

Islam and Christian Realism

[Francis X. Maier](#)

Most Westerners were shocked by the savagery of Hamas's recent attacks on Israel and the systematic murder of Israeli citizens by Hamas terrorists. That wickedness was compounded by blaming Israel for a catastrophic missile strike on a Gaza hospital, when the evidence now shows that the hundreds dead were actually killed by one of Hamas's own rockets. But maybe the most stunning media images involved the millions of people in the Arab world and many Western capitals celebrating the Hamas violence.

Since Vatican II, Catholics and many other Christians have placed a premium on interfaith dialogue and cooperation, especially with Judaism, but also with Islam. The results – as I saw firsthand in the years I served as a diocesan interfaith officer – have often been deeply rewarding. But it's worth remembering that while Christianity has its roots in Judaism, our relationship with Islam is a very different matter. Hence the following thoughts might be worth considering:

Islam and the Word of God:

Whoever knows the Old and New Testaments, and then reads the Koran, clearly sees *the process by which it completely reduces Divine Revelation* [emphasis in original]. It is impossible not to note the movement away from what God said about Himself, first in the Old Testament through the Prophets, and then finally in the New Testament through His Son. In Islam, all the richness of God's self-revelation, which constitutes the heritage of the Old and New Testaments, has definitely been set aside.

Some of the most beautiful names in the human language are given to the God of the Koran, but He is ultimately a God outside of the world, a God who is *only Majesty, never Emmanuel, God-with-us. Islam is not a religion of redemption . . .*

For this reason, not only the theology but also the anthropology of Islam is very distant from Christianity.

– St. John Paul II, from *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*

Islam and conflict:

The world, as [the scholar Bat Ye'or] brilliantly shows, is divided into two regions: the *dar al-Islam* and the *dar al-harb*; in other words, the “domain of Islam” and “the domain of war. The world is no longer divided into nations, peoples, and tribes. Rather, they are all located en bloc in the world of war, where war is the only possible relationship with the outside world. The earth belongs to Allah, and all its inhabitants must acknowledge this reality; to achieve this goal there is but one method: war. War, then, is clearly an institution, not just an incidental or fortuitous institution, but a constituent part of the thought, organizations, and structures of this world. Peace with this world of war is impossible. Of course, it is sometimes necessary to call a halt; there are circumstances where it is better not to make war. The Koran makes provision for this. But this changes nothing: [For Islam,] war remains an institution, which means that it must resume as soon as circumstances permit.

I have greatly stressed the characteristics of this war, because there is so much talk nowadays of the tolerance and fundamental pacifism of Islam that it is necessary to recall its nature, which is fundamentally warlike.

– the late Jacques Ellul, distinguished French Protestant theologian and social critic, from his foreword to *The Decline of Eastern Christianity Under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude* by Bat Ye'or



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Islam, politics, and culture:

The two religions with a “political” dimension did not acquire it in the same way. Christianity gained ground in the ancient world against the power of the Roman Empire, which had persecuted Christians for almost three centuries before itself adopting the Christian religion. Islam, after a brief period of trials, triumphed during the lifetime of its founder. It then conquered, by warfare, the right to operate in peace, and even the right to dictate conditions of survival to the adepts of other religions “of the Book.” In modern terms, we might say that *Christianity conquered the state through civil society; Islam, to the contrary, conquered civil society through the state* [emphasis in original].

Thus from the start, Christianity set itself outside the political domain, and its founding texts bear witness to a mistrust of things political. . . .For Islam, the separation of the political and the religious has no right to exist. It is even shocking, for it appears as an abandonment of human affairs to the power of evil or a relegation of God to a place outside his proper sphere. The

ideal city must be here below. In principle, it already exists: It is the Muslim city.

– Ratzinger Prize laureate and professor emeritus of medieval and Arabic philosophy at the Sorbonne, Rémi Brague, from *The Law of God: The Philosophical History of an Idea*

Islam, despite claims of a common ancestry with Judaism and Christianity stemming from Abraham, and despite its formal respect for Jesus and Mary, **has very little in common with Christian faith. Islam denies the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption. It denies the accuracy of the Gospels. And it denies the origins and purpose of the Church. In fact, Islam acknowledges Judaism and Christianity purely as aberrations in its own syncretic story.**

Today, Christians in Muslim-dominated states like Sudan, Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Bangladesh, and Indonesia face everything from marginalization and harassment to outright violence. The reason is simple. For all of Islam's strengths, **anti-Jewish and anti-Christian prejudice has a long and often bitter history in Islam, despite claims to the contrary.**

This doesn't license a similar prejudice on our part. But **it does demand that we bring realism, courage, firmness, and an accurate memory to our modern encounter with Islam – both in the Middle East and here at home.** In the light of the Gospel, Mohammed is not a true prophet, and the Koran is not the Word of God. **As Jesus himself said, *only he is the way to the Father.* And Muslims do not finally know him. Without our active witness to the Islamic world, they never will.**

***Image:** *Sobieski at Vienna* by Jan Matejko, 1883 [Jan Sobieski room, Vatican Museum]

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Fr. Perozich comments —

Speaking on dieting, a witty friend of mine once exclaimed, “We’ve declared a truce in the war on cellulite; but the other side is not observing.”

*In the document *Nostra Aetate* on non Christian religions, it appears that the church puts out an olive branch to Muslims for a reset of relationships in order to coexist in peace.*

The statement tries to unite Jesus’ revelation of God with Islam’s understanding of God by recognizing some of the divine attributes of God in His oneness and the formulators’ beliefs about Islam, acknowledging that Moslems submit to their God even when the decrees are inscrutable, makes comparisons and relationships to Abraham, Jesus, and Mary, and speaks of a generalized moral life and worship through the pillars of piety.

It does not flesh out these statements because it cannot do so to join Islam to the triune God that Jesus revealed as His Father and the Holy Spirit.

From where does the aggression against non Muslims come: from their God, from the Quran, or from forceful leaders?

A former Muslim from the aggressive Hamas group makes a powerful inflammatory statement about all that is Islam, and what its followers need in order to be liberated from aggression toward other religions.

A reformulation of the wit might be, “Catholics have declared a truce in the war on religion, but the other side is not observing.”

From the Documents of the Second Vatican Council Nostra Aetate

3. The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all- powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth,(5) who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who

have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting. Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.

THE INFIDELS

A line Muhammad would not cross, Hamas did

Exclusive: Lt. Col. James Zumwalt explains Islam founder's battle policy in A.D. 627 conquest



By [Lt. Col. James Zumwalt](#)

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In the wake of the invasion of Israel by Hamas, any member of civilized society struggling to understand how man can so brutalize his fellow man – including women and children – as Hamas did has neither read the Quran nor studied Islam.

Reading the Quran, a theme emerges. For those unfamiliar with Islam, a simple and straightforward declaration of that theme can be summarized as follows:

For the 1,400 years since Islam was first introduced to the world by Prophet Muhammad, its extremist followers have

adopted the role of serial killers who target victims unwilling to embrace the religion as their own. According to the Quran, peaceful coexistence with other religions ultimately cannot occur. Although during this 1,400 year period, there have been times of peaceful coexistence, the Quran mandates it is only for the purpose of believers strengthening their position in order to later impose Islam upon unbelievers. If one truly embraces the teachings of the Quran – which all extremists do but, fortunately, all Muslims do not – followers have a license to kill unbelievers. Thus, the mindset of the extremist is that unbelievers have only one of three options from which to choose: convert to Islam, recognize their own religion's subservience to Islam by paying a tax to continue practicing it, or die for failing to accept either of the first two options. Believers who die killing unbelievers are guaranteed an afterlife in Paradise.

Islam's defenders argue there are Quranic verses suggesting it is tolerant of unbelievers. However, there is a catch. As Muhammad first began proselytizing, his teachings, memorialized in the early part of the Quran, were tolerant. But once he gained strength in followers, that tolerance turned to the intolerance memorialized in later parts of Islam's holy book.

This created an interesting paradox. Muslims were taught the Quran represented the words of God given to the Archangel Gabriel who conveyed them directly to the Prophet Muhammad. As such, both the prophet and the Quran were said to represent perfection. But for centuries, followers were confused by clear contradictions found in the Quran.

These contradictions included errors in science and math as well as in what was and was not to be tolerated. Finally, in the ninth century, Islamic scholars introduced the "law of abrogation" by which an earlier verse was to be ignored, replaced by a contrary, later verse. Christians and Jews, tolerated in earlier verses, were not in later verses.

Abrogation made it clear that Muhammad taught hatred towards unbelievers, with Jews, in particular, victims of his wrath. This perhaps was triggered by his experiences with the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza.

In A.D. 627, the prophet believed he had been betrayed by the Banu Qurayza and spent two weeks laying siege to its compound. When the Jews surrendered, the decision was made to slaughter the men and take the women and children captive. Between 400-900 men were executed. To ensure no children were mistakenly put to death, only those who had reached puberty were beheaded.

Thus, it is obvious that, during the recent Hamas invasion of Israel, these extremists crossed a line – brutally killing defenseless children – even Prophet Muhammad felt morally obligated not to cross. One would have assumed Hamas would have embraced the prophet's standard of sparing children from execution, yet these barbaric murderers were unconstrained even by Muhammad's limited morality.

A former Muslim who, recognizing the deep-seated hatred Islam promotes, believes a solution exists. What [Mosab Hassan Yousef](#) has courageously done made him a hero among Jews and a target among Muslims.

As the son of a founder of Hamas and a one-time member, Yousef was destined to be a next-generation leader. But the more he witnessed the brutality and hatred of Hamas, not only against Jews but its own people as well, and the more he learned about Christianity, he experienced an epiphany. He converted to Christianity, going on to spy for Israel.

It also became clear to Yousef that Hamas and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, led then by Yasser Arafat, had no interest in pursuing peaceful coexistence with Israel, even when the latter provided the opportunity. He was enraged to see Arafat turn down an Israeli offer of statehood on 90% of the West Bank with East Jerusalem as the capital and, instead, look for a

pretext to trigger a second intifada. In 2010, at age 22, Yousef became an Israeli spy.

Several years later, Yousef left the Middle East and today resides in the U.S. Earlier this year, he published his book "Son of Hamas." The issue haunting him today "is whether I was a traitor or a hero in my own eyes." His motivation, he reveals, was to save lives, and he believes he saved them on both sides, including his father's. For Yousef, "saving a human life was something really, really beautiful ... no matter who they are."

Yousef's courage goes beyond his spying days, however. He states something that many others, whether Muslim or not, will not admit. He explains that Muslims are not fanatics but simply "doing the will of a fanatic God ... a fanatic, fundamentalist, terrorist God. I know this is harsh to say. Most governments avoid this subject. ..."

Yousef has grasped the realization that Islam was the creation of a man devoid of perfection. Just like Scientology was the product of Ron Hubbard, who noted years before that inventing a religious ideology was the only way to make money, Muhammad invented Islam for reasons of personal power.

Hubbard's religion does not promote violence towards nonbelievers; sadly, Muhammad's does, having promoted bloody violence for over a millennium. As Yousef boldly declares despite threats to his life: **"The problem is not in Muslims. The problem is with their God. They need to be liberated from their God. He is their biggest enemy. It has been 1,400 years they have been lied to."**

While Yousef gives the West a ray of hope, it is doubtful with Islamic terrorist groups like Hamas still in existence, such liberation will ever be achieved.

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