# Marketing Peace

# Marketing Peace:

*Deconstructing Christian-Muslim Narratives of God, Salvation and Terrorism*

By

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To my daughter, Riddhi

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# FOREWORD

Professor Philip Kotler of Northwestern University and a leading marketing authority was asked an interesting question: "Can we make peace through marketing?" The occasion for the question was the 2016 World Business Conference for World Peace held in Hiroshima, Japan. He answered, "Marketing is love and love is peace." This reply might puzzle some people without a deep understanding of marketing. When marketing is understood as learning what people need and finding constructive, respectful, and mutually beneficial ways of meeting those needs then Professor Kotler's meaning is clear. Understanding basic human wishes with the intent of satisfying them in acceptable ways is what marketing is about. Few desires are as powerful as the desire to live happily side by side with people who are very different. The use of marketing concepts and practices to advance this desire is indeed an expression of love which can lead to peace.

Achieving peace doesn't come easily. However, as Professor Paromita Goswami argues in this moving book, marketing can play a constructive role. Thoughtful attention to basic marketing concepts and principles can help foster mutually beneficial exchanges between groups and individuals that might otherwise be hostile toward one another.

Treatments of intergroup conflict and world peace are generally sincere, thoughtful, and constructive. "Marketing Peace: Deconstructing Christian-Muslim Narratives of God, Salvation and Terrorism" is no exception. However, this endeavor differs from many others with similar goals. I had the privilege of witnessing some of the behind the scenes dynamics of the author's research undertaking. What I saw was a unique combination of bravery, resilience, tact, intellectual honesty, empathy, and sacrifice. Professor Goswami shares several examples of these traits in this book.

In many ways this book is about a journey into a war zone of thought in which the author is a war correspondent. The book itself takes the reader on dueling journeys. First, there is the author's journey into the demanding world of immersive fieldwork and its many personal and professional challenges. This is a world of dramatic ups and downs, of discoveries and encounters that are alternately hopeful and frightening. Second, there is the journey the author urges upon the reader. This journey is "forward to human-ness" and daring us to avoid the ever present

alternative path "backwards to dehumanization, violence, degeneration, chaos, hatred."

Professor Goswami provides guidance for undertaking both journeys. She is one of the few scholars articulating the role of marketing in fostering peace. Marketing is the process of understanding human needs and the worries and aspirations that accompany them. It is a process of developing and delivering meaningful ways of addressing those needs. It requires sensitive and respectful listening to one's audience and the imaginative and constructive use of what is learned. Despite all the differences that can pit one group against another, there are deeper unifying needs that bestow a shared humanity on everyone. As Professor Goswami argues, these understanding and meeting the shared needs of being human is the launch pad for the marketing of peace.

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# CHAPTER ONE

# THE STORY BEHIND THE PURSUIT OF PEACE

## Prelude

*11 July, 2006* I had just returned from a very tiring day at the office. Summer term grades had to be uploaded, and I'd had back-to-back classes till 5:30 p.m. Seemed like my back needed a massage. I had just put my laptop bag on my desk and was ready to freshen up when I heard *Maa*'s shrill shriek. I hurried to the drawing room where she was watching the news. Bomb blasts on Mumbai trains. Seven blasts in 11 minutes in chock-a-block rush hour; 189 deaths, 800 injuries. Is my ex-husband okay? I know he takes the local train (is there any other way to reach anywhere in Mumbai on time?). For a moment I blanked out. It seemed I was just sinking and there was no end to the fall. Can't tell *Maa* to call. I had to do it myself. Not easy to press mobile buttons when your hands are slippery. *Call can't be made*. Once. Twice. Thrice. Deep breath. Once again. No luck. I could call *Mani*. Have not spoken to her in the six months since he left. *If this is not an emergency, I don't know what is*. She took the call. Today is her daughter Shipra's marriage. I am not invited. Of course. But do they know if he is okay? Well, his mom did come that morning. They hoped he is okay. They are all very busy but will try to let me know if they get any news. Again, calls to him. Unending calls till midnight. No response. Then it rang. Around 1:24 a.m.

Are you okay?

I was lucky. Usually I take that train. But today work finished earlier and I took the previous train.

**29 August, 2008** The Hindu-Christian riots at Kandhamal took 45 lives and destroyed 1400 Christian homes and more than 80 sites of worship. I opened my Outlook inbox to angry emails from two Christian colleagues. They were distressed that their non-Christian colleagues were silent about what is happening around them. Do they care? Within another few hours, all of us had to care. Our campus was attacked by a saffron

brigade shouting anti-Christian slogans. After all, we were a Jesuit business school. Although most students, faculty and staff were non-Christians, we too must, by default, share the good/bad deeds of those that they opposed. A group of students had to fortify the school gates to stop the mob from entering the campus. Apart from the residential students, there were faculty, their families and young children on campus.

## Stories of Riot Victims

**6 February, 2010** '*We saw it from the bushes. We were hiding there. We were lucky. They lined up the men in a row. And cut off their penises. We did not know who these people are. We never saw them earlier. Our neighbours did not protect us. We used to visit their homes during Hindu festivals. But when the riots started in Kandhamal, they did not stand by us. We fled to the woods with our kids. I will never forget that night. For the last couple of years, we are staying in Saliya Sahi slum in Bhubaneswar. No, Hindus and Christians don't stay in the same neighbourhood in this slum. We stay in separate pockets.'-Sangita, 40-year old mother of two*

**17 February, 2010** '*I studied in Laxmananda Saraswati's ashram. They provided free education and food. Only Hindus were allowed. No one knows that I am actually Christian. They killed my father, you know. I pretended that I'm Hindu to get free education, free food, but I actually secretly revere Jesus. Don't tell anyone. They will kill me too.'-Manas, 25-year old single man*

## Paromita's Story

I am a non-practicing Hindu; Brahmin by birth. As a child growing up in Kolkata, India, we celebrated Christmas with "boro din-er cake" ("big day's cake") and a visit to the local church for Christmas Mass. We also eagerly awaited invitations from Muslim friends for Eid delicacies. I never thought twice before inviting people who are not Hindu to enjoy the lokkhi pujo[1] khichdi or shop for Durga Pujo[2]. Pandal-hopping during Durga Pujo was not really about worship. It was more about appreciating the craft of the artisans and their art work: beautifully made idols, lighting, and the exquisite designs of the pandals. It never crossed our minds that

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[1] Lakshmi or lokkhi is the goddess of wealth; *khichdi* is a dish made from lentils and rice.
[2] Durga Pujo is the grandest Hindu festival of Kolkata.

Muslims or Christians could not enjoy the Hindu festivities as we did, nor did we think we could not celebrate Christmas or Eid.

After the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992, certain parts of Kolkata did witness riots. We read about them in newspapers but the unrest never affected us personally. That is, beyond a few days off from school/colleges.

We also heard about Muslim-Hindu riots from my *Dida* (grandmother) and *Maa*. *Maa* had to flee the-then East Pakistan when she was in eighth grade, and couldn't leave her home for one full year from fear of physical harm from Muslim neighbors. Interestingly, it was a family of Muslims that helped my *Dadu* (grandfather) run away from an impending Muslim attack. *Dadu* swam across the Ichchamati River to reach safety on Indian land. These were just stories, similar to reading Tagore, Bankim, Ashapurna Devi, Sherlock Holmes, Satyajit Ray, Carolyn Keene or Enid Blyton in our teenage years.

From 2006 onwards, however, it seemed that people I cared about or knew personally were just missing death by inches in repeated terror attacks.

Some questions started bothering me: what made people try to harm others in the name of God? Can marketing and its tool-kit be used to sell peace and shun violence? If marketing can persuade people to buy toothpaste with salt, or make folks prefer Trump or Modi, can't it use its magic wand to make people choose non-violence and peace?

Before I could delve into the questions about the efficacy of marketing in selling peace in the context of religious violence, I had to learn what peace is, how non-violence works, and why religion is used as a justification for violence.

I stumbled upon free YouTube lectures of PACS 164A and PACS 164B "Introduction to Non-Violence" by Professor Michael Nagler of the University of California, Berkeley. Diligent as I am, I devoured the lectures, and started reading voraciously anything that I could lay my hands on in the lean teaching season of 2008. By the beginning of 2009, I'd garnered the courage to write the first research proposal and send it off to the Second Transformative Consumer Research Conference to be held at Villanova School of Business, USA under the aegis of the Association of Consumer Research. The proposal was accepted and I was awarded a $200 travel grant. I couldn't put together the total funds required to actually go to the conference but at least there was some encouragement from somewhere.

Many of my colleagues started looking at me as if I was mentally deranged. They asked why I, with a PhD in Marketing, wanted to study

religious violence. Aren't political scientists and psychologists supposed to do that?

By 2010, I was seriously thinking of doing either another PhD or a post-doc to see if marketing could actually help design an intervention to promote peace. Taking the Fulbright research proposal guidelines as a base, I put together a detailed research plan, and then started writing to professors who might be interested in mentoring the project.

If I wrote ten mails a day, only two would reply, and they too would politely decline, citing various causes. But by this time, I had discerned a pattern: junior-level faculty would not reply at all while senior-level ones would shoot a declining note.

After months of continual rejection, I got so desperate that I shot off an email to Philip Kotler, the author of the textbook that is said to be the bible of marketing. He was also one of the co-authors of the 1970 seminal paper in the *Journal of Marketing* that proposed that commercial marketing principles be used to promote social good. This paper was co-authored by Gerald Zaltman of the Harvard Business School, who also developed a special research tool that uses metaphor elicitation to uncover subconscious motives in consumers. It was my dream to use this tool, the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET), in my research on religious violence. But the tool was patented and only rudimentary information on ZMET was available from open sources. That day in April 2010, I wrote to both these stalwarts: Kotler and Zaltman. And guess what! Both replied! Yes, they BOTH replied. Professor Kotler felt that it was worth making the effort, and Professor Zaltman promised to extend all support possible for this study. I think I must have floated in the clouds, and reached seventh, eighth and ninth heaven a few times that day. I have never experienced anything like this, apart from seeing my daughter in the first ultrasonography in my tenth week of pregnancy.

The Fulbright application was not successful, however. This posed a problem in terms of learning the ZMET. Since it was patented, only licensed agencies that already used ZMET had the know-how to train people to use it. Professor Zaltman put me in touch with the consumer research agency that partnered with Olson Zaltman Associates in the India-China region. However, the agency did not agree to train me in ZMET. It seemed that they would only train their employees, and wouldn't train an academician even if the tool was being used for non-commercial purpose. This meant that I could learn how to use the tool only if I was resident in the US. And for that I needed funding. I started searching and made two other applications.

The last application was to the American Association of University Women (AAUW). I had never heard of them but got an email notification of the fellowship from a list-serve Peace and Collaborative Development Network (PCDN). Apparently, Marie Curie had a fellowship from them in the initial stages of her academic life. The application process was completely online. By this time, tedium was setting in and I started wondering if it was all just a wild goose chase. At one point, I left the AAUW application portal after partially completing it. The next day, someone from the AAUW got in touch, asking if I needed help and encouraging me to complete the process. So, I somehow half-heartedly finished the process. Yet again, I made some errors. The helpful lady from the AAUW mailed me again and guided me gently through the process until all the errors were finally fixed. These guys seemed really nice.

By March 2011, the second fellowship application was also rejected, and my only chance to learn the ZMET was the AAUW. And the AAUW was a tough nut to crack. Unlike Fulbright, they do not have country-wise quotas.

On the 15th of April, at midnight, the mail from the AAUW reached my inbox. I WAS ACCEPTED! Have you ever seen a 40-year-old woman running around her apartment wildly as if she is on fire? Or jumping on the floor at night? And shrieking?

# CHAPTER TWO

# HOW TO FIND THE RECIPE FOR PEACE?

*"I do not like thee, Dr. Fell, the reason why I cannot tell."*

> *11 March, 2005.* Dipa, Moumi and I were returning from College Street after a workshop. It was around 5:30 p.m. We could not take the public bus from our usual stop. All buses were re-directed that day from their usual route. North Kolkata roads were not that familiar to us. The streets looked desolate, and the usually busy city resembled a typical *bandh* day. There were not many people around to ask for directions. We got lost. And found ourselves in a Muharram procession. The men were flogging themselves and shrieking in pain. The sight of blood oozing from their body, along with the cow carcasses hanging from street shops, made me freeze with fear. It was apparent that Moumi was a Hindu woman as she wore her *sindoor* prominently at the parting of her hair. What if these folks attacked us?
>
> There was no logic in that numbing fear. It just happened.

## Us versus them

When I started drawing up my research proposal, the keywords for the literature review were the likes of "Islamic radicalization", "terrorism", "non-violence", "peace." I was mostly trying to understand what makes Muslims terrorists. That is where the journey started. The title for the proposal was *Promoting Non-Violent Approaches to Curb Islamic Radicalization through Social Marketing*.

I landed in Pittsburgh on the 4th of July, 2011. On the 22nd of July that year, Anders Behring Breivik killed 67 people in Oslo, Norway. Media reports said he was enraged by the mass immigration of Muslims that was allegedly destroying Europe's Christian heritage (CBS News, 2013). Interestingly, Breivik is also said to have been influenced by anti-Islam counter-jihad American bloggers (Shane, 2011). I started wondering

whether the word "Islamic" in the title of my research proposal was apt. Is radicalization only Islamic?

Pittsburgh is very much a university town and has been consistently voted as the most livable city in the US. Built at the confluence of the Ohio, Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, it has a 66% White population, followed by 26% African-Americans, 4% Asians and around 2% Hispanics. It has seven major universities, including the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University. Since my mentor, Professor Zaltman, was not based in the city, I needed to get to know people on my own. I am usually introverted and somehow awkward in my social interactions. That did not make the process of getting to know people in a different country and an entirely different culture easy, not to mention the Indian accent that immediately gave away that I was fresh off the boat. But I had to start somewhere. The easiest was emails. So, I started mailing the faculty of different universities of the city who work on issues of religious violence, terrorism or conflict resolution.

Within the first fortnight I met Professor Thomas *(name changed)*, who regularly conducted workshops on conflict resolution; his last program had participants from Israel and Palestine. When I explained why I was visiting the US, he said, "It is stupid to ask why Muslims are terrorists; they are like that, of course." He said that he was from the Middle-East, and Christian by faith. Then, in a whisper, he asked if I knew that my mentor Professor Zaltman was Jewish, and if I knew what the Jewish were *really* like. I had to confess that I had no idea about either.

Social psychologists point out that the tendency to lump people into groups is a natural human response to simplify information-processing. In other words, stereotyping is the way the human mind copes with exceptional overloads of external stimuli. This natural tendency to stereotype fosters prejudice (Kressel, 2002). It has been noted that some prejudice towards out-groups is natural; the danger, however, arises when some individual "bigots" are so strongly biased that they are willing to support legislation or social conditions that adversely affect "them"; and from these bigots emerge "haters" who are so passionately obsessed with negativity towards the out-group that even killing becomes possible (Gaylin, 2003; Ramakrishna, 2006).

Sometimes even a reference to a quote made hundreds of years back can outrage faith groups. For example, in 2006, Pope Benedict XVI delivered his now-famous lecture at the University of Regensberg, Germany and quoted Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologus saying, "Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the

sword the faith he preached" (Benedict XVI, 2006). It is interesting to note that the Pope did not say that Mohammed was evil/inhuman; he simply quoted Paleologus. And Paleologus had said it 600 years back. In fact, if one reads the original papal speech, he disagrees with the tone of the emperor and says, "He addresses his interlocutor with a startling brusqueness, a brusqueness that we find unacceptable" (Benedict XVI, 2006). Yet violence swept the world after the 2006 speech. This prompted a proclamation by 138 Islamic authorities and scholars, representing all Islamic denominations and schools of thought.

> Muslims and Christians together make up well over half of the world's population. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world. The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians.
> —Excerpt from *A Common Word between Us and You, An Open Letter Addressed to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI* (acommonword.com, 2007).

If we read between the lines and examine the title of the letter, the words "us and you" stare back at us. Even an appeal for peace and understanding that tries to search for common ground emphasizes the "other."

How is the "other" perceived in religion?

Believers of God have faith in a universal entity who is the creator and protector of all life forms. To the believers, faith gives life meaning, a sense of purpose and reduced uncertainty in an after-life. The mental construction of the unseen God is harnessed for the perceived salvation of the human soul. Religion not only shows the believers the path to connect to the supreme soul but also guides the way they relate to other fellow human beings. Consequently, a major challenge arises when other people do not follow the same faith group. The choice of a specific religious path divides people irretrievably into "us and you" or the "other." The observant believer's knowledge of what is "right" occasionally makes it difficult for them to have positive feelings towards "other" religions (Altemeyer, 2002; Verkuyten, 2007). Dividing the world into "us" and "them" is a natural human tendency that has the potential to devalue and dehumanize those in the out-group (Staub, 2007). Religion, with its capacity to divide good from evil, blessed from accursed, saved from damned, believer from heretic, can create divisions between communities that then become powerful agents in fomenting xenophobic violence (Chuman, 2006).

## Terrorism and the religious license to kill

It is not that a high degree of loyalty to a particular religious belief alone contributes to prejudiced behavior, conflict or the adoption of violent means (Smock, 2008). Religion, with its powerful role in human identity formation, is an easy tool with which to insinuate the sentiments of a people-group. When a people-group perceives that injustice has been done to them, it is easy to mobilize support for the cause by appealing to one's religious affiliation. It has been noted that the religious card has been used to fuel conflict even among believers of Buddhism, a religion known to have strong roots in non-violence (Frydenlund, 2005). In fact, religious conflicts have been empirically proven to be more intense and longer-lasting than non-religious conflicts (Lindberg, 2008). If a group believes that they can get justice by putting more pressure on the "other" by means of a long, intense conflict, it may be encouraged to use religious sentiment as an instrument to persuade and mobilize the masses.

Of the different forms of religious violence, terrorist attacks are the most difficult to predict as they are strategically meant to frighten and instill a sense of powerlessness in the minds of the civilian population. The indiscriminate killing of innocent people for religious reasons rarely involves psychopathology or material deprivation. Perpetrators of terror are likely to be respected individuals with stable family and community ties, honored in their communities rather than condemned for their violence (Silke, 1988; Turk, 2004). Terrorists do not see themselves as instigators of harm but rather as individuals reacting to the provocative abuses and injustices of others (Silke, 2003).

An act of violence derided as terrorism by some may be respected as the struggle for liberation by others (Turk, 2004). It is interesting to note that at least four Noble Peace Prize winners were labeled terrorists at certain points of time in their careers (Zulaika and Douglass, 1996). Violent terrorist actions are not usually undertaken to settle personal enmity but to achieve perceived societal and political goals (Pape, 2003, Merari, 2005). It has been pointed out that all terrorist organizations are reliant on favorable public perceptions, and without this support it is almost impossible to carry out such subversive acts (Pinker, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2009). As peace psychologists have pointed out, in order to tackle terrorism, it is necessary to understand the passion underlying the potentially valid complaints behind terrorist actions (Wagner, 2006). So, public sympathy for terrorism can be reduced by addressing the societal discontent that radicals exploit to recruit terrorists (Smith et al., 2008). By

the same logic, if societal grievances are addressed, there might be no reason for violent terror action.

How is the religion of the "other" consumed in the market space of ideas?

Apostolov (2004) argues that images of the "other" are not deliberately built in human minds but are the result of unconscious motivated biases that are influenced by cognitive predispositions, historical collective memories and real-life experiences. If one uncovered these subconscious motivations and the emotional lenses that color the perception of one religious group of the other, would it be possible to estimate the nature of grievances that violent actors may exploit to mobilize support for their cause? Could this framework be then utilized to devise a peacebuilding process that addresses those subconscious emotional drivers and promotes the idea of positive peace?

Peacebuilding is said to be proactive attempts to heal post-conflict societies and reduce the structural violence that perpetuates societal inequities, thereby averting future possibilities of episodes of direct violence (Christie et al., 2008). Positive peace aims at truly overcoming violence through mechanisms of societal co-operation and integration, to resolve the deep-seated causes of violence; in contrast, negative peace is concerned with providing security and protection from direct violence (Galtung, 1975; O'Kane, 1992; Woolman, 1985).

Could marketing principles be used to encourage aggrieved communities to adopt peaceful behavior? This was the crux of my search … can marketing help in promoting peace?

## How can marketing help?

### Metaphors and what they do

Seventy per cent of expressions in any world language are said to have metaphorical roots (Lakeoff and Johnson, 1980 as quoted by Zhang and Hu, 2009). Typically, human beings are said to use six metaphors every minute of spoken thoughts (Zaltman, 2003; Pollio et al., 1977).

What is supremely important is that human thoughts are known to arise from images (Zaltman, 2003). Again, 95% of human thoughts, emotions and learning occur in the unconscious mind without conscious awareness (Wegner, 2002). Metaphors help bring these unconscious thoughts and feelings to the surface (Cameron and Low, 1999). These metaphorical expressions are in a way the hidden blueprint that helps us understand the whys of human behavior. For example, in a workplace plagued with

conflict, employees were found to think of their organization as a battleground and this organizational metaphor was the spectacles through which the organizational processes and events were viewed (Hamburger and Itzhayek, 1998). It has been recommended that to resolve conflict situations, more positive alternative metaphorical frames, like journey metaphors, be used (Haynes, n.d.).

Metaphors play a crucial role in bringing about behavior change, and have been known to have very positive results even for addictive behavior. Successful instances include a smoking cessation program that moves from Tobacco Road to Freedom Mountain (Marlatt and Gordon, 1985 as quoted by Peele, 1988). In a recent study by Montazeri et al. (2013), it was found that when metaphors were incorporated in the product design of napkin dispensers, there was a significant reduction in the consumption of napkins (which was the desired target behavior). The results were far better for the metaphorical design than regular or non-persuasive metaphorical designs.

In the traditional advertising of commercial products, metaphors have been used as the key driving force of campaigns across diverse product categories. In fact, marketing professionals have known the value of metaphors in advertising for long enough to see their value. However, it is necessary to understand that unless the communication metaphors "match" the mental metaphors in the consumers' minds, there is scant possibility of hitting the right note. This is where a specialized knowledge of eliciting deep-unconscious-level metaphors is needed.

## Social marketing

When one talks about social marketing (SM), it is often mistakenly thought to be related to social media and promoting through Facebook, Twitter and the like. SM is not social media marketing, although it might involve it. Rather, it involves using commercial marketing principles for the social good. It has mainly been used for public health campaigns like anti-HIV/AIDS, family planning and domestic abuse issues. SM campaigns go far beyond advertising and involve the careful segmentation of the target audience and finding the right product-place-price-promotion mix that would encourage behavior change.

In the context of promoting peace and denouncing violence, there have been social marketing attempts at reducing violence in inner cities and generally high-crime zones. A detailed section will be devoted later to examining campaigns promoting non-violent behavior. However, these

campaigns do not in most cases adopt the SM approach to behavior change.

The primary questions I am trying to address have never been examined before:

1. Could we understand what the metaphorical lens used by religious communities to frame their worldviews of the "other" religion is?
2. Can we design SM campaigns that would promote peace?

## Backdrop: Why the US?

One reason why my US visit was necessary was of course to learn the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET), but there were other compelling reasons to study the Christian-Muslim relationship in the most powerful country in the world.

In the post-9/11 world, the relationship between Christians and Muslims in the US was strained at best. Among other contributing factors, the domestic sentiment in the US propelled the War on Terror, with 89% of the American public supporting it (Lindberg and Nossel, 2005). The negative perception of Muslims or Islam might not have been the only cause for public support of the war but there is no doubt that the war was a response to 9/11, where strong religious conviction was the motivation for the attack. The official 9/11 Commission appointed by the US president and Congress described the aggression as one that "was inflicted by 19 young Arabs acting at the behest of Islamic extremists headquartered in distant Afghanistan" (The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004). Earlier, Al-Qaeda, the outfit behind the attacks, issued a fatwa or religious proclamation that declared "to kill the Americans and their allies – civilians and military – is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it" (PBS Newshour, 1996).

Additionally, incidences of private discrimination had been experienced by most Muslims post-9/11, and almost half of non-Muslim Americans welcomed governmental discrimination against Muslims (Heymann, 2006). Anti-Muslim hate crimes decreased considerably after the 1600% increase in 2001 (FBI, 2001) yet there was still a 50% rise in the reported incidents between 2009 and 2010 (Schevitz, 2002; FBI, 2011).

The relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in America is difficult (Jones et al., 2011). About half of Americans from major religions believe that most Americans are prejudiced against Muslim

Americans, and 48% of Muslim Americans have experienced racial or religious discrimination in the past year (Gallup Center for Muslim Studies, 2010; Abu Dhabi Gallup Center, 2011). With this backdrop, the Muslim-Christian relationship in the US provides an apt ground on which to deconstruct the narratives of one faith about the other.

Additionally, the US holds a supremely important position in global geo-politics and is perceived as representative of the West in general. In an increasingly inter-connected world with easy communication through electronic and social media, information on discriminatory behavior against a faith group travels quickly to other parts of the world. Religious apologetic literature bordering on vilification of "other" religions can be easily accessed in any part of the world. In a time of distrustful relationships between religious groups, the generation of apologetic literature has gained pace and is spread virally far beyond national boundaries.

The devastating consequences of disharmonious inter-religious relationships in the US are also evident in the planning or execution of faith-induced terror acts by American citizens in India and Somalia as well as in the US (Gyford, 2010; Stewart, 2010; Johnson, 2010; Hsu and Johnson, 2009).

*27 March, 2012.* I was at the book club meeting of *Let's Do It* (name changed), an organization dedicated to keeping Sharia away from America. Someone mentioned Anne Barnhadt, a Catholic who marked some Quranic passages with "raw bacon as they made best Quranic bookmarks." She also burned pages of the Quran with controversial verses, saying, "evil garbage…. go back to hell where you came from", "Allah is an evil son-of-a-bitch he can go to hell", "that has no place in civilized society", "it's twisted", "it's disgusting", "most men in Islam and homophiles and hemophilic pedophiles", "filthy, evil, satanic, disgusting", "this crap is evil."

Interestingly, the English version of this Barnhadt YouTube video had 186,627 hits as on 27 March, 2011 while the one with Arabic sub-titles had 608,016 hits on the same day.

The *Let's Do It* members appreciated Anne Barnhadt daring the Muslims and others in the government to try and get her (she gives her address too).