

The Wrathful God: Religious Extremism in Comparative Perspective

Emory University, Carlos Museum

March 3-5, 2008

This conference will examine the conceptual language of extremist discourses in world religions and the factors that contribute to the development of extremist worldviews. Particular attention will be devoted to the monotheistic or “Abrahamic” traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as posing the greatest potential for violence toward the religious other and as challenging liberal and secular ideologies of pluralism and self-determination. However, varieties of non-Abrahamic religious extremism, such as Hindu and Buddhist extremism, will also be examined for comparative purposes.

A major concern of the conference will be to ascertain whether religious extremism can be viewed as a tradition itself; in other words, whether religious extremism is independent to a greater or lesser degree from the tradition of which it is normally seen as a part. Is it possible to view religious extremism as a separate quasi-religion, in which extremist discourses have more in common across religious boundaries than they do with the discourses of religious orthodoxy and orthopraxy in their own traditions? Participants in the conference were invited because of their expertise in the study of religion, society, and religious extremism and because of their willingness to “think outside of the box” in formulating new paradigms of analysis.

Monday, March 3

**** Morning Session – Islam**

Bruce Lawrence, Duke University – Keynote Speaker

Vincent J. Cornell, Emory University – Shari’a, Law and Totalitarianism

Gary R. Bunt, University of Wales-Lampeter – Networks of Cyber-Authority in Islamic Extremism

George Michael, University of Virginia College at Wise – Islamic Extremism and the Extreme Right

Gordon D. Newby, Emory University – Discussant

**** Afternoon Session – Judaism**

David Novak, University of Toronto – Keynote Speaker

Shlomo Fischer, Tel Aviv University – Rabbinic Messianism

Don Seeman, Emory University – Jewish Extremism and Mysticism

Warren Rosenberg, Wabash College – Masculinity and Jewish Extremism

David R. Blumenthal, Emory University – Discussant

Tuesday, March 4

**** Morning Session – Christianity**

R. Scott Appleby, Notre Dame University – Keynote Speaker
Patrick Provost-Smith, Harvard University – Christian Theologies of Extremism
Kurt Anders Richardson, McMaster University – Wrathful God or Gracious God?
Travis Kroeker, McMaster University – Messianic Political Theology and Violence
Steven Tipton, Emory University – Discussant

**** Afternoon Session – Religious Extremism and the Ideologies of Modernity**

Akeel Bilgrami, Columbia University – Keynote Speaker
Bruce Knauff, Emory University – Problematizing Modernity
Bradley S. Clough, American University in Cairo – Doctrinal and National Roots of Buddhist Extremism
Laurie Patton, Emory University – Postcolonial Ideologies of Sanskrit and Religious Extremism among Women: Some Portraits
Gyanendra Pandey, Emory University – Discussant

Wednesday, March 5

**** Morning Session – Private Meeting for Participant Discussion and Conceptualizing the Published Volume**

Sponsored by:

Institute for Comparative and International Studies
Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding Initiative
Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies

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