

Contemporary Issues in

ISLAMIC COMMUNICATION

Editor

Mohd Yusof Hussain



IIUM Press

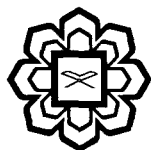
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Distorted Image About Islam in Western Writings

MOHD YUSOF HUSSAIN

Christian writings about Islam have been circulating in the West for nearly 1200 years. The earliest writing was believed to have been produced in Muslim Spain in the late eighth century. This writing was an attack on Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. More such writings were produced after 1095 after Pope Urban II ordered the knights of Europe to liberate the birth place of Prophet Isa (Jesus Christ) in Jerusalem in a military campaign that would become known as the First Crusade. However, after twelve decades of producing written information about Islam, the West still know very little about true Islam. The West still view Islam as a breakaway form of Christianity, the heresy of all heresies and is a violent religion of the sword that glorified war and bloodshed. Prophet Muhammad p.b.u h is still seen as the antithesis of religious spirit and the enemy of decent civilisation. This feeling was expressed by President George W. Bush immediately after the shocking tragedy of 11 September 2001 when Muslim militants destroyed the World Trade Centre in New York together with a wing of the Pentagon. President Bush used the term "crusade" for the planned war or retaliation against the Muslim militants. His outburst triggered protests from leaders of the Muslim World.

President Bush was not the only American politician who is ignorant about Islam. One of his Senate members confessed, "I know a lot about many things but nothing about Islam and the Muslim World and neither do my colleagues" (Eposito, 120).

This chapter attempts to discuss some of the wrong information about Islam in the writings of Western Christian writers from the 800's to the present day, writings which cause the Christian West to have a wrong perception about Islam and the Muslims.