War and Violence
Myths and Facts, #3

REBIRTH

MYTH: "Religion is the cause of most wars throughout history."

FACT: Religion could be considered the cause of only about 3-7% of history's wars. The vast majority of wars are fought for political, social, or economic reasons. (*Encyclopedia of Wars*, 2004)

MYTH: "Without religion, there would be less fighting and war."

FACTS: All evidence so far points to the opposite. Atheist governments and world leaders are recent in history, but have already been responsible for the majority of deaths from genocide or mass murder in the last century.
Six of history's ten worst massacres were committed by atheist regimes.
(*Statistics of Democide*, R.J. Rummel, Rutgers University Press)

MYTH: "People are naturally peaceful. We only hate each other because we are manipulated by governments and religion. Primitive cultures are peaceful and live in harmony with nature."

FACTS: *"The claim that hunters and food-gatherers in general are more peaceful than people at a higher cultural level is false, and so obviously false that one wonders how it can persist so stubbornly in the face of the overwhelming abundance of long known facts."* (Ethologist Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt: *The Biology of Peace and War*)
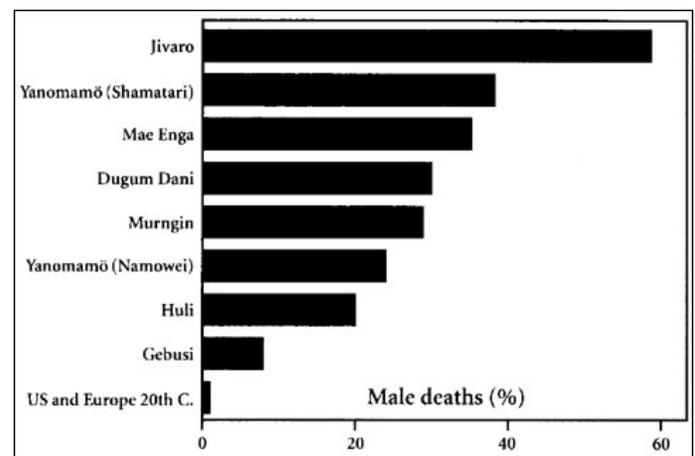
"Peaceful pre-state societies were very rare...In fact, primitive warfare was much more deadly than that between civilized states because of the greater frequency of combat and the more merciless way it was conducted." (Oxford anthropologist Lawrence H. Keeley: *War before Civilization*)

Primitive cultures past and present tend to be in a constant state of small-scale fighting, raiding, and massacring- more deadly than modern warfare. The following chart compares the homicide rate of several native, tribal cultures to that of America and Europe during the 1900's:

Civilizations engage in war, but they also enforce laws and limit mankind's natural tendencies towards constant fighting. Peace does not come naturally to humans. It must be instilled as a value through education, or enforced by law.

MYTH: Christianity didn't make the world any more peaceful or fair.

FACTS: The progressive moral values we have today did not come naturally.

They were introduced by Judo-Christianity- including equality of the sexes and races, human rights to life and freedom, and tolerance. These ideas were virtually invisible before the spread of the Christian gospel.

"*Infanticide [killing of undesirable babies] which might seem contrary to human nature, was almost universal before the rise of Christianity...*

In antiquity, when male supremacy was unquestioned and Christian ethics were still unknown...a man who took [women] seriously was somewhat despised." *(Bertrand Russell, logician and himself an opponent of Christianity)*

MYTH: "People have done horrible things, like witch-burnings and the Crusades, in the name of Christianity. This proves that Christianity is bad."

FACTS: Wars of aggression, murder, robbery, slavery, etc. are all in direct *disobedience* to the Bible and the teachings of Christ. *(Matt. 7:7, 1 Tim. 1:8-11, Matt. 5:43-44).*

Instead of pointing to historic examples of hypocrites *disobeying* the Bible, the logical approach would be to examine the overall effect of the gospel on the world. The reality is that Christianity is to be thanked for the progress in human rights and equality that we take for granted today:

"*It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the coming of Christianity...it taught that in the sight of God, all souls were equal...the Christian sought out the diseased, the crippled, the mutilated, to give them*

help. Since God was love, love took on deep overtones of sacrifice and compassion." *(Yale historian R. R. Palmer)*

"*It is to the Christians that one must turn for the origins of the modern hospital.*" *(Retief/Cilliers: Evolution of the Hospital from Antiquity to the Renaissance)*

"*Christ's teachings...emphasized self-sacrifice for the greater good. Relieving the needs of the poor became the responsibility of the entire community. Many historians consider religious charity to be the predecessor to modern social welfare.*"
(Deborah R. Taggart, Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, Learn to Give)

MYTH: "Kids from fundamentalist Christian homes are likely to be violent or dysfunctional because the Bible endorses spanking."

FACTS: *"Children born into religious families are far less likely than their peers to experience educational or behavioral problems."* *(Family Research Council)*

"*Conservative Protestant parents...are considerably more inclined to affirm their youngsters with frequent hugs and words of praise. Evidence suggests that evangelical parenting yields positive benefits for children. Corporal punishment in evangelical homes may insulate children from the negative effects associated with physical discipline.*"
(Hartford Institute for Religious Research)

Email: rebirthtv@gmail.com
YouTube: /rebirthtv1