Terrorism Around the World: The War Within

by Quenby Wilcox – September 2006

"Poor Brutus, with himself at war, forgets the shows of love to other men" (1.2.46) Julius Caesar

If you listen to some of the 'politically correct' rhetoric within western societies these days, you may be led to believe that the Muslim religion is somehow 'responsible' for terrorism. However, there are two major flaws to this theory. The first is that there are many terrorist groups, ETA, IRA, FARC to name a few, that have absolutely nothing to do with the Muslim religion, and the second is that there are millions and millions and millions of Muslims in this world who are not terrorist and have no connection what-so-ever to terrorist groups. Therefore, these arguments seem to be mutually exclusive and from a purely logically standpoint have no basis or veracity.

Another popular rhetoric today is that the terrorism is war waged by Muslims against non-Muslims in order to gain supremacy in the world. And, while many extremist Muslim groups do promote this belief and justify their actions with this dialogue, concrete evidence demonstrates the contrary. There are literally hundreds of examples of fanatical Muslim militant groups, spurred by religious rhetoric, who have participated in terrorist acts against other Arabs and/or Muslims. So once again it appears that the contention of fanatical Muslim leaders is baseless and just the ranting and raving of zealous madmen.

And if you really listen closely to the rambling of these people, as well as comments made about them and their followers, a certain type of 'personality' appears. These people lack any kind of empathy or conscience, become easily enraged, and are obsessed with controlling and manipulating others. Almost a text book definition of a psychopath. And, as it has been repeatedly shown that psychopaths and psychopathic type people are produced by "prolonged absence of attunement between parents and child [and that it] takes a tremendous toll on the child [when] parent consistently fails to show any empathy with a particular range of emotion in the child…and the child begins to avoid expressing, and perhaps even feeling those same emotions" (*Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman.) Therefore, would not a more viable 'reason' for violence in all its forms be our faulty educational systems and methods, which are all too often based on "spare the rod, spoil the child," that are at the root of producing the psychopathic-type members of our societies.

Then take these people and put them into situations where they are continually discriminated against and generally treated as inferiors, is it really that incredible to believe that they may be inflamed to homicidal and suicidal behavior? I remember as a child in the '70´s when the USA passed through its' 'buckle-up/drive safe' period (which is going on today in southern Europe) a study showed that many of the most dangerous drivers on our roads actually had suicidal tendencies, and that many of the accidents were not so accidental after all. And, what is even more amazing is that these people 'terrorizing' the roads, were and are, transporting their family and friends and not total strangers. Maybe if we could understand what propels this kind of behavior by 'normal' people we would have a better insight into what 'demons within' produce terrorists and suicide bombers.

If you really listen to the dialogues of all perpetrators of violence, whether it be rioting students in Paris, extremist Muslim leaders like Anjem Choudary, guerrilla warriors of the FARC, separatist ETA groups, gang-members in any of our streets and school yards; the list is unending. What they all want and are asking for is one thing; RESPECT. I myself have repeatedly been on the receiving end of degradation and discrimination, as a woman and as an American, and while I certainly cannot understand or condone the actions of terrorists, I can at least empathize with the anger and desire for 'justice' that provoke these people.

If we could only raise our children to be respectful of others as well as teach them that differences of opinion may be resolved without resorting to physical or verbal violence, we would no longer need domestic violence hotlines, riot police, anti-terrorist laws, or even a nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

In *A Brief History of the Human Race* Michael Cook states "Man is the only animal that possessed enough cultural agility and enough aggressiveness to have been able to successfully migrate to every continent (except Antarctica) of the earth. Therefore, it may be assumed that humans possess an inherent sense of aggression and competition, and that while this trait appears to have been necessary in the development of civilizations it also appears to be the one trait that may produce our extinction."

If we go back to the hypothesis that the Muslim religion is somehow responsible for violence, could not the same thing be said about Judeo-Christian religions? If you examine the different religious documents you will find them very similar in content, they all try to instill a sort of moral justice and provide a 'blue-print' for a unified morality, upon which all our legal codes are based. They are filled with statements that incite both violence and peace, and since all were written at more or less the same time in the history of humankind as well as in the same geographical region may we not consider that there could be some sort of historical reasons for their appearance? They all appeared in what is commonly referred to the cross-roads of civilization and at a point in time where the populations and civilizations of the human species had developed in size and quantities to a point where commerce, and the desire to control and profit from this commerce, often through military domination, had reached such an extent that perhaps the necessity of some sort of basic rules was created. After all is 'necessity not the mother of invention?' Now whether these 'rules' come from a divine source or not, is a question for theologians and not the purpose of this article.

James Prescott in his article *Body Pleasure and the Origins of Violence* wrote "It is clear that the world has only limited time to change its custom of resolving conflicts violently. It is uncertain whether we have the time to undo the damage done by countless previous generations, nor do we know how many future generations it will take to transform our psychobiology of violence into one of peace." Unfortunately, this was written in 1975 and it appears that we have made little to no progress in changing the way we educate and raise our children.

Passions may lead to great success, but in order to do so they must be given direction and reason.

PS. - Spring 2007 I have just been watching an interview with the great-aunt of Cho Seung-Hui's, the young man responsible for the recent shooting at Virginia Tech in the USA, and am so angered by her comments. "At eight years old he did not speak…with his mother or anyone," "who would have known he would cause such trouble, the idiot!"

Now, I have worked with so many abused children, and if a child is not speaking with anyone by eight (and there is no medical or physiological reason) then there are some very grave problems within the home, and the environment in which he or she is being brought up. Then, her comment about him being an idiot! I mean what kind of compassion or love do you think this poor tortured soul grew up in – and the terrible violent consequences of his torment!! She just proved the whole premise of my article!