

PRESS RELEASE: JESUS AND THE JIHADIS

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Unmasking the Evil Face of ISIS

New book links Islamic terrorism to core Muslim beliefs

Andy Butcher

The shocking acts of Muslim extremism that dominate today's headlines can only be understood and defeated by looking back fourteen hundred years to the roots of the terrorists' faith, according to two leading Christian academics.

Far from being a corrupted offshoot of followers of Muhammad, as many contend, ISIS is firmly grounded in the Qu'ran and early Islamic tradition, say Dr. Craig Evans and Dr. Jeremiah Johnston in their hard-hitting new book, *Jesus and the Jihadis: Confronting the Rage of ISIS*. "What we are seeing today in the Middle East is the result of a very old story," they maintain.

"We cannot effectively oppose the Islamic State without an adequate consideration of their theology, which drives their ideology," the biblical scholars write.

"Much of the discussion, publication, and media attention have suffered from a lack of understanding of Islamic theology, which is a theology of conflict, world conquest, and domination."

Drawing on their extensive study, the authors find that "an honest reading" of the Qu'ran reveals that almost two-thirds of its content is "driven by the question of what to do with the kafir," or unbeliever. "Essential to Islam is the question of how to crush and suppress unbelievers," they warn.

Rather than being a distortion of Muslim belief, "the Islamic State adheres to and embodies the teachings of Muhammad and Islam at its core," Evans and Johnston write. "An honest and close reading of the Islamic holy texts and traditions reveal that Muhammad would not only join the Islamic State, but he would lead it."

And while most moderate Muslims do not support ISIS or other terrorist organizations, few speak out against them in part because they "actually agree with most of the theology that lies behind the ideology," the authors say.

Evans and Johnston teamed up to address the controversial issue in the hope that speaking directly will help Christians be better informed, and promote what they believe is the ultimate answer to the problem of religious terrorism.

"The only hope for a lasting peace in the Middle

East is Jesus and his way, not the coercive, threatening violence of Islam," the pair write, noting how "Jesus blessed the meek and the peacemakers, while Muhammad promoted jihad and violence."

In addition to tracing the roots of ISIS, Evans and Johnston examine the differences between teachings of the Bible and the Qu'ran. They also look at how ISIS has adopted the latest technology to spread its message and recruit members and supporters—such as posting 90,000 social media messages a day.

The collaborators believe that only by speaking directly to the core beliefs driving ISIS will it be possible to challenge and stop the group's growth.

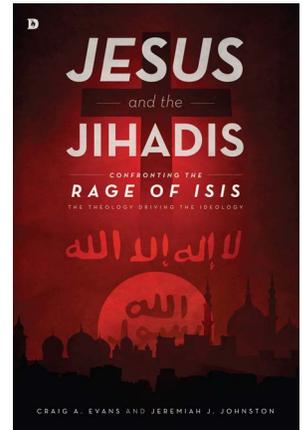
"Almost no one understands what ISIS/radical Islam is," said Evans, the John Bisagno Distinguished Professor of Christian Origins at Houston Baptist University. "Neither Christians nor secularists understand how theologically driven it is. *Jesus and the Jihadis* explains what the movement is and why it is so dangerous."

Founder and president of the Christian Thinkers Society, and an associate professor at Houston Baptist University, Johnston said that he and Evans had been spurred to write their book by "the carnage and devastation at the hands of ISIS, coupled with the widespread ignorance of the church with regards to ISIS and Islam."

The collaborators recognize the uncompromising nature of their book. "ISIS is inflammatory," said Evans. "To challenge it vigorously must run the risk of causing division. What is needed is truth, not crowd-pleasing platitudes and whitewash."

Added Johnston: "We are shining a light on the face of evil, ISIS. However, I am hopeful that readers will find our assessment balanced, truthful, with a redemptive silver-lining that there is a God who loves mankind, accepts humanity, and who is an example to us of loving others sacrificially as ourselves."

Dedicated to the Christians of the Middle East "who have suffered at the hands of the ISIS fanatics," *Jesus and the Jihadis* is published by Destiny Image of Shippensburg, Pa.



Jesus and the Jihadis: Confronting the Rage of ISIS

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MEDIA CONTACT

For press inquiries, interviews, and review copies, please contact

Brad Herman
(717) 532-3040 ext. 172
bherman@norimediagroup.com