

ISLAMIC OBJECTIVES WORLDWIDE

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[This essay was originally published in *Calvinism Today*, Vol. III, No. 3 (July 1993). We have taken the unusual step of reprinting it in this issue of *C&S* because of its particular relevance to current events in the world. The governments and peoples of the Western nations needed to heed the message of this essay when it was originally published almost a decade ago. It is all the more relevant now.—SCP]

FIVE times a day, with their faces turned toward the “sacred” city of Mecca, the birthplace of Islam, the devoted followers of Mohammed begin their prayers reciting, “There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet.”

Until recent decades, the religion of Islam was largely confined to Arabia, western Asia, northern Africa and southeast Europe. It was, and was regarded as, a regional religion: its boundaries imposed and unchanging; its devotees forever isolated, or so it seemed, not only by barren rock mountains and seas of sand, but by a vigorous and resolute Christianity that would not allow Islam’s further expansion.

Following the famous battle of Tours in 732, after a century of conquest, the Mohammedan advance and invasion of France was checked by Charles Martel and his Christian army. This defeat signalled the end of Islam’s northward thrust. The declining but able Byzantine powers still controlled Asia Minor at the time and Charlemagne, a Christian and one of the greatest warrior-kings of the period, was to rule central Europe. These plus additional factors, determined by the providence of God, forced and kept the Mohammedan peoples out of Europe altogether. And although Christendom later suffered a number of internal disturbances destined to weaken its unity and strength, it nevertheless continued, despite division, to oppose Islam uniformly and to keep Islamic influences from re-entering Europe unchallenged. With nothing of any importance left to conquer easily, the Mohammedan armies ceased their excursions and forays into foreign lands and settled down to consolidating their rule over subjugated territories, where they remained for many centuries. The only exception to this were the Ottoman Turks who, after successfully besieging Constantinople in 1453, sought to extend their empire into western Europe, but were eventually repelled. As Western civilisation developed and became more powerful, the Mohammedan civilisation stagnated and became less threatening.

The Industrial Revolution changed everything, however, and a world once dominated by agriculture and craftsmanship was transformed into one dominated by factories and machines. Remarkable developments occurred in every imaginable direction, not the least of which addressed the problem of power. Steam engines were operating in Britain, Europe and North America by the early 1800s. But

the discovery of petroleum revolutionised the Revolution. Initially petroleum was used merely for lighting, heating and lubrication, but as petroleum by-products multiplied so did its usage and the ever-growing consumption of petroleum by-products generated even greater demands for “black gold.” The insatiable demand for one particular by-product, gasoline, used to fuel a staggering number of internal-combustion engines worldwide, has fuelled political, economic, social, cultural and religious unrest as well.

There was a time when the industrial nations of the world fulfilled their own need for petroleum products. In 1939, for example, the United States supplied sixty to sixty-three per cent of the world’s demand. Texas alone produced about two-fifths of America’s domestic supply. But when it was discovered that much of the world’s vast petroleum reserves were under Arab sand, production shifted to that part of the world. The ensuing and inevitable nationalisation of petroleum production stripped the industrialised world of its self-sufficiency and in 1961 the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was set up to protect oil producing countries, mostly Arab, from exploitation by the major oil companies and oil consuming nations, mostly Western. OPEC ended the era of inexpensive energy when in 1973 it decided to double its margin of profit from oil exports (thought by many an act of exploitation itself). Despite higher consumer prices, petroleum consumption continued and continues to soar upwards.

Paralleling the demand for Arab oil by consumer nations throughout the world was a novel and growing power realised by Muslims. Michael Youssef, author of *America, Oil, and the Islamic Mind*, provides data for consideration: “In a world economy dependent on oil, countries fortunate enough to possess a superabundance of the coveted black gold can become fantastically wealthy almost overnight. This is precisely what happened with the Arab oil-producing nations. If oil dependency had a negative effect on the world in general, quite the opposite was felt by nations belonging to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Their staggering profits skyrocketed from \$50 billion in 1974 to \$200 billion in 1980, and now it is over \$1 trillion. In 1981, Saudi Arabia alone earned \$110 billion from the sale of oil. In 1990, with the price of a barrel reaching nearly \$40, thoughts of the net profit stagger the imagination.”

The seemingly endless flow of “petrol-dollars” pouring into Arab bank accounts resuscitated the Islamic world and huge amounts of money were, and continue to be, channelled into domestic development programmes, military expenditures, foreign investments, terrorist activities, and missionary and proselytising endeavours, the result being that peoples once thought to be beyond the pale of Islamic influence and insulated from Islamic objectives are now expressing concern over the growing presence, pervasiveness and power of Islam in and over historically non-Muslim communities and countries.

Are such concerns warranted? Recent figures show that Muslim concentrations in historically non-Muslim countries, especially in the West, are already quite large (due primarily to open immigration policies and higher birth rates), growing, and that the proportion of power held by what may appear to be insignificant numbers of Muslims minimises their minority status. The Muslim population in France, for example, is nearly three million and growing; in Germany, two million and growing; throughout the rest of Europe, substantial and growing; in the United States, six million and growing. Many of these Muslims hold an impressive amount of economic power (through investments and controlling positions in many firms, companies and corporations) purchased largely with Arab money, which, it is feared, may someday be used against the better interests of the West. But not to be overlooked is the kind of power associated with the demands of an imposing, unified, vocal and potentially violent people. Nor is it to be forgotten that the Islamic world, having been transformed from an impoverished, almost forgotten society to a proud, aggressive, self-confident power via an explosion of material wealth, now seeks to impose its political, economic and religious will globally.

Since the declared intent of Islam is to create a universal empire marked by a universal faith as envisioned by Mohammed (and evidence clearly suggests that this objective remains constant), then the aforementioned power of Muslims in and over historically non-Islamic countries becomes a genuine source of worry for those believing the aphorism “One prophet, one faith, for all the world!” to be more than just an empty halloo by an insignificant few Islamic zealots.

It was once thought Muslims would modify their views with the passing of time, perhaps even forced to do so in order to participate in the modern world, but it is quite obvious that has not yet happened. On the contrary, the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism has re-ignited traditional aspirations, quelled moderation and exerts its influence wherever Muslims are found.

Muslims are taught and believe their religion is to be extended throughout the world and that it is their sacred duty whenever they come into contact with non-Islamic society to subjugate that society by whatever means necessary and reshape it into an Islamic society. By whatever means necessary? Yes! Economic force, political force, military force, terrorism, violent protest—by whatever means necessary. To quote Michael Youssef again: “Such a philosophy grows from the desire of Mohammed himself to create a society in which religion encompasses everything. Muslim extremists demand a society controlled, pervaded, and purged by religion and established on and maintained by Arabic culture. They are willing to use every conceivable force to achieve this so-called ‘Divine objective’.”

It is more than interesting that those things most commonly associated with Islamic fundamentalism—*jihād* (holy war), *fatwa* (death sentences), terrorism, hijacking, the taking of hostages—all have violent connotations. It is not surprising, however. Mohammed is portrayed in the Koran as a divinely inspired military leader credited with having said, as tradition has it, that “the key to heaven and hell is the sword; a drop of blood shed in the cause of God is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer.” Mohammed’s seventh-century successors taught that the earth was divided between the *dar ul-Islam* (realm of Islam) and the *dar ul-harb* (realm of war), suggesting to those catechised that violence was essential to forwarding Islam. Violence characterised the followers of Mohammed in the beginning, and his modern-day followers appear to be good practitioners of their religion.

The characteristically violent and hostile nature of modern-day Islam, which has been televised and publicised intermittently over the past few decades, has reinforced Western assessments of Islam as a religion with a historically brutal legacy. The assassination of the moderate President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt on October 6, 1981 by Muslim extremists focused Western attention on what appeared to be an inherently violent strain within Islam. Against a backdrop of terrorism and innumerable anti-Western demonstrations by thousands of maniacal Muslims in Damascus, Tehran, Tripoli and Baghdad are memories of Berlin, Beirut, Lockerbie and the Gulf War. But again, Islam is no longer an impoverished regional religion; therefore its violent eruptions are no longer restricted geographically.

Consider the series of events brought about by the publication of Salman Rushdie’s novel, *The Satanic Verses*, in which Islam and its founder were poked at in a fashion not appreciated by devout Muslims. The book was banned in India to appease Muslims in that country. Alerted to the book by India’s move, British Muslims protested its publication, demonstrated publicly, burned copies of the book and bombed bookstores. British Muslims then deferred to the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran who in turn issued his infamous fatwa against the book’s author, publishers and distributors. Rushdie has been in hiding ever since. Many such examples of Islamic hot-headedness could be cited, but a significant number of people are already convinced that wherever Muslims are found the likelihood of violence exists and wherever large concentrations of Muslims are found the likelihood of violence is probable. One concerned citizen referred to the situation in Britain metaphorically by comparing it to “sitting on a volcano.”

According to Richard John Neuhaus, editor-in-chief of *First Things—A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*, Europe, but especially Britain, is where the question of “Islam in the West” is taking on proportions referred to as an unprecedented crisis. “The British,” writes Neuhaus, “by virtue of historical experience, are a people (actually, three or four peoples) in the sense of being—to use a term no longer in favor—a race. But now the patriotism and imperial glory of ‘Rule Britannia’ has been transmogrified into a threadbare Commonwealth that entitles Muslims from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Africa to British citizenship. Britain has never experienced anything like this before.” Indeed! The mass immigration of Muslims into Britain threatens to press hard upon what comprises British identity. The presence of a minority culture that separates and insulates itself is a ticking time-bomb, whatever the situation.

Britain's particular situation is one in which a minority culture not only refuses to adopt the norms of the majority culture, but threatens to subdue the majority culture by becoming the dominant force politically, economically, socially, culturally, and religiously. What this means for Britain is that its Christian heritage, the laws and liberties connected with that heritage, are under attack and are fully capable of being overthrown by a strident, self-confident Islam which demands that all the world subject itself to Allah, Mohammed and the teachings of the Koran.

What is occurring in Britain is occurring also throughout the remaining countries of Europe to varying degrees. Anthony Hartley, in his article, "Europe's Muslims," appearing in the Winter 1990/91 issue of *The National Interest*, noted four conclusions to be drawn from the present situation:

First, European countries already have considerable Muslim communities. These are likely to grow and to acquire greater political influence as immigrants and their children become citizens of the states in which they are domiciled.

Second, these communities, in so far as they can be judged by their political spokesmen, appear not to be taking the path of integration trodden by other types of immigrants. Their Islamic identity carries with it beliefs and practices that separate them from their adopted societies. Their demand, therefore, is for a special status, privileges additional to the ordinary rights of European citizens.

Third, European societies are finding it hard to resist such a demand. Indeed, there have already been occasions when host societies have had to abandon their prevailing social norms and defer to the customs of Islam, even when these run contrary to cherished beliefs.

And fourth, these Muslim communities have also become a conduit through which movements of opinion in the Islamic world are conveyed into the host country. The governments of Muslim countries and the leaders of Islamic religious sects can, therefore, to a certain extent, exert influence on European societies.

And one can only wonder, given the recent move by the British allowing a Muslim Parliament to serve British Muslims independently, if the European Community will be forced to do likewise and what the consequences would be for such an allowance.

Elsewhere, such as Asia and Africa, Muslims are zealously engaged in proselytising endeavours. These backward "third-world" regions are fertile ground for Islam's well-financed and well-organised missionary programmes.

Islam's Asiatic successes are little known to Westerners, perhaps because Westerners are little concerned with what happens in nations like Singapore, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. From these "out-of-the-way" Islamic strongholds, however, Muslims are venturing further into Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines, where they are gaining converts daily.

The African story is better known. Islamic advances into central and southern Africa are to those interested a matter of making use of a world almanac. Check the Muslim populations of Somalia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique and Zaire. These are growing figures. A Christian friend from Uganda told this writer of Kuwaiti attempts to place a Koran in the hands of every student in that country. Another acquaintance from Nigeria told of Muslims in that country voting as a block in order to gain control over the political, educational and cultural dimensions of Nigerian

life. Confrontations in Algeria between Islamic fundamentalists and the more moderate State government are widely known, having been newsworthy events occasionally making headlines. Subtler "evangelistic" measures, however, though more productive, seldom make "the news."

Saudi Arabia routinely selects and sponsors many of the brightest "third world" students to be educated at Saudi universities hoping to convert them to Islam before they return home, knowing full well these bright new converts will take Mohammed's message back to their native countries and to their own peoples, where and among whom their "sophistication" as "world-travellers" and their "education" will render positions of power more accessible and attainable to them, from which they can further Islam. A similar evangelical measure was once employed by what were once Christian nations, was it not?

Wherever a sufficient number of converts are gained mosques are built, prayer leaders are supplied, Arabic is taught, conferences are scheduled, and Islamic literature is distributed widely and generously. These Islamic establishments then become proselytising centres for wider efforts. Cost is not a consideration, for obvious reasons. In fact, Islam's reputation as a wealthy religion, attractive to the impoverished peoples of poorer regions, enhances Islam's evangelistic endeavours. Many converts are simply impressed by Arab wealth, believing also, perhaps, that a religion so obviously "blessed" must have God on its side and that they too may benefit likewise from such a faith. Means and motives aside, Muslims are successfully proselytising throughout the world.

Muslims in America amount to an insignificant number given America's diversity and population, but that is not to say the United States has little knowledge or experience regarding Muslims. Americans have been threatened, terrorised, murdered, and drawn into war by Muslims who speak of America as the "Great Satan" and get their jollies from burning "Uncle Sam" in effigy before a host of foreign correspondents and camera crews, despite America's untiring efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East. Islamic fundamentalists believe the humiliation of America necessary to the establishment of Islam as a global power, the reason being that radical Muslims perceive the United States as a Christian powerhouse from which the West derives its energy—a weakened America, they presume, means a weakened West, which translates in their thinking into an unchallenged, victorious Islam.

America's support for Israel is another thorn in Islam's side. Israel, hated by the Muslims for a number of reasons old and new, also considered to be America's bulldog in the Middle East, equally possessed, must be destroyed, radical Muslims believe, if Allah is to be served faithfully. But let us return to broader issues.

Although Muslim concentrations in historically non-Islamic countries differ in numbers, places of origin, degrees of education and types of employment, Muslim demands are not dissimilar. A separate legal code and sovereignty over familial, educational, economic and religious matters are central to their demands. (Dilip Hiro, author of *Islamic Fundamentalism*, assures his readers that all Muslim endeavours and demands are steps toward a world system free from non-Islamic influences). And although the countries wherein Muslim concentrations are found differ as to how Muslim demands are handled, host nations appear uniformly con-

cerned with creating autonomous Islamic communities within their countries.

But it is feared Muslim influence cannot be curtailed by government without appearing unfair, undemocratic and discriminatory. Western constitutions especially, were not framed with this sort of problem in mind. There are many, therefore, of questionable intelligence, unprepared or unwilling to grapple with the issues at hand, who seem ready and willing to “dance with the devil” rather than expose the genuine limitations of democracy.

Multiculturalists, considering every culture inherently equal to every other culture (except for that of the West, which they usually characterise as the lowest form of cultural expression known to man), regard the aforementioned concerns unreasonable and reactionary. Apparently, multiculturalists are unaware that a country within which the political, economic, social, cultural and religious divisions have gone too far is a danger to itself and is no match for a determined, well-organised coup.

Whether multiculturalists are willing to admit it or not, Muslims are not interested in multiculturalism. Muslims are not particularly concerned with balancing pluralistic societies, nor are they concerned with establishing harmonious relationships between themselves and non-Muslims except where it benefits and furthers Islam. Muslims are primarily concerned with toppling existing orders and establishing their own totalitarian system wherein dissent is not tolerated. Another wave or two of Islamic fervour sweeping over Muslim concentrations worldwide should be enough to stimulate a general discussion of what cultural responsibility in a democracy necessitates and whether secular democracies are in and of themselves capable guardians of the laws and liberties inherited from what were essentially Christian republics.

Many Muslims, to be fair, are not radical fundamentalists. There are those secular and nominal Muslims that regard the practice and observance of Muslim customs, rituals and obligations indifferently. These Muslims are generally attracted to and influenced by modern culture and are not inclined to participate with Muslims of a more radical nature. It must be pointed out, however, that these Muslims are embracing a culture in many ways as repugnant to evangelical Christians as is Islamic fundamentalism, and that these “progressive” Muslims are merely exchanging one error for another.

The remaining, overwhelming majority of Muslims hold closely to their religion and appear easily actuated by its leaders and theologians (a very disturbing reality not only to non-Muslims concerned with Islamic objectives and the typically violent manner in which Muslims often attempt to realise their objectives, but also to the more moderate political leaders of Muslims worldwide). Islamic fundamentalists tend to overshadow and overwhelm the views of less acerbic Muslims; which does not mean a moderate Islam is acceptable, but only, perhaps, that it is preferable to its alternative.

Reasons for rejecting and resisting the encroachments of Islam are many. They are not constructed on subterfuge, but upon observation, investigation and presentation of clear historical facts. Consider the following. Islam is not Christianity. Islam is not another way to God. Islam is not a revealed religion. It is a man-factured religion, a religion of works adapted to the abilities of fallen man, a religion betraying a

totally inadequate apprehension of sin, redemption, regeneration and sanctification. It is marked by an unambiguous intolerance towards anything foreign. Its tendencies are backward and violent.

Islam’s apologists claim that the rapid expansion of Islam throughout the world testifies to its divine nature and truthfulness, but most historians credit Islam’s expansion to an articulate use of the sword. Why does Islam tend towards violence? Some would have us believe Islam’s hostilities are merely expressions of latent animosities, the consequences of Colonialism and the Crusades. Perhaps, but only in part; were it not for the fact that Islam’s violent behaviour precedes either of the two aforementioned episodes we might be forced to concede they are wholly responsible for Islam’s unsavoury conduct. As was mentioned in the earlier part of this paper, the characterisation of Islam as a violent religion is founded upon both internal and external evidence: (1) Islam’s own literature recommends violence as a way to forward Islam, and (2) historical facts show that Muslims have faithfully employed the recommended measure.

At this point some may argue that Christianity too has exhibited similar behaviour. True, but not on the recommendation of its founder or its literature. It cannot be denied that Christendom has at times manifested intolerance to such an extent as to seem equally as violent as Islam, but, according to Abraham Kuyper, the Dutch Reformed theologian and statesman, such tendencies were *not* suggested by Scripture, but, rather, were common to the times. Christianity’s apologetic and evangelical methods are to be communicative, that is, they are to find their expression in preaching, teaching, dialogue, argumentation, reasoning and polemics. Islam’s apologetic and evangelistic methods, on the other hand, include violence as well.

Islam’s apologists also claim that Islam’s cultural achievements and contributions testify to its divine vibrancy, but, as a study of the assertion suggests, the ransacking of an extremely creative Byzantine culture (a Christian culture!) by sword-bearing Muslims and absorbing, thus benefiting from, that culture’s creativity, does not constitute anything but a “borrowed” vibrancy. The Byzantine Empire emerged from what was the eastern Roman Empire and lasted for over a thousand years, long after the western Roman Empire had crumbled away. Byzantium not only is noted for its preservation of the civilisations of Greece and Rome, but, during the reign of Justinian (sixth century), extended the empire with all of its cultural energy and achievements from southern Spain to the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, and from the Danube to northern Africa. Muslim conquests eventually swallowed up much of the Byzantine Empire and in so doing ingested much of its learning and cultural fire. But under the totalitarian rule of Islam that burning creativity was first dampened, then extinguished, and the Islamic world summarily succumbed to centuries of stagnation. Islam’s resurgence appears equally as dependent upon others as was its first period of “glory.” Just as Islam past benefited from Byzantium, so Islam today benefits from the West—particularly from the West’s petroleum needs. It may be safe to say, therefore, given this line of reasoning, that there is nothing culturally dynamic with Islam, rather, that Islam is aggressively opportunistic—it does not create, it plunders.

Should this negative assessment of Islam be true, it may be asked, what possible explanation could there be for

Islam's recent successes? As was mentioned, the transformation of Islam from an impoverished religion into one able to channel huge amounts into furthering its agenda accounts for some of its triumphs. Additionally, in an age of collapsing empires, confusing philosophies and contradictory voices, Islam's strength and appeal is its strident self-confidence. Islam's resurgence, however, cannot be separated from God's sovereignty over the development of history.

Given the history of Old Testament Israel and God's dealings with that nation we can safely surmise that the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism is directed by God against a declining and decadent Christianity. The real problem then is not an advancing Islam, but a retreating Christianity. The Church of Christ needs to rediscover its purpose, repent of its transgressions, pray for renewed enthusiasm, reverse the declension of power within its community, and reassert its influence and leadership in all of life. Only then will it be able to march forward in the name of its King. Only then will it be able to resist and reverse the encroachments of Islam. Awareness is critical. Islam must be exposed as a dark and devious deception. Christianity must

be appreciated as a liberating and illuminating necessity. Muslims must be evangelised.

Government, too, must be encouraged to conduct its affairs biblically and responsibly. It seems unlikely that the secular humanistic bias now governing what were once predominantly Christian nations will be overturned anytime soon (God, however, can accomplish in a day what man considers impossible!), but residual Christian influences and tendencies are still evident and these governments occasionally, if unintentionally, arrive at biblical positions regarding some issues. Christians must capitalise on this inconsistency to advance a more biblical form of government. Rather than accommodate Islam, government must move, must be moved, to curb Islamic influences through appropriate means. Concessions will only complicate an already problematic situation. Alternatives to Arab oil, also, would lessen the amount of money available to Muslims financing an Islamic agenda. Energy independence is central to limiting some of Islam's influence and power.

May God enlighten our leaders, strengthen our Churches and overcome our enemies. Matthew 7:15. *C&S*

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