

David Barton Takes Obama to Task Over Christian History

Last week, the president made headlines by comparing historic Christianity with modern radical Islam. Cautioning Christians, he warned:

“Unless we get on our high horse and think that this is unique to some other place, remember that during the Crusades and Inquisition, people committed terrible deeds in the name of Christ. In our home country, slavery and Jim Crow all too often was justified in the name of Christ. ... So it is not unique to one group or one religion.”

The indignation over these remarks was prompt. Even HBO personality Bill Maher—an ardent secularist who has described himself as an atheist—affirmed the president’s error. He noted that to make such a criticism of Christianity requires going back to ancient centuries long ago, while the problem of radical Islam is a very real one right now.

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal agreed, declaring: “The Medieval Christian threat is under control, Mr. President. Please deal with the Radical Islamic threat today.” He added:

“It was nice of the President to give us a history lesson at the Prayer Breakfast. Today, however, the issue right in front of his nose, in the here and now, is the terrorism of Radical Islam, the assassination of journalists, the beheading and burning alive of captives. We will be happy to keep an eye out for runaway Christians, but it would be nice if he would face the reality of the situation today.

Pat Buchanan, national columnist and former presidential candidate, concurred:

“He’s trying to give them all [i.e., radical Islamists]

equivalence to what happened in the 11th century to what's happening today? It's astonishing. ... Can the president not see the reality of his own time that he's got to retreat centuries to find what he thinks might be a moral equivalence?

Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee went even further. Referring to the president's recent comment that global warming and climate change is the greatest threat facing America today, Huckabee quipped: "I believe that most of us would think that a beheading is a far greater threat to an American than a sunburn."

Historians and political philosophers from across the centuries have long affirmed what the president refuses to acknowledge: A people's dominant religion (or lack thereof) always exerts a significant influence in shaping their government and behavior. For example, Baron Charles Montesquieu, the most popular political philosopher of the Founding Era, undertook a perusal of a thousand years of world history to assess the impact of religion (especially Islam and Christianity) upon government. He concluded:

"The Christian religion is a stranger to mere despotic power. ... [Christian rulers] are more disposed to be directed by laws and more capable of perceiving that they cannot do whatever they please. While the Mahometan princes incessantly give or receive death, the religion of the Christians renders their princes ... less cruel."

Many others reached the same finding—including famous American diplomat and U. S. President John Quincy Adams, who noted:

"[The] law of nations as practiced among Christian nations ... is founded upon the principle that the state of nature between men and between nations is a state of peace. But there was a Mohometan law of nations which considered the state of nature as a state of war."

A half-century later, historian Charles Galloway confirmed:

"The [Quran] puts a premium upon war, offering the highest rewards to those who slay the greatest number of infidels. Mohammed's cardinal principle (that the end justifies the means) consecrated every form of deception and lying, and encouraged every sort of persecution and violence. ... The citizen is the slave of the state; he has no rights to be respected. Mohammedanism is an absolute despotism."

Half a century after Galloway, England's Prime Minister Winston Churchill (who was also a noted historian) concurred:

"How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism lays on its votaries [followers]! Besides the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy. The effects are apparent in many countries, improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce, and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live. A degraded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement and the next of its dignity and sanctity. The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his absolute property, either as a child, a wife, or a concubine, must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men. Individual Moslems may show splendid qualities, but the influence of the religion paralyses the social development of those who follow it. No stronger retrograde force exists in the world. Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytizing faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step; and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science—the science against which it had vainly struggled—the civilization of modern Europe might fall as fell the civilization of ancient Rome."

Based on the obvious difference between the effects of Islam and Christianity upon a nation, Montesquieu concluded:

“A moderate [non-violent, non-coercive] government is most agreeable to the Christian religion, and a despotic government to the Mahometan. ... From the characters of the Christian and Mahometan religions, we ought without any further examination to embrace the one and reject the other; for it is much easier to prove that religion ought to humanize the manners of men than that any particular religion is true.”

Significantly, if one tabulates the loss of lives occasioned by so-called Christian governments over the 2,000-year history of Christianity (such as the Inquisition, and even the Crusades—which were largely Christian attempts to repel militant Muslim jihadi invasions made into Judeo-Christian regions), a very generous count of the total deaths that may be laid at the doorstep of Christianity is about 5 million. But the number of lives lost at the hands of secular, non- and anti-Christian leaders and governments in just the 20th century alone is well over 100 million.

That includes the 1.5 million Christian Armenians massacred by Muslim Turks on just one occasion beginning in 1915; the 62 million killed by the secular Soviet Communists; the 35 million by the secular Chinese Communists; the 1.7 million by the secular Vietnamese Communists; the 1 million in the Polish Ethnic Cleansing; the 1 million in Yugoslavia; the 1.7 million in North Korea, and other non- or anti-Christian regimes. And the number of deaths perpetrated by such leaders is enormous, including the murder of 42.7 million by Joseph Stalin; Mao Tse-tung, 37.8 million; Hitler, 20.9 million; Vladimir Lenin, 4 million; Tojo Hideki, 4 million; Pol Pot of the Khmer Rouge, 1 million; Yahya Khan, 1.5 million; and so forth. Thus the number of lives lost at the hands of anti-Christians in just the past century is more than twenty times greater than those lost at the hands of Christians in the entire previous 20 centuries.

And since the president mentioned the Inquisition, over its six-century span, between 1,000 and 3,000 individuals were put

to death, which averages from two to five deaths a year across that span. But last year alone (2014), Muslims executed 4,344 Christians thus killing more in one year than Christians did in six full centuries! Additionally, when including just the publicized incidents, Muslims have killed some 11,334 innocents in terrorist attacks since 1980, with thousands if not tens of thousands more dead as a result of the non-reported killings in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Afghanistan and other countries as groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaida, and ISIL have attempted to take control in recent years.

And regarding the President's specific allusion to Christianity and slavery, Jewish writer and national news editor Ben Shapiro correctly noted:

"Christians obliterated slavery. Christians obliterated Jim Crow. Modern slavery is largely perpetrated by Muslims. Modern Jim Crow is certainly perpetrated by Muslims under Sharia law."

By the way, if the president's defenders wish to invoke the American witch trials of 1692-1693 (which the president did not mention, but which American academics often do), then you can include 27 lost lives at the hands of Christians over that two-year span (but you must also note that it was Christian ministers who took the lead in bringing those trials to a close). Yet 27 American lives lost over two years is hardly an equivalent comparison to the 3,000 American lives lost on just one day in September at the hands of Muslim terrorists.

Sorry, Mr. President, but there is absolutely no moral equivalency with your comparison. You have failed to recognize the reality of history and its consistent lesson that the application and practice of the Bible and its teachings elevates a society and civilizes its institutions. By comparing modern Muslim terrorists with medieval Christians you have, once again, totally missed the mark.

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