

The following was sent to me by Dr. Gary L. Cass
of the "Defend Christians" organization. (L. R. W.)



DefendChristians.org

*A Ministry of the Christian
Anti-Defamation Commission*

Dear Lewis,

President Obama did it again.

At the recent National Prayer Breakfast **Obama couldn't resist taking a shot at Christianity.** He did so in an attempt to minimize the horrific things we are seeing on the news every week coming out of ISIS, the Islamic State in Syria, sometimes called ISIL.

ISIS is known for decapitating Christian children, beheading Christian men, crucifying Christian teenagers, raping and enslaving Christian women and girls. We are regularly subjected to videos of their vicious beheading of Americans, Europeans and even Japanese non-Muslims. Recently the world was stunned by ISIS burning alive a captured Muslim Jordanian pilot.

So what does the President do? Rather than a full throated condemnation of ISIS and Islamic Jihad in all its vicious forms, or offering a clarion call for the utter defeat of this murderous Islamic regime, **Obama used the Prayer Breakfast to scold Christians.**

Unless we get on our high horse... remember that during the Crusades and Inquisition, people committed terrible deeds in the name of Christ. In our home country, slavery and Jim Crow all too often was justified in the name of Christ. So it is not unique to one group or one religion. There is a tendency in us, a simple tendency that can pervert and distort our faith.

That's right, Christians better not get on their "high horse" and stop feeling morally superior to ISIS and Islamic terrorists because, after all, we're guilty, too. **There are many things wrong with Obama's statement, but I only want to deal with one, the matter of the Crusades.**

Obama is reading right out of the Muslim propaganda playbook. Whenever the documented facts about the extremely violent nature of Islam are offered, the apologists for the "religion of peace" make the false argument that Christians are just as guilty. Because the lies about the Crusades are so pervasive, it's time to set the record straight.

No, Mr. President, the Crusades when compared to what the bloody sword of Islam has done are NOT morally equivalent. **Well over 250,000,000 people have been killed in the name of Islam,** more by far than any other ideology, but apparently we aren't supposed to say that. Just last month, **January 2015, in the name of Islam 3,998 were murdered, 2,261 critically injured in 266 attacks in 28 countries.**

Popular radio talk show host Dennis Prager, a Jew, responded to the President by asking, "What other religious group is engaged in mass murder, systematic rape, slavery, beheading innocents, bombing public events, shooting up school children, wiping out whole religious communities and other such atrocities?" Good question!

WHO ARE THE REAL AGGRESSORS?

In a recent politically correct movie about the Crusades, *Kingdom of Heaven*, the popular Crusade myths were regurgitated.

The Crusades were supposedly the unprovoked campaigns by Christian religious zealots against sophisticated and peaceful Muslims.

Here's what really happened. After **450 years and over 500 attacks by Muslims** against Christians and after **Muslims captured two thirds of Christian lands**. (See the map) The Crusaders recaptured Jerusalem in 1099. There were seven Crusades from 1099 to 1250 and they proved to be largely ineffectual. As a result were considered insignificant until just recently when they have been dredged up to justify violence against the West by Marxist and Jihadist historical revisionists.

WERE THE CRUSADES UNPROVOKED?

Islam conquered Jerusalem in 638. Soon **Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land were being crucified, robbed, extorted, taxed and instructing others in the Christian faith, including their own children, was banned**.

After centuries of abuse by Muslims, including the killing of converts, sacking and destroying churches and monasteries, the exceedingly vicious **Seljuks Muslims took control of Jerusalem in 1077. They immediately murdered three thousand inhabitants**. They were soon threatening the vestiges of the weakened Eastern Christian Byzantine Empire.

Byzantine Emperor Alexious I then asked for help from the Western Church. Pope Urban II called for Christians to defend the Christians in the Holy Land based on the Christian doctrine of self-defense.

[T]he Turks and the Arabs have attacked ... and occupied more and more the lands of Christians, and have overcome them in seven battles. They have killed and captured many, and have destroyed the churches and devastated the empire. If you permit them to continue thus for awhile with impunity, the faithful of God will be much more widely attacked by them.

People were so stirred they rose up in what is called the "Peoples Crusade." It was an utter failure and the Turks mercilessly massacred many in 1096.

- The **First Crusade** that was formally organized was the most successful. In 1099 the Crusaders took Jerusalem and created several Crusader states in the Middle East.
- The **Second Crusade** of 1147 was defeated before it ever made it to the Holy Land.
- The **Third Crusade** to again retake Jerusalem from the Muslims in 1188 failed.
- The **Fourth Crusade** ended up attacking fellow Eastern Christians in Constantinople and establishing a Western Christian Kingdom, weakening the already fragile Byzantine Empire.

- The **Fifth Crusade** focused on Egypt in order to weaken it so they could retake Jerusalem. It ultimately failed.
- The **Sixth Crusade** was a continuation of the Fifth and ended up with a ten year truce with the Sultan of Egypt and the Crusaders in charge of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth. They eventually left Jerusalem undefended and it was soon back in Muslim hands by 1244.
 - The **Seventh Crusade** was focused on Egypt to and was led by French King Louis the IX. It failed and Louis IX was captured and had to be ransomed.

In the end, all the gains of the Crusades, including the last Crusader state, were lost by 1291.

SO Were the Crusades Justified?

According to Thomas Madden, author of *The New Concise History of the Crusades*, "**All the Crusades met the criteria of just wars.** They came about in reaction to attacks against Christians or their Church." Just wars are essentially wars of self-defense. That does not excuse any excesses of war and senseless violence, or the foolish calamity of the Fourth Crusade, but puts a lie to the charge the Crusades were unprovoked.

Historian Jonathan Riley-Smith reminds us that, "**[C]rusading was seen as an act of love- specifically the love of God and the love of neighbor.** By pushing back Muslim aggression and restoring Eastern Christianity, the Crusaders were-at great peril to themselves-**imitating the Good Samaritan.**"

Because the cost of crusading was staggering, only the wealthy could afford to embark on a Crusade. They weren't attempting to enrich themselves or to colonize new lands, they were simply acting in defense of other Christians and seeking to restore lands previously taken by Muslim aggression. **Many noble families impoverished themselves by crusading.** Recent studies show around **one-third of knights and nobility died on crusade. The death rates for lower classes were even higher.**

We often fail to appreciate the Christian Medieval mind. There was a profound, spiritual aspect to the Crusades. It was seen as an act of self-sacrifice and penitence for their sin. Why would they need to make such an extravagant gesture? The medieval nobility was a warrior aristocracy. This caused them to be deeply aware of their own sinfulness and extremely anxious over the eternal destiny of their souls. The Crusades gave them a chance to unselfishly risk their life and fortunes in order to show contrition.

*The modern historian can only marvel at the First Crusade. I know of no other instance in human history in which so many soldiers marched thousands of miles from their home and endured numerous hardships deep in enemy territory for no good strategic or economic reasons. **Their reasons had much more to do with the next world than with this one.** It is equally amazing that a loosely organized enterprise like this with no clear understanding of the local terrain or sure means of provisioning could so often snatch victory from the jaws of apparent defeat. [Thomas Madden]*

What difference does it make?

Thankfully the Crusades stopped the Muslim's militaristic adventures into Europe. The fall of Spain, the Middle East and North Africa all happened before the First Crusade. **The Crusades bought Europe time and united it against Islam, otherwise we all might be speaking Arabic.**

To see the difference it makes, go to Egypt where Muslims have dominated the Christians for centuries. Once an overwhelming majority, the Coptic Christians in Egypt are now only 10% of the population and are persecuted by the Muslims. Look at the states like Saudi Arabia that practice Islamic Sharia law and the religious persecution of Christians there. This could have been the fate of Europe except for the courage of Christians who acted to defend themselves.

The use of the Crusades as a grievance by Muslims against the West is a new phenomena. Carole Hillenbrand in *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* found that after 1291 when the Muslim armies removed the last vestiges of the Crusaders from Palestine, **the Crusades largely dropped out of Muslim memory.**

Now decades of anti-West Marxist historical revisionism by those who hate our Christian heritage have taken root. They have distorted history and created the popular crusader myths used by Jihadists and progressives to justify violence against the West.

Truth is the antidote.

When you support DefendChristians.Org you keep us declaring the truth and equipping the church so we can stand against the lies of our day. Secular progressives and the Muslims are working together to defame us in order to neutralize the church and make us unwilling to defend ourselves and our values. **By God's grace, and with your prayers and support, we will not be relent!**

Jesus taught "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The Crusaders went to the defense of their brothers at a huge cost and risk. The loving thing to do is to defend our faith with the truth. Jesus willingly made himself of no reputation even to the point of dying like a criminal on a cross for our sin. **We gladly identify with Him and His Word of Truth.**

For the Defense of the Gospel,



Dr. Gary L. Cass