

The Papacy and Islam

by Richard Bennett and Robert J. Nicholson

New Partnership with Muslims

In his message to the predominately Muslim nation of Kazakhstan twelve days after the horrors of September 11th, 2001, the Pope declared,

“‘There is one God’. The Apostle proclaims before all else the absolute oneness of God. This is a truth which Christians inherited from the children of Israel and which they share with Muslims: it is faith in the one God, ‘Lord of heaven and earth’ (Lk.10:21), almighty and merciful. In the name of this one God, I turn to the people of deep and ancient religious traditions, the people of Kazakhstan.”¹

He then gave a false Gospel. Building a “civilization of love”, he said, is the task of Christians and Muslims. His exact words were,

“This ‘logic of love’ is what he [Jesus] holds out to us, asking us to live it above all through generosity to those in need. It is a logic which can bring together Christians and Muslims, and commit them to work together for the ‘civilization of love’. It is a logic which overcomes all the cunning of this world and allows us to make true friends who will welcome us ‘into the eternal dwelling-places’ (Lk.16:9), into the ‘homeland’ of heaven.”²

His final prayer was for a partnership between “Christians and Muslims”. His words were,

“And in this celebration we want to pray for Kazakhstan and its inhabitants, so that this vast nation, with all its ethnic, cultural and religious variety, will grow stronger in justice, solidarity and peace. May it progress on the basis in particular of cooperation between Christians and Muslims, committed day by day, side by side, in the effort to fulfil God’s will.”³

In spite of the catastrophic events of September 11th, the Pope has continued faithfully the Roman Catholic Church policy of affirmation and approval of Islam. The Vatican speaks officially of the Roman Catholic Church having the same God and faith of Abraham as the Muslims,

“*The Church’s relationship with the Muslims.* ‘The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind’s judge on the last day.’”⁴

The Roman Catholic Church officially declares that the One God of Holy Scripture is also the God of Islam. It also esteems the moral life of Islam, the affirmation of which follows,

“The Church has also a high regard for the Muslims. They worship God, who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has also spoken to men. They strive to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God, just as Abraham submitted himself to God’s plan, whose faith Muslims eagerly link to their own.

¹ Homily of the Pope, in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Sunday, 23 September 2001. Accessed 9/28/2001.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/2001/documents/hf_jpii_hom_20010923_kazakhstan_astana_en.html

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1994) Para. 841 Hereafter *Catechism*

Although not acknowledging him as God, they venerate Jesus as a prophet, his virgin Mother they also honor, and even at times devotedly invoke. Further, they await the day of judgment and the reward of God following the resurrection of the dead. For this reason they highly esteem an upright life and worship God, especially by way of prayer, alms-deeds and fasting.”⁵

It is clear from this official recognition that the Church of Rome’s estimation of Islam has experienced a fundamental change. The Biblical commandment not to venerate any strange god has been broken by Rome in order to credit Islam and its adherents with holding to the faith of Abraham. Patently, this novel re-assessment of the Muslim faith represents a major shift in the political policy of the Vatican. These official statements are carefully constructed religious discourse. They are aimed at engendering a new mood of respectful rapprochement and mutual understanding between the Papacy and Islam. As a device of diplomatic exchange, they show clearly that a new interfaith-ecumenicity is being propounded by Rome with the singular objective of embracing Islam and its peoples within a new international community of religious life and faith, a community incidentally, in which Rome enjoys priority as founder and senior partner.

Islam rejects Trinity, Christ’s divinity, His sacrifice

Christians believe in One God, in which One Godhead there exists Three Persons. Islam rejects this concept as blasphemous. The Qur’an declares,

“Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely Allah is the third (person) of the three; and there is no god but the one God, and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve”(Surah 5:73)⁶.

The Bible proclaims Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross in place of the believer, *“In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”*⁷ Islam passionately rejects the crucifixion of Christ Jesus. Thus the Qur’an declares,

“And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Marium, the apostle of Allah; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like Isa) and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure” (Surah 4:157).

The Bible proclaims Christ Jesus as divine, being the brightness of the divine glory, and the express image of God. In the Qur’an Christ Jesus is debased to being solely an apostle of Allah. Thus the Qur’an states, “O followers of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak (lies) against Allah, but (speak) the truth; the Messiah, Isa son of Marium is only an apostle of Allah...” (Surah 4.171) Christ Jesus declared, *“Before Abraham was, I AM.”*⁸ *“I and my Father are one.”*⁹ *“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”*¹⁰ A religion that rejects Christ’s divinity is dead in its sins. It is an absurd blasphemy that the Pope declares that the one, living and subsistent God of the Bible is the same one as the infidel god of Islam.

⁵ *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, No. 56, *Nostra Aetate*, Austin P. Flannery, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B Eerdsman’s Publ. Co., 1975 & 1984) Vol. I., pp. 739-740. Hereafter *Vatican II*.

⁶ All quotes from the Koran are from this site: <http://www.hti.umich.edu/k/koran/>

⁷ Ephesians 1:7

⁸ John 8:58

⁹ John 10:30

¹⁰ John 8:24

The Gospel and the Qur'an's religious philosophy

In the Bible the Gospel is as the Apostle John declared, *"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."*¹¹ *"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."*¹² The whole purpose of the God of Scripture is clearly seen in the reason why the Gospel of John was written, *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."* This is totally different from the god of Islam who orders fighting, war, and punishment, by murder, crucifixion and amputation. The following is just a sample of the primary concept of fighting for Allah that the Qur'an requires:

"And kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from whence they drove you out, and persecution is severer than slaughter, and do not fight with them at the Sacred Mosque until they fight with you in it, but if they do fight you, then slay them; such is the recompense of the unbelievers." Surah 2.191

"And fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion should be only for Allah, but if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors." Surah 2.193

"...let those fight in the way of Allah, who sell this world's life for the hereafter; and whoever fights in the way of Allah, then be he slain or be he victorious, We shall grant him a mighty reward." Surah 4.74

"The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His apostle and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be murdered or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be imprisoned; this shall be as a disgrace for them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement," Surah 5.33

"Those who believe fight in the way of Allah,..." Surah 8.39

The commandment of the Lord is as different as darkness and light, for He says, *"Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."*¹³ While many individual Muslims may deplore atrocities committed in the name of Islam, it cannot be denied that these atrocities are justified and encouraged by Islamic teaching. Even the most moderate form of Islam is incompatible with Biblical truth.

RCC dogma on Islam changed

Nonetheless, after six centuries of condemning of Islam and two centuries of Crusades against the Muslims, modern Roman Catholicism is welcoming and affirming the religion of Mohammed. Rome now accepts Islam as having the same faith of Abraham as herself. How can the Roman Catholic Church espouse a religion that utterly rejects the Trinity, the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Gospel? Clearly, the Roman Catholic Church still plays the adaptable chameleon—for since Vatican Council II, she has in Muslim circles embraced Islam to the extent that she calls praiseworthy that which she once had denounced as evil and the object of war.

In 1095, Pope Urban II called for a "War of the Cross," or a Crusade, to retake the holy lands from the infidel Muslim Turks. Several versions of his speech at the end of a Church

¹¹ 1 John 1:5

¹² John 17:3

¹³ Luke 6:35-36

Council have survived. Although we cannot be sure of the exact words the Pope used, the substance however is the same. The heart and mind of papal power in twelfth and thirteenth centuries is seen in these sentences, “All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested.”¹⁴

The present Pope and his Church uphold the teaching that the definitions of all Roman Pontiffs pertaining to faith or morals of the Roman Pontiff are “irreformable by their very nature.”¹⁵ If the present Roman Pontiff, John Paul II, has proclaimed Muslims to be acceptable as believers, then by that same proclamation, Urban II and the whole line of Crusading Popes have been proven to be damnable heretics, since they condemned Muslims and fought against them!

Emotional unity and its consequences

The ecumenism of the Papacy with Islam is of grave concern for the true body of Christ to consider. The Sovereign Pontiff John Paul II sees himself as the one capable of bringing in a New World Order, in which Rome will be the Mother and Lawmaker. Through his Vatican II documents the Pope declares, “The encouragement of unity is in harmony with the deepest nature of the [Roman Catholic] Church’s mission....”¹⁶ On an highly emotional spiritual level there has been a great common-ground meeting place between Rome and Mecca in the town of Fatima in Portugal. To quote a Catholic news organization, “Our Lady of Fatima is really Fatima, daughter of the Prophet Mohammed...On October 23, 1995, Iranian television began running stories that the apparitions in Fatima, Portugal in 1917 were religious phenomena of Muslim origin.”¹⁷ Islam teaches that men can achieve favor with God by what a person does. On the Fatima site in Portugal May 13th 2000, the Pope proclaimed a message that could be readily accepted by both Muslims and Catholics. “Pray, pray much and make sacrifices for sinners; many souls go to hell because they have no one to pray and make sacrifices for them’....”¹⁸ Heroic deeds to win the approval of God appeal to the natural man, including the devout Muslim; it is, however, light years away from the Gospel of grace. The Pope’s message, and the message and veneration of heroism in Islam are a total negation of the Gospel, “*not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us....*”¹⁹ In practice both systems—a mammoth one billion adherents each—are totalitarian, synthesizing spiritual and civil power in their doctrinal presentations and cultic practices. The global hierarchy and infrastructure of the RCC, however, is far more developed than that of Islam.²⁰ The bringing together of both under the Roman Pontiff, who calls himself the Vicar of Christ, would make for a political powerhouse of vast consequences.

¹⁴ Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, 1, pp. 382 f., in *A Source Book for Medieval History*, Oliver J. Thatcher and Edgar Holmes McNeal, eds. (New York: Scribners, 1905).

¹⁵ *Vatican II*, No. 28, *Lumen Gentium*, Vol. I., p. 380.

¹⁶ *Vatican II*, No. 64, *Gaudium et Spes*, Vol. I, Sec. 42, p. 942.

¹⁷ www.zenit.org/english/asia/za980513.html Accessed 11/1/2001

¹⁸ www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_p.../hf_jp-ii_hom_20000513_beatification-fatima_en.htm accessed 6/1/00.

¹⁹ Titus 3:5.

²⁰ For a brief overview of the Islamic position, see Yossef Bodansky, *Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America* (Roseville, CA: Prima Publ, Forum, 1999, 2001) Introduction, pp. x-xv. For a study of RCC infrastructure, see 2001Catholic *Almanac* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publ., 2000) Part III: The Church Universal.

Pope's message echoed by Bush and Muslim Leaders

The drawing of governments and religions even more closely into a global coalition before a politically constructed god has already begun. Rome has many times shown herself as the one to whom all can come for unity within her. Islam as such is still accepted as a valid religion, and the terrorists of September understood to be fallen from their religion, rather than upholding its teachings. In the words of President George W. Bush, "These murderers have hijacked a great religion in order to justify their evil deeds. And we cannot let it stand."²¹ The Muslims themselves are giving the same message. For example, the Associated Press reported,

"An international Muslim religious ruling endorsed the morality of the U.S.-led military effort against terrorists...The ruling...was written by Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the widely respected chairman of the Sunna and Sira Council in Qatar, along with three colleagues in Egypt and one in Syria. The new fatwa cited the words of God in the Quran and authoritative Hadith... 'All Muslims ought to be united against all those who terrorize the innocents, and those who permit the killing of non-combatants without a justifiable reason,' the fatwa said... The five jurists also said Muslims have a duty to speak up about the faith's anti-terrorism stand."²²

This spin on Islam is perfectly in line with what Pope and the Vatican declared, "together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day."²³ It looks as if the Pope, the politicians, and the Muslims continue to conceal successfully the history of Mohammed and the contents of his Qur'an.

A Trumpet Call to the True Church

The Pope's profession of a 'civilization of love' in his rapprochement with Islam represents only another tactical re-appraisal of circumstances and opportunities for Rome. It is merely the old idol of humanistic sentiment religiously recycled and held out to the world as the cohesive force that will unite all sincere religious people in a concordat of international condemnation against the kind of anti-social fanaticism that led to the September 11th horror. The profound danger for Evangelical people is that they, unthinking, might come to embrace Rome's claim to be the true spokesman for Christ on this earth, a lie which is deeply embedded in this new thrust for inter-faith ecumenicity. The Pope is not a first among equals as a bishop. Frankly, he is not even a bishop in the biblical sense of the term. Karol Wojtyla is the head of a totalitarian hierarchy. Its position as the restored Holy Roman Empire is depicted in the Bible. He is an absolute monarch. He has his own secular government of Vatican City and more property worldwide than any other person on the planet. He has territorial dominions, cardinals, ambassadors worldwide, a detective force, legislature, jurisprudence, laws, advocates, taxes, banks, foreign treaties, ambitious plans and policy, more than any other secular Prince. But he differs from other secular leaders: his spiritual commerce goes hand in hand with his civil power, claiming infallibility and international recognition. The Pope in his own laws declares, "There is neither appeal nor recourse against a decision or decree of the Roman Pontiff." His arrogance is not just in spiritual matters, but in secular affairs also, for he claims supreme power as much as any totalitarian ruler, "The First See is judged by no one."²⁴ "It is solely the right of the Roman Pontiff himself o

²¹ Reported on cnn.com 10/12/01 "Bush Gives Update on the War on Terrorism".

²² http://dailynews.yahoo.com/h/ap/20011012/ts/attacks_fatwa_1.html Associated Press, Saturday October 13, 2001.

²³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Para. 841.

²⁴ *Code of Canon Law*, Latin-Eng. ed. (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1989) Can. 1404. All canons taken from this work.

judge...those who hold the highest civil office in a state..."²⁵ This Pope desires partnership with Islam. His claims echo II Thessalonians 2:4, "*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God*" and Isaiah 14:14, "*I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like most High.*" Had not Holy Scripture warned us of this we would rightly be afraid. The Sovereign God remains sovereign. His purposes may be the purification of the Bride of Christ Jesus, the remnant pilgrim Church on earth. The Lord Jesus Christ did not elect the Pope as His Vicar on earth; rather He and the Father gave to the Holy Spirit of Truth to that position.

If contemporary Evangelical leaders and their disciples discount and ignore these utterly basic prophetic and historical facts, they must understand they are placing themselves outside the stream of historic biblical Christianity. They are willingly divorcing themselves from great men of the faith—Wycliff, Huss, Luther, Tyndale, Calvin, Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Bradford, Foxe, Bunyan, Newton, Edwards, Whitefield, Wesley, Spurgeon, Ryle, and Lloyd-Jones to mention just a few. It is impossible to hold to the Gospel of Christ and simultaneously accord any legitimacy to the accommodations of the papal system. The Lord of Glory Himself will not allow such behavior to go unpunished. If Evangelicals to continue to fraternize with Rome, it will mark a major, irrevocable betrayal of the Gospel testimony toward the poor deluded adherents of Romanism and leave them languishing in the claws of the devil. In other words, in simple terms of loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ, those claiming to be believers must "*Come out of her...that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*"²⁶ There is no common ground between the religion of apostasy and the Gospel of the Apostles. In spite of papal declarations of a truce and vacuous "Evangelical" alliances with the enemies of Christ, "*Enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed,*" Genesis 3:1, is an epitomized history of conflict which, from the moment of the Fall, has been waged between the children of light and of darkness, between those who adhere to the Gospel of grace and God's righteousness, and those who are ranged on the side of the Devil by their love of accommodation and compromise. At this moment of history the Ecumenism of accommodation, with the Pope leading the pack, accepts Islam as a great religion. The true believer must decide where he or she stands. "*And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve.*"²⁷ ♦

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²⁵ Can. 1405.

²⁶ Revelation 18:4.

²⁷ Josh 24:15