How Christian Views of History Facilitate or Distort Christian Understanding of the New Faith

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Christian views of history distort the Christian understanding of the new faith in many ways. First, scholars and historians borrow heavily from people who had limited knowledge or affiliation to Islam. For instance, Tolan begins his book by dedicating a chapter to the writings of Isidore of Seville. Isidore, a 7th-century contemporary of Prophet Mohammed, knew little about Islam. By dedicating the most important parts of their works to the writings of people with limited or misleading information about a particular religion, modern historians and writers easily distort and mislead their readers' knowledge or understanding about Islam. This problem is particularly more pronounced when the authors/historians present these materials as the actual representation of Islam.

Misinformation/disinformation can also distort the Christian understanding of Islam. Some historians borrow heavily from early Christians' accounts or writings instead of sourcing their information from the accounts of Muslims. Some sources, and particularly those that originate from hostile authors, twist and create an ugly portrayal of Islam (Tolan, 2002). Unlike modern times, the old times saw intense hostility between Christians and Muslims that often turned into wars. Due to this hostility, Christian writings often compared Prophet Mohammed and his followers to the false Prophet and the antichrist, who featured in the Bible in Matthew 24:16.42 and Revelation 9:13–21. Besides, some Christians often considered Islam as Christian heresy, which means that its coverage in ancient writings by Christians was from a Christian rather than an Islamic point of view (Tolan, 2002). Because there was no consensus among Christians about Prophet Mohammed's coverage in the Bible, relying on early Christians rather than Muslims as the source of Islamic history results in inconsistencies. Unless the history of Islam is sourced from early Muslims, the Christian understanding of the concept will forever remain distorted.

From a Christian perspective, the history of Islam focuses heavily on the failures and negatives rather than the positives/accomplishments of the Muslims. Elements such as the Crusades and other religious wars, the bloody conquest of Islam, and the persecutions that happened due to religious conflicts feature extensively in the Christian illustration of Islam's history (Tolan, 2002). As such, the reader is made to understand the followers of Prophet Mohammed as violent, horrible, followers of a false religion, and an enemy of Christianity. This bias plays a pivotal role in how Christians understand Islam and the perception that they develop towards Muslims

# Reference

Tolan, J. V. (2002). *Saracens: Islam in the medieval European imagination*. New York: Columbia University Press.