

## THE CRUSADES

### **COLD OPEN**

<< **cam 1** >> The Crusades. Was it brutish Catholic soldiers terrorizing innocent Muslims ... forcing them to convert or die? Or was it actually the other way around? Let's set the record straight.

### **CUT TO FILM NOIR OPEN**

<< **cam 1** >> Hello ... I'm Michael Voris ... and welcome to the latest edition of CIA ... Catholic Investigative Agency ... a show where we reveal the hidden ... and the not so hidden attacks on the Church.

In this episode... we will unveil the truth about the Crusades.

Few things are more misunderstood in the history of the Catholic Church ... than these military campaigns waged hundreds of years ago.

There are lots of reasons for that ... which we'll get into shortly. But first ... let's begin as we always do with our thesis:

**THESIS:** Contrary to popular belief ... the Crusades were not a campaign to spread faith by the sword ... but a defense of Catholics and their holy places against Muslim aggression ... as well as an answer to a desperate plea from the Orthodox Church. << **turn cam 2** >>

When someone has a problem with Christianity in Western Civilization ... or more specifically ... the Roman Catholic Church ...

... inevitably one of the first assaults they will launch ... has something to do with the Crusades.

Funny thing is ... their original problem usually has nothing to do with these military campaigns.

They point to the Crusades as a grave injustice that the Catholic Church has committed

... albeit a perceived injustice ... and therefore ... their personal problem they have with the church is justified ... since it is “clearly evil”.

But **IS** the church evil? **DID** it force Christianity on others? Let’s examine some of the falsehoods. << **turn cam 1** >>

## **FALSEHOODS**

There’s an abundance of lies floating around about the Crusades. During a recent interview with RealCatholicTV DOT COM ... Canadian columnist, talk show host and author Michael Coren ... tries to clear things up.

The first ... and greatest falsehood that he addresses is ... the notion that Christians were the aggressors. Coren explains that it was ... in fact ... the **MUSLIMS** who were actually the instigators:

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So the truth is ... the **MUSLIMS** were the ones spreading their faith by the sword ... **NOT** the Christians.

But to hear any average citizen tell the story ... you’d think that Christians were the aggressors ... and Muslims were the victims. << **turn cam 2**>>

We wanted make sure ... that this truly is the common understanding of the Crusades. So we decided to talk with some people on their lunch breaks ... and see what they had to say. Not surprisingly ... their perceptions are far from the truth:

<<**PAUSE SOT MAN**>>

There you have it. But it’s not just your average Joe or Jane ... who mistakenly thinks that Christians were the aggressors.

Shortly after 9/11 ... former President Bill Clinton ... gave his opinion on why those terrorist attacks happened.

He points back to the Crusades ... and how the Christian West is ultimately to blame ... for Muslim hostility towards us.

Here’s our 42<sup>nd</sup> president revisiting the common myth. Quote:

<<MIKE READ VOICED BOARD>>

“Those of us who came from various European lineages are not blameless. Indeed, in the first Crusade, when the Christian soldiers took Jerusalem, they first burned a synagogue with 300 Jews in it, and proceeded to kill every woman and child who was Muslim on the Temple mound(sic). The contemporaneous description of the event describes soldiers walking on the temple mound(sic), a holy place to Christians, with blood running up to their knees. I can tell you that that story is still being told to today in the Middle East and we are still paying for it.” << turn cam 1>>

There are several things to contend with in Clinton’s speech.

First ... the famous image of blood running up to their knees is misinterpreted. More than likely ... this reference is borrowed from Raymond of Aguilers ... a chronicler of the First Crusade ... who was pointing to imagery from the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation. Not to mention ... the fact that basic physics render this claim ludicrous. Raymond was hardly offering a historical account ... and more than likely didn’t intend his statement to be taken as one.

Second ... does it make **ANY** sense at all for Americans to pay for the sins that their European ancestors committed almost one thousand years ago?

Third ... what we are paying for is not the First Crusade ... but a revisionist history account of the first crusade which was taught to ... and carried on by ... a Muslim world that fails to see the truth of the matter.

So why the revisionist history? What does it accomplish for those who ... knowingly or unknowingly ... promote it?

Robert Spencer... director of Jihad Watch ... discusses the historical myth of the Crusades and what Muslims ... and anti-Catholics ... stand to gain from it:

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<< turn cam 2 >>And it doesn’t help that Hollywood continues to reinforce these cultural myths ... with slick, big budget movies and TV shows.

Here are a few examples:

“Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves” ...

... starring Kevin Costner as Robin Hood. At one point in the film ... we hear Robin explaining that his father was against the Crusades ... because he believed it was silly ... and immoral ... to attempt to convert others to your religion.

In the movie ... Catholic monks are portrayed as boozed up jesters ... Catholic bishops as crooked gluttons. Of course Muslim warriors are shown as whip smart ... yet very sensible and down to earth.

Another movie on the Crusades ... “Kingdom of Heaven” ...

... is just as misleading. Catholic film critic Steven Greydanus ... sums up the revisionist storyline. He says that the Crusades are portrayed in the film as quote ...

<<MIKE READ BOARD>>

“...the failure of moderate Christians to restrain fanatical Christians from oppressing innocent Muslims, thereby provoking justifiable Muslim retaliation against the Christians, both fanatics and otherwise.” << **turn cam 1** >>

Then there's TV shows ... like The History Channel's “documentary” ... *The Crusades: Crescent and the Cross* ...

... which misses the mark from the get go. Within the first ten minutes ... there are many inaccuracies. Pope Urban II is repeatedly portrayed as a cunning politician ... who cared less about Christianity and more about gaining power. And the Crusaders are shown as soldiers who got involved with the holy war ... for honor ... prestige ... and great riches.

It's truly unfortunate that millions of dollars was spent ... producing these visually stunning films & TV shows ... yet the factual content was either clearly not checked ... or even worse ... intentionally and maliciously misrepresented.

However ... we **HAVE** done a lot of the fact checking and digging ... and want to share with you what we've found. In just a minute here ... we'll lay down the history as succinctly as possible ... without leaving out the critical details.

After watching this episode of C.I.A. ... we encourage you to dig even deeper. Have a

look at our bibliography at RealCatholicTV DOT COM ... or our resource disc that comes with the Crusades DVD. These are great starting points for anyone who wants to learn more about these holy wars. << **turn cam 2** >>

One last thing before we get to the timeline of the Crusades. There isn't a "nutshell" version of these holy wars ... or at least no *accurate* "nutshell" version. It's a complicated story ... that played out over a long period of time ... nearly two hundred years. So anyone who ever tries to reduce the Crusades to a quick sound bite ... is not giving it a fair treatment.

So ... you've heard the lies. Now here's what **really** happened ...

### **THE REAL HISTORY**

<< **cam 1** >> In 638 ... six years after the death of Mohammed ... Muslims captured Jerusalem. This ended Christian control of the holy city ... for the next four and a half centuries.

Islamic war lords went on to conquer all of Northern Africa and Southern Spain in the year 700 by forcing all of the populations to convert to Islam or meet death under their scimitars.

Had it not been for victories by Charles Martel at Tours and Poitiers in 732 ... Islamic forces would've overtaken Europe in its entirety.

It wasn't until 1095 ... that the Catholic Church responded to the Muslim aggression ... nearly four hundred years later.

It was then that Pope Urban II decided to do a preaching tour of France ... calling for Catholics to unite ... and help the Christians of the Byzantine Empire defend against the violent aggression and expansion of the Muslim Seljuk Turks into Anatolia.

Urban promised a plenary indulgence for those who took the cross ... which meant ... remission of all penances for their sins.

Several of Urban's successors promised the same thing during future Crusades as well. Here is an excerpt from Pope Urban II's speech at the Council of Clermont ... according to FUL - CARE of SHART - RUH... a chronicler of the first Crusade.

<< **PAUSE VOICED BOARD**>>

<< **turn cam 2** >> Participants were asked to take the Cross in a public ceremony. This meant that they had to vow to join the military expedition ... attach a cloth cross to his or her clothing ... and wear that cross until the vow was fulfilled.

These brave men undertook the first campaign in the year 1096. It lasted until 1102 ...  
... with Jerusalem being recaptured for Christendom in the summer of 1099.

Since Jerusalem required support ... multiple Christian settlements were set up in Edessa, Antioch and Tripoli.

The second Crusade happened almost 50 years later ... between 1147 and 1149 ... and was led by Louis the twelfth of France

Interestingly ... Crusades weren't taking place in just in the Holy Land at this point. They were happening all over Europe ... Poland, Spain, Germany, the Baltic, Italy and Bohemia ... known today as the Czech Republic.

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However ... these "European" Crusades are pretty fairly treated historically ... unlike the ones that occurred in Palestine.

In 1187... Jerusalem and most of the surrounding area ... fell to Saladin ... the Muslim leader ... during the Battle of HA – TEEN.

This loss prompted the Third Crusade.

Even though the Third Crusade and German Crusade regained many of the areas that were lost ... Jerusalem stayed in Muslim possession.

There were even a few non-military campaigns ... such as the Children's Crusade in 1212 ...

... and the Crusade of the Shepherds in 1251.

The Fourth Crusade ... which lasted from 1202 – 1204, was diverted to Constantinople.

The Fifth Crusade, beginning in 1217 and going until 1229 ... actually saw Jerusalem recaptured for a brief period ... until it was relinquished again in 1244.

Jerusalem's recapture only lasted a short time ... in large part because the Muslims destroyed the walls of the city ... before the Crusaders arrived.

This left the citizens of the sacred city vulnerable ... making it nearly impossible for them to keep out aggressors ... after the Crusader army returned home to Europe.

The Sixth Crusade ... was led by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick the Second ... and lasted from 1228 – 1229.

It is said that there was very little fighting in this Crusade ... and ultimately a treaty with the Muslims was signed in 1229 ... handing over Jerusalem to the Christians.

The treaty held for about ten years ... until 1244 ... when Jerusalem was conquered by Islamic forces once again. << **turn cam 2** >>

From there ... we move to the Seventh Crusade ... which took place from 1248 – 1254. Louis the Ninth of France led his men in an attempt to conquer the Muslims in Egypt and ultimately regain Jerusalem.

Unsuccessful ... Louis took a second shot at regaining Jerusalem in 1270 ... which is known as the Eighth Crusade. This was a failed attempt as well.

Louis died near Tunis in this Crusade. An interesting sidenote ... he is the Catholic king that St. Louis, Missouri gets its name from.

While the popular understanding of the Crusades cut the number at eight ... there were actually many more.

Several were launched by the French in the late 1200s ... and in the early 1300s there were further Crusades and numerous smaller campaigns and excursions in the eastern Mediterranean.

Crusading continued in different forms up until the sixteenth century ...

... including the famous naval victory at the bay of Lepanto in 1571 ... where Christian forces once again turned back the aggressive Muslim forces trying to conquer to Europe.

There were also military campaigns in the late seventeenth century to regain sections of the Balkans from the Turks.

As you can see ... the history books tell quite a different story than the one most people believe. SO ... where exactly did the false version of the Crusades come from?

## **SOURCES OF THE FALSEHOODS**

<< **cam 1** >> Now that we've established a basic history and timeline ... let's address some of the falsehoods ... and their sources.

As we've said ... the Crusades were **NOT** a campaign to spread Catholicism ... but to simply defend the sacred places of Christ's life ... and protect Catholics already living there that were being attacked. The Muslims were the aggressors ... not the Crusaders. To portray the Crusaders as aggressors would be akin to painting the allies who stormed the Normandy beaches to liberate Nazi occupied Europe as aggressors. And further, forced conversions are explicitly forbidden in Catholicism.

Once again ... here's Michael Coren ...

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<< **turn cam 2** >> So ... what were the origins of all this false history?

Two of the main sources ... that contribute to today's misunderstanding of the Crusades ... were a seemingly harmless novel and a six volume history of the Crusades.

The novel ... written by Sir Walter Scott ... is called *The Talisman*.

The six volume history...is entitled *History of the Crusades*...by Joseph Francois ME-SHOW.

Let's start with Scott's book.

Written in 1825 ... *The Talisman* ... is set at the end of the Third Crusade. In many ways ... Scott's novel is like another, more recent popular work of fiction ... that is familiar to many of you.

"The Da Vinci Code" ... written by Dan Brown ... released in 2003 ... weaves a tale that explains how Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene ... who was the real Holy Grail.

Both novels are wildly imaginative ... and have a few dashes of history thrown in. And unfortunately ... both fantasies were eventually taken by many as gospel.

There was one person in particular ... that read *Talisman* ... and wound up having a big impact ... on how we view the Crusades today.

His name is Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. As a boy ... Wilhelm's British mother raised him on the works of Scott. << **turn cam 1** >>

Unfortunately ... he took them **ENTIRELY** too seriously.

When he grew up to be King of Germany ... Wilhelm visited the tomb of SAL-uh-din ... to pay homage to the leader he had admired for so long.

Or at least to the version he had read about.

Funny thing is ... this supposed great leader was barely remembered by his own people. But Muslims certainly knew about SAL-uh-din after this.

Although ... they weren't exactly getting an accurate picture. Once Christian Egypt was conquered by SAL-uh-din ... who is revered as a peaceful and honorable leader by most ... he made a stunning move. Listen to Michael Coren describe the terrible event:

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<< **turn cam 2** >>While readers of Scott's book were being misled in one way ...

... the other work ... *History of the Crusades* by French historian Joseph Francois me-SHOW ... was different...but equally misleading. me-SHOW's book was intended as a historical text ... and while he certainly got some of the facts right ... completely mistook the motivation behind the Crusades.

His skewed view of the Crusades ... was that they were fought so that France ... his home country ... could increase the size of their empire.

This practice of extending the rule of a country over other foreign countries ... is known as *imperialism*.

me-SHOW was a nationalist ... who was extremely devoted to his home country. He

looked back at the Crusades ... READ ... his version of the Crusades ... with a certain fondness. me-SHOW thought ... mistakenly mind you ... that they were the perfect example of French imperialism ... and longed for the time when France could return to their dominating ways.

Again ... he may have had some of the facts right about the Crusades ... but **COMPLETELY** misunderstood the motivation behind these holy wars. Crusaders weren't power hungry patriots who wanted to expand their country's influence ... nor were they poor peasants ... who sought to loot and pillage for personal gain. Research shows that the average Crusader was of noble lineage ... or came from a wealthy background or both.

These brave soldiers risked their lives ... and their family fortunes ... for Christ and their fellow Christians. << **turn cam 1** >>

When his six volume set began to make its way to other European countries ... nationalists from Germany, England and Scandinavia ... also began to take an interest in their crusading past ... and developed similar beliefs that the Crusades were examples of imperialism at its finest.

Eventually ... these false notions of the Crusades ... seeped into the Muslim understanding of the conflicts.

Truth be told ... prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century ... there was very little care in the Muslim world about the Crusades. Up until that point ... the common understanding was ... that the Crusades were a proud and victorious time for the Muslim world.

The role of victim ... wasn't adopted until the late 1800s. That's when the leader of the Turkish Ottoman Empire ... Sultan Abdul ha-MEED the second ... whose country was in serious economic trouble ... made a deceitful and strategic move.

Wanting to unite the Islamic world ... the Sultan began promoting the notion that his European neighbors ... were threatening the Turkish nation with a new round of Crusades.

This new "holy war" that was being waged against Abdul ha-MEED and his people ... was in actuality more about trade ... money ... and geopolitics ... than religion. << **turn cam 2** >>

At about the same time ... another one of those "history books" was being published. This one was the first history of the Crusades written by a Muslim scholar ... Sayyid 'Ali al-hah-REE-ree. It espoused the growing idea ... that the Crusades were a

forerunner of European colonialism.

Coinciding with the release of this important text ... was the influx of young Arabs to Europe. They were coming west for a college education.

What they were getting in the classroom ... was the latest fashionable views about the Crusades ... that Muslims had been oppressed and Christians had been the oppressors.

When the British defeated the Turks in World War I and occupied large portions of the Middle East ... there was fear of a new Crusade.

Only adding fuel to the fire ... was the establishment of a Jewish settlement in Palestine ... and eventually forming an official state in 1948.

Today ... Muslims see many things as part of a modern Crusade ... from Zionism ... to Communism ... even atheism is part of this group.

So you can start to see where some of the unjustified ... yet very real anti-Christian sentiment stems from.

Unfortunately ... the majority of the Western world won't stand up to point out these falsehoods.

Why? ... Because the West is ignorant of the truth ... or too politically correct ... and has developed its own hatred of Christianity over the years. << **turn cam 1** >>

Those who are against the Church ... often point to a statement by Pope John Paul II in 2000 ... where an apology was made regarding ... "sins, past and present, of the sons and daughters of the Church."

Immediately ... it was taken as an admission of guilt for the Crusades ... which it was **NOT**. It was ... in fact ... a sincere apology to the Orthodox Church for the 1204 sack of Constantinople ... where one of the crusading armies diverted from its original plan and ransacked the city for their own personal gain.

No apology should be offered for defending Christendom ... nor was it.

The Crusaders had a right to defend their Christian neighbors and holy sites. But still more questions arise ... from those who hate the church.

Questions like ... "Was force necessary ... since Christians are called to "turn the other

cheek?” ... and “If force was necessary ... couldn’t they have been a bit less violent?” ... and also “What about all of the Jews that Christians murdered in cold blood? They had nothing to do with this war.”

Let’s start with the former question. Once again ... we turn to Michael Coren. His book ... “Why Catholics Are Right” ... explores this challenging question of whether the Crusades and the Crusaders were justified.

It essentially says that ... while it’s true that Christ was the prince of peace ... He was **NOT** a pacifist. He **WHIPPED** men who were selling impure animals for sacrifice outside the Temple ... and advised His followers to arm themselves while on the road. To turn the other cheek when struck is completely different from leaving another defenseless person to be attacked, let alone an entire population to be dominated and exterminated.

Pope Innocent III came to the same conclusion ... albeit 800 years earlier ... after the eastern Christian empire had been pleading for help after years of persecution:

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<< **turn cam 2** >> To answer the second question ... did it have to be so violent? ... we simply look to what other wars were like during the Middle Ages. They were not pretty. So yes, the Crusades were bloody ... but that was just how war was at the time and is still is.

And the last question ... what about the slaughter of the Jews? How can the Catholic Church justify that kind of behavior?

It’s true that Jews were senselessly murdered just before the beginning of the first crusade. But ... they were killed by unruly mobs that were ... as Michael Coren puts it ... “drunk on the idea of a holy war”.

The Catholic Church **NEVER** called for this behavior. It did...however ... stand definitively against it. Bishops did all they could to defend the Jews ... hiding them in their living quarters from the angry hordes.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux traveled to the Rhineland and demanded that the senseless murders be stopped ... saying ... << **turn cam 1** >>

<< **PAUSE BOARD**>>

So ... you’ve got most of the basic information. Now how do you use it to defend the

Catholic Church?

## CALLING ALL CATHOLICS

<< **cam 2** >> We are called as faithful Catholics to stand up for the truth. You can do that by taking the knowledge that you've gained from this show ... and sharing it with others.

As was said earlier ... there is no one sound bite that will sum up the Crusades. But there are a few basics that will serve as starting points for explaining what really happened:

- Remember that it was Muslims ... not Catholics ... who were the aggressors attempting to spread their faith by the sword.
- The Catholic Church **NEVER** condoned violence committed by its soldiers against the innocent. Often the violence wasn't even committed by the actual Crusaders ... but by uninvited tagalongs who had their own agendas.
- The current understanding of the Crusades ... the one that says that Catholics were forcing everyone to convert or killing them ... essentially stemmed from two books ... *The Talisman* by Sir Walter Scott and *History of the Crusades* by Joseph Francois Michaud.
- The Crusaders **DID** commit violence ... but that doesn't necessarily mean they did anything wrong. A Catholic can be justified in using force. Look at paragraph 2309 of the Catechism ... which explains the just war doctrine. And don't forget ... Christ was the Prince of Peace ... but he was **NOT** a pacifist. The peace that Christ spoke of was not the mere absence of war, but a spiritual peace of the soul.

With this information ... charitably correct those who erroneously believe that Catholics were the aggressor in these holy wars. They have been misled ... and have a right to know the truth.

## **OUTRO**

So... now you know. Thanks for watching this edition of C.I.A. ... Catholic Investigative Agency. I'm Michael Voris. Let's hit the streets.