



Making War in the Name of God

Christopher Catherwood

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As religious zeal and sectarian strife set the opening years of the new millennium ablaze, they ushered in the latest chapter of a story that began centuries ago. From Bali to Beirut, we have inherited an idea that is as old as religion itself: killing in the name of God.

In this engrossing book, renowned historian Christopher Catherwood vividly recounts a saga of passion, prejudice, and imperialism that laid the foundation for our own troubled age. Beginning in the year 632, Muhammad--as much political leader and general as prophet--commenced the breathtaking spread of Islam that, under his successors, eventually conquered an empire larger than Rome's at its height. Even as this vast realm broke apart into Sunni and Shiite factions, the Christian retaliation--ruthlessly and unscrupulously unleashed in 1095 with the First Crusade--sparked a clash between East and West that continues to this day.

The pattern would repeat itself again and again with the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans, in which the same Islamic faith that had once been an institution for tolerance in places like Spain became an instrument of expansion; the wars of the Reformation, when Catholic and Protestant slaughtered each other in the name of the Prince of Peace; and the endless conflicts of the modern Middle East, savagely fought over by three faiths that all worship the same God.

As the author re-examines these devastating struggles, he answers questions that are timeless, vital, and unsettling. Based on exhaustive research and written with an unflinching, unbiased eye toward revealing the often painful truth, *Making War in the Name of God* unveils humanity's ancient habit of sanctifying bloodshed--and exposes a past that we forget at our peril.

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