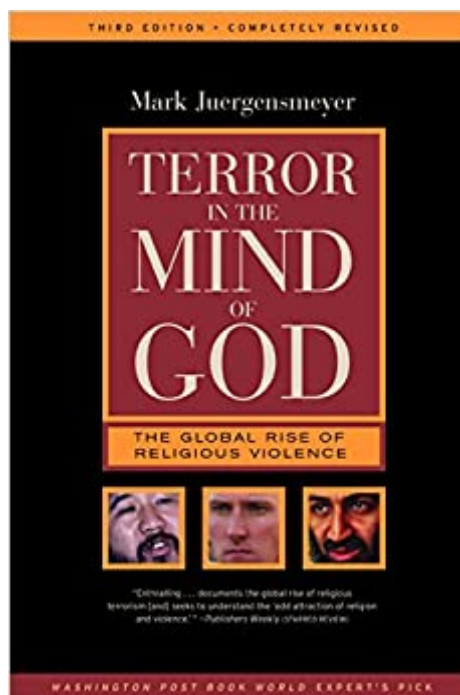




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# Terror In The Mind Of God: The Global Rise Of Religious Violence (Comparative Studies In Religion And Society)



## Synopsis

Completely revised and updated, this new edition of *Terror in the Mind of God* incorporates the events of September 11, 2001 into Mark Juergensmeyer's landmark study of religious terrorism. Juergensmeyer explores the 1993 World Trade Center explosion, Hamas suicide bombings, the Tokyo subway nerve gas attack, and the killing of abortion clinic doctors in the United States. His personal interviews with 1993 World Trade Center bomber Mahmud Abouhalima, Christian Right activist Mike Bray, Hamas leaders Sheik Yassin and Abdul Azis Rantisi, and Sikh political leader Simranjit Singh Mann, among others, take us into the mindset of those who perpetrate and support violence in the name of religion.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This dark, enthralling book not only documents the global rise of religious terrorism but seeks to understand the "odd attraction of religion and violence." Juergensmeyer bases his study on scholarly sources, media accounts and personal interviews with convicted terrorists. He exercises caution with the term "terrorist," preferring to emphasize the large religious community of supporters who make violent acts possible rather than the relatively small number who carry them out. Juergensmeyer identifies certain "cultures of violence" via case studies along the spectrum of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. Such religious communities often perceive themselves and their way of life as under attack. In Japan, for example, a new branch of

"socially prophetic" Buddhists released toxic sarin gas in the Tokyo subway system in 1995, shattering their own nonviolent ethic and harming thousands because they had adopted millenarian prophecies about an imminent end to the world. Juergensmeyer is a powerful, skillful writer whose deeply empathic interviewing techniques allow readers to enter the minds of some of the late 20th century's most feared religious terrorists. Yet he is also a sensitive scholar who aptly dissects religious terrorism as a sociological phenomenon. Later chapters pay special attention to issues of "performance violence," enemy formation, martyrology, satanization and "images of cosmic confrontation." (Feb.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Written well and engagingly for a popular audience."--Jonathan Groner, "Washington Post Book World"

Juergensmeyer straddles religious traditions to find common threads of violence. Fundamentalist, overly-rigid/simplistic philosophical reactions to technological and societal change bolster pathologically violent acts through dehumanization and demonizing of the secular and/or different. Much can be learned from this analysis. Great segment identifying Timothy McVey's right-wing, anti-government motivations for the Oklahoma City bombings in 1995. As a resident of Oklahoma, these ties were somehow white-washed and swept under the rug. Instead of focusing on the irrational fears and bigger societal movements that spawned his horrific action, Oklahomans tend to limit the lunacy to only he and Terry Nichols without greater attention to the separatist compound where he trained. Perhaps we also "run" from the truth with our memorial marathon. Moreover, Juergensmeyer's focus spans not only Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, but also (and surprisingly) Buddhism and Sikhism as well. No faith gets preferential treatment. A worthy read in a post-911 world for those looking for answers to avoid more senseless tragedy.

I bought this book for a course (required reading) and am so happy to have read it. It's a really great look at religiously-motivated "terror" from a wide set of religions. While you get some brief deep-dives on certain groups or ideologies, the book takes a wider approach and scans various religions across all parts of the world and their common uniting threat in inspiring and encouraging terrorism/[political] violence. Juergensmeyer does a fantastic job and I definitely recommend getting this on your book shelf asap.

This is an excellent treatment of the subject by an author who has met personally (and continues to meet) many of the key actors on the global stage in this field! I therefore take his descriptions, opinions, and analyses very seriously! Very thoughtfully and interestingly written!

This book is on my reading list here at UNR, and it is one of the VERY few that didn't disappoint. It is honest, frank and shares an inside look into the minds of terrorists. If you go into the book with an open mind and not just the preconceived notion that all terrorists are nut jobs, and read it to gain a different perspective of why some of these acts occur, then the book can be an eye opener. It doesn't create sympathy or empathy in the reader, but it does help one to understand why people act the way they do. By understanding why they do what they do, maybe we can better prevent it.

This was the text for one of my religion classes. I personally found it amazing, because we're not just given one side to each story. The author breaks it down by different religions, and breaks down the conflict by showing us EACH SIDE'S arguments. It was not a biased book at all, so you were able to view conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from both sides of the conflict. It really opened my eyes to faith and its role in War and Peace.

Terror in the mind of God is a remarkable work made all the more remarkable by the author's dispassionate portrayal of people who, in every other facet (except that facet, religious belief, which has consumed and overwhelmed all the other elements of their humanity) of their lives seem to be no different from the reasonable and decent "normal" people who espouse Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, or Jewish beliefs. Perhaps a major difference which sets apart those who kill, and in some cases die, for their religious beliefs is that there is never the slightest element of doubt in the minds of the true believer, and this total belief by religious fundamentalists of any faith in a cosmology which unbelievers find incredible, is always dangerous. (Didn't someone smart once say, "I don't care what you believe about God so long as you don't believe it totally.") Juergensmeyer has managed to elicit and portray their fanaticism in such a way that the reader is never tempted to laugh uproariously at even the most fantastic, unbelievable and outrageous claims of these "true believers". I've no experience with Jewish, Islamic, Sikh, Hindu or Buddhist true believers, but having lived all of my adult life in Northwest Arkansas and provided abortions in my medical practice in an area surrounded by "true believers" from the furthest fringes of the Christian Right and having been the target of Christian antiabortion fundamentalists on numerous occasions in the past, I can testify that Juergensmeyer knows his terrorists. The folks who have targeted me and my practice

seem on first glance to be concerned and reasonable people, at least until the subject turns to abortion or gays, evolution or prayer in the schools. Then their eyes literally glaze and they begin to spout utter nonsense as though reading from a text. I have been on talk shows, debates and public forums with them, sitting in a chair next to them, and were I a fearful man, easily intimidated, it would have been a most frightening experience. Of course, terror is what they want and intend to inspire in both their victims and in those observing, just as Jeurgensmeyer said. But if their actions cannot terrify those of us at whom they are aimed, what is the point? Unfortunately, the terrorists who confront us today have certainly managed to terrify a significant portion of the American citizenry. We can only hope that fear doesn't rob us of our collective wits, although the performance of the current military and political leadership in this country (with the glaring exception of Colin Powell and the California congresswoman - I wish I could remember her name - who cast the lone vote against our current Asian adventure) does not inspire confidence. This book, coupled with Ahmed Rashid's book, Taliban, should be required reading for anyone who aspires to a position of leadership in this country over the next fifty years or so, and should certainly be on the curriculum of any religious institution which purports to instruct as opposed to indoctrinate religious leaders. Religious belief in the service of peace and justice, of solace and relief, has been one of the great blessings of mankind. I am just not sure that this benign aspect of religion has ever been enough to compensate for its more malignant faces.

Balanced,comprehensive examination of the motivations of religious terrorists. Clearly outlines the connection between religion and violence drawing distinctions between religious motivations and other factors.

Came on time, and is just as described

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