

Equalities Tutor Time: Islamophobia – Religions and Bad Reputations

Produced for Fullbrook School

With extra resources from:

Foreign Policy.com

CNN

Big think



What is the most peaceful religion?
Which is the least?
How do you know?



Currently, there is a lot of misrepresentations of religion in the media, especially Islam.

- Many words like ‘terrorism’ and ‘Jihad’ get thrown around as evidence that Islam is a violent religion, however, ‘Jihad’ is actually the name given to war made in a lawful and fair way, the way of God.
- Christianity (amongst other faiths) is often cited as being a religion of love, but as you will see on the following slide, it has had its violent moments.

Herem vs jihad

- There is a specific kind of warfare laid down in the Bible which we can only call genocide."
- It is called *herem*, and it means total annihilation. Consider the Book of I Samuel, when God instructs King Saul to attack the Amalekites: "And utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them," God says through the prophet Samuel. "But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."
- When Saul failed to do that, God took away his kingdom.
- "In other words," Jenkins says, "Saul has committed a dreadful sin by failing to complete genocide."
- Jenkins notes that the history of Christianity is strewn with *herem*. During the Crusades in the Middle Ages, the Catholic popes declared the Muslims Amalekites. In the great religious wars in the 16th, 17th and 19th centuries, Protestants and Catholics each believed the other side were the Amalekites and should be utterly destroyed.

This, despite the golden rule of Christianity being 'do unto other as you would have them do to you'!

However, it seems unlikely that just based on this part, we would condemn all Christians as violent and dangerous.

Why is this?

Let's look at some of the bad things done in the name of religion – does it match up to our stereotypes?

How well do you follow the news? The names of which religions are involved in the following...

- A country with which national religion is currently setting up “re-education” camps to target another religion (in which many people are dying)?
- A country with which national religion has been recently accused of genocide against another religious group?
- A country with which national religion has built a wall to keep out asylum seekers?
- Terrorist factions claiming to represent the interests of which religious group has committed over 50 terrorist attacks in the UK?
- A country with which religion in power has recently decided that anyone can apply for citizenship except for those from a different religion?

How well do you follow the news? The names of which religions are involved in the following...

Atheist – China has been launching a campaign against the Uyghur Muslims since 2017 and is thought to contain up to 3 million detainees. Even 'non-religion' can be used to justify violence!

- A country with which national religion has been setting up “re-education camps” against a particular religion (in which the majority of people are of that religion)?
- A country with which national religion has been recently accused of genocide against another religious group?
- A country with which national religion has built a wall to keep out asylum seekers?
- Terrorist factions claiming to represent the interests of which religious group has committed over 50 terrorist attacks in the UK?
- A country with which religion in power has recently decided that anyone can apply for citizenship except for those from a different religion?

How well do you follow the news? The names of which religions are involved in the following...

- A country with which national religion has been setting up “religious groups” in which people are persecuted?
Atheist – China has been launching a campaign against the Uyghur Muslims since 2017 and is thought to contain up to 3 million detainees. Even ‘non-religion’ can be used to justify violence!
- A country with which national religion has recently accused a religious group of terrorism?
Buddhist – Myanmar has been accused of the systematic murder of 24,000 Rohingya Muslims as part of its ongoing attacks (not including nonfatal assaults in this statistic)
- A country with which national religion has built a wall to keep out asylum seekers?
- Terrorist factions claiming to represent the interests of which religious group has committed over 50 terrorist attacks in the UK?
- A country with which religion in power has recently decided that anyone can apply for citizenship except for those from a different religion?

How well do you follow the news? The names of which religions are involved in the following...

- A country with which religion is setting up “re-education” camps for people of that religion (in which country)?
Atheist – China has been launching a campaign against the Uyghur Muslims since 2017 and is thought to contain up to 3 million detainees. Even ‘non-religion’ can be used to justify violence!
- A country with which religion has recently accused another of religious genocide?
Buddhist – Myanmar has been accused of the systematic murder of 24,000 Rohingya Muslims as part of its ongoing attacks (not including nonfatal assaults in this statistic)
- A country with which religion has put together a wall to counteract an influx of Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers whose countries are at war?
Jewish – Israel has put together several controversial measures to counteract an influx of Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers whose countries are at war.
- Terrorist factions claiming to represent the interests of which religious group has committed over 50 terrorist attacks in the UK?
- A country with which religion in power has recently decided that anyone can apply for citizenship except for those from a different religion?

How well do you follow the news? The names of which religions are involved in the following...

- A country with which religion in power is setting up “re-education camps” for people of other religions (in which country?)
 - Atheist – China has been launching a campaign against the Uyghur Muslims since 2017 and is thought to contain up to 3 million detainees. Even ‘non-religion’ can be used to justify violence!
- A country with which religion in power has recently accused a religious group of terrorism?
 - Buddhist – Myanmar has been accused of the systematic murder of 24,000 Rohingya Muslims as part of it’s ongoing attacks (not including nonfatal assaults in this statistic)
- A country with which religion in power has put up a wall to prevent an influx of Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers whose countries are at war?
 - Jewish – Israel has put together several controversial measures to counteract an influx of Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers whose countries are at war.
- Terrorist factions claim to be in the interests of which religion? How many over 50 terrorist attacks have they committed?
 - Roman Catholic Christianity – The IRA and the Provisional IRA, two Irish groups, have committed more terrorist bombings in the UK than any other group (not even including failed attempts)
- A country with which religion in power has recently decided that anyone can apply for citizenship except for those from a different religion?

How well do you follow the news? The names of which religions are involved in the following...

- A country with a religion is setting up “re-education camps” for people of that religion (in which the country has a large population of that religion)
 - Atheist – China has been launching a campaign against the Uyghur Muslims since 2017 and is thought to contain up to 3 million detainees. Even ‘non-religion’ can be used to justify violence!
- A country with a religion has recently accused another country of religious genocide
 - Buddhist – Myanmar has been accused of the systematic murder of 24,000 Rohingya Muslims as part of it’s ongoing attacks (not including nonfatal assaults in this statistic)
- A country with a religion has put a wall to stop an influx of Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers whose countries are at war.
 - Jewish – Israel has put together several controversial measures to counteract an influx of Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers whose countries are at war.
- Terrorist factions claim to be in the interests of which religion? They have carried out over 50 terrorist attacks in the UK.
 - Roman Catholic Christianity – The IRA and the Provisional IRA, two Irish groups, have committed more terrorist bombings in the UK than any other group (not even including failed attempts)
- A country with which religion is never has recently decided that citizenship is not granted to citizens of that religion except for that religion?
 - Hinduism – Indian Prime Minister Modi has recently put laws in place severely reducing the rights of Muslims to Indian citizenship, saying Hindus come first.

Discuss

Did the information on the previous slide surprise you? Do you think that looking at these events in isolation gives a fair view of the religions themselves? Why or why not?

How do you think people gain their impressions of religions? Where does the information come from?

Why do you think some individuals use religion badly and give it a bad name? Why use it this way?

What good **can** religion achieve?

Looking at the bright side!

- Muslims, Jews and Christians stand together to protect each others' places of worship after terror attacks
- Obviously religion is also a reason why many people do good things. Read the link above for a little bit of a reminder of the good it can bring!

<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/11/06/us/rings-of-peace-toronto-trnd/index.html>