

Understanding the Islam-Mormonism Connection

A number of years ago, I was on *Larry King Live* and was asked point blank if I had a problem with the appointments of Justices Roberts and Alito (both are Roman Catholics). My answer was very clear that I did not, as long as they shared my own conviction of upholding the Constitution—not trying to rewrite it—and as long as they were committed to the biblical values of the Founding Fathers. I was certain that both men were.

Many people today are quoting a statement reputedly made by Martin Luther, the great reformer, that he “would rather be ruled by a competent Turk (a Muslim) than an incompetent Christian.” First of all, there is no evidence whatsoever that Martin Luther ever said these words. But even if he did say them, it would have been a gross exaggeration used to make a point. He never lived under a Muslim ruler and did not know what that would be like. But I did. And I can tell you, there is no such thing as choosing between Muslim and non-Muslim leaders under Islam.

In America, we have the great privilege of choosing candidates based on our core values, rather than how they identify with our theological point of view.

In looking at some of the candidates for the 2012 election, one cannot help but notice the controversies that have arisen regarding the Mormon religion. As I considered Luther’s quote and the concerns regarding electing a Mormon president, I noticed some peculiar similarities between the Mormon faith and Islam as they relate to orthodox Christianity.

It’s hard to believe that two religions that are worlds apart geographically have so many things in common. Here are some

examples:

1. Both believe that Christianity was corrupt and incomplete until their respective founders came on the scene. For Islam, it was Muhammad; for Mormons, it was Joseph Smith.

2. They both have their own book of "sacred scripture." While both tip their hats to the Bible, each see God's Word as insufficient by itself. Both Islam and Mormonism use many biblical themes, narratives and personalities. But the Quran draws heavily from the apocryphal books rather than the authoritative cannon of the Bible.

3. In both cases, Islam and Mormonism see their religion as complete within itself. Above all, both repudiate biblical Christianity and identify orthodox Christianity as a false faith.

4. Both religions reject the doctrine of the Trinity. The Mormon's concept of god includes many gods, not just one. Muslims view god as one, but as an aloof, remote god who could never become a man or relate to humanity. Allah can have mercy if he wants to, but he is also a cunning god.

5. Both religions reject the Bible as the sole and sufficient authority of faith. For Mormons, the Book of Mormon and other writings of the Latter-day Saints represent God's final revelation. For Muslims, the Quran and the Sunna (traditions of Muhammad) constitute God's final authoritative word.

6. They both reject the biblical teaching of original sin. Muslims believe Adam did not become completely depraved after disobeying God; he merely slipped but quickly recovered. Therefore to Muslims, humanity does not need redemption. Salvation in Islam is very uncertain, even when keeping the Five Tenants of Islam; although some teach that jihad will help in that quest for salvation. Mormons believe that they are not condemned by what many call "original sin." In other words, they are not accountable for Adam's transgression in

the Garden of Eden.

Here are two questions Christians must ask when considering political candidates:

First, has the candidate been consistent in his/her political and moral values, or is he/she pandering? Second, has the candidate upheld their philosophical convictions throughout their public and private life, or did they change their political convictions to suit their audience?

All believers need to be good stewards and spend time in deep prayer before exercising their right to vote. God will give us wisdom so that we will not be persuaded by the slickest and the cleverest. We can trust Him to help us choose those who have proven core values.

Dr. Michael Youssef's expertise on the Islamic culture and the Middle East in today's post-modern world is actively sought by hundreds of thousands of followers around the globe. With a Ph.D. from Emory University in social anthropology, his Egyptian heritage gives him particular insight into the cultural and religious entanglements of international affairs. □It is estimated that over 10 million viewers/listeners around the world are tuned in every week through an international Christian media ministry founded by Youssef, . It broadcasts via radio and television to over 200 countries and in over 20 languages. Follow Youssef, a common sense intellectual and renowned author of 24 books, on twitter @michaelayoussef and through his news blog, .