

Dealing with Absolutes

Religion, the Operational Environment, and the Art of Design



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Joshua conquered the whole land. He defeated the kings of the hill country, the eastern slopes, and the western foothills, as well as those of the dry country to the south. He spared no one; everyone was put to death. This was what the Lord God had commanded.¹

—Joshua 10:40

When the sacred months are over, slay the idolaters wherever you find them. Arrest them, besiege them, and lie in ambush everywhere for them. If they repent and take to prayer and render the alms levy, allow them to go their way. God is forgiving and merciful.²

—Koran, Sura 9:5

MY DISCUSSION HERE examines the effects of religion on the operational environment and how planners and commanders may use the concept of Design to gain a deeper situational understanding of the role religion plays in motivating and justifying actions in this environment.

Design and Ideological Mobilizations

Recently, the U.S. Army has recognized the need for a broader understanding of the complex environments in which it operates. Consequently, the Army is institutionalizing a more holistic approach that seeks to understand situations in greater breadth and depth with an aim to find deeper and more durable solutions to complex problems. This process, known as Design, seeks to understand by “framing” a given situation within a context. When the situation changes, planners will “reframe” a perspective against a more relevant context. Practitioners of Design include not only traditional military, political, and environmental factors in their analysis and synthesis, but also broader areas of human endeavor such as history, culture, society, and religion.³

The method of Design is useful to strategic planners only if it facilitates a more accurate understanding of reality and therefore fosters helpful modifications to operational plans. Fully understanding the role of religion

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PHOTO: The Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa. Afonso X, Cantigas de Santa Maria. (c. 1260-1270). T.1.1 fol. 92, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional.

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in a given situation or event goes beyond simple *rational* understanding. It includes accepting and apprehending other modes of human perception, exchange, and discourse. These modes include emotional empathy and consideration of other opinions—even those opinions that lie outside the parameters of traditional Western logic, judgments, perceptions, and intuitions.

Planners tend to approach their work in a rigorously logical, methodical, process-oriented manner best exemplified by formalized military staff processes such as the Joint Operations Planning Process and the U.S. Army's Military Decision Making Process. A process approach can be very good for straightforward (linear) actions such as force-on-force operations. However, such process approaches are ill-suited to community-centered action in which force has second- and third-order (or greater) effects which often undermine the desired outcomes. If planners seek to understand a human system in which religion plays a significant part, they must remember the inherent complexity of the individual religious experience and its many social dimensions. Specifically, planners and thinkers involved in the Design process should bear in mind the following guidelines when assessing the potential impact of religion on the strategic or operational environment.

Religion as a Presence in the Operational Environment

Although many religions have been used to further political, social, or spiritual aims, I focus on the three monotheistic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These religions tend to be dogmatically exclusivist. They classify people into believers and non-believers. This bifurcated worldview tends to create an “us versus them” mentality, which can foster conditions to justify the use of force against those who have not accepted “the truth.”

Judaism originated as the religion of an ethnic group—the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Throughout its history, Judaism has retained its exclusivist character. It has not been especially keen to convert others. Rather, it has concentrated on preserving the purity of its beliefs and the integrity of its traditions against an often hostile environment.⁴ In contrast, Christianity has been a missionary religion

from the beginning.⁵ An outgrowth of Judaism, it developed by converting others to its views. First, it drew converts from the Jewish community, but soon it welcomed outsiders. Similarly, Islam has been a missionary religion from its beginning.⁶ It grew by converting pagans and Christians to its views. The missionary aspect of Christianity and Islam is important because it demonstrates a desire to convert the unenlightened “other” to the “one true faith.” The believer does not come to accept “the other” as he is but seeks to change him for his own good. If “the other” cannot be converted, followers of missionary religions have historically demonstrated a tendency to dismiss, reject, or even attempt to destroy this “other.”

Tenacity of Religion

The tenets of religion are not amenable to rational proof. Significantly, they are also not amenable to rational disproof. Believers hold religious axioms as “true” through the process of “belief”—that is, the psychological act of accepting that certain assumed “facts” correspond to truth based on a “leap of faith.” This process is neither rational nor irrational. It may be described as supra-rational because its *object-knowledge* of the absolute—and its *means-perception* through faith—lie beyond the scope of reason.⁷ Reason, however, has a role in religion. Once “truths” are accepted, believers use inductive and deductive logic to speculate, expand, clarify, comment, question, and affirm these beliefs. Unfortunately, reason may also serve to justify violence and war in the name of religious faith.

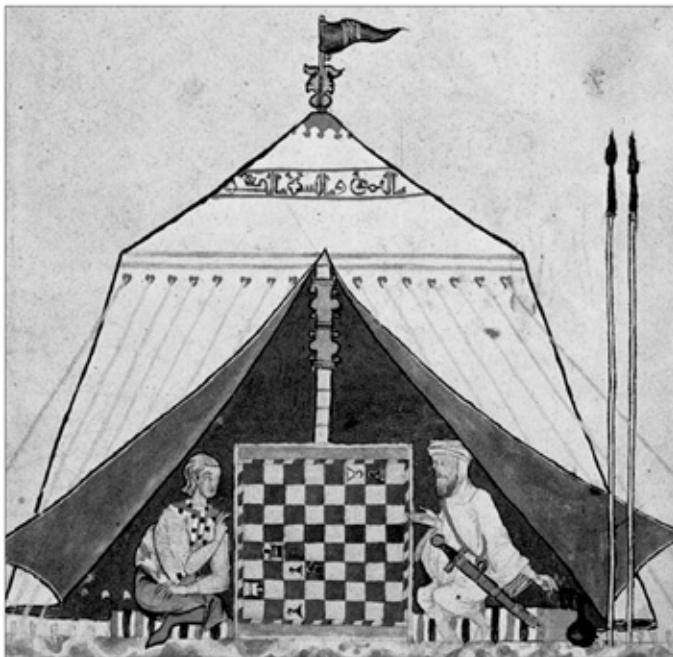
Some anthropologists propose a religious component to human nature. They suggest that an internal mechanism inherent in human nature may compel us to seek explanations for paradoxes and human limitations to cope with despair about mortality. This mechanism propels us to seek answers to ultimate questions.⁸ A purely supernatural explanation of these transcendental desires creates values and a worldview that are

Some anthropologists propose a religious component to human nature.

consistent with specific religious beliefs. Such an idea was expressed famously by Augustine of Hippo: “You have made us for yourself; and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”⁹ Religion is a nearly universal phenomenon. This means that it will likely be a factor, sometimes a very significant one, in situations involving national security.

In contemporary American society, religious faith is mostly a personal matter. Americans find it difficult to conceive of religion as a motivating factor in warfare. However, when considered in the long historical perspective, the social impact of religious belief has been enormous. If we examine the patterns of world history, clearly human societies have been deeply shaped by religious belief. The present state of affairs that has existed in “the West” since the 19th century, where secularism and an attitude of indifference or hostility to religious belief prevail, is atypical of human history as a whole.

Even Marxism with its assessment of traditional religion as “the opium of the masses” failed to extinguish the human need for belief. Instead, it inaugurated a period where millions practiced a kind of materialistic and godless ideology, a “religion” characterized by its own dogmas,



Illuminated miniature from *The Book of Chess, Dice and Board Games* commissioned by Alfonso X el Sabio of Castile. 13th Century. Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

orthodoxies, heresies, and saints. Capitalism, with its emphasis on material consumption and lack of any ideal other than the pursuit of profit and wealth, offers even less religious satisfaction than socialism. Although some Western intellectuals have famously declared that “God is dead” and resolved to live with the resulting angst, this has not been a generally accepted reaction to the ubiquitous religious impulse.¹⁰

Significance of Religion

Religion is primarily significant because it offers answers to the primordial questions of human existence. However, beyond this eschatological and metaphysical aim, religion provides moral and ethical norms for both individual and collective life. In addition, many religions incorporate social norms into their practices which are invested with considerable moral authority. This aspect of religion is significant from the collective perspective. Many would argue that the position of women in Islam, and to a lesser degree in Judaism and Christianity, stems from cultural norms that have gained quasi-religious force. However, also important is that others consider these norms as integral parts of their system of belief.

In addition to theological tenets, most religions, and certainly the three great monotheistic religions, have either developed or adopted a particular worldview. This worldview entails a cosmology, an anthropology, and one or more models for social life. These form the context within which new ideas are accepted, rejected, or modified by the religious tradition. Discoveries in the physical and biological sciences in particular have proved to be a challenge to religion because they have provided rational explanations for natural and human phenomena that do not depend on a religious worldview. The conflict between religiously based worldviews and science is greatest when the religious view involves a fundamentalist interpretation of scripture. An example is the continuing controversy between the scientific theory of evolution and some Christian groups’ theories of intelligent design.¹¹

Religion and War

Religion is generally regarded as a force for peace today. However, throughout history, it has served to justify war or even served as a weapon of war. How

is it, then, “mobilized” for war? Certain conditions must exist if religion is to be used as an effective weapon.

First, there must be a community of believers who are willing to take collective action based on their common belief. For example, during the Middle Ages, people identified themselves not by ethnicity but primarily by their religious affiliation—as Christians, Muslims, or Jews.¹² A similar situation exists today in the Balkans where peoples of the same ethnicity, who speak the same language, and share essentially one culture sharply distinguish themselves solely on the basis of religion. The same is true in other areas of the world such as Indonesia and parts of Africa. Although one of the commonly recognized virtues of Islam is that it does not discriminate on the basis of race or ethnicity, the orthodox Islamic worldview is based on religious discrimination between believer, non-believer, and “People of the Book.”¹³

Another necessary condition is that the group in question must perceive itself as oppressed and that religion offers an option for liberation. For example, a common theme expressed by the militant Muslim Brotherhood is that Muslims were colonized and oppressed by the West because they had not been faithful to Islamic practices. Thus, the solution to their plight is to return to the strict practices of Islam. God himself will then redress any perceived injustices.

Although the conditions discussed are necessary for the use of religion as a weapon, their existence is not sufficient; they do not guarantee that this will occur. They merely create the possibility. The actual use of religion as a weapon occurs as the result of a human decision or series of decisions, judgments that conditions or beliefs do not predetermine. Religion becomes a weapon of war when it is used as justification for armed violence. This use may be either explicitly intended by religious leaders or may be the interpretation given to certain phrases of scripture or the sayings of

religious leaders by others. In any case, religion becomes a weapon because it serves as a powerful motivation to violent action.

The two main tendencies that facilitate the use of religion as a weapon are fundamentalism and proselytism. Fundamentalism promotes a rigid frame of reference that accentuates the differences between believers and “the other.” It also promotes a literalist and inflexible mentality that genuinely believes that “truth” may be grasped and understood as an objective fact.¹⁴ Proselytism actively seeks to change “the other” through conversion. In some cases, the zeal for converting the other may result in offering the vanquished alternatives of either conversion or death. These two forces have been at work for centuries in the complex relationships between the Islamic and Christian worlds.

After the “Age of Enlightenment” in the West, the concept of “secular democracy” largely replaced that of “Christendom.” Thus, today the conflict between religions has been transformed into one of democracy versus Islamic theocracy. In the West, aggressive *proselytism of secular democracy* is not only part of national agendas, but also that of many nongovernmental organizations promoting “human rights.” Rather than being viewed as a religiously neutral stance, the active promotion of democracy and abstract “human rights”—a secular mentality separate from religiously based ethics—is something many Muslim societies view as alien ideology that competes directly with Islamic moral and religious values. Democracy and the promotion of secular human rights have become for many Muslims an anti-religious “other.”

Religions that maintain certain writings as uniquely inspired by God are preoccupied with interpreting these texts. By definition, their scriptures have eternal validity and authority. Interpretation is amenable to reason, and throughout history scholars of the three great monotheistic faiths have made their names based on specific

Democracy and the promotion of secular human rights have become for many Muslims an anti-religious “other.”

interpretations of their religious traditions. Closely tied to scriptural interpretation are cultural developments and the history of ideas. One school of interpretation posits that scripture is inspired by God. In extreme cases the sacred text is considered as the very utterance of God.¹⁵ The other main school of interpretation believes that, although scripture may be divinely inspired, it is neither final nor infallible but subject to interpretation, development, and contextualization.¹⁶

Both of these positions are hermeneutical or interpretational frameworks. They both have internal logic, so that their acceptance is a matter of belief. As such, they are not subject to rational confirmation or denial. However, once either position is accepted as a mental framework, reason and logic may be applied to its interpretation and commentary. The extreme school of thought is capable of making religious interpretation susceptible to “weaponization.”

Fundamentalism and War

The first of these positions, that scripture is immutable, is commonly known as a *fundamentalist* position because it bases its views on what it regards as the fundamental, unvarnished version of the sacred texts. Fundamentalist interpretations exist in all three monotheistic religions. The texts of the Jewish scripture, particularly the Torah and the Psalms, as well as Islam’s Koran contain many passages where God prescribes violence against the unfaithful. Many of the Psalms explicitly invoke God’s wrath upon enemies.¹⁷ Others use bellicose imagery.¹⁸ Advocates of a fundamentalist interpretation of scripture accept these texts at face value and also place themselves at odds against all other competing positions, both within their own faith and with outsiders.

Advocates of fundamentalism deny the possibility of salvation to those who do not accept their interpretation of their faith; at worst they may advocate violence against “the other.” Fundamentalism has provided an intellectual justification for unjust wars based on religion. For example, the Salafist and Wahhabi schools of Koranic interpretation have been identified as ideological sources of the modern call for “external” jihad and the restoration of an Islamic theocracy. Fundamentalist Judaism calls for the

restoration of the Temple of Jerusalem and of the territory of “Greater Israel” in the manner of a theocracy. These two positions are logically irreconcilable, and if unchecked, would make any compromise needed for peacemaking in Palestine impossible. Unfortunately, advocates of these two positions are currently active and influential in the Middle East.

Christianity also has fundamentalist strains, though the Christian texts themselves—the Gospels and the books of the New Testament—are remarkably free from worldly violent pronouncements. Indeed, Jesus himself advocated an extreme form of pacifism and insisted that “my Kingdom is not of this world.”¹⁹ However, most Christians accept the Jewish scriptures, which they call the “Old Testament,” as a valid—although incomplete—revelation from God. Christians have also used these texts to justify violence in the name of religion.²⁰ Despite this tendency, Christianity was in its origin and, for nearly four hundred years, a pacifist religion that abhorred all violence as sinful. Its followers evinced a preference for martyrdom over the most basic right of individual or collective self-defense.

Only with the advent of official status as the religion of the Roman Empire were Christians forced to wrestle with the concept that collective violence in the form of war, may, in some instances, be morally justified. The classic proponent of the idea of the “just war” was Augustine of Hippo.²¹ Thomas Aquinas later developed this idea and, to this day, his work represents the leading Christian justification for war.²² His idea of the just war also serves as the basis for the modern Western humanitarian theory of war. Despite very sharp theoretical limitations on both the justification for war and on moral behavior in war (*jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*), Christian practice did not follow theory. Christians waged vicious and genocidal wars against enemies of a different religion, unorthodox Christians, and even between Christians of the same persuasion. Militant Christianity bloodied the course of human history in the West.

Religious Intolerance

Historically, religious intolerance has been much more prevalent than religious tolerance. However, the majority religion has not always

persecuted or killed the minority. Minority individuals and groups have been left more or less on their own so long as they have remained small and inconspicuous in number. In some cases, members of these groups with rare and useful skills have been accepted and even promoted within the society of the majority so long as they provided necessary services and conformed to the prevailing social mores—including the dominant *religious-social* complexes.²³ Although most Western democracies take the concept of religious tolerance as an article of faith, that posture is a relative newcomer on the world scene (when observed against the canvas of human history). Most societies have insisted on the practice of their majority religion, the toleration of other religions being limited to isolated cases and a few outsiders.²⁴

In Hellenistic times, including—perhaps surprisingly—during the Roman Empire, many religions were tolerated, though the civil authorities normally imposed the official cult of the emperor or the king on all citizens with very few exceptions granted. Indeed, refusal to worship the sovereign

became a major cause for martyrdom among Hellenistic Jews and Christians.

The modern Western concept of freedom of conscience is a product of the Enlightenment and flourished only after the Peace of Westphalia put an end to the terrible wars of religion in Europe.²⁵ Freedom of conscience is closely associated with the gradual secularization and democratization of western Europe and America. Its history reveals the rarity and youth of the concepts involved, and it explains why it is not as generally accepted outside the West as Westerners imagine or wish.

Despite its newness, freedom of conscience and religious toleration have been embraced by much of the international community under the leadership of the West and the world media. These ideals are certainly contrary to ideas of religious *absolutism*. We have to recognize this fact and understand that theocracy is a perfectly valid and rational alternative to those who accept a worldview that places enormous importance on a particular religious system. A society ordered around absolutist religious values and cultural norms is not amenable to rapid advances in



Photo courtesy of the author

The author greets Muslim villagers in Afghanistan.

freedom of thought and speech. However, this cultural intractability to Western values does not justify the use of religion as a weapon of war.

As may be seen from our survey of some of the religious attitudes that exist within the monotheistic traditions, a broad cultural understanding of religion and its various social contexts may provide a lens through which the presence of religion and its effects on a given operational environment may be assessed. To accomplish this I offer the following recommendations:

Accept the reality of religion. Religion is neither rational nor irrational; it is supra-rational—beyond the reach of strict reason. However, once the basic tenets of a given religion are accepted, it is usually amenable to rational understanding, and its precepts may be discussed rationally.

Religion will continue to have a profound influence on individual and collective actions. Thus, religion must be recognized as significant even though it is not reducible to rational explanation alone. As Rudolf Otto expressed it, “the object of *religious* awe or reverence—the *tremendum* and *augustum*, cannot be fully determined conceptually: it is non-rational, as is the beauty of a musical composition, which no less eludes complete conceptual analysis.”²⁶ The acceptance that religion has its own specific category separate from logical reason is very important to the understanding of any situation in which religion plays a part. Such acceptance may be difficult to those accustomed to deal in tangible political realities, especially those guided by modern notions of *realpolitik*. However, the reality and importance of the religious factor in politics was acknowledged by no less a political analyst than Machiavelli.²⁷

All religions must be granted validity, if not from the planner’s philosophical point of view, at least from an empirical perspective. For religious persons, granting validity to another religion—the religion of “the other”—may be a difficult emotional and intellectual task. For nonbelievers, or those for

whom religion is not a significant part of their psychic or emotional makeup, recognizing the reality and significance of religious belief may be even more challenging. A useful reminder for planners is this: Even if you do not accept the tenets of a particular religion, they are real to believers. This means that a specific religion *is* a reality, even if not one’s own.

Recognize that religion deals with absolutes. This is its most intractable quality. The fact that many religions affirm knowledge of absolute truth makes them much more intractable to interactions that require moderation and compromise outside their belief systems. Diplomacy requires that those who hold conflicting positions meet somewhere in a middle ground. This requires flexibility and *willingness to compromise*. However, many religious figures are revered precisely because of their zealotry and their *uncompromising* belief. Indeed, many who are regarded as saints by their followers are viewed as fanatics by their opponents. We have to recognize to what extent participants in a given interaction may be willing to compromise. Otherwise, much time and effort may be wasted in a fruitless pursuit of a goal not shared by the parties involved.

Understand that religion has both personal and social aspects. Religion is a complex concept. It has both personal and social aspects. The personal aspects may be significant when they mold the thoughts and actions of key players in political or cultural spheres. These individuals may exercise great influence over their followers. The social aspects are even more significant because they may be influential in motivating collective actions. In many places and situations, religious identity is often the most significant source of collective identity.

Understand that religion consists of theological beliefs and cultural norms. The word *religion* encompasses a wide range of meanings and refers to more than theological concepts. It also provides norms for personal and collective conduct, a system of ostensibly “moral” values. Many religions include ancillary norms that dictate behavior, dress, diet, and the like. Such aesthetic norms can carry the force of moral law in a fundamentalist, theocratic society. Some religious interpretations apply the same rigor of enforcement

...a specific religion is a reality, even if not one’s own.

to these norms as they do to deeper theological tenets. Other interpretations within the same religious body may recognize these aesthetic aspects as traditional cultural accretions that do not have the same force as theological beliefs.

Since most people are not overly reflective in their day-to-day interactions and use of language, the complex admixture of cultural-religious traditions are not always adequately distinguished, and the richness and ambiguities inherent in language only add to the problem. When religiously inspired norms combine with cultural attitudes or mores, the result may be described as a religious-cultural complex.

One can see an example of the impact of cultural customs in the various practices on the veiling of women. The Koran mandates that Muslim women must observe modesty in dress.²⁸ This mandate has been interpreted variously in the Islamic world to mean the covering of the entire body, as in the Pashtun *burqa*, or in the simple head scarf, as worn by many Indonesian women.

Realize that religion exists in context with other ideologies. There was a time in the West when politics and religion were one. In much of today's world, this identification remains important. Even in the West, religion does not normally exist in isolation from other modes of thought, political or religious. A religion normally exists in a context that often shapes and influences what that religious tradition emphasizes. When a religion, or a sect within the religion, is in the minority, it may take a defensive and sometimes militant attitude toward the majority faith. Conversely, members of a majority religion may decide to tyrannize all opposition and persecute other minority faiths. This tyranny of the majority also occurs in confrontations between Western modes of thought, such as those stemming from religious traditions, Anglo-Saxon ethnocentrism, democratic idealism, secular humanism, and forms of political totalitarianism (such as Marxism).

Use religion as a tool. As is true of all cultural constructs, religion may serve purposes other than its avowed spiritual function. Thus, it may take on political, cultural, social, and other roles. Leaders of all types recognize the power of religion and leverage it to their own purposes.

Ethical dimension. The use of religion as a weapon, and the defense against the use of religion as a weapon, both present challenging ethical implications. Just as the use of medical or psychological knowledge to leverage personal or group advantage is fraught with ethical perils, so does the use of religion. As an example, can a commander use his chaplain to try to influence local religious leaders based on the chaplain's religious status? Another example might be to consider what may be some of the advantages as well as potential pitfalls of using religious precepts as the basis for civic or military action? These and other questions have no clear-cut answer. They are subject to moral and ethical interpretation. In a larger context, these questions relate to the age-old ethical dilemma of whether or not the end justifies the means and, if so, under what circumstances?

Collective Human Interaction

In summary, religion has been and continues to be a significant factor in individual and collective human interaction. Despite Western attempts to "separate God from Caesar," religion refuses to be relegated to a backwater in world affairs. Failing to deal with its presence, influence, and effects is tantamount to denying reality. Ironically, religious beliefs—the most abstruse and transcendental constructions of the human mind—have practical and at times deadly consequences for individuals and communities. For the policymaker, the military officer, and the practitioner of Design, ignoring religion and all its complex effects is simply not an option. **MR**

NOTES

1. Joshua 6:16-17, as given in *Bible: Today's English Version with Deuterocanonicals and Apocrypha* (New York: American Bible Society, 1993), 187.

2. *The Koran*. Translated by N.J. Dawood, 6th rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1997), 146.

3. "Design enables commanders to conceptualize the operational environment. They can visualize the environment in terms of not only enemy, adversary, friendly, and neutral systems across the spectrum of conflict, but also in the context of the political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment and time (PMESII-PT, FM 3-0)." Jack Kem, *Design: Tools of the Trade* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2009), 12.

4. "In exile, the Jews felt the harshness of the surrounding world; this sense of presence helped them to feel enveloped by a benevolent God." Karen Armstrong,

A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam (New York: Ballantine, 1993), 76.

5. "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age." Matt. 28:19-20.

6. "Therefore call men to the true Faith, and follow the straight path as you are commanded." *The Koran*, 340.

7. Rudolf Otto has identified the human capability to apprehend supra-rational objects as the feeling for the "numinous," and the object of this apprehension the *mysterium tremendum*—the awesome mystery, which leads to the idea of God as the "wholly other." Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923), 25-30.

8. "Indeed, there is a case for arguing that *Homo sapiens* is also *Homo religiosus*. Men and women started to worship gods as soon as they became recognizably human; they created religions at the same time as they created works of art." Armstrong, xix.

9. St. Augustine of Hippo, *The Confessions*. Translated by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3.

10. The French revolutionary government inaugurated the reign of "Reason" and the end of official Christianity in the new Republic. Later Nietzsche declared the death of God and the dawning of the era of the Superman. Marx called religion the "opium of the masses." In the 20th century, scientific positivism and communism were opposed to religion; capitalism ignored or bypassed religious concerns. Philosophers such as Sartre have attempted to construct a morality that does not depend on God. Despite all these trends, religion has survived and promises to be a powerful force into the 21st century. For a concise treatment of the confrontation of religion and modernity, see Armstrong, op. cit., 365-371.

11. "Darwin's name has become a byword for atheism in fundamentalist circles, yet the *Origin* was not intended as an attack upon religion, but was a sober, careful exposition of a scientific theory." Armstrong, 94.

12. "Before calling themselves Leonese, Castilian, or Aragonese, those who fought against the Moors and who lived intermixed with the Jews called themselves Christians." Américo Castro, *La realidad histórica de España* (Mexico City, Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1982), 25.

13. "He [God] has revealed to you the Book with the Truth, confirming the scriptures which preceded it; for He has already revealed the Torah and the Gospel for the guidance of mankind, and the distinction of right from wrong." *The Koran*, 42-43. "The only true faith in God is Islam." *The Koran*, 44. "Had the People of the Book accepted the Faith, it would surely have been better for them. Some are true believers, but most of them are evil-doers. . . . Yet they are not all alike. There are among the People of the Book some upright men who all night long recite the revelations of God and worship Him; who believe in God and the Last Day; who enjoin justice and forbid evil and vie with each other in good works. These are righteous men: whatever good they do, its reward shall not be denied them. God well knows the righteous." *The Koran*, 52.

14. "Jewish and Muslim fundamentalists had turned their *mythoi* into pragmatic *logoi* designed to achieve a practical result. Protestant fundamentalists had perverted myth in a different way. They had turned the Christian myths into scientific facts, and had created a hybrid that was neither good science nor good religion. This had run counter to the whole tradition of spirituality and had involved great strain, since religious truth is not rational in nature and cannot be proved scientifically." Armstrong, 355.

15. In the Koran, God speaks thus: "We have revealed the Koran in the Arabic tongue that you may understand its meaning. It is a transcript of the eternal book in Our keeping, sublime, and full of wisdom." *The Koran*, 343. "Those that suppress any part of the Scriptures which God has revealed in order to gain some paltry end shall swallow nothing but fire into their bellies." *The Koran*, 27.

16. "Since the late eighteenth century, German scholars had applied the new techniques of literary analysis, archaeology, and comparative linguistics to the Bible, subjecting it to a scientifically empirical methodology." Armstrong, 91.

17. "What my enemies say can never be trusted: they only want to destroy. Their words are flattering and smooth, but full of deadly deceit. Condemn and punish them, O God; may their own plots cause their ruin. Drive them out of your presence because of their many sins and their rebellion against you." Ps. 5:9-10.

18. "Then the Lord thundered from the sky; and the voice of the Most High was heard. He shot his arrows and scattered his enemies; with flashes of lightning he sent them running." Ps. 18:13-14.

19. "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your friends, hate your enemies. But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become the children of your Father in heaven." Matt. 5:43-45.

20. This is true to this day, as shown by Preston Jones and Cody Beckman in *God's Hiddenness in Combat: Toward Christian Reflection on Battle* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2009).

21. Even when acknowledging the social necessity of the "just war," Augustine laments its violence. "For it is the wrongdoing of the opposing party which compels the wise man to wage just wars; and this wrongdoing, even though it gave rise to no war, would still be matter of grief to man because it is man's wrongdoing. Let everyone, then, who thinks with pain on these great evils, so horrible, so ruthless, acknowledge that this is misery." Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God against the Pagans*, 617-18.

22. "Christians can use violence when they have a duty to do so; in other words, when they are soldiers (or policemen). Such Christians respond to violence from enemies that threaten peace and order—not passively, but with force. . . . Christians fight in the army and pray for victory because they are formed by the perfect virtue of charity. Charity is the ruling virtue in the moral life." Alexander F.C. Webster and Darrell Cole, *The Virtue of War: Reclaiming the Classic Christian Traditions East and West* (Salisbury, MS: Regina Orthodox Press, 2004), 150.

23. Here I have adapted the concepts of a "complex" and the constellation of such complexes used in Jungian psychology and applied them to a larger social context. "Some collective complexes, circling around issues of sex, religion, money, or power affect almost everyone to some degree and can lead to fierce discharges of energy, even to war, if provoked severely enough." Murray Stein, *Jung's Map of the Soul: An Introduction* (Chicago: Open Court, 1998), 76.

24. ". . . up until the 1680s, much of Europe, while religiously diverse, nonetheless had no real freedom of religion in the sense that we understand it today. Being the wrong kind of Christian could still lead to one's death, and sometimes a horribly violent one—countless thousands were burned alive at stakes, and Anabaptists, because they believed in baptism by immersion, were often killed by drowning, in a macabre and deliberately ironic method of execution." Christopher Catherwood, *Making War in the Name of God* (New York: Citadel Press, 2007), 119.

25. Catherwood, 127.

26. ". . . expositions of religious truth in language inevitably tend to stress the 'rational' attributes of God. But though the above mistake is thus a natural one enough, it is none the less seriously misleading. For so far are these 'rational' attributes from exhausting the idea of deity, that they in fact imply a non-rational or supra-rational Subject of which they are predicates." Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 2.

27. In his celebrated treatise on political leadership, *The Prince*, Machiavelli acknowledges the influence of religiously derived ethical ideas, even as he challenges their usefulness in politics. He also devotes an entire section to what he terms "ecclesiastical principalities." See Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, (London: Penguin, 1981), 73-76.

28. "Enjoin believing women to turn their eyes away from temptation and to preserve their chastity; not to display their adornments (except such as are normally revealed); to draw their veils over their bosoms and not to display their finery except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their step-sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women-servants, and their slave-girls; male attendants lacking in natural vigour, and children who have no carnal knowledge of women. And let them not stamp their feet when walking so as to reveal their hidden trinkets." *The Koran*, 248.