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Puritanism & Islam

by *Joe Escobar* – Friday, October 9, 2015, 11:11 PM

This forum thread is for Puritanism & Islam posts and replies.

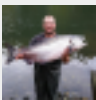
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Covenant relations among Puritans and Islam

by *Daniel Swisher* – Saturday, October 10, 2015, 8:59 PM

The findings do not concern me, but I wouldn’t quite consider them to be of a “wonderful insight”. As an atheist, I am less than well-educated on the topic of religion. I have spent 2 years of my life living in various Muslim communities throughout the Middle East and from personal experience, Islam IS more closely related to the beliefs of the Puritans coming to the New World than our current American students. The religion of Islam is more closely related to what the Puritans embraced as Covenant Theology. I did not know about Covenant Theology until I read page 61 of the text. The text book talks about god not punishing a whole community based on the misdeeds of individuals. In my experience, Muslim people live a much more religiously structured life as oppose to the new age Christian belief of “Do good things and you will get to heaven.” I wouldn’t say that I personally can relate to what the Puritans experienced when they came to the New World, but my eyes definitely don’t “glaze over.”

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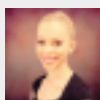
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Religion

by *Emalie Pilon* – Sunday, October 11, 2015, 3:01 PM

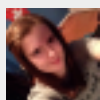
I think that if you have a religion that you are practicing in, that it will give you a bias. It will make you think a different way about other religions. I feel that this happens a lot because we are spectacle about there ideas ans beliefs. People need to try to keep an open mind and stick to the facts about history, tell it the way it happened and the not way they think it should have went. I think people don't always know that they are doing it, but they want to make their ideas and beliefs sound better than the others. And that if you already feel a certain way and already have your own beliefs that it will take a lot to change them. Almost like for those who believe no proof is necessary and for those who don't no proof is possible.



Broadly Bias

by [Amanda Power](#) - Tuesday, October 13, 2015, 11:56 AM

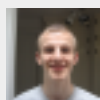
One thing you mentioned that I thought stood out is that religion gives a basis for bias, and that people should stick to the facts of history. For arguments sake, do you think one could say that historical facts (in the way in which they are presented) are also bias? It is true what you said, that we are all greatly influenced by our own personal belief system. We have seen examples, including from the author's in our current history textbook, presenting information with the eluding reference to their own opinionated innuendoes. I agree that history should be presented as how it happened, not how it should have happened. But, that is where the unavoidable psychological conflict of selective perception plays in. We, as humans, tend to hear what wish to hear and be true, rather than the opposite. Though often unintentional, this is simply part of human nature. So, I guess that one could potentially say that bias draws no boundaries, and unfortunately crosses over into every aspect of presented information.



The importance of the Puritans

by [Aleethia Collins](#) - Sunday, October 11, 2015, 7:57 PM

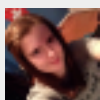
The findings of Professor Patrick Q Mason are concerning. It is astonishing to hear that Egyptian students could have more in common with 17 century New England Puritans than their American descendants. I feel my religious background helps me to be able to relate to Puritans. Many in our country simply do not value religion, as some do in other countries. Which could attest to those students in Egypt being more closely linked the the Puritans of New England. Based on the [Religion Poll](#) so far, majority of the students have answered as being Protestant/ Christian. In the interview it was said that American Christianity no longer relates to Puritanism the way contemporary Islam does, with them having a more similar undifferentiating worldview. Regardless if you are a student in the Middle East or America, there need to be a greater emphasis on the Puritans and their vastly important influence with the founding of the nation.



Understanding the Puritans

by [Robert Driver](#) - Monday, October 12, 2015, 3:38 PM

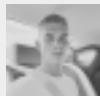
My bias affects how I see the Puritans. I'm inclined to read through the sections of the textbook that talk about Puritan beliefs and evaluate how correct they are by my own beliefs, rather than seeking to understand them. But I think the main reason that Puritan beliefs are important to study in U. S. history is that you cannot really understand the Puritans without understanding their beliefs. Their religion was the foundation of their lives, not just something they did regularly. I think this is the primary similarity between Puritans and many Muslims. For both of them, their religion is their life. I think that the separation of church and state and, more importantly, the separation of church and life, keeps us Americans from understanding Muslims just as much as it keeps us from understanding Puritans.



Understanding the Puritans response

by [Aleethia Collins](#) - Wednesday, October 14, 2015, 7:44 PM

For the Puritans religion was very important to them and was carried over into all aspects of their lives. As you said the same is true with the Muslim culture. They both highly valued religion and make it a valuable part of their everyday life. It is more difficult to find the similarity between the Puritans and Americans. Primarily in America, religion is not viewed as highly and is not seemed as a priority. I can definitely see students in Egypt having more in common with the Puritans than American students.



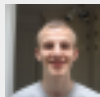
Why were the Puritans so harsh with punishment?

by [Jacob Brands](#) – Monday, October 12, 2015, 7:32 PM

Something I thought was interesting in the Puritan video was that they considered themselves to be very religious people but yet they were very harsh with their punishments. The video says that people were put on public display for humiliation and men were even hung. I would've expected a society like this who considered themselves to be very religious to have more compassion towards their own people.

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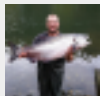
Because they focus on justice

by [Robert Driver](#) – Wednesday, October 14, 2015, 2:32 PM

The Puritans thought differently about compassion and justice than Americans do today. The things they saw as sin were intolerable to them, and they tried very hard to eradicate those things from their communities as much as possible, with compassion being less important. From what I know, most Muslim communities are like this as well.

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Re: Why were the Puritans so harsh with punishment?

by [Daniel Swisher](#) – Wednesday, October 14, 2015, 8:34 PM

When does being religious mean that there is no harsh punishments? I believe we are currently fighting a war against a terror group that does horrific things in "the name of religion". There are many more historic examples of religious groups committing acts of violence on their own people in the name of religion. We live in a sheltered country that shields us from things like this. It was far from uncommon back then to hang people in the name of religion. "God will not judge a community based on the misdeeds of individuals."

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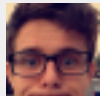
Re: Why were the Puritans so harsh with punishment?

by [Amanda Power](#) – Thursday, October 15, 2015, 10:17 PM

I think there is also a lot going on inside of religious communities in the U.S that doesn't make media headlines. Some churches in the United States still practice the principle of punishment in their congregation. Granted, I don't know of any churches who are hanging their members for sinning against God, but the concept of banishment (or excommunication), and even physical beatings as punishment for sin, or to "ward off evil" are still in practice today.

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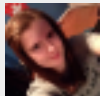
Re: Why Muslim students understand Puritanism better than American Students?

by [Nikita Douglass](#) – Monday, October 12, 2015, 9:11 PM

From what I know about Muslim and the Puritan religion, that they have a lot in common. The Puritans are a people of religious fervor and faithful to the Bible. The decisions they made, was based on their religion beliefs even when it came to politics. That's similar to Muslim religion, also both of these religions have a huge number of members. The two religion do a lot of stuff as a community, such as worshiping god together, rejoicing together, but Puritans pray god and Muslim pray Allah. They truly believed that they were a group apart from the rest of organized religion.

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Why Muslim students understand Puritanism better than American Students? response

by [Aleethia Collins](#) – Friday, October 16, 2015, 7:29 PM

The Muslims and the Puritans did have many similarities. As you stated for both religion carried over into

many other aspects of their lives, such as community and politics. Often in the Muslim world the relationship between religion and state was blurred and this can be true for the Puritans as well. The Puritans undifferential worldview is also similarly linked with that of the Muslims. I agree with you that the Muslims and the Puritans do have a lot in common.

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Glazed Donuts or Glazed Eyes?

by [Jonathan Davis](#) – Monday, October 12, 2015, 9:12 PM

I'm a little concerned that American students are refered to as "eyes glazed over" when talking about the Puritans. Yes, the majority of people do get a glazed-over look in their eyes while talking about the Puritans; for two reasons: they are of another branch of Christianity or they have heard about the Puritans and their history a lot growing up. I feel that I would fall in with the students from Cairo. The morals and ethics of one culture should not dominate another. Just because you believe one thing doesn't mean your belief is correct. I also believe that the Puritans played a fundamental part in shaping America, good or bad.

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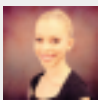
Re: Glazed Donuts or Glazed Eyes?

by [Daniel Swisher](#) – Wednesday, October 14, 2015, 8:13 PM

I believe the "eyes glazed over" reference applies to when a student can not comprehend what he or she is reading or learning about. I believe the majority of American students today don't understand the puritan beliefs because the majority of our lives do not revolve around religion. Muslim communities are much different in that aspect. Seperation of Church and State brings on an entirely different meaning if you were to visit a Muslim predominant school. As was stated in class, the Puritans CONSTANTLY worried about going to hell. We only think about things like this every once in awhile. Muslims are much more like the Puritans in this aspect, hence the reason they relate to them so much better than we do.

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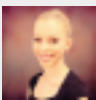
A Glazed Normality

by [Amanda Power](#) – Thursday, October 15, 2015, 10:07 PM

I think that the mentioning of the "eyes glazing over" is in reference to the modern day social shift, currently becoming the American norm. In today's upcoming generation the whole idea and concept of being religious is falling by the wayside. I think that in an age where the youth are re-defining our culture as one of free thinking, self-expression, and individuality, the concept of religion is being brushed under the rug. Many young individuals view religion as oppressive, invasive, and controlling, and as a result choose to pay no mind to it. Also, many youth find the topic of religion boring, and as a result could care less about a denominations history or origin.

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Mormon's, Muslim's, and Puritan's. Where do I fit in?

by [Amanda Power](#) – Monday, October 12, 2015, 9:25 PM

In listening to the Journal of American History podcast reading of Patrick Mason's essay "What's so Bad about Polygamy", I found the fallowing quotation to be of particular interest:

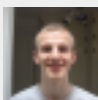
"Perhaps I could have anticipated this if I had thought more about it, but many of my middle eastern Muslim students had far more in common with seventeenth century New England Puritans than did most of twenty-first century American students. The way that puritanism offered totalizing, undifferentiating, and world view, in which the sacred presses upon every aspect of life, resonates in many (though not all) corners of contemporary Islam in a way that most expressions of American Christianity no longer do. In addition the lines between

religion and state are often blurry in many areas of the Arab world even in putatively secular republic like Egypt. So, my Egyptian students could grapple the intricate relationship of church and state in Puritan New England in a far more informed way than most American students, who even they are personally religious, can casually dismiss religious establishments as unenlightened and even barbaric antiquities”.

I found the author’s observation of similarities between his Muslim Students and the Puritan’s to connect with my own religious experience as well. Growing up raised in a devoutly Mormon household I was accustomed to the rules and regulations of religious life coinciding with the American U.S laws. While my family acknowledged and obeyed the laws of the land, we also fallowed a unique set of laws laid out by the Mormon Church. Like the United States Government, the Mormon Church has its own system for running and efficient and organized “people”. This system has its own governing body consisting of a prophet, counselors, regional leaders, and a quorum of apostles. These figures are appointed electively by God, and the members of the church. Their task is to enforce God’s law, a law more important than any worldly law based on secular standards. The church also imposes its own financial, employment, and tax system. As a child I watched my parents attend their church organized jobs, attend church organized meetings, and then every month pay their church taxes (known as tithing), a ten percent portion of their income. There is also a council (replicating a U.S court justice system), where both a judge and jury to call to trial any member who has committed a grievance against God and his church.

Needless to say I was brought up in a secular nation, living in a non–secular household, where there were two ruling bodies to abide by. Church and state, were (and still are) very much the same to me, as I am held to both the laws of the church, and the laws of the state. It is in particular my connection to living and obeying the word of my church in which I feel I can relate to both the Puritan experience and the Muslim students.

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About the Podcast...
by [Robert Driver](#) – Tuesday, October 13, 2015, 1:12 PM

I find it interesting that Patrick Mason reached the conclusion that Puritans and Muslims are similar from an exercise that I think would have brought the conclusion that Mormons and Muslims are similar. I wonder how he started comparing the Puritans and the Muslims. Maybe it had something to do with the Puritan influence on the Constitution. Or maybe it’s just that Mormons, Muslims, and Puritans all have a lot in common.

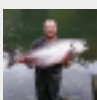
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Re: About the Podcast...
by [Nikita Douglass](#) – Tuesday, October 13, 2015, 5:29 PM

To be honest I see more similarity between the Puritans and the Muslims, than Mormons and Muslims. I can't really find anything to shoe how the two religions are similar. In my opinions, i believe that Mormons and the Puritans are far away from each other in their religion beliefs.

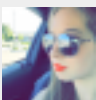
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Re: About the Podcast...
by [Daniel Swisher](#) – Wednesday, October 14, 2015, 8:28 PM

I believe the exercise was conducted at a Muslim school and an American University. As comparison, the religion of Islam is much more closely related to the Puritans than the Christian predominance found at the majority of American Universities. The question I ask is, how have we come so far from our roots? Have we veered away from our religious beliefs so far that a Muslim community more closely relates to the Puritans of the new world than we do?

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Unshakable Communities
by [Kaitlyn DiMercurio](#) – Monday, October 12, 2015, 11:30 PM

Although I learned about the Puritans throughout middle school and high school through various US history classes, it wasn't until this term that I began to see similarities between the Islamic and Puritan faiths. This is mostly in part to the fact that I have been repeatedly taught only the most basic concepts of Puritan faith and I only recently really began to understand the Islamic faith as my best friend is Muslim. The first thing that really stood out to me was the community aspect. I think that there are many groups within individual religions that might seek out community amongst themselves, but Puritans and Muslims take part in a specific kind of community based on their religious practice. That is to say that while those of some religions choose to be in community, these two religions demand it. Beyond this I think that the way they choose to individually live their lives is similar as well. Both stress the shaking off of worldly possessions as well as continuous prayer. Many other religions, I've noticed, talk of prayer as more of a recommendation while these two religions make more of a rigid schedule, less of a suggestion and more of an obligation. One other thing I have noticed, especially from knowing my friend and his family, is that many of the religious people of today and across time have been seen to be converted rather easily; while on the other hand the Muslims I have come to know, whether fully practicing or not, seem to have a deep belief that their religion is true. I know that might sound odd, like of course they believe what they believe, but what I mean is that many people can be swayed into other forms of thinking or looking at things, but the people of these religious communities have grown strong and steadfast together in their faith so while they might not be perfect, they won't be moved in their belief systems.

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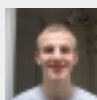


Re: Puritan beliefs
by [Nikita Douglass](#) - Wednesday, October 14, 2015, 8:47 PM

"They believed that God has already chosen who will enter the heaven", it doesn't matter what you do, you can act any way you want to, you can be bad as you can be. It's already been decided, it's either you're going to heaven or not. Puritans believed that God has decided at the time we were born who's going to heaven or going to hell. People who were supposed to go to "heaven" were not afraid of hell so they had the "right" to do pretty much whatever they want because they knew they'll end up being in heaven no matter what.

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What the Puritans actually believed
by [Robert Driver](#) - Friday, October 16, 2015, 2:29 PM

I don't think that's entirely accurate. The Puritans did believe that God decided beforehand who would go to heaven and who would go to hell. God knew beforehand who would accept the covenant of grace and therefore be saved. But they did not believe that that meant people could do whatever they wanted. You see, they believed that the covenant of works could no longer bring eternal life, but was still in effect. They believed that it imposes strict moral standards that every Christian must strive to follow (see page 61 in the textbook). No one can meet these standards perfectly, but those who try, fail, and then accept God's covenant of grace and continue to try to live up to the standards will be saved.

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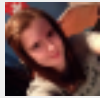
This doesn't bother me at all
by [Justin Cox](#) - Friday, October 16, 2015, 2:19 PM

I found the findings of Professor Patrick Q. Mason that his Egyptian Muslim students' possessed a greater ability to conceptualize the perspective of colonial New England puritans than did his American students to be intriguing but in no way concerning. I interpret his experience, as relayed to us via Professor Scott Casper, to be that Muslim students find an easier route to imagining the perspective of colonial New England puritans because the perspective of their modern culture is more in-line with that of the puritans than is the culture of modern America. I don't think this represents a shortcoming in American students, rather it represents that Muslim students generally need not stretch their imaginations as far as those in America to find themselves in the mind of an colonial American puritan.

If I was a highly religious modern day puritan, my view of this phenomenon would certainly be different. However, I am not. I believe that it is typical for the collective values of cultures to evolve over long, and sometimes short, periods of time. That is what has happened over the past 500 years here in America. While I

think it is important for young Americans to have some appreciation of those who went before them, I don't think it is necessary for them to possess the same perspective.

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Similarities between Muslims and Puritans

by *Aleethia Collins* – Friday, October 16, 2015, 7:40 PM

The Muslims are more able to relate and understand the Puritans, because their religions are relatively similar. On the other hand, Americans have a tougher time relating due to the fact that they have less in common. Modern Christianity is quite different than the Puritan religion. The Muslims have similar worldviews and value their religion, just as the Puritans had. This is why it's not that astonishing that Muslims would have more in common with the Puritans than Americans would.

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Differences between Puritanism and Islam

by *Robert Driver* – Saturday, October 17, 2015, 9:07 PM

I think that there are differences between Puritanism and Islam that we seem to be glossing over by thinking about the similarities between the two belief systems. One big difference is that Puritans believe that Jesus was the son of God, but Muslims do not. As an extension of this, the Puritans believed in the Trinity (basically, that God is three-in-one) but the Muslims do not. The Muslims and Puritans also have different books that they hold to be the inerrant, divinely inspired word of God. There are more differences than these these, to be sure.

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