

# Bible in the Age of Religious Radicalism: An Enigma or Assistive Literature

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## Abstract

Religious radicalism is a serious phenomenon that is dotting our age. Terrorism is currently the world's major threat to peace. Unfortunately, terrorism is increasingly being linked to religious radicalism than to any other ideology, economic, political or any other. The solutions being offered for terrorism in the world scene are mainly military interventions. Unfortunately, many of these methods have not turned to religious text for solutions. Noting this gap, this paper aims at evaluating the usefulness and usability of the Bible in countering the ideology of religious radicalism. By employing library research, this paper uses postcolonial biblical hermeneutics to orientate the gospel of Mark to terrorism studies paying particular attention to its theme of discipleship. Data is analysed through exegesis and philosophical analysis to conclude that religious radicalism is not a preserve of one religion but cuts across all religions and one religion's resources can overtly be useful in subverting the effects of religious radicalism caused by another religion.

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## 1. Introduction

Religious radicalism which is closely allied to contemporary terrorism is a serious phenomenon that is plaguing our age. Terrorism is currently the world's major threat to peace. Terrorism is linked more to religious radicalism (which is defined later) than it is linked to economic, political or any other ideology. However, the solutions being offered for terrorism in the world scene are mainly military in nature rather than religious. In Kenya, many counter terrorism measures have been suggested and implemented including surveillance, reporting issues to 'hotlines,' security checks, and anti-terrorism trials. However, major methods for curbing or mitigating the effects of terrorism have not seriously considered religious texts as sources for solutions. In fact, many anti-terrorism seminars recurrently offered in institutions of learning in Kenya hardly resort to any religious texts (whether the Quran or the Bible) as dialogue partners in the war against terrorism. In light of that gap, this paper evaluates the utility of the Bible in countering the ideology of religious radicalism. It employs postcolonial biblical hermeneutics as its theoretical orientation to interrogate the gospel of Mark, paying particular attention to the theme of discipleship. In doing so, it reviews the Jesus movement and the possibility that it could have employed clandestine movement tactics in its organization; similar to terrorist groups.

The results of such inquiry have been generalized to the New Testament and, by extension, to the entire Bible and other religious texts. This paper recognizes that religious radicalism is not the preserve of one religion, but cuts across all religions. Nevertheless, one religion can be useful in subverting the effects of religious radicalism caused by another religion.

Recognizing the need to address religious radicalization and the reading gap between religious literature and radicalization, this paper calls for developing effective resources of counter-language to speak to the ideological merchants of the empire of radicalization and terrorism. The central argument is that whereas the biblical logic could be attuned to radicalizing literature, it can also be a source for the identification of assistive language for counter-radicalization and de-radicalization. In this way the paper introduces pro-active rather than re-active measures in the war against terrorism.

The thrust of such reflections on violence and religion in the biblical tradition is that the predominant Christian community in Kenya will understand that the problem of terrorism is not peculiar to Islam, but can also be found in attitudes and assumptions that are deeply embedded in Jewish and Christian scriptures.

## 2 Readings in Terrorism

When considering contemporary scholarly discourses on terrorism, in the overall, what is noticeable is that a field known as 'terrorism studies' has developed as part of the strategy to combat terrorism. However, most terrorism studies remain rudimentary – especially for those concerned about terrorism in Kenya – because religious texts and African voices are to a large extent not taken into account. Terrorism studies are not recent phenomena. According to David C. Rapoport (1984:658), writings on terrorism keep fluctuating with the rise and fall of terrorist activities. Therefore, terrorism is not a new mode of conflict and writings about it are not restricted to the recent past. It is important to note that though there has been a resurgence of writings in this field, much of it reflects the post September 11 period. Internationally, September 11 has become synonymous with the day terrorism made a

huge intrusion onto American space by means of one of the worst attacks in world history.

Key writers on terrorism, including Walter Laqueur (1996:24), acknowledge that much of the writing on terrorism focuses on issues such as international politics and what is referred to as the “clash of civilizations” between the Arab/Islamic East and secular/Christian democracies in the West. According to Shadia Drury (2003:14), another noticeable trajectory in terrorism studies and writings is the association of Islam with terrorism. Many scholars, mainly from the West and especially in the post September 11 era, have constrictively focussed their writings on Islam and the Quran, trying to demonstrate its close affinity with terrorism, much to the detriment of a whole culture and religion.

What is obviously noticeable, however, is the absence of references to the Bible specifically, and Christianity generally on matters related to terrorism. And when these writings do appear, the smallest number comes from the African continent. A tentative explanation for the two scenarios regarding writings on violence and terrorism could probably be lodged in the fact that interpreters of the Bible and Christianity are also its primary adherents. It is not expressly clear why African, and especially East African, biblical scholars’ voices would be absent from discourse on terrorism given that the region has experienced a series of serious terrorist attacks. In East African Christianity, the Bible and terrorism cohabit as alien compatriots, not unlike the still naively inchoate blend of African Religion and Bible Christianity.

That being said, it is important to note that Western thinkers (e.g. Laquer, Kainz, Drury among others), mostly Americans after September 11, have written interesting writings on Bible and terrorism and in the ensuing discourse this paper on several occasions draws on some of their conceptualizations. Suffice it to note that the main assertion in their writings is that it is no longer feasible to exclude or exonerate the Bible with regard to matters of violence and terrorism, precisely because the Bible bespeaks much violence and terrorism.

Right from the beginning, however, there is need to avoid the danger of conflating the categories of Bible and Terrorism indiscriminately. In the opinions of Mudimbe and Apphia (1992:152), it is difficult to capture the two categories within a single definition. For that reason, there is need to define precisely what is meant by Bible and what is meant by Terrorism. There is also need to avoid the “invention” of definitions that fit only into our particular mind sets. Hence the need to be aware of the generalizations that characterize much of terrorism scholarship. It is therefore necessary to include in this inquiry the parameters for the broad categories being cited and, in particular, the terrorist category.

### 3 Understanding Religious Terrorism

Due to its constant mutation, terrorism as it is constituted today can be termed as a new and unprecedented phenomenon being also one of the most important and dangerous problems facing humanity. Until recently, the attitude towards terrorism in Kenya and in Sub-Saharan Africa generally, has been one of benign neglect because its effects were assumed to be beyond immediate contacts and boundaries. Although terrorist attacks can be dated to 1998 with sporadic recurrence since then, it is only recently that Kenya has definitely been described a “hotbed” of terrorism. Therefore, the understanding of this relatively “new” phenomenon becomes of paramount importance.

Without delving deeply into the etymological definitions of terrorism which would take us to 1798 when according to Laqueur (1987:11) it’s meaning in the French dictionary was given, first with a positive connotation and later associated with abuse and criminality. However, it is important first to note the difficulty in defining terrorism, which according to Long lies in the fact that over time “the term has been employed in many ways to designate a whole range of activities that make people feel threatened” (2004:1). It is not surprising, therefore, that in Long’s view, the distinctive features of terrorism are lost or submerged in a cloud of “rhetorical confusion” (2004:1).

Fully aware of this “rhetorical confusion” or ambiguity, it is therefore important to state that terrorism is ideological; it is expressed in behaviour that uses violence to create fear in order to further some purpose. It differs from other forms of violence as traditionally described because it is activated by faceless, behind-the-scenes, perpetrators. Like accidents, it occurs without predictability, but frightens people more than accidents do because it is driven by anger and malice. Again, terrorism is premeditated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by clandestine agents with the intention of influencing a target audience. Terrorist activities are intended to be felt by the victims, but even more to be seen by others and thus achieve a modicum of publicity.

J. Daryl Charles (2005:151) has defined terrorism as a deliberate violation of established moral norms; it is perpetrated by people who perceive themselves to be marginalized. According to him, all terrorists are united by the conviction that they are engaged in a form of vigilante justice. The inclusion of religious elements is what distinguishes religious terror from other terrors. Grant Wardlaw (1989:16) offers a more comprehensive definition, which avoids the common mistake of attributing terrorism exclusively to extremist groups rather than to states: in his view, terrorism can be seen as “the use, or threat of use, of violence by an individual or a group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety and/or fear-inducing effects in a target group larger than the immediate victims, with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political demands of the perpetrators” (1989:16). The importance of such a view is that it notes

that governments or legal entities can function as instruments or perpetrators of terror.

It is understandable therefore, to agree with Long (1987:8), that “terrorism is likely to remain the subject of considerable misunderstanding and misinterpretation.” However, we need to go further than Long to argue that researchers will soon realize that there is not one, but different types of terrorisms. According to Laqueur (1987:6), although some schools of thought claim that terrorism is a natural response to injustice, oppression and persecution, and can therefore be reduced to grievances, it important to recognize others who claim that terrorists are mostly fanatical believers driven to despair by intolerable conditions.

There are many other definitions which view terrorism in either positive or negative light. What is noticeable, however, is that there is paradox involved in the methodologies involved in the study of terrorism. In as much as the basic issues involved are straightforward, there is something about terrorism that eschews neat categories. It is important also to note that none of the existing definitions can capture all that should be included in an adequate definition of terrorism; this being occasioned by the mutating nature of terrorism, thanks to differing motivations, changing demands and changing tactics. Every day terrorism mutates and dons a new face, hence Kainz (1999:40) calls for revised definitions that also recognize the emergence of terrorism as increasingly a faceless phenomenon. Together with all that has been noted, the definition of religious terrorism can be conceived as an act couched in religion, assuming the approval of the divine, justifying the disturbance or invasion of the peace of defenceless masses in order to make an external, divinely pre-meditated statement. Such acts of violence find their primary justification in religious texts.

The definition thus adduced channels terrorism to religious space. Within this space or domain, it can further be noted that religious terrorism is triggered at the point where in God’s name justification is adduced for the annihilation of the ‘other.’ Othering in postcolonial categories considers that binary exclusions are taken into account in the classification of identities. This point is further illumined by turning to the text.

#### **4 Bible’s Potential for Terrorism**

Mark’s gospel is primarily used in this paper mainly because of its clear theme of followers or disciples. Even though Mark’s gospel constitutes a primary source of support for this paper, the ‘priority’ accorded to Mark does not preclude the relevance of other biblical texts to terrorism studies. Many examples of what would now be referred to as “atrocities,” “massacres,” or “terrorism” can be found in the Bible. Whereas the Bible does not contain the word terrorism, nevertheless, it is replete with words like terror acts that can be classified as terrorism under our primary definition of terrorism. Many scholars have attested to the fact that this premise is vast and deep-seated in the biblical text to the extent of depicting Yahweh as a terrorist. For example, Cyril Rodd (2001:185) observes that virtually every one of the 39 books of the Hebrew Bible mention the subject of war, and some deal with it in great detail. Richard Hess (2008:18) has noted that the noun “war” or its equivalent appears 320 times in the Old Testament. The New Testament in its mimetic posture does not relinquish this Old Testament characteristic and even depicts God as a warrior.

Drury problematizes this view of the text when he notes that “the Bible, that sacred text, as a text like any other, is a flawed and one-sided account of historical events told by the victors” (2003:2). Similarly, Kainz (1999:12) mentions that many scriptural accounts based on imperial conceptualizations narrate that God, without hesitation or nuance, commanded the dispossession of inhabitants to make way for the Israelites (e.g. Num. 33:55-56). In this way, the text maintains a trajectory that favours the complete slaughter of men, women, and children deemed inferior, and sometimes even animals, including the Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites (see Deut. 3:2, 7:2-5, 20:16; Num. 2:34, 3:3; Josh. 6:21, 8:26-28, 11:20). A reading of the story of Samson and the Philistines (Judges 16) implies that there were no innocent Philistines; they were evil by virtue of being Philistines. According to the narrator, God supposedly punished the Philistines as a people in a purposeful manner. Read within a terrorist hermeneutic, Samson can be compared with a suicide bomber. In fact, to delve into select biblical narratives of similar ideology is to plumb the depths of terrorist ideology.

The Bible could also be understood in terrorist terms because of its apparent dualism; people in the world of the Bible are divided between those who are ‘inside’ and those who are ‘outside;’ some are on the side of God while the enemies are allied with Satan. Such tidy binary categories divide people between us-and-them, good-and-evil, God-and-Satan. The constant struggle against all antagonists is therefore part and parcel of the cosmic struggle between the forces of good and evil. Once the world is understood in these biblical terms, it becomes clear why Christian terrorists are heroes while Islamic terrorists are villains.

According to Drury (2003:7), this dualist construction of reality depicts two equally arrogant antagonistic self-righteous civilizations, expressed in the modern arena as a Bible-based civilization versus a Quran-based civilization. The radical nature of the conflict is due not to the differences between them, but because of the similarities; each is convinced that theirs is on the side of God, truth and justice, while the other is allied with Satan, wickedness, and barbarism. The trouble with this dualist posture is that “it radicalizes and polarizes the world; it denies plurality, and it precludes self-criticism and self-understanding” (:9).

The generally accepted interpretations of the Bible are readily understood in terror terms. Ron Ray (2018:219)

rightly argues that interpretation is where relativization of biblical interpretation begins. According to him, Jesus and several New Testament writers, especially Paul, often reference the Old Testament traditions with subtlety and creative freedom rather than basing their chosen themes directly on specific texts. Although, it is not easy to systematize Jesus' relative hermeneutic of Old Testament traditions, he established precedent for its relative use. Jesus exercised liberal freedom in his hermeneutics; instead of assuming that all passages of scripture were equally binding and compatible, he sometimes played off one against another. A prime example is how he interpreted the law of Moses by insisting that permission for divorce (Deut. 24:1) was not (as the Old Testament claimed) an expression of God's primal will, but a mere concession to human sin (Mark 10:2-12). Therefore, not only does Jesus become the textual authority, he opens space for a liberal interpretation of the text.

The logical implication of Jesus' liberal hermeneutics is that it is not offensive to interpret a trajectory in the Bible that seems to perpetuate a norm of war and terror. It is therefore not surprising that God's putative power in battle is a major consideration in many elements of Christian worship songs and prayers. As Rapoport (1984:663) observes, the Bible in many places invokes a hermeneutic that justifies terror. In his words: "the Bible is not such a sacrosanct text as has been presumed by many," but has potential for terrorist interpretations and attitudes of celebrating terror.

### 5.0 'Terrorizing' Mark's Disciples

How can Mark's disciples be construed as a band of trainee terrorists? How can their organization shed more light on how the New Testament can be construed as a text of terror. As has been mentioned, among the synoptic gospels, it is Mark's gospel that stands out with its clear theme of discipleship (John Donahue, 1998:45). Robert H. Stein's (2008:8) view is that Mark teaches discipleship in two ways; one by recounting Jesus' general teaching on the subject, and the other by narrating different accounts in which Jesus invites various individuals to follow him. In all cases, discipleship in Mark involves denying oneself, taking up one's cross and following Jesus. In Mark, Jesus is the greatest example of discipleship; he lived out the disciple's life; he was aware of his passion; he denied himself in order to follow God; he served fully as a servant; he modelled a life of prayer, and gave his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10).

Although discipleship can be viewed as a harmless enterprise in Mark's gospel, Tat-Siong Benny Liew's (1999:26) view is that Jesus' disciples are co-opted into a distinctly ideo-theological project that is enshrined in Mark's representation of Jesus' authority that duplicates an absolutist ideology. For this reason, an inquiry into Mark's positioning of the disciples and how they blend into a terrorist motif becomes necessary.

Rhoads and Michie (1982:123) have depicted the disciples as close followers and helpers of Jesus; however, their failure to understand Jesus and to be like him is also exposed (see 8:5). On the one hand, they were loyal and courageous, with a capacity for sacrifice and an enthusiasm to follow Jesus, but on the other hand they were afraid, self-centred, dense, and preoccupied with their own status and power. This loyalty and naivety rendered them as vulnerable *radicalizable* entities, at the mercy of their band leader.

The interactions of the disciples with Jesus were hierarchically construed. Liew (1999:18) has argued that this relational pattern did not deviate significantly from the Roman construction of hierarchy in which power was lorded over those of lower rank. Although Mark's Jesus forbids his disciples from regarding each other in this manner, it is an attitude that Mark reserves for the description of Jesus' interaction with his disciples. For example, Jesus sends out the twelve and 'authorizes' them (6:7); and 'orders' them (6:8); and severally 'commands' them (e.g. 8:15). In the end they became, in Liew's (1999:19) terms, "loyal satellites."

Mark identifies a discrete space for Jesus and his group, rendering them akin to a clandestine movement. There are many correlations between the Jesus band of disciples and other contemporary bands of terror. For example, Mark's depiction of insider/outsider binarism involves violent destruction of those 'outside' when the 'ins' and 'outs' become clear and absolute at Jesus *parousia* (Liew, 1999:22). Terrorist inflections are implicit in the way and the words of Mark's Jesus and in his use of very ominous language and menacing acts with regard to his disciple's performances.

Terrorist affinities with the Jesus group can also be noted particularly where Mark becomes categorical that discipleship involves death. The taking up of one's cross, ideologically is a subtle religious category of coercing followers into an acceptance of their own deaths (see also Rev 12:11). Jesus endured the Roman cross and not his own cross. Unchecked variants of interpretation of the cross could actually lead a naive band of disciples to wish their own death and, like jihadists, at great cost to themselves. Group ideology and group terrorism required that the disciples be dressed-down, a criterion that Mark's gospel seems to conform to. Their master set out a course for which they must live or die (8:34). Although they resist the three passion predictions, they shift their focus and overcome their blindness. In the end they resolve their resistance and not only accept that Jesus would suffer and die but also, they enter Jerusalem committed to follow him to death (Rhoads and Michie, 1982:124). In this regard, the perceived end of discipleship required by Mark's gospel mirrors that of terror groups.

### 5.1 Further Terrorist Traits in the Jesus Group

Although the information offered in the gospels concerning the group of Jesus is scanty, and comes from an intermediate level and favourable sources, however, it is nevertheless clear that several of its characteristics and especially that which describes the Jesus group resemble terrorism. According to Bruce Malina (2001:206), group organizers must declare a purpose for the body that they organize. For the Jesus group, “the purpose was to have Israelites get their lives in order in preparation for God’s forthcoming takeover of the country” (reminiscent of the Islamic State) (Malina, 2001:206).

Malina has systematized the stages in group formation and maintenance which include, storming, norming, performing and adjourning with predictable behaviour at each stage (2001:208). In the formative stage members are gathered and familiarized with the purpose for which they are assembled. The calling of the disciples is the first act of Jesus’s public ministry; in Malina’s view what Jesus did in this regard was distinctive in Jewish society. Jewish teachers did not go out recruiting disciples; disciples sought out teachers. Jesus very specifically selected and called the first disciples. In Mark, the initiative for discipleship training always emanates from Jesus.

In the storming stage members realign themselves with the group. It is a stage of conflict and disputes as they jockey for positions. The norming stage is for leveraging group performance, negotiating group norms and group behaviour. The performing stage takes into account that the disciples imbibe the mission of Christ as they also accept its destiny. Participants carry out the task for which they were assembled. It also involved further recruitment. In the adjournment stage not all groups disband, but members gradually disengage from the tasks and services, marking the gradual demise of the group

Although it is inappropriate to read this terrorist pattern into every group that is mentioned in the New Testament, particularly the Jesus group, it is important, nevertheless, to note the correlation between the traits of terrorist groups and the Jesus group. Terrorism is sustained by group mentality. The group provides love, friendship and protection even as it replaces family, culture and politics. It features its own language, symbols and value system. Those who join find it hard to imagine an existence outside of the group, despite the severe friction that characterizes the relational dynamics of its members (Laquer, 1987:89). Jesus’ rather hostile statements regarding family (Lk 12:53, 14:26; Matt 10:35-37) should be read with this understanding

A closer reflection on Jesus’ inner group reveals its predisposition to radicalization. It is no secret that the Jesus group featured a complete finance office managed by several financiers (Lk. 8:3). The Chief Finance Officer was Judas Iscariot whose second name indicates that he may have been a *Scarii*, a member of a group also referred to as assassins. The group also featured sons of thunder (Lk. 9:54; Mk. 3:17) –James and John, who at one time wished for the mass destruction of others. With such predispositions favouring such weapons, they could have committed the heinous crime of the mass destruction of humanity. Peter exuded such dynamics as the sword bearer and protector of Jesus during the hour of trial. Jesus himself behaved like a terrorist leader. He was excessively authoritarian, determined to operate on his own terms and to bear the ultimate *exousia*, accountable to no one. Jesus was the master of ideological binary distinctions, respectively citing persons who chose between narrow and wide options. They were the main recipients of vitriolic discourse from both Jesus and his disciples. Even when Jesus told his disciples that “those who are for us are not against us” (Mark 9:38-42), it was a subtle statement pointing not so much to the silent acceptable ones, but to those who opposed Jesus’ band of disciples.

Another important characteristic of Jesus’ ministry was its proclivity for itineration. Jesus loathes the settled life for his band. Several of his statements regarding sedentary life were pejorative; ‘foxes have holes and birds have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head’ (Matt. 8:20). The utterances regarding the narrow way versus the wide way in Matthew’s account were not real options, but binary categories to facilitate othering. Terrorism operates extremely well where others have been created, identified and profiled. In Mark, sin is referenced as a subtle category for justifying the annihilation of the masses, with the text encouraging the creation and profiling of others for destruction. In the ultimate end, in Mark’s gospel, the whole idea of eternal damnation invites celebration of mass destruction. It was cowardly to consign others to hell fire because alternate ways of recruiting them into the Jesus circle had failed. Only a terrorist manual could advocate the mass destruction of those who had refused to be corralled into a select group. It can therefore be noted that the Jesus group featured several similar but subtly distinct traits that mirrored those of terrorists.

### 6 A Hermeneutics of Terror: Reading the Text Otherwise

The project of terrorist hermeneutics becomes viable when it is recognized that in so far as terror is concerned, the Bible does not demystify or demythologize itself; that is the work interpreters. Thus, it is possible to read terror in the Bible and it is also possible to read peace in the Bible. The text can serve at the same time as a document of radicalization and a document of de-radicalization. According to Collins (2003:8), there is a dark side of the Bible in so far as violence is concerned. Although there is a long and venerable tradition of interpretation going back to church fathers like Philo of Alexandria and Hellenistic Judaism that sought to protect the text from tinges of terrorism, the text should be left to speak for itself. A hermeneutics that justifies terrorism as inherent in the text should accept the logic that God is a warrior and that “terrorists” are his foot soldiers. This posture reflects a text-

context interaction that justifies the methodology employed for actual acts of terror. Therefore, as Collins (2003:12) writes, no amount of interpretation can negate the force of the biblical endorsement of violence that has been considered here. In short, violence is a model of behaviour on offer in the Bible and it is not an incidental or peripheral feature.

On the other hand, in a culture that embraces God's loving certitude, there is need for a hermeneutic that protects the biblical text from terrorist implications. Although "freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them" (Linell E. Cady, 2008:189), there is need to modulate the involvement of God in human affairs. A de-terrorizing hermeneutics that protects the texts needs to recognize that the text can be re-directed providing for an ethos of peaceful coexistence. This hermeneutics recognizes that terror is discernible in the text only because love and the sister-brotherhood of humanity have failed. Religious texts should be used to foreground those virtues that unite us rather than those that divide us. As an example, our preaching should shift from a heaven of a minority to a world of the majority. As Hess has argued, "...it is not acceptable to take a text such as the Bible and merely parade a collection of contradictions from its many and diverse pages to justify it for terrorism" (2008:23). Instead of counter-reading the text for terrorism, it is possible to read the text for its straight-forward themes of peace and prosperity.

## 7 Conclusion

The exploitable seeming weakness in Mark's gospel is that which presents an unfurnished picture of Jesus portrayed in everyday language. Such a portrait of Jesus and related issues renders the text liable to favourable and unfavourable interpretations, depending on one's vantage point. So, on the one hand, seeming contradictory ingredients in Mark specifically and in the Bible generally can be used to create and sustain terrorism. On the other hand, obvious and non-contradictory ingredients in the Bible can be used to neutralize a trajectory of terror readings. In the end, the Bible reflects a variety of allusions to terrorism, but it does so with a high moral tenor that ultimately recognizes battle as a necessary recourse in the context of a greater, cosmic struggle between good and evil. Therefore, with regard to Bible and terrorism, the reader is suspended between pluralist meanings and interpretations.

Finally, in these days when much religious terrorism is largely directed towards Christians (kafir-including moderate Muslims) and when Christian extremists are beginning to ask questions concerning their obligation to the plight of their co-religionists in oppressed communities, many suggestions can be made. Care should be taken not to be swayed by proposals such as those proposed by Philip Jenkins' (2002) who calls for Christian communities throughout the world to ensure that they are not crushed by the forces of militant Islam. Jenkins' suggestion is that Christians should repulse any ideology that attempts to make the world an Islamic state. Although Christians should recognize that the biblical text may indeed justify the just war option against forceful Islamization, the view of this paper is that counter-language vis a vis terrorist hermeneutics must become the primary scholarly and Christian engagement. Even when the level of oppression of Christians in Kenya becomes nearly intolerable, Christians should make efforts to repress insurgents and to mute retaliatory language and methodology by turning to the same Bible. For the Bible still functions as supportive literature for faith readers and as an enigmatic text for fundamentalists.

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