Crusades, which stemmed from the actions of two Popes, "the First Crusade: an attempt, begun by Pope Gregory VII, to reform the church, and the pressing need to strengthen the weakened Papacy itself. Direct impetus was given the crusade by the famous sermon of Pope Urban II … Exaggerating the anti-Christian acts of the Muslims, Urban exhorted Christendom to go to war". Men were extorted to wage war on others, just because of a difference in

belief, and the true motive behind the entire first crusade was to increase the general power of the church. Nevertheless the mindset of Crusades only worsened, by the fourth and fifth crusades when "the Crusaders stormed the city, sacked it amid horrendous rape and murder, divided the rich spoils", which showed the true nature of these "religious movements". Christianity was manipulated as the purpose for these crusades. The Popes orchestrated a fallacy that lead good Christian men to take arms under an idea that they were spreading faith, atoning for sins, and working for God. Yet after two centuries rape, murder, and plunder were all preconceived plans, they were the riches of war. The faith that prided itself on love and acceptance was truly spread through death, transgression, and greed.

Thomas Hritz

REEL1003: Intro To World Religion

April 15, 2016

<div align="center">Work Cited</div>

Armstrong, Karen. "The True, Peaceful Face Of Islam." *Time*. Time Inc., 23 Sept. 2001.

    Web. 15 Apr. 2016.

"Crusades." The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th Ed.. 2016, John Cannon, Elizabeth

    Knowles, "crusade." The Oxford Pocket Dictionary of Current English. 2009,

    "Crusades." World Encyclopedia. 2005, John Bowker, T., and "crusade." Oxford

    Dictionary of Rhymes. 2007. "Crusades." *Encyclopedia.com*. HighBeam

    Research, 01 Jan. 2016. Web. 15 Apr. 2016.

"Jewish War & Peace 101." *My Jewish Learning*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Apr. 2016.

"Missions Time Line." *Christian Missions History Time Line*. Nazarene University, n.d.

    Web. 15 Apr. 2016.

"Research: Islam Really Is the World's Most Violent Religion." *Jihad Watch*. N.p., Aug.

    2016. Web. 15 Apr. 2016.