

Week Eleven Handout

“God & Caesar – The Ancient Modern Clash”

Dr. James C. (Jim) Wallace



International Relations and Religion:

The Emergence of a New Challenge since 9/11

Since 9/11, the world has “rediscovered” the importance of religion in resolving conflicts in world affairs.

What is the role of “the mighty and the almighty” on the international stage? Are we headed for a “clash of civilizations?” Does religion have answers for some of the current conundrums and conflicts in international relations? We will look at the emergence of religion in international affairs since 9/11 and some of the difficult issues it has to confront – peace in the Middle East, Western-Islamic relations, the rise of religion in China, and American foreign policy in Africa.

Discussion Question from Last Week

After viewing the various arrangements of religion-state relations in the different nation-states, are you satisfied with the current way religion is dealt with in the United States or do you wish it was different? If so, how would you change it?

Opening Question for This Week

From the perspective of religion-state relations, do you think 9/11 changed the perception of the importance of religion in international affairs? If so, is the ‘change’ a matter of perception only or a matter of actual real-time activities?

Introduction

Ephesians 6:10-13 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

Matthew 24: 4-8 *Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.*

Isaiah 9:6-7 *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. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.*

"Clash of Civilizations"

Samuel P. Huntington, Director of Harvard University's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs

- ❖ Early 90s debates over post-Cold War configuration of the world
- ❖ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992)
- ❖ "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs* journal (Summer 1993)
- ❖ Debate over what will control and "order" the world with the fall of Communism
- ❖ Book: *"The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order"* (1996)
- ❖ Hotly debated issue is the role of ideology (including religion) in shaping the world order

The Impact of 9/11

Former U.S. Secretary of State and Distinguished Professor of Diplomacy at Georgetown University, Madeline Albright, in her book, *The Mighty and the Almighty* (2006), suggests that the status quo separation of religion from international relations has been significantly challenged by 9/11:

We were living, after all, in modern times. . . . Surely, I thought, these [religious] rivalries were echoes of earlier, less enlightened times, not a sign of the battles still to come.

Since the terror attacks of 9/11, I have come to realize that it may have been I who was stuck in an earlier time. Like many other foreign policy professionals, I have had to adjust the lens through which I view the world, comprehending something that seemed to be a new reality but that had actually been evident for some time.

Daniel Philpott, Associate Professor of Political Studies and Peace Studies at Notre Dame, in an article in *World Politics* in October 2002, echoes Albright's position that the status quo arrangement of Westphalia has been threatened by September 11, 2001:

The greatest assault on the United States since the end of the cold war, perhaps since its very founding, had little plausible origin in the dynamics of alliances and polarity, in the rise and fall of great powers, in any state's quest for security, or even in the actions of any state at all. For this reason, it eludes the emphases of realism, traditionally the dominant school in international relations scholarship. . . . Rather, those involved in crashing planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, were animated by a kind of conception, were organized around a kind of idea, and appraised the international system according to a kind of notion to which international relations scholars have paid relatively little attention: religion. . . .

On September 11 the [Westphalian] synthesis was shaken by the fitful rumblings of a RipVan Winkle awakening from long centuries of slumber, a figure whose identity is public religion—religion that is not privatized within the cocoon of the individual or the family but that dares to refashion secular politics and culture. Of all the fits and starts in the arousal of public religion over the past generation, the most radical and volatile is a political theology—radical Islamic revivalism, it can be called—that directly challenges the authority structure of the international system. This radical revivalism is the tradition behind al-Qaeda's attacks. The attacks and the

broader resurgence of public religion ought, then, to sound the alarm clock for international relations scholars, as a call to direct far more energy to understanding the impetuses behind movements across the globe that are reorienting purposes and policies, alignments and dilemmas.

Philpott confirms that the secularist bent still predominates in recent international relations scholarship – he conducted a survey of articles in four leading international relations journals over a period from 1980-99 which revealed that only “only six or so [articles] out of a total of sixteen hundred featured religion as an important influence.”

A close colleague of Huntington and a member of the Harvard faculty working group on Religion in Global Politics, **Professor Harvey Cox**, delivered an appeal at the inaugural Yale conference of the “Common Word” for a new story to replace the ‘clash’ narrative:

One of the things we need might be called a better story – a big story. Unfortunately, one of my colleagues, Professor Samuel Huntington, has produced an enormously influential story. It’s called the ‘clash of civilizations’ – very widely discussed, very widely believed, very widely acted upon. And there are, perhaps, millions of people in the world who still think that the big story today is the ‘clash of civilizations.’ That’s what they think [that] we’re going to be in this ‘clash of civilizations’ for decades and decades. That’s the big story.

I think it’s NOT the big story. I think it’s a diversion and it’s an easy excuse provided for some very destructive purposes – keeping hungry and needy people out of Europe who are looking for jobs to support their families. The ‘clash of civilizations’ thesis is very popular among right-wing, anti-immigrant groups in Europe. They love to have Professor Huntington come and speak to them and explain the ‘clash of civilizations.’ We need a better story. And I think our story is that Muslims and Christians, after years of antagonism, are taking the first steps to work together, to reconcile themselves to each other, insofar as possible, and to address some of the major threats to the entire human race.

On September 20, 2001, **U.S. President George Bush**, in an address to a Joint Session of the U.S. Congress, declared a “global war on terror.” However, other political leaders and pundits were more pointedly sectarian by declaring war against ‘radical Islamic extremism,’ ‘Islamic fundamentalism,’ ‘Islamic terrorism,’ and even ‘Islamofacism.’ Osama bin Laden personally stoked the fires of Muslim-Christian conflict when in a November 3, 2001 Al-Jazeera broadcast he declared, “This war is fundamentally religious.” He went on to suggest that the world was now divided East and West, “Muslims” versus “Crusaders” – a new bi-polar divide.

Some Americans agree with bin Laden and echo his radical view, albeit in reverse, like **Sam Harris** who stated in the *Washington Times*, “It is time we admitted that we are not at war with ‘terrorism.’ We are at war with Islam.” Harris, in his subsequent book, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason*, expands the scope of his argument that the current conflict is religious: “Western leaders who insist that our conflict is not with Islam are mistaken; but, as I argue throughout this book, we have a problem with Christianity and Judaism as well.”

Group Discussion Questions

1. Since 9/11 has the United States been "at war" against terror or against radical Islam? How do you view the current U.S. initiatives in this regard (Iraq, Afghanistan, and Homeland Security)?
2. Is the primary threat radical Islam or all forms of extremist, violent religious fundamentalism? Can you think of examples of radical, violent Christian fundamentalism?
3. Do you think extreme and violent reactions to world events and social changes are ever justified by the Bible? If so, what scripture verses do you use to support your point-of-view?

Bibliography

Akbar, M.J. *The Shade of Two Swords: Jihad and the conflict between Islam and Christianity*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Almond, Gabriel A. *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms Around the World*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Appleby, R. Scott. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*. Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

Armstrong, Karen. Foreword to *What's Right With Islam Is What's Right With America*, by Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004.

bin Laden, Osama. "Bin Laden Rails Against Crusaders And UN." *BBC News*, November 3, 2001. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/media_reports/1636782.stm (accessed August 7, 2008).

Bush, George W. "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People." *The White House*, September 20, 2001. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html> (accessed August 10, 2007).

Clinton, President William J. Introd. to *The Mighty and The Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs*, by Madeleine Albright. New York: Harper Perennial, 2006.

Harris, Sam. "Mired in a Religious War." *The Washington Times*, December 1, 2004. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2004/dec/01/20041201-090801-2582r/> (accessed July 30, 2008).

_____. *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2004.

Huntington, Samuel P. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22-49.

Inglehart, Ronald and Pippa Norris. "The True Clash of Civilizations." *Foreign Policy*, no. 135 (Mar/Apr 2003): 62-70.

- Juergensmeyer, Mark. *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
- Kepel, Gilles. *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Micklethwait, John. "In God's Name: A special report on religion and public life." *The Economist* (November 3, 2007): 3-22.
- Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart. *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Owens, Erik C. "Sovereignty after September 11: What Has Changed?" In *The Sacred and the Sovereign: Religion and International Politics*, ed. John D. Carlson and Erik C. Owens, 265-276. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2003.
- Philpott, Daniel. "The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations." *World Politics* 55, no. 1 (October 2002): 66-95.
- _____. "The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations." *World Politics*, no. 52 (January 2000): 2006-245.
- Thomas, Scott M. *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.