



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on April 6, 2011

## Bringing Peace to Pakistan and India

Cameron has not been to Pakistan since becoming Prime Minister, although he did visit India last year — and caused a ruckus by suggesting that Pakistan is exporting terrorism. The conflict between India and Pakistan is ancient. When Britain, through a variety of political mechanisms, ruled what is now India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Burma, the old differences that had kept these “nations” at each others’ throats were dropped as they united in hostility to the British Raj.



These differences transcend simply the conflict between the Hindu majority in the Raj and the Muslim minority. Within that amorphous population called “Hindu” are various isolated groups. The caste system, for example, kept in separate compartments whole slices of society living in the same provinces, with little possibility of finding common ground. The worst category of all is that of the casteless ones, the [Dalits of India](#) or “untouchables,” who still exist in numbers roughly equal to the whole population of England. Their plight even today is pitiable — much worse than that of blacks under Jim Crow in the old South — and the Indian government denies to former Dalits who convert to Christianity the same rights granted to Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, or Dalits. Despite the nominal nonviolence of Hinduism, Christians in India are the subject of persistent persecution — in many cases, state-supported. On [March 29, 2011](#), for example, 14 Christians, including two clergymen, were arrested in the Mayurbhanj district of Orissa for converting Indians to Christianity without a license.

Pakistan is even more hostile to Christianity, and murder and mayhem are very common occurrences against Christians there. The entire Islamic world officially persecutes Christians and tolerates mob violence against them.

The hatred and genocide within the nations that were part of the British Raj were also horrific. When



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the British left in 1949 and granted India independence, millions of Muslims and millions of Hindus were murdered, raped, or maimed — each side guilty of massacres of the other. The hatred of these two groups dates back more than one thousand years, when Muslims conquered India and treated the natives as if they were atheists (so lacking the protection given to “People of a Book”). Over time, Hindus were raised to the level of dhimmi, or subject peoples such as Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians, but their plight was still grim. One reason for the suttee — the Hindu practice of the widow of a Hindu burning herself to death on her husband’s funeral pyre — was because of the prevalence of Muslim rape of Hindu women. Timur the Lame (or Tamerlane) built entire pyramids of human skulls when he conquered cities in the subcontinent, and the rule of the Muslims was savage.

Since 1949, the subcontinent and contiguous parts of the Raj have been violent, bloody places indeed. Old Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, endured one of the longest and most brutal civil wars in history between the Buddhist Sinhalese and the Hindu Tamils — both notionally nonviolent groups. The first suicide bombers were not Muslims, but rather members of the notorious Tamil Tigers, who strapped bombs on themselves to commit maximum mayhem.

The Sikhs have assassinated Indian Prime Ministers twice — both times to retaliate for the encroachments of Hindu India into those northern parts of the country that Sikhs consider their homeland. Pakistan itself has been riven with violence. Originally, the Muslims of the Raj were given a nation of two parts — West Pakistan and East Pakistan. The West Pakistanis, though smaller in number, effectively controlled the government and treated their countrymen to the east as stepchildren. As a consequence, the East Pakistanis began a civil war in 1971, with the goal of establishing their own nation, Bangladesh. The West Pakistan army attempted to suppress this revolt, and it is estimated that millions of Bengali women were raped during this civil war.

Really, both India and Pakistan are empires of subject peoples. India has many different languages — including 20 languages, each of which is spoken by more than one million people. The Indian subcontinent — before Britain, France, Portugal, and Holland decided that they must compete for empire there — was not a nation at all (any more than Europe was a nation in 1648), despite the fact that its peoples shared many cultural, religious, and linguistic characteristics. It was home to many different religions: Parsees (or Zoroastrians), who escaped Muslim rule in their native Persia; Sikhs; Buddhists; Jains; Jews; Christians from the Church of the East; and the polyglot varieties of Hinduism, including castes or the wretched casteless “untouchables” — but these groups seldom interacted. Parsees, for example, remained mostly in a small part of Bombay, and Sikhs stayed in northern India.

The British introduced several reforms: For instance, the suttee was abolished by law; child marriage was banned; untouchables, Muslims, and those of other religions were granted equal rights; and thuggee (the practice of ritual murder of strangers to placate the Hindu goddess Kali) was punished as murder. Such reforms, however, did not mean that the British Empire resolved all the problems of the subcontinent. What the British did bring to the subcontinent — though they did not recognize it at the time — was something very different: Christian civilization. For instance, the equality of all men (and women) before God was a Christian concept unthinkable to a Brahmin or even a Muslim among dhimmi. The oppression of women was a common characteristic of Islam, Hinduism, and even Buddhism (Gautama Siddhartha considered women so far down the level of creatures in the order of reincarnation that at first he did not even condone Hindu nuns).

The subcontinent was ancient, advanced, populous, and filled with intelligent people. What it lacked was the hope of Christianity, which comes best not by soldier, diplomat, or even a British Prime



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Minister. The love and tolerance of Christianity come through professing Christians bringing the Gospel to those who do not have it. Consider a frail little woman who grew up in a backward nation and came to India with little more than her faith. Mother Teresa arose, alone, out of a gigantic nation that encompassed one-quarter of humanity and that was filled with every faith and metaphysical system imaginable, and — in a land that considered women inferior and resented Europeans — drew with Christian love huge numbers of Indians so that when she died she was given a state funeral.

Politicians such as Prime Minister Cameron cannot bring peace to that Gordian knot of mistrust and misery. The problems of India and Pakistan are not political, but spiritual. The battle to bring peace to the world is being fought every day all over the world by Christian missionaries bringing medical clinics, schools, orphanages, and hope. It is in this great battle — not in diplomacy or foreign aid or peacekeeping forces — that peace will come. It is through acceptance of God's love — and nothing else.



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