

Fordham University
Center on Religion and Culture | Center for Ethics Education

New York, New York
April 12, 2011

MORAL OUTRAGE AND MORAL REPAIR:
Reflections on 9/11 and its Afterlife

PANEL I:
RELIGION AND TERRORISM:
CONTEXT & PERSPECTIVE

Moderator

David Myers, Associate Professor of History, Fordham University

Panelists

Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict: Pathways to Terrorism

Clark McCauley, Rachel C. Hale Professor of Sciences and Mathematics, Co-Director, Solomon Asch Center for the Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict, Bryn Mawr College

Sanctified Terror

James W. Jones, Distinguished Professor of Religion and Adjunct Professor of Clinical Psychology, Rutgers University; Senior Research Fellow, Center on Terrorism, John Jay College

The Role of Terror in the Religious Imagination

Scott Appleby, Professor of History, John M. Regan Jr. Director, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame

CELIA FISHER: As we turn to our first panel, I would like to introduce its moderator, Dr. David Myers, Associate Professor of History at Fordham. Known for his earlier work on the history of sacramental confession, Dr. Myers took a different path with his newly completed book, *Death and a Maiden: The Tragical History of Margarethe Schmidt, Infanticide*. This work, along with the support of prestigious fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Herzog August Bibliothek, brought Myers into close contact with the history of torture in European society and in the United States. In addition to his other scholarly work, Dr. Myers has written and reviewed widely on issues of history, torture, and religion for the *Chicago Tribune* and *Conscience*. David, it's a delight.

DAVID MYERS: Thank you, Celia. A brief word about the process here. We will have the three talks, and I will introduce each speaker before his talk. At the end, questions will be collected from the audience by Professor Fisher, and then I will perform a sort of triage on them and distribute them to the appropriate panelist. At the end of the talks, before the questions, I will give the panelists a chance to comment and to interact with each other about their own work. That's just a little bit of housekeeping I think that would be useful.

In September 1793, radicals of the French Revolution implored their leader, Maximilien Robespierre, to let terror be placed on the order of the day. Beginning that September and continuing for some fifteen months was a well-documented episode in the history of the West. Over 200 years later, again in September, terror was once again placed on the order of the day, where it remains now, ten years later. Those spine-chilling words from 1793, though, should remind us that terrorism is a not-unfamiliar policy in the history of the Western state, Western church, and Western religion.

Today, our three speakers from various disciplines and using those various disciplines perform the grimly unenviable but foundational task of showing that the terror exploding over American cities on 9/11 did not just fall from the skies. Moral outrage, it seems, also has a history.

Our first speaker is Clark McCauley, Rachel C. Hale Professor of Sciences and Mathematics and the Co-Director of the Solomon Asch Center for the Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict at Bryn Mawr. Professor McCauley.

CLARK McCAULEY: Thank you very much for the introduction. It's a pleasure to be here. I'm looking forward to a very interesting day. I have too many things to tell you in fifteen minutes, but I'm going to try.

My book, *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us* (Oxford University Press 2011), is basically an identification of twelve different mechanisms of political radicalization across three levels: individual, group, and mass public. I'm going to concentrate today on the individual-level mechanisms. I ought to say what I think radicalization is. Here's how I think about it: change in beliefs, feelings, and actions toward increased support of one side of an inter-group conflict.

I'm going to concentrate today on action. It's a whole different story how opinions are radicalized, a related story but a different story. Today I want to focus on radical action. I think about terrorism in terms of a pyramid. The terrorists are the apex, a very small number. Beneath them are people I call radicals — that is to say, people who agree that violence is necessary and justified. Below that are people I call activists, who are people who are doing legal and not violent things toward advancing some political cause. And then of course, like most of us, most of the time, there is the great mass of people who are not doing anything. I want to emphasize that terrorism is just that very small subset of radicals using violence against civilians.

That pyramid is indeed a pyramid of radicalization, in the sense that the higher in the pyramid, the more radical. But it's not a stage theory, I just want to caution. I don't think you have to traverse every lower stage in order to get to a higher one.

Here's some individual-level mechanisms that I want to mention to you today briefly.

- First is personal grievance. For non-state groups attacking governments and governments' citizens, a personal grievance is an individual who has felt personally attacked, harmed, or victimized by government. So people often talk about the Chechyan black widows as an example, because they have maybe been raped or brutalized by Russian troops and their menfolk have been tortured and killed. So when it's you and yours, people you love, who have been harmed, that's personal grievance.
- But the capacity of human beings to care about large groups, groups even that they are not a member of, is amazing. Group grievance is the situation of an individual who feels like some group that they care about has been victimized. There is enough of that going around right now to explain why the United States and many U.S. citizens are concerned about the rebels in Libya. This is the place I'd say where moral outrage is laid in my story line — that is, group grievance, moral outrage. You can say a personal grievance is anger. Group grievance is more like moral outrage.
- There are some people who join a terrorist group because somebody they care about is already more radicalized than they, already a member. It may seem kind of unlikely just in the cold light of the morning, but for some people having a loved one ask you to join a terrorist group is a good enough reason. We've got plenty of examples. In fact, I should pause to say all of this story line comes from looking at case history materials of people who moved to terrorism. So for many, if you've got a friend, you've got a loved one, you've got a relative, you've got a romantic partner who is a member of a terrorist group and they say, "Come help us," that's a good enough reason.
- Then there is fear. Some people join a radical group, and even a terrorist group, because it's safer. There are places in the world where being on the street by yourself is more dangerous than being part of a group that's got guns in their hands — places like Colombia or Iraq. Or, even if you are just involved in

some kind of political activity and you think prison is staring you in the face, the government is coming for you, the police are looking for you, that's a good enough reason. You're safer with the group, you think, than you would be in jail.

- Then there is something I call kind of a compound, thrill, status and money. It's kind of hard to describe, but it's something that you can see plenty of, especially with young males. A friend of mine likes to say, "Well, you know, if we knew how to keep young Americans from joining the U.S. Marine Corps, we'd know a lot about how to keep young Muslims from joining terrorist groups." But actually we don't know much about either one of those.

I went to a meeting once in Washington where somebody told me this story. They had captured a guy who was putting in IEDs, improvised explosive devices, in one of the roads around Baghdad somewhere. They're interrogating him. What they're expecting is a long litany of victimization of Muslims and hatred for the Americans. None of that.

"So why did you do that?"

"Well, it was for the money. You get \$100 cash for every one of these things you put into the road successfully."

"Really, \$100?"

"Yes," he says, "and I'm saving my money, and I'm saving up hoping to get to the U.S. when I've saved enough."

So you can't underestimate the appeal of thrill/status/money/dealing with guns and explosives as a reason for joining a violent group.

- Then there's something I call "the slippery slope," which is self-persuasion and action, where each little step you takes becomes a reason for taking a bigger one. Professor Milgrim's experiment that a lot of people know about, getting people to shock other people in a fake learning experiment — it has that quality, because the shock levels are so close together — 15 volts, 30 volts, 40 volts, and so on. So one way to think about why that situation is so powerful is that it is hard to stop because they are so close together, these shock levels, that if you want to say no to this one, you have to admit you must have already done something wrong the last one. So it's a psychology of self-justification. The good news about the slippery slope is that it works just as well toward virtue and sainthood as it does toward violence and destruction. So it's not inimically a mechanism for bad.

- Lastly, there is unfreezing. For a social psychologist, we try to understand values and norms, and we usually see them as anchored in groups. So we understand that if you suddenly, especially, lose contact with all the elements of normality and connection in your life, you are ready for some new people. When you suddenly lose a spouse, loved ones, children, your work, or maybe you go someplace far from home, and now you are a person with no roots, no connections, this is opening the door to new friends, new ideas, new values. So it's not a mechanism in itself; it's an opening that makes these other mechanisms possible.

Why I am going through these is to notice out loud with you that I didn't say anything in there about ideology. You know, the closest I came was talking about group grievance as a kind of moral outrage. So where is ideology?

To take the example that everybody likes to worry about these days, though there are plenty of others we could worry about, there is jihadist terrorism, terrorism by people who say that they are acting in the name of Islam and to protect Muslims around the world. So I'm saying I don't think we should take them too seriously when they talk like that. I'm going to offer you my top ten reasons to doubt that religion produces terrorism in the case of the jihadists.

- This one is the one I start with. There's only one group grievance that connects with Islam, and at that

you have to recognize Osama bin Laden is really facing an uphill battle trying to make a political reference group out of the international *uma*. He is fighting uphill against nationalism, the strongest mobilizing force in politics of the 20th century, and I believe will continue to be the strongest as we go through the 21st.

- The second reason: religion is very indefinite about violence. Every religion has got texts that can support violence and other texts that can support peace. So to start pointing to religion as a cause of violence is a very unhelpful approach, it seems to me, because you can always make whatever you want out of a text, especially texts as rich as most major religious texts, or even in the older days socialist and communist texts.
- Furthermore, the people that most often get pointed to as the religious source of jihadist violence, Salafi and Wahhabi kinds of fundamentalists of Islam, it's often lost sight of that most of them do not support jihadist violence. In fact, a large portion of the people who call themselves Salafis just want to withdraw from the world, they don't want to try to change it at all. They're like Orthodox Jews, you might say, Hassidic.
- Furthermore, it turns out that you can show in polls that the great, great majority, like 99 percent, of the people who justified suicide bombing in polls — these are polls of U.S. Muslims, of U.K. Muslims — they never do anything. So there is a sense in which even outrage, you might say, the kind of outrage that leads to agreeing that suicide bombing is justified in defense of Islam, even this kind of extreme opinion and outrage is very, very weakly associated with behavior, in the sense that 99 percent of the people who believe that never do anything. There are only maybe 1,000 people in the whole of the United Kingdom that the security people are keeping eyes on. There are maybe a million adult Muslims in the United Kingdom.
- Here's a case-history reason. I don't know of a single example — maybe some folks here can fill me in — but I don't know of a single example of somebody getting up from reading the Quran, or the Bible either, and saying, "That's it, it's clear, religion is telling me it's time to attack." I don't know any cases like that. But we do have lots of examples of people being radicalized by watching videos of Muslims being victimized. So notice the difference between watching people getting victimized and some kind of religious justification that starts from a text.
- Behavioral psychology shows there is a weak link between attitudes and actions. So as soon as you're trying to say that "religion is a cause of violence," you are up against this ugly problem here, that opinions of all kinds, and attitudes in particular, are only weakly linked to behavior. So as a way of predicting and understanding behavior and as a way of predicting and understanding violent behavior, and terrorism in particular, going to opinions is going to be a weak read. When there is this kind of reason, Aristotle says, "Virtue is doing what we find reason for." But, I don't know your experience, but mine is I'm not up to my elbows surrounded by people with virtue. In fact, when I look in the mirror, I don't feel like I'm really up to my elbows in virtue myself. So if doing what you find reason for is virtue and reading a text, even if it says, as you understand it, that you should go do violence, how many people who agree are going to have the virtue to act?
- Then there is the opposite, you might say, psychology's view, the opposite of Aristotle's view: We are very good at finding reasons for what we do. That's how that slippery slope operates for that psychology of self-justification — "I've done a little bad thing; I can do a bigger bad thing; as a matter of fact, I have to do a bigger one to make sense of the last littler one that I did." This is a dissonance, avoidance of inconsistency and a bad self-image. We're good at that. We're weak on virtue and we're strong on rationalization.
- Lastly, I don't think even the U.S. government believes that ideology drives political violence, though you can hear people from the government say things that sound the contrary.

Here is a text I am going to read to you. It's from the U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide of 2009: "Modern insurgencies are often more complex matrices of irregular actors with widely different goals" — like all the different kinds of goals I've just mentioned to you as mechanisms by which individuals join

violent groups, for instance. “At least some of the principal actors would be motivated by a form of ideology, or at least will claim to be, but ideology will not necessarily extend across the whole insurgent network.”

So what I want to say is I think religion and ideology are important, but they're important as rationalizations. They're not prime movers, they're not causes, they're not good predictors. Human beings don't kill other human beings without talking and thinking about it. They're going to come up — we're going to come up — with a story line every time we do that. Every time we kill people, we're going to have a story line.

But there are many possible story lines. Religion is one. Ethnicity and nation, a kind of a secular religion, that's another. For a lot of the 20th century, the interest of the working class was a kind of religion. Sometimes it's just as simple as the reciprocity rule, “We're going to do back to them whatever they do to us.”

I think religion, and ideology more generally, is not a prime mover, it's not in the direct causal chain. It's a rationalization, and if religion doesn't provide a handy one, we'll find a different one. Thanks a lot.

DAVID MYERS: Thank you very much, Professor McCauley. I am reminded of another bit of housekeeping. The way in which questioning is going to take place here is that during the talks you have the opportunity of writing down your questions, which will be collected at the end. You have within your folders index cards on which the questions can be asked. So start early, get your questions in on time, and that will allow you, obviously, to do questions during the talks and not have to reflect upon them twenty or thirty minutes later.

Our second speaker is James W. Jones. He is a Professor of Religion and an Adjunct Professor of Clinical Psychology at Rutgers University, as well as a Senior Research Fellow at the Center on Terrorism at John Jay College in New York. Professor Jones.

JAMES JONES: Thank you very much. I want to thank the conference organizers for the invitation to come here and speak.

I will tell you in advance that you will notice a slightly different emphasis in my talk than in Professor McCauley's talk, and of such things is good intellectual conversation made. It's good to have a debating partner whose work I respect as much as I do Professor McCauley's. However, I'm going to start with the opposite proposition, and perhaps we can talk in the exchange about it. I've actually been thinking as I've been preparing for this conference about why he and I come to such different conclusions about the role of religion. We can talk about that later.

What I want to begin by pointing out is that the prominent use of sacred text, the central role of ministers, gurus, imams, rabbis, and other religious leaders, the apocalyptic rhetoric of splitting the world into a battle of the totally pure against the totally demonic Other, the use of religious categories of the sanctification of violence, the drive for purification, the ritualization of violence — all of these themes and many, many others, it seems to me, point to the religious nature of much of contemporary terrorism.

These individual groups and individuals commit acts of violence in the name of sacred values that are of ultimate concern to them, rather than being motivated primarily by total political objectives or pure self-interest. Violence and terror in the service of sacred themes and values and ultimate commitment, that's my definition of religiously motivated terrorism. Now, obviously, not all current terrorist groups are motivated by sacred values. But I would argue that all those that have a global agenda and all those that might pose an existential threat to the American democracy at this point are.

The question for this morning is: Does that make any difference? What I want to suggest to you is that current psychological research says definitely yes, denoting something as sacred or ultimate appears to have significant behavioral and motivational consequences.

- First, sacred values and goals evoke more commitment. Studies of motivations concerned with ultimate

purpose or with a commitment to a “higher power” suggests that those who denote a facet of their life as sacred place a higher priority on that aspect of life, invest more energy in that aspect of life, and derive more meaning from that aspect of life than happens with things not denoted as sacred. Research suggests that people rate such spiritual, so to speak, goals as more important and that they evoke more commitment and effort than non-spiritual secular, political, and economic strivings and goals, calling forth greater dedication and energy, even if that something is the jihad or turning America into a biblical theocracy or restoring the boundaries of biblical Israel or purifying the Hindu homeland or converting the Tamils to Buddhism.

- Second, sacred values and goals take precedence. Motivational studies also find that sacred values and ultimate concerns take precedence over more finite concerns. The leader of Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia said, and I quote: “Jihad is more important than making the Hajj. There is no better deed than jihad, none. The highest deed in Islam is jihad. If we commit to jihad, we can neglect other deeds.”

I don’t need to belabor the fact that that’s a tremendous misreading of the great tradition of Islam. But that’s what the jihadis — and so many people who consider themselves “traditionalists” for any religious tradition — it’s a very, very, very selective and very, very modern reading of their tradition. And the jihadis, of course, fit into that very nicely.

The Reverend Paul Hill, a Presbyterian minister who killed a physician and his bodyguard in front of a women’s health clinic in Florida, told his followers, and I quote: “We must use all the means necessary. This duty comes directly from God and cannot be removed by any human government. It is virtually impossible to overstate the importance of maintaining the eternal and immutable principles of the moral law.”

A young Somali man who was part of the cohort who left the United States to join Al-Shabaab in Somalia, at least one of whom died in a suicide bombing, told his colleagues, and I quote: “If it was just nationalism, they could give money. But religion convinced them to sacrifice their whole life.”

For the religiously motivated terrorist, acts of violence become ultimate concerns. That is, they take precedence over any more mundane concerns. As ultimate concerns, these acts take on an overpowering transcendental necessity for the believer. In the eyes of their proponents, such acts of terror become a spiritual necessity.

- Third, sacred values and goals evoke greater rage. A recent study found that the desecration of something held sacred leads to overwhelming rage. The main characteristic of such rage is that it shows a total lack of empathy for the offender. Such a total lack of empathy is one of the most striking traits seen in those who bomb innocent noncombatants, assassinate health-care providers, and imagine and sometimes plot apocalyptic genocidal violence in the name of their deity.

While some spiritually motivated terrorists may employ violence purely tactically in the pursuit of limited and achievable political goals, others dream of the complete purification and the apocalyptic eradication of all unholy people. Such totalistic schemes of divine vengeance reek of the rage born of threats to cherished beliefs and ideals.

Now the very act of killing is seen as sacred in itself. Violence is not simply a means to an end; violence becomes itself sacred, transcendental, almost divine.

When violence becomes sanctified, it is changed. It is changed in ways that go far beyond simply justifying its use. Violence becomes a religious imperative, carrying a cosmic or spiritual meaning that goes beyond that meaning provided by any purely political or legal authority. This inevitably leads to a significant reduction in the usual restrictions on the deployment of violence, opening up the possibility of full-scale, unrestricted genocidal campaigns, including with weapons of mass destruction.

The RAND Corporation observes, and I quote from one of their reports: “For the religious terrorist, violence is first and foremost a sacramental act or divine duty. Terrorism thus assumes a transcendental dimension, and its perpetrators therefore often disregard the political, moral, or practical constraints that affect other terrorists.”

When asked about using nuclear weapons, the leader of Jemaah Islamiyah replied: “Yes, yes, if necessary. Allah has said that we should equip ourselves with weapon power, and that is an order.” Along this line, al-Zarqawi proclaimed: “Allah commands us to strike the unbeliever, kill them, fight them by any means necessary to achieve the goal. The servants of Allah who perform jihad are permitted to use any and all means necessary to strike the unbeliever combatants and cleanse the earth from their abomination.”

The Army of God has on its Web site in bold letters this quote from Psalm 144: “Blessed *be* the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.”

Ironically, the Jewish Defense League Web site virtually parallels the Web site of the neo-Nazi Aryan Nations, both of whom call on their members to conduct themselves with “guns, knives, bullets, and bombs.”

Implications: Four practical implications of this research on religious and spiritual motivation:

- First, since the jihadi human bombers — as well as, say, the members of Aum Shinrikyo in Japan, or those willing to die for the vision of a new Aryan nation — since they are offering a religious sacrifice, their actions are not primarily motivated by utilitarian or pragmatic calculations. Thus, it is a mistake to seek to understand religiously motivated terrorists using the game theoretic or rational choice models so prominent in the social sciences these days. Rational choice models cannot really comprehend sacred values that are deeply held for non-instrumental reasons. Such values are not open to the instrumental calculus of statistically based social sciences. Social scientists trained only in those methodologies and those they advise may have only a limited understanding of religiously motivated terrorism.
- Second, ultimate commitments to sacred goals take precedence over other commitments. No secondary commitment must be allowed to interfere with commitment to jihad, to the unborn, to greater Israel, to Hindutva, or to Earth First. The religious drive to sacrifice and make holy one’s life and one’s cause transcends and subsumes any pragmatic or purely self-interested motivation. Given the sacred nature of these acts, counterterrorism policies based on appealing to or attempting to negotiate with religiously motivated terrorists will probably have very little success. Sacred terror is nonnegotiable terror.

Research finds that counterterrorism interventions that threaten or seek to bargain with religiously motivated terrorists only invoke greater scorn and rage. The carrot-and-stick approach that the Italian police used in the 1960s and 1970s to disband the Red Brigades, or that the Germans used to turn members of the Baader-Meinhof gang, will probably have little success against al Qaeda, Earth First, the Army of God, or the Animal Liberation Front. Asking someone to trade their sacred values for financial gain or greater political power is universally understood as the voice of the Devil.

A 2006 RAND Corporation report demonstrates that religiously motivated terrorist groups are the hardest to subdue. Of the myriad violent groups that have begun since the late 1960s, two-thirds of the religiously motivated ones are still active, as opposed to only one-third of the ethnonationalistic political groups. Of those religious groups that did end, most ended because of internal division and not because of external intervention. A few were defeated by good law enforcement. Virtually none were eliminated by military action or voluntarily gave up their cause.

- Third, as a corollary, as we saw for example with the trapped members of the Madrid cell, counterterrorism and law enforcement policies based on frightening religiously motivated terrorists into surrendering by an overwhelming show of force will rarely, if ever, work. Threatening to kill someone who wants to martyr themselves for their cause is not an effective counterterrorism strategy.
- Fourth, if we do not understand the spirituality that motivates religiously motivated terrorists and the power of religious conversions to reorient and give meaning to people’s lives, we will never counter them effectively. If part of the attraction of violent religion is the attraction of personal transformation and spiritual renewal, then a crucial part of our response must be the articulation of an equally powerful alternative religion and moral vision.

Community organizations, churches, mosques, who seek to counter terrorism must provide groups and programs that channel the seeker's drive for meaning, service, and perhaps adventure, in constructive ways.

Conclusion: As all psychologists know, the question of human motivation is always multi-dimensional and multi-determined. My point is not that sacred terror is only motivated by sacred strivings and ultimate goals. Clearly, political and economic conditions and personal histories enter into the making of a religious terrorist. My point is, rather, that research suggests that when a goal or movement takes on the patina of the sacred, it changes in significant ways.

There is much research being done now on how people are recruited into terrorist movements through naturally occurring groups — neighborhood and family connections, sports teams, Internet chat rooms. But once the cause gets sanctified, once it moves from the family gathering or the soccer league or the online discussion into the realm of sacred values and ultimate concerns, it changes. Even if terrorists are primarily recruited through natural groups, once their cause gets sanctified, it is transformed.

Likewise, with the classical motivations for terrorist action — like politics, ethnicity, nationalism — once the nation, the land, the race, takes on an ultimate status, it is no longer simply politics or group pride. Actions done in the name of the nation, the land, the race, now become absolute, ultimate, sanctified, as the examples of the Hindu Nationalist Party or the settler movement in Israel or the Aryan Nations all show. They are not just politics cloaked in religious dress; they have entered the realm of ultimate concerns.

The research on the psychology of sacred values and spiritual strivings underscores the crucial ways in which contemporary religious terrorism differs from previous ethnonationalistic and politically revolutionary terrorism. It is not simply the same old terrorism with a different motivation or rhetoric. Research suggests that sacred motivations make a big difference. We must recognize that in the case of the jihadis, the Christian Identity soldiers, the Hindu nationalists, and the Israeli settlers seeking the ethnonationalistic purification of their countries, apocalyptic Christians awaiting the Rapture and hungering for Armageddon, Sri Lankan and South Asian Buddhists seeking to forcefully convert or suppress their non-Buddhist minorities — in all of these cases, evoking and invoking the sacred transforms these movements in potentially dangerous ways. Thank you very much.

DAVID MYERS: Thank you, Professor Jones. I think we have the basis of a discussion in the aftermath here. Our final speaker today in this morning's session is Scott Appleby. Scott is Professor of History and the John M. Regan Jr. Director of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. And, as he was a classmate of Father McShane's at the University of Chicago Divinity School, he was also a classmate of mine at the University of Notre Dame, and we have the same degree from there I believe. Scott Appleby.

SCOTT APPLEBY: Thank you, David. I'd like to thank Celia Fisher and Peter and Peggy Steinfels, and of course my dear old friend and family chaplain, Father McShane. I invite you, when you greet him next, to call him by his well-known name "Ruby Red." [Laughter]

Obviously, the organizers of the conference chose carefully, because we do have an interesting conversation here. It's my assignment to demonstrate that both of our previous speakers are wrong. [Laughter] That's going to be difficult.

In 1984 Martin E. Marty delivered the Ingersoll Lecture on Immortality at the Harvard Divinity School, later published in *Harvard Theological Review* under the title "Hell Disappeared. No One Noticed. A Civic Argument."

Marty's civic argument was formulated in response to the public debate over values in American elementary and secondary education, and specifically to the call by some for religious instruction — or as some Christian advocates put it, "moral education the way it used to be in this country." Marty found their proposal implausible, he reported, because it would necessarily entail imposing a doctrine of eternal punishment — in short, the possibility of hell, which "has disappeared or been drastically diminished in

the preachments of most American religious groups and is hence not culturally available.”

Marty goes on to demonstrate that the doctrine of hell had been culturally available, and in spades, for Catholics on this continent from 1492 onward and Protestants from 1607 onward. As those of you who know Marty can imagine, he has great fun in the article citing the fire-and-brimstone warnings and moral exhortations of American religious figures, from Jonathan Edwards and Increase Mather, all the way up to Jimmy Swaggart, though he detects a waning in the latter days of what we might call disinterested sincerity, as the profit motive gradually undermines the motivation to play the prophet.

More interesting is Marty’s retrieval, not of the usual religious suspects, but of less-than-orthodox Christian or Jewish, or simply secular, American educators, inventors, and political figures in American history. All of these camps, he demonstrates, also appreciated and maintained a close connection between a doctrine of eternal retribution and the social effort to uphold personal as well as public morality in this “one nation under God.”

In 1814, for example, the deist Thomas Jefferson wrote to the skeptic Thomas Law that society through public education would address the defect of the lack of a moral sense in citizens by promoting “ultimately the prospects of a future state of retribution for the evil as well as reward for the good done while here.” Progressive proto-secular educators of the 19th century, such as Horace Mann, also made use of traditional Christian language about the threat of hell.

In a more recent and detailed history, entitled *Hellfire Nation*, James Morone meticulously tracks “the Puritanical strain in the American character which finds expression in political rhetoric from the Colonial New England Jeremiad to the 20th-century stump speech. Embedded in American civic and religious discourse, from the *McGuffey Reader* to the Moral Majority, the recurrent raising of the specter of divine judgment has aimed to bolster, reinforce, and sanction traditional morality, whether this morality be called Victorian or Christian or Judeo-Christian. Apocalyptic or supernatural rhetoric, in short, has long survived its expiration date. Its custodians usually, if not in every case, have recognized religion as one of its chief guarantors and enforcers.”

And then, as the copious polls and bibliographies Marty cited in 1984 attest, “this linkage in this country between morality and holy terror began to erode, right around the time, coincidentally or not, that the U.S. Supreme Court declared prayer in the public schools unconstitutional in rulings in 1962 and 1963, which was also the time of the Second Vatican Council. And today, not only since the rise of the religious right in the 1980s but especially in the decade since 9/11, we have witnessed the spectacle of social conservatives, Protestant moralists, Catholic cultural critics, and calculating latter-day prophets of doom, including politicians who aspire to the highest political office in the land, go on the circuit and display charts demonstrating the supposedly strict correlation between the banishing of prayer from the public schools and the moral collapse of the nation, as evidenced by the use of illegal drugs, out-of-wedlock births, soaring rates of divorce, and the like.” The fact that Newt Gingrich alone somehow inhabits all of these personas I just mentioned and uses all of these charts does not undermine my larger point.
[Laughter]

So precipitous and far-reaching was the decline in the belief in hell that Catholics and Protestants alike began to worry about the future of Christianity itself. In 1963, reporting on the data gathered by Ben Gaffin and Associates using a questionnaire approved by George Gallup in 1952, Father John L. Thomas S.J., noting that only little more than one out of eight adults regard hell as a possible future alternative, commented: “It is easy to miss the profound implication of these findings for the American character, because the word ‘hell’ has come to be regarded as nothing more than a byword in vulgar speech. Considering the perspective of Christian realism, however,” he continues, “hell is the alternative to justification and salvation. Only in terms of this stark realism can the Christian make sense of the redeeming death of Christ. To deny the existence of hell is implicitly to deny the need for redemption. Viewed in the light of this consideration, the fact that in 1962 one out of every four Roman Catholics and almost half of American Protestants no longer believe in the existence of hell may be judged highly significant.” Close quote from Father Thomas.

I call your attention to the curious fate of hell to make the simple point that it was not long ago that

religion in this country was widely perceived as serving several important social functions, one of which was to scare the hell out of people, to terrorize them literally with disturbing and occasionally dramatic and traumatizing images of unceasing anguish and torment in the afterlife. Now, over the last forty to fifty years, strikingly, that function has withered or been displaced among large segments of the Western, and perhaps also the non-Western but globalizing, world.

What has this to do with 9/11 or, more generally, with the rise, or at least the greater incidence, of religious terrorism? Here a few words about so-called religious terrorism. Is there such a thing as religious terrorism or are we being unfair to religion? Short answer: there is such a thing, and it comes in two big brands.

The first we call from our research “strong religion” — that doesn’t mean we think it’s the best kind of religion, only that these are cases in which a social movement or individual or in fact a nation-state seeks to identify, demonize, and, if necessary and possible, annihilate an ethnic or religious or national Other. And movements or individuals or nation-states in which religious elements play a major, or even *the* decisive, role in the motivation, pattern, timing, targets, and intended consequences of this violence.

Islamic movements, such as al Qaeda, and Jewish movements, such as Gush Elinem or Kahanism, are cases of strong religious movements, movements with a strong religious element. George W. Bush’s “War Against Terror,” if one believes the reportage about its Christian roots, as bin Laden and company surely do, might qualify instead as a case of the second brand of religious extremism in the world, which we call “weak religion,” in which primarily territorial or political or other mundane factors are decisive in the move to exterminate or terrorize the enemy, but in which religious elements are manipulated to lend a sacred legitimation or aura to the campaign.

Certainly, the Serbian state crusade against Bosnian Muslims in the 1990s, orchestrated in part by that not-quite-true believer Slobodan Milosevic and company, and given a blessing by the majority of Serbian Orthodox bishops and priests, was a case of a weak or dependent religious community being taken advantage of and employed in an essentially nationalist reign of terror. Ian Paisley’s fire-and-brimstone denunciations of the papists in Northern Ireland aspired to motivate what were really post-Protestant Ulster militants to march, literally, against their Catholic counterparts.

So what has the general waning of the fear of hell to do with religiously inspired or justified violence? Quite a bit, I want to speculate. Who are the morally outraged who seek moral repair? Well, all of us are, right? We were, indeed, and are outraged by the taking of innocent life on 9/11. Many of you, of course, lost loved ones in that tragedy.

Bin Laden, on the other hand, claimed that he and his followers were morally outraged by the taking of innocent lives in Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and across the Sunni world, wherever Western interests had imposed sanctions or supported dictators who tortured their own people, or supported Israelis who denied basic human rights to the occupied Palestinians, and so forth. Of course, bin Laden and his murderous accomplices had the advantage of hellfire on their side in rallying the disaffected, the disposed. He had the advantage, that is, of a readymade available language of transcendent moral outrage, of a palpable hell, as an active and activated dimension of the religious imagination.

He was in fact riding a wave in the Islamic world. In 1993, I remember, as we were in the midst of a study of fundamentalism, listening to Hassan Al-Tourabi, whom I had read a lot about and thought, *If there’s ever someone who’s an Islamic fundamentalist, it’s this gentleman*. But I was worried that we had just read about this, I would meet him, and I would realize that all our research was in vain and we hadn’t gotten it right. We got it right. Tourabi said, very directly: “You in the West have become weak. If you really were Christian or Jewish, we would respect you. But you’re lukewarm.” “You should be spit out of Christ’s mouth,” he said to an audience in Washington. “We in the Islamic awakening,” as he called it, “have retained the true belief and we will take over Africa, and the *uma* will extend beyond the nation-state because we are the true believers.

Around the same time, a scholar at Georgetown named Barbara Stowasser — I was at a very impressive presentation she gave about the rise at that time of graphic comic books and graphic novels in Saudi

Arabia that were selling in the thousands and hundreds of thousands in the Sunni Arab world that depicted the Ddajjal — that is, the Islamic what we would call anti-Christ or satanic figure who comes toward the end of time and is the avatar of true evil. Of course, in these comic books he's depicted as a Zionist and he's depicted as coming with technology and military power and so forth. Her point was that there is a rise of apocalypticism, of Millennial thought, in the Islamic world — this was long before 9/11 — leading to a resurgence and legitimation and violence.

In our studies of fundamentalism, we found many characteristics of so-called fundamentalists, including those — not all fundamentalists do violence, of course — moving toward extremism, and the straw that stirs the drink of those characteristics — I won't go through them now — is Millennialism, apocalypticism, because the radical extremist leader has a problem: he's recruiting from two different pools — one is conservative or orthodox believers who are not radicalized; the others are young people or people who are moralists, who don't know their traditions, and are looking for an identity at home — we've heard about that already.

But the problem is with the orthodox, the conservative, the true believer, who knows their scriptures, they recognize, at best, that their scriptures are ambivalent and that certainly kill the innocent is not the leading role, the leading message, in any of these scriptures. Quite the contrary. Whether it's the Granth Sahib of the Sikhs, or the Quran, or the Bible, the message is forgiveness, repentance, forbearance, and love. Those are the main themes of these texts.

There are, of course, texts that can be retrieved and interpreted to justify violence in all of the texts. The point about Millennialism, apocalypticism, the fear of hell, is that the extremist leader, in order to justify violence, has to make the claim that we are living in an exceptional time of great darkness, moral turpitude, in order to justify violence. In each of these scriptures, in fact, you will find what I call an "emergency clause." In the Granth Sahib, which is the Living Guru, time after time we read forgive, for love, reconciliation, and so forth. And yet there is an emergency clause: However, if the Sikh religion should be under siege, it is your obligation to take up arms, to take up the sword. And so the radical Bhindranwale in the Punjab adopted the motorcycle and the revolver as accompaniments to the turban and the short pants and so on, the other symbols of Sikh identity. Millennialism, apocalypticism, the fear of hell, is the context in which history stops. The world has changed and the true believer must justify violence.

We come to a conclusion. Please do not misunderstand me. I am hardly denying the West's capacity for moral outrage, much less New Yorkers' capacity for moral outrage. But I am comparing that capacity and the response it evokes, however, shaped as it is by a largely mundane universal human rights discourse, and an increasingly secular imagination — I am comparing that capacity for moral outrage, what we have today, with the "take no prisoners in this earthly realm" imagination of the religious extremist, whether he controls a nation-state or merely a ragtag army of marginalized mujahideen. Nor am I bemoaning the loosening of the grip of religious-induced pathological fear upon generations of modern Americans or Western people. Hardly.

And yet, it seems worthwhile for us to contemplate Father Thomas's claim that the loss of the fear of damnation also might signal the loss of a felt need for redemption — or, more broadly, the loss of a transcendent meaning or depth dimension of human life. Living in the imminent frame with a "buffered self," to use Charles Taylor's lingo in *A Secular Age*, may not be all that it is cracked up to be. That is, the current situation, in which we are fated to derive meaning and significance not from the gods or the transcendent, but within our own noble but relatively puny and perhaps inconsequential humanity, a situation moreover in which the self is considered to be buffered, as Taylor says, or insulated from the slings and arrows of outrageous supernatural fortune, the self is far less vulnerable to forces beyond its immediate control, while living under such a cultural regime as we do, in which the fear of hell and the imposition of supernatural is remote, raises as many questions and problems as it solves.

You may not agree. Indeed, I hope few, if any, of you in the audience share the nostalgia for the bad old days when religion supplied us all with ample doses of eternal superego and nightmares of the harrowing hound of hell. I hope few, if any, of you in this audience believe this or are nostalgic for the old-time religion. I hope that you're not religious extremists that is, self-styled true believers whose conviction that

the murder of the Apostate or the evil leader is a “forgotten obligation,” as Sadat’s assassins claimed. There are those who believe that there are no innocent people who also pay taxes and support the American leviathan, that use the awesome power of militarized state to terrorize those who resist its neocolonial military hegemony.

Religious terrorists, lamentably, are captivated by an unbalanced view of old-time religion. I’ll say more about this if we have time in the questions. We Western liberals have jettisoned for the better the terrible dimension of religion, those dimensions that reduce us to creators, that take our vulnerability to the gods and expose it, render it undeniable, and exploit it via magic. This dimension of religion strikes us as cruel and unbecoming of a loving creator.

In choosing the noble side of religion — and if we have time in discussion, I’ll indicate where they are both wrong — in choosing the noble side of religion, however, have we also lost the sense of majesty, the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* of Rudolf Otto, the enormity of the sacred? Is the righteous God, the one whose infinite depths contain the possibility of damnation as well as redemption, the source of moral outrage and moral repair that speaks to the depths of the human heart?

I have my son Paul here. I’m proud and pleased he is here. I remember when he and certainly his older brother were making their first confession in the 1980s. This was the time of a kind of communal confession. They went up to the altar and they were saying the Act of Contrition. In those years there was no Pains of Hell. I remember telling Ben, “Don’t say that prayer. You say the Pains of Hell.” I don’t know why I said that. Now I do.

So, I conclude, how do we arouse moral outrage that leads to consequences for ourselves and for our opponents, consequences that are commensurate with the depth dimensions of the human person with her transcendent dignity? What is the source of that kind of moral outrage? And how, my fellow sinners, do we do that without invoking the pains of hell, and thereby without sowing just a little terror in the hearts of us all? Thank you.

DAVID MYERS: I’m reminded to remind you to turn off our phones, please, as we go on. We have many questions here. But I think, after three such stimulating and provocative and apparently in some cases at-odds presentations, I think we owe it to our three very fine speakers to let them begin this with their own comments on the session and on their fellow panelists.

JAMES JONES: I think it’s important to keep in mind a couple of things about Professor McCauley and me in terms of the context here. We are really coming at this — I’m not saying we don’t disagree, because we do, but let’s put that disagreement — at least I want to first of all begin by putting that disagreement in some context and focusing it a bit.

Professor McCauley’s interest in terrorism is much, much broader than mine. I mean he has been a student of terrorism for a long time and he covers a much wider domain. If you look at his book, which I recommend, which he mentioned, he writes about the Russian Revolution, the 1960s groups, and so on and so forth.

I never thought that I would be ending my career talking about terrorism and meeting with people from New Scotland Yard and Interpol and all that sort of thing. I’m a psychologist of religion, and my interest is in the studies of religious motivation. I got recruited into the discussion of terrorism because there was an international seminar that was looking for someone who knew something about the psychology of religious motivation. I hadn’t really thought much about terrorism before that.

So my focus is — I don’t have the breadth and depth of focus that Professor McCauley has. My focus is on religiously motivated terrorism. That is really what I know about. I don’t have any professional knowledge of the Russian Revolution or the Baader-Meinhof Gang or something like that. Where I think we differ, though, is that I do think that the terrorism we face now is different than ethno-nationalistic-political terrorism. I am one of those people who thinks there is such a thing as a new terrorism which is more global and more religiously motivated, and that the models that were developed to deal with the IRA and the Baader-Meinhof Gang don’t necessarily apply as well. I think that’s the place where we differ. I

think another difference that you should understand is I think that the practical place where we meet, the practical issues of counterterrorism, is different.

Professor McCauley — he can correct me if I'm wrong — if I understand him correctly, his concern is with public policy, with policymakers. My concern is not with that. My concern is with local enforcement, and I deal with local law enforcement. So that gives my practical how to make the research available — for one of us it's how to make the research useful to people making policy; for the other, it's how to make the research useful to people who are in the law enforcement community. You should keep those differences in mind when you hear the discussion between us.

DAVID MYERS: Thank you, Jim. That's very good. Professor McCauley, do you want to respond quickly?

CLARK McCAULEY: Yes. But let me start with a few thoughts about Professor Appleby's story. The first half of it I thought was really an argument against Charles Murray. But he's not here, so I am going to let that go. And then, whether or not there is a hell — you know, we're not so young, either one of us. I guess we'll get to find out before too long. So one of us is going to be surprised. [Laughter]

What he has to say about the difference between strong and weak religion does make sense to me. I guess what I think is what he called "weak" religion is practically all of the relation of religion to terrorist violence, and what he called "strong" religion, which is the kind of verbiage, the kinds of categories, the concerns with outrage and Millennialism and all the kinds of religious-imbued language, I think every group that gets to violence goes down that road to some extent. I mean you can look back and read, and even read reasonably, just here in the United States the kind of imagery and language that gets used when the United States gets involved in violence here or abroad.

I agree that those religious categories and those extremes, those black/white kinds of categorizations, are commonplace in violence — and it's not just terrorist violence. In state violence you can find those same kinds of terms and eschatology all in there, and they are in there — I'm agreeing with him now, I think both of my colleagues here — there's power in those. I agree there's power in those. Politicians wouldn't have recourse to those categories and that kind of talk if there weren't power in them, and Osama wouldn't have recourse to that kind of talk if there wasn't power in them.

But notice that I was trying to restrict my comments to the question, How do individuals get into terrorist groups? I didn't try to address — in fact, I tried to say I wasn't going to address — issues of public opinion and where this whole mass public sentiment comes from. I have a little bit about that in the book. I am interested in the effects of martyrdom, for instance, the political effects of martyrdom. I'm interested in hate, which has in my mind the idea of a bad essence, which I think is very similar to the idea of moral categories of impurity and contamination. So I think there is power in it. But all I want to say is when you get down to the people who are actually doing the dirty work, the people who are actually the perpetrators of violence, whether it's for the state or whether it's for some terrorist group, you don't find ideology is the big mover.

I've tried to tell you what I thought was the big mover, along with some group dynamics I didn't have time to talk with you about. But just to make it clear, I wasn't trying to talk about mass public sentiment or approval of or disapproval of violence at a mass public level. I was trying to talk about how individuals get into groups that do violence that we call terrorism.

DAVID MYERS: Thank you, Clark. Just briefly, Scott, do you want to reply as well? And then we'll move on to the questions.

SCOTT APPLEBY: Four quick points, thirty seconds each. My presentation was not so much to hope that you all believe in hell. I was not trying to shill for hell. However, I think many of us, and certainly those who lost loved ones on 9/11, have already experienced hell. And there are many people in the world today who know what hell means. The point about hell is, whether or not there is a fiery torment place somewhere, etc. — the point is there is a depth dimension to the human person that can have agony that goes beyond the mundane and joy and redemptive suffering, that depth dimension. In this culture, we are

still struggling for language today to captivate that, to capture it, to respond to it. We have many ways of doing it. And so the question of hell is also a question about how do we talk about the transcendent, how do we talk about these depth dimensions, how do we talk about that beyond the mundane? The religious extremists have that down cold — not the way we would approve.

I disagree with the notion that ideology — and I wouldn't call it ideology; I call it belief — is not to suggest — I would say Professor McCauley, in his first slide, where he put the various motivations for people to join movements, and said jihadists only have a couple of them —

CLARK McCAULEY: No, no, all of them. They use all of them.

SCOTT APPLEBY: Okay. My point is that in these movements — I'm talking about motivations and means of being mobilized — in these movements that we would call strong or weak religion — let me clarify that. Yes, of course, both of those kinds of religious extremists use this language, use these concepts and symbols.

What we are calling strong religion is when the religious element is a deep motivational element, when the fight is for religion. Al Qaeda, is it fighting for territory and oil resources? Sure. And some members of the movement are motivated by all kinds of things. But the core, the true believers, actually believe in these doctrines. This is their sensibility and that spurs them — in a way that the Serbian Orthodox who were recruited by Milosevic and used the same kind of language are not motivated into the war by some religion claim. Catholics were not fighting Protestants in Northern Ireland so there would be more Masses. They were using religion and transcendent language in a territorial and political dispute. Al Qaeda is using political and territorial elements, but it is really about something quite different. That's where Professor Jones's language I think was appropriate.

So when I said "both wrong," I'm teasing of course. There are elements of truth in both of these. It depends on the movement. It depends on how religion is used or employed within those movements. Religion has the capacity to provoke both destruction, forgiveness, and reconciliation, because it's an awesome numinous power that goes beyond language and it is experienced as such. So does it evoke tremendous acts of forgiveness and reconciliation? Indeed it does. Does it also evoke death and destruction? It does. Deuteronomy says, "I set before you life and death." That's the experience of the sacred, "I set before you life and death." And then the interpreter comes in and says, "Choose life." But that's an interpretation that has to be made by the religious leader.

Those are the dynamics of religion. It's not that there are not nationalism and ethnicity and other considerations in these movements — indeed there are — but what we have to do is tease out those movements and individuals and nation-states in which religious motivations and such are more at the core, because that does make a difference in analyzing and interpreting them.

DAVID MYERS: Thank you both.

CELIA FISHER: I think we don't really have time for the questions, except, having read all the questions, I think that this dialogue has addressed many of them. Also, as you know, in our final panel we are going to have everybody up here and we will be looking at those questions again. Thank you very much. Now we've got five minutes. I'll make it seven, but if I say five it'll probably be ten. So everybody go out, do their thing, or stay where you are, and we'll start the other panel. This has been absolutely fabulous. Thank you so much. [Break: 10:38 a.m.]