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# 1. 2015

## 1.1 November

### **Westboro Baptist Church (2015-11-30 21:44)**

Under the umbrella of Christianity, a very well known group that has been called both fundamentalist and extreme would be the Westboro Baptist Church. They are considered fundamentalist, because they operate on a rather strict interpretation of the Bible, and their interpretation serves to distance them from other Christian groups. They can also be considered extremist because of the measures they go to, to try and promote their interpretation of the scriptures. On their website, they advertise their beliefs, which are anti-homosexuality, anti-fornication, anti-sin in general. They also say that the common teachings that Jesus loves everyone is incorrect, and I think that this is how they separate themselves from the majority of other Christian groups. However, they believe that their interpretation is correct, and that anyone who believes otherwise simply has not really read and fully understood the Bible. So while they believe that Jesus does love, they believe he only loves certain people, the people who do not sin, because of what the rest of the scriptures say. They interpret the Bible so that sin is at the forefront, and I believe that this makes them fundamentalist, because they adhere to the rules and principles of the Bible at the most basic level. The do's and the do not's. This is the most basic and literal way I believe one can interpret the Bible. I also believe that they are extreme in the way that they express these beliefs to the rest of the world, because many describe their speech as hate speech. They use politically incorrect term to describe homosexuals, and they protest military funerals of war heroes, and even the funerals of the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. I do not believe that they have the intention of being hateful, I personally believe they are just misguided in their interpretations, and how they carry out their beliefs in the outside world. I think that after the Protestant Reformation the idea that your faith in Jesus Christ was what saved you because of his grace and mercy, not because we could ever make up for our sins, was prominent in America and still is today. So the fact that they deviate so much from those ideas separates them from other churches, and makes their ideas seem a bit extreme.



## 1.2 December

### Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (2015-12-03 23:11)

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (commonly abbreviated RSS) is a Hindu nationalist fundamentalist group. They are not affiliated with the government and operate on a voluntary basis. They were originally created to help resist British colonization and to protect and preserve a “Hindu Nation”. They seek to promote Hindutva, or simply the essence of being Hindu, and in doing so they reject all other foreign religions like Islam and Christianity. I’m not sure that the term fundamentalist would be the best descriptor of this group, but they do aim to basically create a nation state of only Hindu’s and spread the Hindu religions. In doing so they have also earned the moniker of an extremist group because they have been linked, on many occasions, to riots and acts of violence against those other religions that they reject, mostly Muslims. One specific example of incredible violence against Muslims in India in the name of Hindu nationalism is the Gujarat Genocide of 2002, in which Muslim women were raped, Muslim owned business were demolished, and hundreds of thousands of people were left homeless because their houses were destroyed. And the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh claims that all of this is self defense, in the name of preserving and protecting their Hindu Nation. Ironically this mass genocide occurred in the homeland of Mahatma Gandhi. But their purpose in inciting violent riots is to separate the rejected religions from the Hindu people of India, and to try and draw more people to their cause by attracting them to the events. Using this tactic of violence to further their agenda makes them extremist.



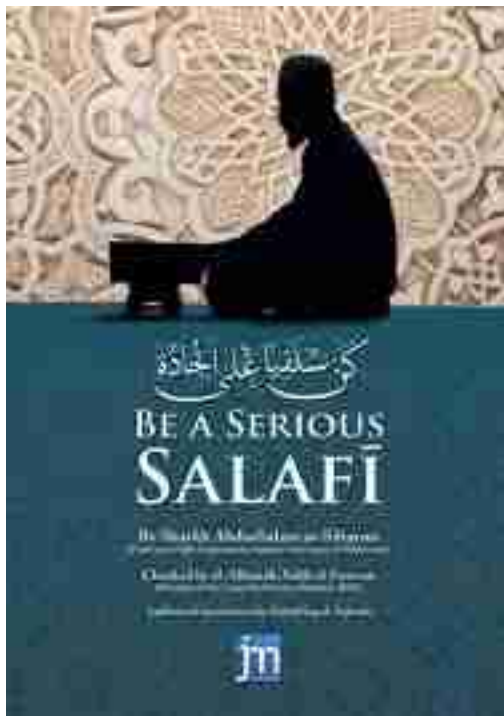


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### Salafi Islam (2015-12-04 17:19)

Salafi Islam is a branch of Islam that is considered fundamentalist. Their name comes from the Arabic word that refers to the Muslims that lived and died with the four hundred year timespan after Muhammad's death, because they would have lived their lives the most in accordance with true Islamic law. They were the most original Muslims who adhered to what Salafi Muslims believe to be the original Islam, because Salafi Muslims believe that no one since that time period has truly understood the teachings of the Q'uran and the Sunna. They believe that today's Muslim communities are too relaxed about the way that they follow Allah's laws and commandments and that the way it is taught now is a misinterpretation, and that is why the world is in such turmoil. Peace can be found if Muslims revert back to what Salafi's consider the original Islam, and truly follow the letter of the law. This means giving alms, doing the daily prayers, and being more conservative in today's society. I think that this embodies what fundamentalism is, trying to go back to the origins of their religion and interpret the text in a very rigid and strict way, the way that they believe it was intended to be understood and carried out.





While Islam is not an innately violent religion, there is a violent side of Salafi Islam which has created extremist groups that evolved into terrorist organizations. One of the most commonly know groups that identify as Salafi Islam, is Al Qaeda (believed to be responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks). They operate of a Salafi Jihad agenda which involves violence and attacks against those who are thought to inhibit the spread of Islam and against its nonbelievers. Massive acts of terrorism like 9/11 demonstrate the extreme lengths that they are willing to go to for their religious beliefs. I personally do not understand this, because Islam is not a religion that in any way promotes violence.





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### **Buddhist Extremists (2015-12-04 18:05)**

The title Buddhist Extremists almost seems like an oxymoron. To general public knowledge, most people associate Buddhists with peace, nature, and calm. They imagine silent but wise monks living in gardens (or at least I do). And while it is true that the majority of Buddhists live a peaceful existence trying to do no harm and just do good karma, there are some groups that are considered "Buddhist Extremists".

The thing that appears to link different Buddhist extremist groups in countries that do not even neighbor each other, is a hatred of Muslims. These Buddhist monks and the people they lead are not even under a threat of attack from Muslim group and yet they still target them. One such group exists in Sri Lanka, and they go by the name Bodu Bala Sena which means the Buddhist Brigade. They hold rallies and incite violence against Muslims in the community, similar the Buddhist groups in Burma. Sadly the Burmese Buddhists have been even more violent towards the Muslim minorities in their community. Burmese Buddhist monks have taken a stance that

They must protect their religion and community from Muslim invaders; this stance stems from a more widespread global view of Islam and the major terrorist groups associated with the religion, and not based on anything the communities of Muslims in Burma have actually done wrong. The Buddhists seem to be trying to be proactive, but are very extreme in the way that they go about it. They have attacked mosques, burned and destroys homes, and boycotted business of Muslims, simply because they are afraid of other extremist groups in Islam, ironically enough. They are using extreme measures to try to avoid attacks from another violent extremist group. But I think that fighting fire with fire will only burn everyone involved.



### Ultra-Orthodox in Isreal (2015-12-04 21:58)

Just the name of the group lends itself to be considered a fundamentalist group, "Ultra-Orthodox". The Ultra Orthodox Jews in Israel, also called Haredi Jews are the epitome of fundamentalist. While there are Modern Orthodox Jews who have incorporated elements of modern life in their faith, and their religion has evolved with the modern world. Ultra Orthodox Jews on the other hand have become more withdrawn from society as time goes on. They are a very family centric bunch, and very conservative. They have a specific and very modest dress that seems like it could cause heat stroke in the middle of summer, but they are dedicated to their faith. The women wear long skirts and modest tops with high necklines and usually long sleeves. If they are married they are usually wearing something akin to a bonnet to cover their hair. The men wear dark suits and hats with long hair on the sides. I think that they are dressing in a way that would have been appropriate when the Torah was being written.

✖ ✖ Growing up the children are sent to Hebrew schools and study the Torah until they are of age, and boys and girls are almost always separated even in a public setting. They reject secular things and some modern advances like Internet (maybe for good reason) and even television sometimes. They reject anything that could bring the temptation of sin with it. It may seem over protective and archaic to some but in all honesty I think that it brings them closer to the Torah. They strive to live exactly the way the Torah commands, in a basic fundamentalist way, which does separate them from the world but brings them closer to their God and that is noble to me.

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*gads*

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Edited: December 5, 2015

