

Network for Inter faith Concerns

Christian-Muslim News Digest Issue 3 2011

Christian-Muslim News Digest

Introduction

Welcome to the third issue of the Digest for 2011. This issue focuses on the coverage of the tenth anniversary of “9/11”: the way it was reported in the United States and around the World and the involvement of the church in acts of remembrance. It also reviews two reports from the Pew Research Center and two reports on Islamophobia which were published to coincide with the anniversary.

The two reports from the Pew Research Center are: *Muslim Americans: No Signs of growth in alienation or support for extremism* and *Ten Years after 9/11: United in Remembrance, Divided over Policies*.

The two reports on Islamophobia are: *Islamophobia and Its Impact in the United States January 2009-December 2010: Same Hate, New Target*, from Berkeley Center for Race & Gender, University of California and the Council on American-Islamic Relations; and *Fear, Inc. The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America* from the Center for American Progress.

9/11 anniversary as seen in the USA

The coverage in the United States of events in remembrance of the tenth anniversary of 9/11 was exhaustive. There were special editions of newspapers, and live broadcasts of events from the three sites in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

The major focus was on the Twin Towers’ site, featuring the memorial pools and the reading of the names of all those killed. Mayor Bloomberg’s reported decision not to invite any religious leaders to the event led to discussions in the blogosphere. The event itself was dignified; a portion of Psalm 46, beginning “God is our refuge and strength” was read by the president.

In their wider coverage the media did report on religious services conducted around the country and on the opinions of religious leaders.

Lynette Wilson, writing for the *Episcopalian News Service* “[Presiding bishop preaches 9/11 sermon at St. Paul’s Chapel](#)” (ENS 11th September 2011), reported on the service held at St. Paul’s Chapel, in lower Manhattan, across the street from Ground Zero. This chapel,

[i]n the immediate aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, ... became a staging area and sanctuary for rescue workers, police and firefighters, construction workers, and others who worked “the pit,” as the smouldering remains of the World Trade Center towers came to be called.

During the service, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori asked the congregation ... to pray for those who perpetrated the violence, those who sought vengeance and for the families and friends of those who died in the terrorist attacks 10 years earlier.

In her sermon she said:

We gather here today in peace, yearning and hoping that peace may come in this land and across the world. We gather to remember those who died violently and senselessly 10 years ago today. We gather to reflect on lives lost, families devastated, and hopes dashed. And still we gather in hope for hearts that will grow and learn and change, so that no nation will study war any more.

After the service she told the media:

We will not be healed if we hold hate in our hearts, healing comes through the discovery of common bonds.

Elizabeth Tenety, in an article in *The Washington Post* “What have we learned about religion post-9/11?” (8th September 2011), asked some of “the world’s most influential religious leaders and thinkers” “What have we learned about religion in the past 10 years? What was the spiritual impact of 9/11?” Extracts from their responses are presented:

Rick Warren “There are three lessons to be learned from 9/11. First, life is a gift that is fragile and brief. Whatever you are going to do with your life, you had better get it done. Second, everybody needs community. And thirdly, everybody has a spiritual hole in their heart that only God can fill.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu: “If it were possible for anything to be more devastating than the unnecessary deaths that have accrued over the past 10 years, I would argue that the damage that has been done to global relations between the so-called Judeo-Christian and Muslim worlds must be a candidate.”

Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, who [has] spent much of the last year under sharp critique for his plans to build an Islamic center near Ground Zero, writes, “Americans should come away from the last decade understanding that radical Islam is a small and increasingly spent force.”

The Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori: “The greatest memorial to those who died ten years ago will be a world more inclined toward peace.”

Cardinal Donald Wuerl: “Jesus offers us an answer not only to this great act of violence — now known simply as 9/11 — but also to the very root and source of all such manifestations of hatred.”

T.D. Jakes writes that the lessons of 9/11 are hidden in plain sight. Among them: “We’ve neglected to comprehend that there is more that unites than separates us.”

Yasir Qadhi gives five facts--and five misconceptions--Americans believe today about Islam, including the myth that “Muslims are out to overthrow the Constitution and establish Sharia in America.”

Rabbi David Wolpe: “Faith can be turned to evil when people believe that God’s word is made as small as a resentful heart. Faith can be as large as the sky and [as] healing as a lover’s touch when we understand that God wishes goodness.”

Bishop Gene Robinson, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire, contributed an on-line article [“What Have We Learned in the 10 Years Since 9/11?”](#) (9th September 2011, *Huffington Post*). He relates where he was on the day: on his way to Manhattan, having just landed in New York. He comments:

... marking the 10th anniversary of these events that scarred our nation's soul, it is time to reflect on what we have learned from all this trauma. I fear that the answer is "not much."

Some of us learned to distrust, fear, and even hate other Americans of Middle Eastern descent, not to mention entire countries that have large Arab or Muslim populations. Some of us have added that fear to the ongoing immigration issues our country faces and have concluded that we should circle the wagons against the onslaught of "people like us." The words inscribed on the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free," now seem like a quaint lyric from a Rogers and Hammerstein musical, rather than the living hope and dream that brought us ALL to these shores (never mind those pesky native Americans whom we had to exterminate once we got here).

At the time of the 9/11 crisis, our president wondered aloud, "I can't imagine why anyone could hate America like this?" I was astounded that the president of the United States, while loving this country with all his heart, was unable or unwilling to consider the nuance of U.S. foreign policy and how it could negatively affect the way some people think about our nation. While I believe ours to be the greatest country on earth, one that has done so much to improve the world, I also believe we have much for which we should repent.

Several Muslims wrote about their own experiences following 9/11. One article is by Shibli Zaiman [“Twenty Years in September”](#) (11th September 2011, *Suhaibwebb*) who ten years ago visited Saudi Arabia in an attempt to understand the actions of Osama bin Laden. He ends his piece by saying:

I remember lying in bed in my hotel room, in a hotel allegedly once owned by Osama bin Ladin, writing an apology to my beloved fellow Americans for the hapless events of 9/11. ... These are the words I wanted to say then, but it took me 10 years to find them.

I am sorry, America. I am sorry that I couldn't stop what happened. I am sorry that the murderers claimed to share my religion in some twisted and perverted way I am truly sorry. However, I will not allow anyone to blame me for it. I empathize and suffer with you, my beloved country. Yet please know this: If it was in my power, I would stop my fellow Muslim from causing even the slightest injustice against you, regardless of your race or religion, to the utmost of [my] ability.

Some groups tried to use the event to raise the spectre of Islamophobia; one event was planned for Franklin, Tennessee, to be held on 9/11/2011. Lucas L. Johnson II in an article for *Associated Press*, "[Tennessee. 9/11 event features anti-Islamic speakers](#)" 7th September 2011, reported:

A 9/11 event in Tennessee with a roster of speakers linked to anti-Islamic efforts and a policy to ban news coverage is provoking questions from a national advocacy group concerned it's more of a "Muslim-bashing session."

A poster advertising the Sunday event in Franklin is titled "Remembering 911 ..." in bold large letters, then states in smaller print further down: "No audio recording, video, or photography allowed. No media. Photo ID required for admission." Additionally, it lists individuals and groups invited to attend the event, including two Tennessee lawmakers who introduced a bill to ban Shariah — Islamic law — and three others who have made headlines for their anti-Muslim views.

Perhaps unsurprisingly with media barred from the event, we have no reports of how well it was attended and what was discussed.

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9/11 anniversary as seen around the World

The anniversary of 9/11 was commemorated in many parts of the World. The media, in addition to coverage of events in the United States of America, also reported on local events.

United Kingdom

The Archbishop of Canterbury recalled how he had been in New York, two blocks from the Twin Towers: "The first thing we wanted to do, of course, was to sit and pray, and that's what we did ... we did that as we heard the unforgettable noise of the first tower coming down."

The Guardian reported "[9/11 anniversary: services and ceremonies held throughout UK](#)", (11th September 2011) on the range of services which were held:

Church services and ceremonies, including services at St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, were held across Britain to commemorate the 67 Britons among the 2,977 who died in the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

Relatives of the victims attended a service at the Grosvenor chapel, near the US embassy in London, where the deputy US ambassador, Barbara Stephenson, lit a memorial candle.

Canon Jim Rosenthal said: "Remembering such horrific scenes is not easy. But remembrance is not static – it's a constantly growing and evolving action, which gives us the opportunity to take hold of the past and transform it to reach out with grace, understanding and healing."

UK firefighters laid a wreath at the memorial outside Westminster Abbey in memory of the 243 members of the New York fire department who were killed.

The day ended with a service of remembrance and reconciliation at Westminster Abbey. The service also marks Awareness Sunday, part of a campaign by the Awareness Foundation, an international charity founded in 2003 in response to the rise in religious conflict and violence across the world.

There were also ceremonies and services in Exeter, Birmingham, Plymouth, Truro and in Northern Ireland. In Scotland, faith leaders and politicians were planning to join a peace walk in Edinburgh; the deputy first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, was due to attend an inter-faith service at Cathcart Old

Parish church in Glasgow and the first minister, Alex Salmond, was due to attend a service at St Nicholas Kirk in Aberdeen.

In London, during the memorial service in Grosvenor Square, a group of Muslims protested, whilst a counter demonstration also of Muslims opposed them. The *Daily Mail* "[100 protesters burn American flag outside U.S. embassy in London during minute's silence for 9/11](#)" (12th September 2011) reported:

A group of 100 Muslim radicals, including members of Muslims Against Crusades, shouted 'USA terrorists' and brandished anti-American placards. One protester in Grosvenor Square said: 'You will always face suffering, you will always face humiliation, unless you withdraw your troops from Muslim lands.'

A small group of Muslims staged a counter-demonstration nearby, holding up placards reading 'Muslims Against Extremism' and 'If You Want Sharia, Move To Saudi'.

The *Daily Telegraph* "[9/11: Radical Islamists burn US flag in London protest](#)" (12th September 2011) also reported the incident, mentioning that:

A number of radical Islamic groups including Muslims Against Crusades (MAC) gathered outside the US embassy on the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. The group of around 100 men shouted "USA terrorists", brandished anti-American placards and chanted through a loud hailer. ... A moderate group of Muslims opposing the extremist protests were also in attendance, as were roughly 60 members of the English Defence League.

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The Middle East

The media used the opportunity to reflect on the connections between the aftermath of 9/11 and the "Arab Spring". *The Guardian* "[9/11 anniversary: across the Islamic world opinion is against the militants](#)" (8th September 2011), gathered opinions from a large number of people:

For Saadine Lamzoua, 25, a Moroccan journalist in Rabat who watched 9/11 unfold on al-Jazeera, religion has become more important in his life. "It gives me a sense of belonging to a very large community and brotherhood with people from different countries and races with whom I share the same faith," he said.

[On conspiracy theories] in Saudi Arabia, a wealthy female university lecturer and a 44-year-old male labourer both said it was "too early to be sure" who was responsible for 9/11. ... "It can't have been Arabs. You need a powerful organisation to do that. And you have to look to see who has gained the most benefit," the lecturer said. A Moroccan businessman, Nourdean, 57, described al-Qaida as "puppets".

Some, even after so many years of violence, reveal a guarded optimism for the future, in part due to the Arab Spring. For the journalist Salah-Ahmed, as for most Egyptians, the events of 9/11 are made more distant by this year's dramatic political upheavals, which she believes could have a lasting impact on global power structures. "A few months ago I could have listed the major events of the past decade in order of importance – but then the revolution came along and overshadowed everything that's happened since 2000."

Ismail Gad, 41, an Egyptian clothes shop owner, said his life had improved during the decade. "I'm now married, I have two kids, and Egypt has had a revolution. Terrorism seems [now] to have been reduced and in many ways things feel safer and more secure."

The long-term influence of 9/11 is reflected in a piece by Larbi Sadiki "[Ten years later, 9/11 continues to condition our thinking, being, behaviour, and identity](#)" (11th September 2011), in *Al Jazeera*:

[Bush and Blair] left power, but they have not vanquished the imagined or real enemy that they constructed out of 9/11. The real enemy is hatred, distrust, and misunderstanding. It is a myth to think that hard power alone defends nation-states in the modern world.

The biggest loser, even with bin Laden killed and al-Qaeda partially weakened, is the United States. In 1956 the US emerged as a beacon of hope and justice, breathing life once again into Wilsonian idealism, when then-president Dwight Eisenhower spoke out against the tripartite aggression against Egypt. Despite its lack of evenhandedness and its unfettered bankrolling and arming of Israel, the US had never so unjustifiably invaded an Arab state as it did in March 2003. The resulting regimes of securitisation and militarisation that flowed from that invasion have not been dismantled. The Arab Gulf, where the US maintains bases, is the most securitised region in the world. This will always draw opposition, rejection and low-key forms of anti-American violence. The US' new status as a colonial and imperialist power is aggravated by its moral failure in handling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel does not only kill with American hardware and approval, but is also implicated in the war against terror. Its fight against Hamas and Hezbollah during the 9/11 decade have surpassed all reasonable and proportionate rules of military engagement.

Neither the violence of Hamas nor the belligerence of Hezbollah justifies the bombing and siege of Gaza, nor the bombing of Lebanon. The indifference of the prophets of democracy in light of the Libya revelations expose the hollow and self-interested moralism of the likes of Tony Blair.

The upshot is that the 9/11 decade not only killed 100 times more Middle Eastern or Muslim people than were killed on 9/11. It also cemented the ties between democratically-elected Western leaders and some of the worst ruling elites in the Arab region: Gaddafi, Ben Ali, Mubarak, Dahlan, Saif al-Islam. Fake democrats kept this great company of autocrats and demagogues in power. Luckily, the Arab Spring tsunami came early in 2011 to sweep away the mediocrity that was Ben Ali and his peers.

The memorialisation and moralisation used to entrench and formalise realist politics, and the consequence of this armament and the arms bazaars, in consortium with Arab capitalists and dictators, has interfered with imagined communities.

Fluidity, borderlessness, and networks of self-help and mutuality have all been vandalised since the beginning of the 9/11 decade. The tradition of *sadaqa*, voluntary alms-giving, is now policed. The FBI regulates how this is done, and in every Arab state, sending money to loved ones has become a nightmare. *Hawala*, the money transfers many Muslims depend on for sending remittances, has been almost criminalised. How Muslims spend their private money, and to whom they send it, is all implicated in the 9/11 puzzle.

In an article "[US Response to 9/11 Taints Muslim Image of America](#)" for *Voice of America* (29th August 2011), Brian Padden reported on Muslim attitudes in various places:

It has been 10 years now since Islamic terrorists attacked the United States and focused the world's attention on America's relationship with the Muslim world. Most Muslims around the world condemned the September 11 terrorists' attacks on the United States in 2001. But many consider the U.S. response to the terror attacks far worse: The ensuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. NATO's military intervention in Libya. And support for regimes that use the threat of terrorism to justify suppressing dissent.

This too often overshadows America's efforts supporting freedom and democratic values, says Steven Kull, the director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland.

"There's the bad America that doesn't always live up to those values and is seen as being unfriendly to Islam, ready to use military force irrespective of international law and not promoting democracy," Kull said.

Esam El-Erian is a leader of the conservative Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, a group that was once banned for opposing the military-led rule of Hosni Mubarak.

He argues that U.S. military operations kill more people than Islamic terrorists and that using force to bring stability and impose democracy in Muslim countries is a failure.

"Defeated in Afghanistan, yes. They failed to reconstruct a nation. Defeated in Iraq, yes. They failed to build a model of democracy," El-Erian said.

Opinion polls show that President Barak Obama's efforts to engage the Muslim world have had little impact on such attitudes.

In Tunisia, some criticize the U.S. for not offering enough support to pro-democracy groups, but

this man detects a change in American policy.

"The Americans are starting to have an interest in Tunisia, even becoming passionate. I have the impression they will help the Tunisians and are beginning to," one Tunisian said. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has indicated the U.S. is ready to take a step in that direction and engage Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, but Esam El-Erian says so far there has been no contact. Ten years have passed since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and Muslim attitudes about America remain a causality of the war of terror.

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Pakistan

The media in Pakistan reflected on their own nation's situation as a result of the invasion of Afghanistan, the "War on Terror" and the government's apparent complicity in concealing the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden. The government of Pakistan placed an advertisement in the *Wall Street Journal* on 9/11 in an attempt to demonstrate that they were engaged in "the war for world peace". NDTV reported on this: "[Furore over Pakistan's 9/11 advertisement in US paper](#)" (13th September 2011) explaining that the half-page advertisement:

... lists several statistics aimed at highlighting the impact of the 9/11 attacks - and the subsequent war in Afghanistan - on Pakistan. Through this ad, the Pakistan government touts its efforts against Al Qaeda and praises itself for its role in America's war on terror. In fact, it even goes on to suggest that Pakistan is fighting terror for the rest of the world.

In the advertisement, which has a picture of the assassinated former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan asks, "Which country can do more for your peace?"

It goes on to give statistics of bomb blasts and assassination plots against Pakistani leaders and civilian and military casualties that a "nation of 180 million" suffered while "fighting for the future of world's seven billion". The advertisement notes that despite sacrifices, the country is still engaged in "the war for world peace". "Can any other country do so? Only Pakistan," it adds.

The advertisement has invited flak from all quarters and has not gone down well with most readers. Some are calling the ad a "joke" and questioning how a country where Osama bin Laden was hiding safely for years can "claim to be a victim of terrorism".

An editorial in *Times of Pakistan* "[Back to square one](#)" (13th September 2011), reflects on the cost to Pakistan of all that has followed 9/11:

The world stood by the Americans in their hour of grief. They all agreed that the perpetrators of these heinous attacks must be punished but there was a difference of opinion even then on how the US should go about it. That 9/11 changed the world is common knowledge. What remains to be seen is whether the measures used to avenge 9/11 were appropriate or not.

With hindsight we can say that the US invasion of Afghanistan following Mullah Omar's refusal to hand over al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden was akin to killing a fly with a sledgehammer. The fly got away from Tora Bora, only to be found almost 10 years later in Abbottabad. But the virus it left behind is something that leaves no country in the world unaffected. What went wrong in these 10 years that led the world from being with the US to an increasing anti-Americanism worldwide, especially in the Muslim world?

To say that this is only because of religious affiliations is wrong. The sense of solidarity in the Muslim world is largely cultural, not religious. What imperialism has done to the third world is a historical fact and continuing reality. The memory of humiliation awakens and is refreshed every day for the victims of imperialist interventions (past and present).

The anti-colonial movements were led by the local elites, who turned out to be a disappointment for their followers later on. Even revolutionary nationalist movements failed as their leaders turned out to be corrupt and morally bereft. Extremists filled the vacuum of a lack of leadership in the Muslim world and used religion to advance their agenda. Following the US invasion of Afghanistan, the

extremists got an added advantage: now they had reason to justify their fanaticism. The means applied to resolve the al Qaeda conundrum were used without weighing the consequences, intended or unintended.

While paying tributes to the victims of 9/11, the world should not have forgotten millions of innocent lives lost in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and other countries. They were the consequent victims of this war. They too were human beings, they too had families, yet the world does not mourn or commemorate their deaths. Pakistan's Foreign Office said that Pakistan is severely affected by terrorism. Despite our security establishment's double-edged policy of supporting the jihadis and the Taliban, the real victims of terrorism are the common citizens of this country.

There is a need for introspection for the western world as well: those responsible for war mongering and war crimes are still free. George W Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Tony Blair, among others, should be punished for their crimes.

Asad Hashim writing in *Al Jazeera*, "[Pakistan Adrift: A review of the 10 years since the September 11, 2001, attacks for a country that has weathered more crises than most](#)" (2nd September 2011):

The last 10 years have been something less than kind to Pakistan. Since it was famously told that it either stood with the United States in its "War on Terror" or faced being bombed "back to the Stone Age" in 2001, it has lost 35,000 citizens to "terror"-related attacks and violence, with 3,500 of those being security forces and military personnel who were either targeted by militant groups or were killed during military operations. To put that second number in context, it is 30 per cent higher than NATO military casualties in the war in Afghanistan in the same period.

It has endured countless attacks against both civilian targets (including mosques) and state personnel and infrastructure, peace deals with militant groups in its largely ungoverned tribal areas (invariably followed by the breakdown of said deals), the storming of a radical seminary in the capital by the army (the Lal Masjid episode of 2008), the emergence of a Pakistani-target centric militant network (the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan), al-Qaeda's designation of it as its primary enemy worldwide, the imposition of *Sharia* law in Swat, and a subsequent military operation in the valley, as well as similar operations in South Waziristan, Orakzai, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Kurram and Swat itself on an earlier occasion; elsewhere, the government used armed tribal "lashkars" to fight extremist groups. It has seen the killing of arguably the country's most nationally popular leader in a suicide-bombing-and-shooting attack at a political rally, more bombings against civilians, the assassinations of a provincial governor and a federal minister for opposing a controversial blasphemy law, the killing of a major Baloch separatist leader in a state military operation, an expanded US drone strike campaign since 2009 killing an estimated 2,309 people, of whom at least 392 were civilians, and the killing of the world's most wanted man, Osama bin Laden, on the doorstep of the country's military academy in a covert strike by US special forces.

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Malaysia

In addition to reflective pieces such as Umapagan Ampikaipakan's writing in the *New Straits Times* "[America looks inwards to try to regain its virtues](#)" (11th September 2011), looking at the effect of 9/11 on the United States, it was also reported by AFP "[Malaysia's Mahathir: 9/11 not work of Muslims](#)" (11th September 2011), that:

The long-serving former Malaysian premier Mahathir Mohamad says Arab Muslims are incapable of carrying out the 9/11 attacks on the United States that killed nearly 3,000 people.

The ageing firebrand, who was in power in Malaysia at the time of the attacks and stepped down in 2003 after 22 years in power, slammed former US president George W. Bush ahead of the 10-year anniversary Sunday of 9/11.

Washington blames the attacks on Al-Qaeda. "Bush lied about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction... If they can lie so as to kill Iraqis, Afghans and American soldiers, it is not unthinkable

for Bush & Co. to lie about who was responsible for 9/11," the 86-year-old wrote in his blog on Friday.

Listing ... reasons in line with a conspiracy theory that the US government was behind the attacks, he wrote the Twin Towers in New York "came down nicely upon themselves".

"I believe Arab Muslims are angry enough to sacrifice their lives and become suicide bombers. But they or their handlers do not strike me as capable of planning and strategising such attacks so as to maximise the damage to the enemy," he said.

Mahathir, a fierce critic of the West, is known for his anti-Jewish and anti-American statements in Muslim-majority Malaysia.

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Pew Research Center reports

The Pew Research Center has produced two reports on attitudes in the United States about Islam and the events of 9/11. The first surveyed American Muslims, up-dating a survey conducted in 2007, whilst the second surveyed all sections of society on attitudes to government policies and security ten years after 9/11.

The first, [*Muslim Americans No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism*](#), is a detailed survey of Muslim Americans, seeking to assess "the attitudes, opinions and experiences of this growing segment of U.S. society" (Preface). In-depth interviews were conducted with around 1000 respondents, using English, Arabic, Urdu and Farsi to ensure wider coverage. The respondents were asked around 100 questions (Appendix pages 99-127) which examined the state and attitudes of Muslim Americans. They estimate that the number of Muslims in the United States is 2.75 million, an increase of 400,000 since their previous survey in 2007.

The survey gives a demographic portrait of Muslim Americans (Section 1: A Demographic Portrait of Muslim Americans, pages 13-21). The survey found that among adults 37% had been born in the United States and 63% had been born abroad and that 25% had arrived in the United States since 2000. Of those interviewed, 81% had US citizenship; of those who did not hold citizenship most had not yet fulfilled residence requirements. The survey estimates that 55% of the Muslim population is male and 45% is female. This is different from the gender ratio amongst the general public (48% male, 52% female).

The survey found that 65% of Muslims in the United States identify with Sunni Islam, 11% identify with Shia Islam whilst 15% of those interviewed had no specific affiliation. This last group was higher amongst native-born Muslims (24%) compared with Muslims born in other countries (10%) (Section 2: Religious Beliefs and Practices, pages 23-31).

Other sections examine Identity, Assimilation and Community (Section 3, pages 33-41); Challenges, Worries and Concerns (Section 4, pages 43-51); Political Opinions and Social Values (Section 5, pages 53-63); Terrorism, Concerns about Extremism and Foreign Policy (Section 6, pages 65-74).

The Overview (pages 1-12) summarises the findings and raises the following issues:

A significant minority (21%) of Muslim Americans say there is a great deal (6%) or a fair amount (15%) of support for extremism in the Muslim American community. That is far below the proportion of the general public (40%) that sees at least a fair amount of support for extremism among U.S. Muslims. And whereas about a quarter of the public (24%) thinks that Muslim support for extremism is increasing, just 4% of Muslims agree.

Many Muslims fault their own leaders for failing to challenge Islamic extremists. Nearly half (48%) say that Muslim leaders in the United States have not done enough to speak out against Islamic extremists; only about a third (34%) say Muslim leaders have done enough in challenging extremists. At the same time 68% say that Muslim Americans themselves are cooperating as much as they should with law enforcement (page 1).

For Muslims in the United States, concerns about Islamic extremism coexist with the view that life for Muslim Americans in post-9/11 America is difficult in a number of ways. Significant numbers report being looked at with suspicion (28%), and being called offensive names (22%). While 21%

report being singled out by airport security, 13% say they have been singled out by other law enforcement [agencies]. Overall, a 52% majority says that government anti-terrorism policies single out Muslims in the U.S. for increased surveillance and monitoring (page 2).

A comparatively small percentage of Muslim Americans express favorable views of al Qaeda – 2% very favorable and 3% somewhat favorable. The current poll finds more Muslim Americans holding very unfavorable views of al Qaeda than in 2007 (70% vs. 58%).

There is much greater opposition to suicide bombing – and more highly negative views of al Qaeda – among Muslims in the United States than among Muslims in most of the seven predominantly Muslim countries surveyed by the Pew Global Attitudes Project. In the Palestinian territories, 68% of Muslims say suicide bombing and other forms of violence are at least sometimes justified, as do 35% of Muslims in Lebanon and 28% of those in Egypt.

[The second report *Ten Years after 9/11: United in Remembrance, Divided over Policies*](#) is a survey of 1,500 American adults, drawn from across the whole country and all sections of society, who were contacted in mid-August 2011. It finds that:

The public offers generally positive ratings of the government's response to the terrorist threat. Yet when asked why there has not been another major attack on the U.S., 43% credit government policies while only somewhat fewer (35%) say it is because the country has been lucky so far. Overall, most think terrorists have either the same (39%) or an even greater (23%) ability to launch another major attack on the U.S. today as they did ten years ago. Just 35% think it is harder for terrorists to reach us today. Despite the killing of Osama bin Laden, as many say the U.S. has not captured or killed most of those responsible for the 9/11 attacks as say it has (47% vs. 45%). Moreover, only about a quarter say the wars in Iraq (26%) and Afghanistan (25%) have lessened the chances of terrorist attacks in the United States. In both cases majorities say the wars either have increased the risk of terrorism in this country or made no difference.

A decade after 9/11, most Americans reject the argument that the attacks triggered a "clash of civilizations" between the West and the Muslim world. Nearly six-in-ten (57%) say the Sept. 11 attacks led to conflict with a small, radical group, while 35% say they began a major conflict between people in the West and the people of Islam.

Yet Americans' concerns about Islamic extremism, both in the United States and around the world, remain extensive. Two thirds (67%) say they are very or somewhat concerned about the possible rise of Islamic extremism in this country, while 73% are at least somewhat concerned about the rise of Islamic extremism around the world (Pages 1-2).

The media coverage of these reports was generally balanced. Carol Morello in ["Muslim Americans say life is more difficult since 9/11"](#) (30th August 2011 *Washington Post*) stated that:

[A] majority of Muslims say the terrorist attacks made it more difficult to be a Muslim in the United States. Many said that they had been singled out by airport security officers and that people had acted suspicious of them or called them offensive names. But half also said Americans had been friendly toward them, and three-quarters expressed faith that with hard work, they could get ahead.

In an *Associated Press* report, ["US Muslims find selves target of monitoring, abuse yet poll reveals satisfaction in life, home"](#), (31st August 2011, *Boston Globe*) Hope Yen reports that Ibrahim Hooper, spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, a Muslim civil rights group based in Washington, D.C., as saying that the findings of the report:

Confirm what we've said all along: American Muslims are well integrated and happy, but with a kind of lingering sense of being besieged by growing anti-Muslim sentiment in our society.

References

Muslim Americans No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism

<http://people-press.org/2011/08/30/muslim-americans-no-signs-of-growth-in-alienation-or-support-for-extremism/>

Ten Years after 9/11: United in Remembrance, Divided over Policies

<http://people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/9-1-11%20Sept.%2011%20Release.pdf>

Carol Morello "Muslim Americans say life is more difficult since 9/11", 30th August 2011 *Washington Post*

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Hope Yen "US Muslims find selves target of monitoring, abuse yet poll reveals satisfaction in life, home", 31st August 2011, *Associated Press/Boston Globe* http://articles.boston.com/2011-08-31/news/29950131_1_muslim-americans-american-muslims-muslim-extremists

Islamophobia in the US: Two Reports

The events of 9/11 led to a rise in suspicion about Muslims in many parts of the world and in the United States in particular. Two reports have been published which look at the impact of Islamophobia in the United States.

The first was by the Berkeley Center for Race & Gender, University of California, and the Council on American-Islamic Relations. Their research was published as [*Islamophobia and Its Impact in the United States January 2009-December 2010: Same Hate, New Target*](#) and found that "America is not an Islamophobic nation, but it has Islamophobic elements". The report states:

The public's favorable rating of Islam sank from 40% in November 2001 to 30% in August 2010; In late November 2010, ... 45 percent of Americans agree that Islam is at odds with American values; A Time magazine poll released in August 2010 found, "Twenty-eight percent of voters do not believe Muslims should be eligible to sit on the U.S. Supreme Court. Nearly one-third of the country thinks adherents of Islam should be barred from running for President....

The report gives the best examples of people who are working to reduce Islamophobia (pages 13-15) and the worst examples of people who are actively promoting it (pages 16-21). It also documents examples of Islamophobic acts that occurred during 2009-2010, the survey period (pages 25-28), and Anti-Muslim discrimination (pages 29-36).

In addition to documenting best and worst practice it also draws up suggestions of good practice for Muslim individuals and institutes to counter Islamophobia.

The second report is by the Center for American Progress, a non-partisan research and educational institute based in Washington D.C. Their report, [*Fear Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America*](#), was published in August 2001. Faiz Shakir, one of the authors, says that the report:

... reveals that more than \$42 million from seven foundations over the past decade have helped fan the flames of anti-Muslim hate in America. ... [and] lifts the veil behind the hate, follows the money, and identifies the names of foundations who have given money, how much they have given, and who they have given to.

The report looks at the sources of funding, naming various groups and individuals who have donated over \$40 million over the last ten years to fund an "Islamophobia network". It also names "five misinformation experts" who, they say,

... generate the false facts and materials used by political leaders, grassroots groups, and the media ... [and] travel the country and work with or testify before state legislatures calling for a ban on the nonexistent threat of Sharia law in America and proclaiming that the vast majority of mosques in our country harbor Islamist terrorists or sympathizers.

In their Introduction they draw attention to initial speculation following Anders Breivik's attacks in Norway on 22nd July 2011 whereby mainstream media referred to an Al Qaeda or jihadist connection. When Breivik's manifesto was examined, it contained numerous references and quotations from 'American bloggers and pundits, quoting them as experts on Islam's "war against the West."

The report then goes on to say:

This small group of anti-Muslim organizations and individuals in our nation is obscure to most Americans but wields great influence in shaping the national and international political debate (Page 1).

The report looks at the "reach" and "impact" of the "misinformation experts".

There has been relatively little media coverage of the report, but its sentiments concur with the concerns of others. In an article posted by Grace Nasri, "[The Surge in Islamophobia](#)" on the *Huffington Post* website, she quotes the Berkeley Center and CAIR report, that:

... vandalism, Islamophobic rhetoric and violence targeting Muslims and their places of worship has risen considerably, and in some cases more than doubled, between 2009 and 2010.

She also quotes the Pew Research Center Report (see above). In addition she helpfully quotes a recent book, [*The Future of Islam and Islamophobia and the Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century*](#) edited by John Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin (2011, Oxford University Press):

The anti-Shariah movement is simply the latest wave of anti-Islam and anti-Muslim bigotry and prejudice. Organizations like ACT[! For America] (which describes its mission as mobilizing Americans in response to "the multiple threats of radical Islam") and Mr. Yerushalmi, who has been

the major force behind the anti-Shariah movement, politicians in mainstream parties, particularly Republicans like Newt Gingrich, Herman Cain, and Christian Zionist preachers exploit what in fact is a non-issue. Shariah has never superseded US constitutional law. ... Moreover, there has been no Muslim movement nor major Muslim organization who has advocated implementing Islamic law in place of American constitutional law.

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Berkeley Center for Race & Gender, University of California and the Council on American-Islamic Relations *Islamophobia and Its Impact in the United States January 2009-December 2010: Same Hate, New Target* <http://pa.cair.com/files/CAIR%20Islamophobia%20Report%20-%20Same%20Hate,%20New%20Target.pdf>

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Grace Nasri "The Surge in Islamophobia", 2nd September 2011, Huffington Post http://www.huffingtonpost.com/grace-nasri/the-surge-in-islamophobia_b_939910.html

John Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin (eds.) *The Future of Islam and Islamophobia and the Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century* (2011, Oxford University Press)

A Final Word

This issue of the Digest has concentrated on one topic which has had a major impact on Christian-Muslim relations over the last ten years. The repercussions of that event have led to many other events, many of them negative.

The final issue of the year will cover events in the Middle East and the 'Arab Spring', on Sudan six months after the birth of the new state, and an update on the situation in Nigeria.