

Attitudes toward Muslims and Jews linked

Maureen Fiedler | Feb. 1, 2010 NCR Today

On the most recent "[Interfaith Voices](#) [1]," I interviewed Dalia Mogahead, executive director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies. She reported on a new poll of Americans that found that 43 percent admitted feeling prejudice toward Muslims. And that's the percentage who *admit* it. Not surprisingly, Islam registers a much higher negative rating than other religions. Given the negative media coverage of Islam, and careless political language used by some public officials, that's not surprising.

But the most fascinating finding is the fact that the best predictor of a negative attitude toward Muslims is a negative attitude toward Jews. Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia go hand in hand.

That's not a surprise for James Carroll, the Catholic author of the best-selling book, *Constantine's Sword*, which traced the sordid history of anti-Semitism in the history of the church. I invited him on the show to follow Dalia Mogahead's interview. What he said may startle some people.

He notes that the Crusaders of 1096, on their way to kill Muslim "infidels" in the Holy Land, first attacked those they regarded as the "infidels" within: the Jews of Europe. The first pogroms date to 1096!

He believes the Gallup study does a real service by exposing the fears of both Muslims and Jews that still lurk in the heart of Christendom, giving everyone an opportunity to change their minds and hearts.

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[1] <http://interfaithradio.org/>