

THE KNOW SERIES

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How of the Christian Experience

LESSON # 29

“ISN’T CHRISTIANITY AND RELIGION RESPONSIBLE FOR MOST WARS?”



OBJECTIVE: People have somehow been lead to believe, and will often be heard saying, that most, or at least many of the wars in the world are a result of religion. The conclusion then is that religion leads to evil, or even worse is evil. Is this claim true? Let’s examine it this week!

No!

Contrary to popular belief and a charge that is leveled against Christianity, Most wars are not religious wars. Sam Harris, in his book *The End of Faith* says that faith and religion are “the most prolific source of violence in our history.” Richard Dawkins has put it this way: “Religion causes war by generating certainty”. They are both plain, flat out, wrong!

(I) SIN IS THE CAUSE OF WARS

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man” (Mark 7:21–23).

“What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel” (James 4:1–2).

Sin is the cause of all wars.

(II) HISTORY AND THE FACTS BEAR OUT THAT RELIGION IS NOT THE CAUSE MOST WARS

On the contrary, only a small percentage of wars have a religious context, and Islam accounts for the largest number of those.



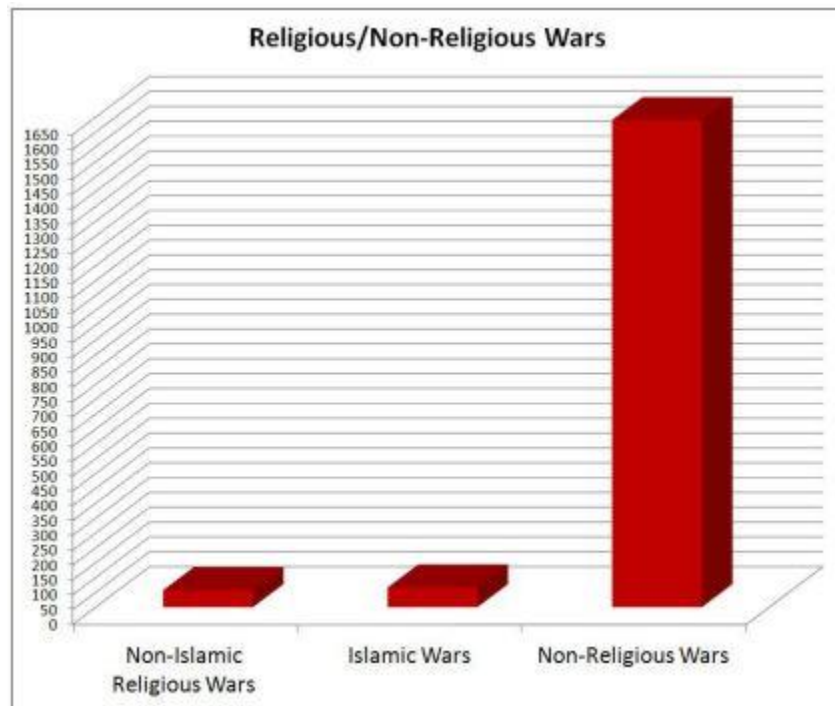
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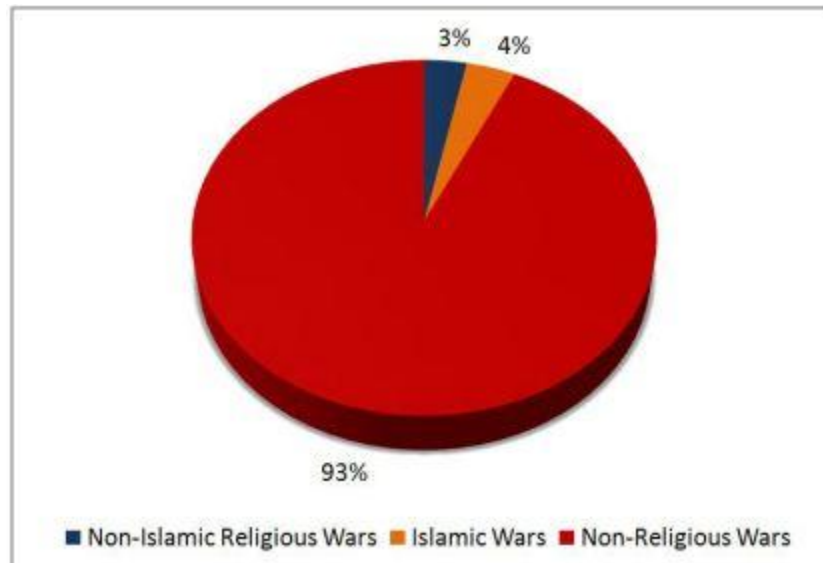
Robin Schumacher and Matt Slick have compiled some interesting statistics about wars and their origin.

“An interesting source of truth on the matter is Philip and Axelrod’s three-volume *Encyclopedia of Wars*, which chronicles some 1,763 wars that have been waged over the course of human history. Of those wars, the authors categorize 123 as being religious in nature, which is an astonishingly low 6.98% of all wars. However, when one subtracts out those waged in the name of Islam (66), the percentage is cut by more than half to 3.23%.”



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That means that all faiths combined – minus Islam – have caused less than 4% of all of humanity’s wars and violent conflicts. Further, they played no motivating role in the major wars that have resulted in the most loss of life.

(III) NON-RELIGIOUS, ATHEISTIC AND COMMUNIST DICTATORS HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR UNTOLD OF MILLIONS OF DEATHS

A) R. J. Rummel’s work *Lethal Politics and Death by Government* gives these figures of deaths by non-religious dictators:

Joseph Stalin - 42,672,000 (Soviet Union 1920s – 1950s)

Mao Zedong - 37,828,000 (China 1900 – 1970s)

Adolf Hitler - 20,946,000 (Germany 1934 – 1944)

Chiang Kai-shek - 10,214,000 (China 1930s- 1970s)

Vladimir Lenin - 4,017,000 (Russia 1870s – 1930s)

Hideki Tojo - 3,990,000 (Japan 1880s – 1940s)

Pol Pot - 2,397,000 (Cambodia 1930s – 1990s)



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Rummel says: “Almost 170 million men, women and children have been shot, beaten, tortured, knifed, burned, starved, frozen, crushed or worked to death; buried alive, drowned, hung, bombed or killed in any other of a myriad of ways governments have inflicted death on unarmed, helpless citizens and foreigners. The dead could conceivably be nearly 360 million people. It is though our species has been devastated by a modern Black Plague. And indeed it has, but a plague of Power, not germs.”⁴

(IV) TOM PRICE OF OXFORD CENTER for CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS RESPONDS

A) What could a Christian say in response to this kind of challenge?

- 1) It's too simple to say that religion causes war and violence
- 2) Sometimes it's pretty clear that corrupt establishments or organizations use religion to justify crooked agendas.
- 3) The imperialistic bloodlusts of the crusades were not so much a product of the Christian invaders bible, but rather their own agendas.
- 4) Much of the conflict and war in the 20th century was the result of atheist ideologues. Religion gets the blame but history tells us quite a different story. The critic of religion needs to be able to offer an explanation for why the greatest butchers of the last 100 years turned to atheism and secularism for their justifications. Hitler leaned on the work of atheist philosopher Frederick Nietzsche and Stalin leaned on Karl Marx for support.

(V) THE BIBLE ADVOCATES PEACE

A) Matthew 5:9

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

B) Psalm 29:11 The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.

C) Psalm 34:14 Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.



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D) Psalm 37:37 Consider the blameless, observe the upright; a future awaits those who seek peace.

E) Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

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