

Extremism
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
January 23, 2010

In 1984, while studying the Sabbath – I would not even shave on Saturday. I wanted to “get it right” so I went to extremes.

Several years ago we saw Shakespeare’s “Timon of Athens” in Stratford, Ontario. Timon was a rich philanthropist who lavished expensive gifts on his friends; he even paid their debts. When he ran out of money, his friends deserted him. In many ways, the story of Timon paralleled that of Job. In the end, he accidentally found a stash of gold that made him richer than he had been at the start. He went from being an eternal optimist to being an incurable pessimist. Near the end of the play, Apemantus, a churlish philosopher says: “The middle of humanity thou never knewst, but the extreme on both ends: when thou was in thy gilt and thy perfume, they mocked thee for too much curiosity; in thy rags thou knowest none, but art despised for the contrary.” Timon had seen the highs and lows of humanity.

In June, I got an email from ex-EDS executive which I have edited to focus on facts and to eliminate his editorial comments:

- November 1979 in a country going through a religious and political upheaval when a group of Iranian students attacked and seized the American Embassy in Tehran. This seizure was an outright attack on American soil. The attack on this sovereign U. S. embassy set the stage for events to follow for the next 30 years.
- April, 1983 - a large vehicle packed with high explosives was driven into the US Embassy compound in Beirut... it kills 63 people.
- October 1983 - a large truck heavily with over 2500 pounds of TNT smashed through the main gate of the US Marine Corps headquarters in Beirut - 241 US servicemen are killed.
- December 1983, loaded with explosives is driven into the US Embassy in Kuwait.
- September 1984, another van was driven into the gate of the US Embassy in Beirut.
- April 1985 a bomb explodes in a restaurant frequented by US soldiers in Madrid.
- August 1985 a Volkswagen loaded with explosives is driven into the main gate of the US Air Force Base at Rhein-Main, 22 are killed.
- October 1985, the Achille Lauro cruise ship was hijacked.
- April 1986 TWA Flight 840 was bombed - killed 4
- 1988 Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland killing 259.
- January 1993, two CIA agents are shot and killed as they enter CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia.
- February 1993, a rented van packed with explosives is driven into the underground parking garage of the World Trade Center in New York City. Six people are killed and over 1000 are injured.
- November 1995 a car bomb explodes at a US military complex in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia killing seven service men and women.

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- June of 1996, another truck bomb explodes only 35 yards from the US military compound in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. It destroys the Khobar Towers, a US Air Force barracks, killing 19 and injuring over 500.
- 1996 a simultaneous attack on two US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. These attacks were planned with precision. They kill 224.
- October 12, 2000 - The USS Cole was docked in the port of Aden, Yemen when a small craft pulled alongside the ship and exploded killing 17 US Navy Sailors.
- September 11, 2001 – the World Trade Center attack
- Over the past 9 years, these attacks have continued – with a few failed attacks this past year in Dallas and the flight from Holland on December 25

These events of the past 30 years have placed a lot of focus on the Islamic extremists as the terrorists.

Is history repeating itself?

- 1931 Japan invaded Manchuria.
- 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia.
- 1938, Hitler occupied Austria.
- 1939, Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia.
- Later in '39, Hitler invaded Poland.
- 1940, Hitler invaded Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.
- 1940, Italy attacked France and later Greece.
- 1941, the Axis Powers attacked Yugoslavia and Greece and they dominated the Balkans.
- 1941, also, Hitler invaded Russia.
- Japan has attacked Malaya and Thailand -- and the United States.

The Anti-Defamation League was created in 1913 and tracks extremism in the US and beyond. They started as a group fighting Anti-Semitism and supporting the memory of the Holocaust. On their web site, they report extremist meetings.

Christian Identity is a religious ideology popular in extreme right-wing circles. Adherents believe that whites of European descent can be traced back to the “Lost Tribes of Israel”. Many consider Jews to be satanic offspring of Eve and the Serpent, while non-whites are “mud peoples” created before Adam and Eve. Its virulent racist and anti-Semitic beliefs are usually accompanied by extreme anti-government sentiments. Despite its small size Christian Identity influences virtually all white supremacist and extreme anti-government movements and is growing. And they observe the OT Holy Days, the Seventh Day Sabbath and dietary restrictions found in the Torah. AND – they have been tied to the KKK.

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Extremist: One who takes things beyond the norm – to the outer reaches of the outer boundaries.

I think we need to remember these things when we talk about the Islamic extremists and then continue to condemn all Islamic followers. I'm not a proponent of Islam. I am also not a proponent of extremism of any kind.

Even extreme Muslims justify their actions. They do not see themselves as terrorists, and it may even be unfortunate that we have labeled them as such. They see themselves as on a Jihad – a religious duty. It is one of their 10 Practices of the Religion. Jihad is the only form of warfare permissible under Islamic Law – used to further the expansion and defense of the Islamic state. Extremists choose to ignore the restrictions – a ban on killing women, children and non-combatants, as well as not damaging cultivated or residential areas. Attacks like the 9.11 attack on the WTC have never been sanctioned by more centrist groups of Muslims. However, that alone does not help non-Muslims to identify who are extremists and who are centrists.

We need to take care when we try to identify extremism. Remember, we could be tied by outsiders to the Christian Identity movement.

Just as the Christian Identity movement does not define all Christians, neither do the Islamic extremists define all Muslims. For instance, the Sunnis alone are divided into 4 separate “schools”. Michael D. Evans has written a very good book that can educate us on the variations (**The American Prophecies**).

Matthew 23:

- 1 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples,
- 2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.
- 3 "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.
- 4 "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.
- 5 "But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.
- 6 "They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,
- 7 "greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'
 - The scribes and Pharisees were extremists.
- 8 "But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.
- 9 "Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.
- 10 "And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.

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- 11 "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.
- 12 "And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.
- 13 ¶ "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.
- 14 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.
- 15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.
- 16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.'
- 17 "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?
- 18 "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.'
- 19 "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?
- 20 "Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it.
- 21 "He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it.
- 22 "And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.
- 23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.
- **24 "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!**
 - They missed the point!
- 25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.
- 26 "Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.
- 27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.
- 28 "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

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- 29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous,
- 30 "and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'
- 31 "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.
- 32 "Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt.
- 33 "Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?
 - The scribes and Pharisees had become the extremists of their day.

Paul gave these instructions to the Galatians and Ephesians:

Galatians 5:

- 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
- 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
- 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
- 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
- 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
- 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
- 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
- 26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.
 - Christian extremists miss the point even today.
 - Many, such as the Christian Identity movement do not practice love, joy and peace with Jews and non-white people

Ephesians 5:

- 1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
- 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.
- 3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;
- 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

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- 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.
- 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.
- 8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:
- 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)
- 10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Please don't misunderstand the message. I am not saying that Muslims do not have a plan to take over the United States and the world. I suspect they do. We should not hate them all, though we need to be cautious about the extremists and keep true to God's word in how we live our lives daily. We do hate what the extremists do – both Islamic and Christian extremists. But we should keep our focus that the real enemy is Satan.

God gave us two commandments: (1) treat God right (2) treat each other right. He gave us 10 commandments to explain how to do those two.

Matthew 22:

- 34 But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.
- 35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,
- 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?
- 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
- 38 This is the first and great commandment.
- 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
- 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

We need to strive to get this right without going to extremes!