

Is Islam Really a Religion of Peace?

Exactly one year after he stood before the United Nations General Assembly and asked for the removal of Syrian President Bashar Assad, President Obama again in September addressed the violent conflict in the Middle East—this time calling for a combined global effort against Islamic terrorism in that region.

In his speech, the president made this baffling comment about Islam: “Islam teaches peace. Muslims all over the world aspire to live with dignity and a sense of justice. And when it comes to America and Islam, there is no us and them—there is only us, because millions of Muslim Americans are part of the fabric of our country.”

While I commend President Obama for deploying U.S. military forces to fight this vile and wicked threat, I also believe our president is completely and fundamentally mistaken about the intolerant and violent nature of hardened Islamic followers.

The day after the president’s speech, I stood at Lafayette Square—just across from the White House—and spoke at a prayer vigil for Saeed Abedini, the Iranian American who has been imprisoned in Iran for two years.

Saeed is incarcerated simply because of his Christian faith, beaten and tortured for the sake of Christ by the hostile Islamic regime.

Islamic terrorists are indiscriminately and brutally killing all who stand in their way, as evidenced by the gruesome, demonic images of recent beheadings of American and British journalists. For Muslims, peace comes only through submission to Islam. When they speak of peace, they mean submission to

their religion. Worldwide, tens of thousands of men, women and children have been slaughtered in the name of Allah, under the bloody flag of Islam.

This is why, as we prayed for the release of Saeed and persecuted Christians, I spoke to the president via the media and loudspeakers in Lafayette Park:

“Mr. President—followers of a peaceful religion do not cut off the heads of innocent people in the barbaric fashion the world has watched recently.

“Mr. President—believers in a peaceful religion do not kidnap 300 young schoolgirls as Boko Haram did in northeastern Nigeria in April and reportedly [sell] them to men to be sex slaves.

“Mr. President—men who practice a peaceful religion do not detonate bombs on an American street during a marathon race to kill and maim innocent people.

“Mr. President—no one who belongs to a peaceful religion would even consider hijacking jet airliners and flying them into buildings occupied by thousands of innocent people beginning their workday, as happened in this country and in this city on 9/11.

“Mr. President—no peaceful religion would tolerate, let alone practice, female circumcision, require a woman to have her husband’s permission to leave her home and take up employment and restrict her ability to receive justice in the case of sex crimes.

“Mr. President—a peaceful religion would not condone and allow a father to drown a daughter in a swimming pool in front of the family in the name of family honor because she might have stayed out late in the evening with her boyfriend.

“Mr. President—why haven’t the 3.5 million Muslims in North

America rejected this gross, barbaric and despicable behavior by their fellow Muslims on American soil?"

Even President Bush in the previous administration called Islam a peaceful religion. Both men have done a great disservice to the American public by not understanding Islam and its teaching in the Quran.

Now, I realize that these terrible acts have been carried out not by peaceful Muslims, but by radicalized extremists. Certainly there are many Muslims who peacefully coexist with adherents of other faiths.

However, my question is why haven't many, if not most, of the 1.6 billion Muslims around the world condemned these violent crimes against innocent humanity as they have occurred? Why would 23 percent of the world's population stand by and allow their fellow Muslims to define them by violent behavior if this is truly a religion of peace?

If someone who claims to be a Christian commits a violent act, mainstream Christians quickly and unanimously rise together to condemn it. I cannot recall a single instance of violent behavior supposedly done in the name of Christianity that was not immediately repudiated by the Christian community.

President Obama said that groups such as al Qaida and Boko Haram are guided by an ideology that "will simply wilt and die if it is consistently exposed, confronted and refuted in the light of day."

That simply is not the case. Islam is not a simple ideology or philosophy. It is a false religion. While it may contain some elements of human moralism, it is nonetheless guided and characterized by treacherous deceit.

Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Any faith—Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism—that denies the deity of Jesus

Christ and seeks salvation by any means other than saving faith in Him is a false religion.

The blinding lies of Satan himself are the dark and sinister force ultimately behind any false religion. When the Pharisees of Judaism questioned Christ's claim as the Eternal Truth, Jesus answered them with this startling rebuke: "You are of your father the devil ... He was a murderer from the beginning ... he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44-45).

It is impossible for a false religion to be a true religion of peace, since it can never reconcile a holy God and sinful man, and it can never bring lasting peace between men or nations.

Obviously not every false religion is marked by the barbaric behavior we see today. Some may seem serene and harmless on the surface, but none can deliver from the damning power of sin. Christ alone, the Son of God, saves from sin, Satan and death. He died on the cross for our sins, was buried and rose again from the dead.

My earnest prayer is that the Lord will use the chaotic and frightening events we see happening on the world stage to drive people, including followers of Islam, to the only solution—personal, transforming faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Scripture quotations from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version.

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