

Why Christians and Jews Embrace Islam?

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Introduction

Those who are guided to Islam have been actually touched by Allah's care and are in fact blessed with His grace and Mercy. Allah guides to His light whomsoever He wills, and sets on the right path whomsoever He pleases.

False and brutal accusations are launched every day by the biased media against Muslims and Islam, but why thousands of Christians embrace Islam in Europe and America every day? Moreover, why Christian priests and missionaries also embrace Islam?

The author presents some key aspects that draw Jews and Christians to the Islamic faith.

Why Christians and Jews embrace Islam?

It is a well known fact that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world today. People in the West, Europeans and Americans, both young and old, are desperately searching for guidance. They know from bitter experience that the personal freedom and opportunities they enjoy are meaningless and self-destructive without reliable guidance, direction and purpose. Now they realize that secularism and materialism are powerless to provide any positive or constructive moral values either individually or collectively.

Historically speaking, Christianity and its salvation and henceforth the Church dominated Europe for more than a thousand years. This put an end to many of the worst social and moral evils of decadent Rome. Unfortunately during the formative period of its history, the Church compromised with paganism and secularism, adopting an elaborate priesthood and incomprehensive theology which could not resist the impact of the Renaissance, the revival of the natural sciences and the radical secularism of the French Revolution.

During and shortly after the Enlightenment, thinkers like Immanuel Kant, August Comte and Geor Wilhelm Friedrich Hegal believed that man if liberated from religion, could master his world with his rational faculties alone. Rationalism would guarantee in the end a prosperous peaceful humanitarian world. However, we know now for sure that the Project Modernity failed miserably in its endeavor to tame destructive human instincts by reason alone. Instead of post-religious paradise on earth, we had the most incredibly savage world wars, chemical and nuclear warfare, the holocaust, and ethnic 'cleansing' – to name only a few disasters.

After Christianity, comes Judaism which has always been parochial and tribal, seldom welcoming converts. Judaism therefore, has never been a universal faith. The Zionist movement which resulted in the establishment of the State of Israel is the secular expression of Jewish nationalism and tribalism. The dreadful atrocities committed by the Israelis in occupied Palestine, the aggression in Lebanon and attempted genocide of the Palestinians, depriving them of all human and political rights, is the logical result of this same narrow parochial outlook. This is the reason why even the most orthodox of the rabbis refuse to believe that Israel can do any wrong and uncritically support everything she does. The Jewish idea that there is only one God Who is their tribal God, is of course a contradiction in itself. If there is one single God, it must be everybody's, not God of a particular Chosen People. These glaring moral and spiritual defects automatically disqualify Judaism as the faith of the future (1).

Against this background, it is of the highest significance that Islam made an unexpected, spectacular comeback as from the 70s of the 20th century and onward to the third millennium.

Today, the Christians and the Jews in the West have deserted their faith wholesale leaving -the churches and synagogues almost empty while the newly-built mosques and Islamic centers are attracting rapidly growing numbers. As it seems, Judaism and Christianity have failed them, and turning towards Islam became their refuge. Most of these converts are young, educated and intelligent. No longer is Islam foreign to Europe or American scenes. There are already millions of Muslims in Europe and America today and their numbers are increasing fast.

The question then arises: What attracts people in the West to Islam?

People in the West are rich, well educated, blessed with surplus of food and high technology. They spend their lives working non-stop to the extent of having no time to think in any other matter than achieving success and seeking worldly pleasures. They entertain themselves by throwing plenty of money on gambling, wine and women thus committing sins forbidden in every religion. As time goes by, and death hovers over their heads, those of them who have been touched by Allah's guidance slow down and think: Where do we come from? Why are we here? Where do we go from here? Is it possible to defeat the angel of death by amassing enough power and wealth? What would be our fate in the Hereafter, is it Heaven or Hell? Is the wealth amassed and power gained in the worldly life would be sufficient to rescue us from Hell fire, or Allah's parameter in judging the deeds of His servants in the Hereafter is rather different?

The Koran says concerning the love of man to earthly life and his neglect of the Hereafter:

**Cross rivalry diverts you, until you visit the tombs.
No indeed; but soon you shall know.
Again, no indeed; but soon you shall know.
No indeed; did you know with the knowledge of certainty, you shall surely see Hell.
Again, you shall surely see it with the eye of certainty.
Then on that Day you shall be asked about the delights (you indulged in, in this world) (At-Takathur 1-8).**

**Woe unto every backbiter, slanderer, who has gathered riches and counted them over thinking his riches have made him immortal!
No indeed; he shall be thrust into the Crusher!
And what shall teach thee what is the Crusher?
The Fire of Allah kindled roaring over the hearts.
Covered down upon them, in columns outstretched (Al-Humazah 1-9).**

**Nay, you prefer the life of this world.
And the world to come is better, and more enduring (Al-A'la 16, 17).**

As for him who gives and is god-fearing and confirms the reward most fair (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, or Allah will recompense him for what he has spent in Allah's way and bless him with Paradise), We shall surely ease him to the easing.

**But as for him who is a miser, and self-sufficient, and cries lies to the reward most fair, We shall surely ease him to the hardship.
His wealth shall not avail him when he perishes (Al-Lail 5-11).**

O men, Allah's promise is true; so let not the present life delude you, and let not the Deluder (Satan) delude you concerning Allah. Surely Satan is an enemy to you; so take him for an enemy.

He calls his party only that they may be among the inhabitants of the Blaze (Fatir 5, 6).

Allah has given human beings the will and power to think and differentiate between wrong and right. The Koran is very clear about that:

This is the path of thy Lord; straight; We have distinguished the signs to a people who remember. Theirs is the abode of peace with their Lord, and He is their Protector for that they were doing (Al-An'am 126, 127).

The true test of progress in spiritual life is to be measured by other things than material wealth and influence. What we have to ask ourselves is: are we the least bit nearer to Allah?

All worldly goods are but a shadow that will pass away. Its intrinsic and eternal value is small. But those who work righteousness in faith are on the true path of self-development. The reward they will get will be intimately more than their merits entitle them to, for they will partake of the boundless bounties of Allah. Their happiness will not only be multiplied, but it will be of a magnificent sublime quality, and it will endure without any chance of its loss or diminution.

It is not your wealth nor your children that shall bring you near to Us, except of him who believes, and does righteousness; those – there awaits them the double recompense for that they did, while secure they (reside) in the dwellings on high (Saba', 37).

Those who are guided to Islam have been actually touched by Allah's care and are in fact blessed with His grace and Mercy. Allah guides to His light whomsoever He wills, and sets on the right path whomsoever He pleases.

We have sent not Messenger save with the tongue of his people, that he might make (the Message) clear to them, then Allah leads astray whomsoever He will, and He guides whomsoever He will; and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise (Ibrâhîm, 4).

Had Allah so willed, He would have guided all humanity to His right path, but He gives light according to His wisdom and guides to His light whomsoever He wills.

Say: 'To Allah belongs the argument conclusive; for had He willed, He would have guided you all.' (Al-An'âm, 149).

Thou guidest not whom thou likest, but Allah guides whom He wills, and knows very well those that are guided (Al-Qasas, 56).

The media in the United States and also in Europe classifies Muslims as terrorists, highjackers and kidnappers. False and brutal accusations are launched every day by the biased media against Muslims and Islam, but why then would anyone even look at Islam? Why thousands of Christians embrace Islam in Europe and America every day? Moreover, why Christian priests and missionaries also embrace Islam?

The following is some names of the Christian priests and missionaries who have embraced Islam:

- Abdullah al-Faruq – formerly Kenneth L. Jenkins, minister and elder of the Pentecostal Church, USA.

- Dr. Jerald F. Dirks – Former minister (deacon) of the United Methodist Church. He holds a Master degree in divinity from Harvard University and a Doctorate in Psychology from the University of Denver. Author of the *Cross and the crescent: An interface dialogue between Christianity and Islam*. He has published over 60 articles in the field of clinical psychology, and over 150 articles on Arabian horses.
- Viacheslay Polosin – former Archpriest of the Russian Orthodox Church.
- Anselm Tormeeda – 14th century CE Majorcan scholar and priest. From his Book *The Gift to the Intelligent for Refuting the Arguments of the Christians*'.
- Khadijah 'Sue' Watson – former pastor, missionary, Master degree in divinity.
- Ibrahim Khalil – former Egyptian Coptic priest.
- Martin John Mwaipopo – former Lutheran Archbishop.
- Rapahel – former Jehovah's Witness minister.
- George Anthony – former Catholic priest.
- Dr. Gray Miller (Abdul-Ahad Omar) – former missionary.
- Yusuf Estes – Former Christian minister.
- Ann Holmes Redding – Former Director of Faith Formation at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral for 20 years.

Many people ask how preachers and priests in Christianity can ever go to Islam, If Islam is that bad, why are so many priests and preachers entering Islam?

The principles on which Islam is based on are so logical, so true and honest that it is out of the question for a wise and educated person seeking for truth and reality in a religion not to accept them.

People are converting to Islam for a number of reasons; the followings are some key aspects that draw Jews and Christians to the Islamic faith:

- 1- Islam is the faith of equality and justice for all. Islamic religion states that people all over the world, regardless of their races, are born slaves of Allah, equal and similar. One Koranic verse eliminated all traces of racial superiority from the hearts of the believers. All human beings are created by the same One God - Allah – and are descendants of the same one couple. Allah creates every child as pure and sinless. Racial or ethnic background or socio-economic status carries no weight in His eye; the most honorable in the sight of Allah are the most god-fearing of His servants.

O mankind, We have created you male and female, and appointed you races and tribes, that you may know each other. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most god-fearing of you. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware (Al-Hjurat, 13).

1200 years before the American constitution was drafted, Islam established the equality of all human beings in unambiguous terms. Prophet Muhammad said:

"People are like the teeth of a comb. You are all from Adam, and Adam is from dust. There is no superiority of white over black or of Arab over non-Arab, except by piety."

Converts to Islam say that Christian discrimination left them disconnected and disfranchised, but now after they embraced Islam, they have the distinction, purpose and empowerment that even the Civil Rights movement did not give them. As Bruce Fields notes in *"Introducing Black theology: Three Critical Questions for the Evangelical Church"*, it is unfortunate, that "because the issue of racism still exists in our society, it still exists in the church. He adds that "if the world does not see true unity among those who claim allegiance to Jesus Christ, the church should not be surprised when the world is unimpressed with our proclamation that the Father has sent the Son."

- 2- Islamic supreme authority is the Holy Koran – the Word of Allah. It is brief and to the point, yet holds detail of every subject related to the daily life on earth and beyond. Arabic being ever popular language, with translations available in most modern languages around the globe, the Koran is easy to read and straightforward to understand therefore, new comers find it simple to comprehend.
- 3- The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, holds a paramount position in Islamic Faith, yet he is not considered as a god, his place in Islam is rather of a man, a Messenger, and a servant of Allah. As a person Muhammad was an incredible man, and people see in him a perfect example to follow.
- 4- Islam is monotheistic religion. It calls upon people to believe in One True God only. People are told in the Koran:

Say: 'He is Allah, He is One; The Self-Sufficient, The Eternal God; He begets not, nor was He begotten; There is none equal to Him (Al-Ihklas, 1-4).

- 5- Islam considers Jesus as a human and a Prophet of Allah sent to the Children of Israel. This Islamic belief rather than as a divine figure appeals to those who find the Christian concept of the Trinity too confusing to understand.
- 6- Islamic basic beliefs are relatively straightforward and easy to understand as well as to perform, compared with other fundamental religions percepts. For example, the five pillars of Islam: Shahada, obligatory prayers, fasting in the month of Ramadan, paying Zakat (Charity) to the poor, and traveling to Makkah to perform the Hajj; even the younger followers can comprehend them without hardship or confusion.

- 7- Islam's great civilization and rich history has an intellectual appeal for many people. Converting to Islam means that the new comers will also become part of the Muslim Ummah (nation).
- 8- Islam's emphasis on the importance of family life and social values is one of the key aspects that attract men and women from various cultural backgrounds, particularly those serious in true and traditional family values and moral teachings.
- 9- Islam is not only a religion but also a complete way of life, where everything is detailed in the Koran very clearly, and further explanation is available through the Sunna of the Prophet.
- 10- Many of the Prophets and stories found in the Bible such as the creation of Adam and Eve, the story of Noah and the flood, the events in the life of Abraham and his sons, the Psalms of David, and the kingdom of Solomon, the Exodus of Israelites from Egypt led by Moses, Jesus preaching the Injeel (Good News) to the Children of Israel – are present in the Koran as well. Christians and Jews who convert to Islam often comment they are attracted to the faith partly because of its similarities to Christianity and Judaism (2).

Allah infuses security and peace into man, yet the Christian religion falls short of giving him this sense of peace. It is the Islamic religion, alone, that teaches man the greatness of Allah and which, at the same time guides him in regard to where the human soul will go after death. The Islamic religion guides man not only in the world, but also in the Hereafter. It teaches in a plain and logical manner what should be done in the world in preparation for a comfortable life in the Hereafter. An awareness of the fact that Allah will subject human beings to an equitable interrogation in the Hereafter on what they have done in the earthly life, will urge them that they should abide by justice and integrity in the present life.

In Islam belief and logic do not contradict each other, which is the common blemish of other religions. Islam resolved a number of theological questions and issues of belief which Christianity could not satisfactorily address.

Islam is attractive to non-Muslims because of its universal Message. In Islam the faithful believe that everyone is born Muslim and thus call the transformation reversion, not conversion. Islam is also attractive because its teachings incorporate other traditions, honoring Jesus Christ, the Patriarch Abraham and other Biblical figures as prophets. Though missionary work is rare in Islam, spreading the Message is demanded by the Koran. Conversion to Islam is as simple as reciting one sentence: "I bear witness that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger" – in front of witnesses, a ceremony known as Shahadah.

Abdullah al-Faruk, a priest converted to Islam, forwarded the reasons for his conversion as follows:

"I soon discovered that there was a great deal of jealousy prevalent in the ministerial hierarchy. Things had changed from that to which I was accustomed. Women (in the church) wore clothing that I thought was shameful. People dressed

in order to attract attention, usually from the opposite sex. I discovered just how great money and greed play in the operation of church activities. There were many small churches struggling, and they called upon us to hold meetings to help raise money for them. I was told that if a church did not have a certain number of members, then I was not to waste my time preaching there because I would not receive ample financial compensation. I then explained that I was not in it for the money and that I would preach if there was only one member present...and I do it for free! This caused a disturbance. I started questioning those whom I thought had wisdom, only to find that they had been putting on a show. I learned that money, power and position were more important than teaching the truth about the Bible. As a Bible student, I knew fully well that there were mistakes, contradictions and fabrications. I thought that people should be exposed to the truth about the Bible. The idea of exposing the people to such aspects of the Bible was a thought supposedly attributable to Satan. But I began to publically ask my teachers questions during Bible classes, which none of them could answer. Not a single one could explain how Jesus was supposedly God, and how, at the same time, he was supposedly the Father, Son and Holy Ghost wrapped up into one and yet was not a part of the trinity. Several preachers finally had to concede that they did not understand it but that we were simply required to believe it."

Abdullah al-Faruk goes on:

"Cases of adultery and fornication went unpunished. Some preachers were hooked on drugs and had destroyed their lives and the lives of their families. Leaders of some churches were found to be homosexuals. There were pastors even guilty of committing adultery with the young daughters of other church members. All of this coupled with the failure to receive answers to what I thought were valid questions was enough to make me seek a change." (3).

Another Egyptian priest by the name of Ibrahim Khalil was asked after converting to Islam about the salient features of Islam which have attracted his attention most. And he answered:

"My faith in Islam has been brought about through reading the Holy Koran and the biography of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him. I no longer believed in the misconceptions against Islam and I am especially attracted by the concept of unity of God, which is the most important feature of Islam. God is only One. Nothing is like Him. This belief makes me the servant of God only and of no one else. Oneness of God liberates man from servitude to any human being and that is true freedom. I also like very much the rule of forgiveness in Islam and the direct relationship between God and His servants."

Say: "O my people, who have been prodigal against yourselves, do not despair of Allah's mercy; surely Allah forgives sins altogether; surely He is the All-forgiving, the All-Compassionate. Turn unto your Lord and surrender to Him, before the chastisement comes upon you, then you will not be helped." (Al-Ahzab 53, 54).

The followings are some of the reasons which compelled the American former Catholic, Nuh Ha Mim Keller to embrace Islam. Keller, in the 25 years since his

conversion has gone on to become one of the leading contemporary scholars of Islam (4).

"I studied philosophy at the university and it taught me to ask two things of whoever claimed to have the truth: what do you mean, and how do you know? When I asked these questions of my own religious tradition, I found no answers, and realized that Christianity had slipped from my hands.

"One reason was the frequent changes in Catholic liturgy and ritual that occurred in the wake of the Second Vatican Council of 1963, suggesting to laymen that the Church had no firm standards. To one another, the clergy spoke about flexibility and liturgical relevance, but to ordinary Catholics they seemed to be groping in the dark. God does not change, nor the needs of the human soul, and there was no new revelation from Heaven. Yet we rang in the changes, week after week, year after year; adding, subtracting, changing the language from Latin to English, finally bringing in guitars and folk music, priests explained and explained as laymen shook their heads. The search for relevance left large numbers convinced that there had not been much in the first place.

"A second reason was a number of doctrinal difficulties, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, which no one in the history of the world, neither priest nor layman, had been able to explain in a convincing way, and which resolved itself, to the common, and at least in a sort of godhead-by-committee, shared between God the Father, who ruled the world from Heaven; His Son Jesus Christ, who saved humanity on earth; and the Holy Ghost, who was pictured as a white dove and appeared to have a considerably a minor role. I remember wanting to make special friends with just one of them so he can handle my business with the others, and to this end, would sometimes pray earnestly to this one and sometimes to that; but the other two were always stubbornly there. I finally decided that God the Father must be in charge of the other two and this put the most formidable obstacle in the way of my Catholicism, the divinity of Christ. Moreover, reflection made it plain that the nature of man contradicted the nature of God in every particular, the limited and finite on the one hand, the absolute and infinite on the other. That Jesus was God was something I cannot remember having ever really believed, in childhood or later.

"Another point of incredulity was the trading of the Church in stocks and bonds in the Hereafter which it called indulgences. Do such and such and so-and-so many years will be remitted from your sentence in purgatory. That had seemed so false to Martin Luther at the outset of the Reformation.

"I also remember the desire for a sacred scripture, something on the order of a book that could furnish guidance. A Bible was given to me one Christmas, a handsome edition, but on attempting to read it, I found so rambling and devoid of a coherent thread that it was difficult to think of a way to base one's life upon it. Only later did I learn how Christians solve the difficulty in practice, Protestants by creating sectarian theologies, each emphasizing the texts of their sect and downplaying the rest; Catholics by downplaying it all, except the snippets mentioned in their liturgy, something seemed lacking in a sacred book that could not be read as an integral whole.

"Moreover, when I went to the university, I found that the authenticity of the book, especially the New Testament, had come into considerable doubt as a result of modern hermeneutical studies by Christians themselves.

"According to the Bible, it was customary to call any Prophet of God, or righteous man, a son of God. Jesus called himself the son of man, not God or God's literal son. Evidently, Paul was most responsible for elevating the status of Jesus to the son of God, distorting the teachings of Jesus.

" Jesus did not appear to be the 'begotten' son of God (as it used to say in John 3:16) since this word has been cancelled from the Revised Standard Version (RSV), as well as many new other versions of the Bible. Furthermore, God emphatically says in the Koran that He does not have a son. However, God also declared that He created Adam and Jesus:

Indeed, the example of Jesus to God is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him 'Be', and he was." (3:59)

"Subsequent to these modifications emperors and clergy made further fabrications, contrary to what Jesus said or did. Of these was the concept of Trinity in which Jesus is one of the three manifestations of the Trinitarian God (the Father, the son, the Holy Ghost). In the Bible this verse is given as the best proof for the doctrine of Trinity, even though this doctrine was never brought forth by Jesus, his disciples, or Christian scholars. In fact, it was enacted after much disagreement and conflict among Christians in the year 325 AD at the Council of Nicea. Interestingly, this verse has been expunged from the Bibles of modern age. In addition, the Koran warns the Jews and the Christians to refrain from disbelieving in revelation of God and against believing in Trinity.

"A related area of controversy I read about was 'Original Sin' and salvation through 'the crucifixion' of Jesus. Presumably, before Jesus, there was no Doctrine of Original Sin. However, after Jesus the Doctrine of Original Sin appeared. Moreover, before Jesus, salvation was obtained by obedience to God whereas after Jesus, salvation was achieved through his crucifixion so they said.

"I came across many sources indicating that Paul and others were frustrated by the Jewish rejection of the Message of Jesus, so they extended their call to the Gentiles. They reached into southern Europe, where polytheism and idolatry were spreading. Gradually, the Message of Jesus was modified to suit the tastes and traditions of the Romans and Greeks of those days. The Bible warns against adding or removing information from its teachings, which is precisely happened. God addresses this point in the Koran as well.

So woe to those who write the Book with their hands, then say, 'This is from God,' to purchase with it a little price! Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for that they earn thereby (Al-Baqarahh, 78).

Leopold Wiess, the Australian Jew who embraced Islam in 1926 and became one of the greatest Muslim intellectuals of the twentieth century has expressed his astonishment at the overwhelming beauty and coherence of Islam:

"I was asked, time and again: 'Why did you embrace Islam? What was it that attracted you particularly?'—and I must confess: I don't know of any satisfactory answer. It was not any particular teaching that attracted me, but the whole wonderful, inexplicably coherent structure of moral teaching and practical life program. I could not say, even now, which aspect of it appeals to me more than any other. Islam appears to me like a perfect work of architecture. All its parts are harmoniously conceived to complement and support each other: nothing is superfluous and nothing lacking, with the result of an absolute balance and solid composure. Probably this feeling that everything in the teachings and postulates of Islam is in its proper place, has created the strongest impression on me."

Dr. Murad Wilfried Hofmann, Ex German diplomat and author of 'Islam: the Alternative', 'Islam 2000', 'Voyage to Makkah', reverted to Islam in 1980. He wrote about why people in the West need Islam in their lives:

"Younger generations, are seekers of religion in transit. They are sick of the meaninglessness, the spiritual vacuum in their lives, and looking for certainty in a world in which 'anything goes'. They have been raised without restrictions and are craving for leadership, real values and reliable norms. In short, these people represent an enormous religion potential. They may turn the 21st century into a religious one."

"The question therefore is: Will Islam be perceived as a better choice than Christianity before? And will worshipping together be preferred to the private type of religion now so prevalent? As for the first question, it is my considered opinion that Christianity in Europe is beyond repair. I am equally convinced that the Occident cannot get its act together through an artificial new religion, an eclectic Esperanto religion. It won't work because religion presupposes authority beyond doubt. Only a religion built on revelation can qualify. As for the latter question, I am rather positive because the young generation is again cherishing togetherness and getting increasingly worried about the fate of 'singles' as they grow older. It is indeed one of the major assets of the young that Islam comes together with a family, the Ummah (nation), and that brotherhood and sisterhood in the Islamic community is more real, more touchable, than the idea of loving-neighbor is among Christians. If the emotional cooling of Western societies (not the promised 'Greening of American' – as Charles Reiches envisions) is a fact, as I think it is, then the Islamic Ummah in offering warmth and compassion fulfils the basic need of contemporary western kids.

"The autistic nature of cyberspace, the sexually over-heated atmosphere in which Westerners live, and the brutal competitiveness of life in the West – from school to job, from job to sexual relations – with the constant pressure to over-achieve have led to a situation where the average American is consulting at least one psychiatrist, their so called 'shrink'. Such people cannot fail to be impressed by the obvious fact that most Muslims are self-content, unstressed, not under undue time pressure, in short in harmony with God, themselves and their environment. For all these reasons I feel that many people, tired in their daily rat race routine, will be eager to discover more about Islam.

"The Muslim concept of God – the incomparable One and Unique divinity, both immanent and transcendent, beyond time and space, the only being that has real

Being - is the only concept which will satisfy the educated modern men. Tawhid, Pristine monotheism without any frills is our major asset.

"No civilization can survive for long with the break-down of family structures as we observe it currently. The family is virtually under assault...The divorce rates are appallingly high. Half of the households in the major towns are now run by 'singles', including women who want a child but no husband. A large sector of children is growing up without a father. How unbalanced many kids are shown in their growing propensity to violence. Their respect for elders and the family is so low that now it is even possible in America for children to sue for divorce from their unloved parents...however, Muslim families in general are much more tightly knit and provide much more security than the average Western one.

"All sorts of addictions are spread in Western societies – to cigarettes, alcohol, cocaine, LSD, and other drugs, but also to TV and the internet. One can say without overstating the case that the West is structurally addicted. It is so sad to see people who cannot cope with life without that glass, that pill, or that cigarette. Such people in fact are practicing a modern form of *Shirk* (polytheism). They are slaves to something else but God...Muslims can be proud in demonstrating that they are structurally sober: always ready, always alert...Hardly anything shows more clearly that Islam is an alternative way of life, capable of saving the West from self-destruction.

"Western societies are all threatened from within, the various forms of ethnic prejudice, racism, chauvinism, and the discrimination of other religions. The slave history is still visible in the United States. All many wars fought until recently in Europe and America was due to such prejudices...Islam is the one religion which has solved the problems of race and religious pluralism: by making piety and not color important; by accepting anybody in the same Ummah; and by tolerating other religions whole-heartedly.

"Equally impressive is of course the manifesto of religious pluralism contained in the Koran:

And We have sent down to thee the Book with the truth, confirming the Book that was before it (Torah and Gospel), and assuring it. So judge between them according to what Allah has sent down, and do not follow their caprices, to forsake the truth that has come to thee. To every one of you We have appointed a right way and an open road. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one nation; but that He may try you in what has come to you. So be you forward in good works; unto Allah shall you return, all together; and He will tell you of that whereon you were at variance (Al-Maidah, 48).

No compulsion is there in religion. Rectitude has become clear from error. So whosoever disbelieves in idols and believes in Allah, has laid hold of the most firm handle, that will never break; Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing (Al-Baqara, 256).

"This foundational tolerance – commanded and practiced 1400 years before the modern World Ecumenical Movement – is so extraordinary in the eyes of western people that they cannot but applaud. All we need to do is to point out that Greece

remained Orthodox during 500 years to Turkish rule – and then ask where the Muslims are in Spain, where they lived for 800 years before being expelled.

"Young people feel emancipated, and want to remain so. They hate hierarchies, sacraments administered by clergymen, mysterious dogmas, and anything that reminds them of the church institutions. Such people are pleasantly surprised when they find out that Islam knows no church, no Pope, no sacraments, and no mind-boggling dogmas like divine incarnation, trinity, salvation on the cross, or hereditary sin. They are thrilled to learn that there are no more emancipated believers than Muslims since they do not tolerate any intercession, be it by priests or saints, when they face Allah, fully individually, in their prayer. They are likely to be as impressed when learning that each and every Muslim, regardless of rank, is qualified ad hoc to serve as an Imam (religious leader).

"The Muslim position on homosexuality also commands respect with the silent majority in the West who condemns the new Occidental policy of treating same-gender relations as an optional life style, one 'orientation' among others. Many a western observer fears that the whole sale public up-grading of homosexuality, including homosexual marriages, is a symptom of decadence, indicative of a declining civilization. Such people are scandalized by the existence of two entirely homosexual city quarters in San Francisco. No wonder that they sympathize with the Muslim attitude: to show compassion with seemingly 'born' homosexuals while refusing to treat homosexuality as such as a normal affair in public.

"In the occident, the pendulum constantly seems to swing back and forth between a puritanical demonization of sex (and even marriage) and sexual licentiousness, without limits or taboos. Thoughtful western people are therefore impressed by the more balanced and sober Muslim approach to the sexual nature and needs of man. Islam does not sanctify marriage by raising it to the level of a Christian 'sacrament' but, with common sense, treats this union rather as a possible non-permanent contract. At the same time, however, Islam considers the sexual life between married partners as *Ibadah*, i.e. an act of devotion and worship. People who have been able to maintain a sense for what is natural of man – for his *Fitrah* (natural disposition) – may well realize that Islam's approach to sexuality makes good sense.

"Even in the field of economics, Islam might be perceived as a saving grace. At first sight, the prohibition of *Reba* (usury) is likely to be considered naïve and highly impractical. But then people may have second thoughts when realizing that this prohibition may help defend the very spirit of entrepreneurship on which capitalism is built. How is that? By insisting on profit-and-loss-sharing financial agreements, Islam fights the saturation and stagnation which sets in when capital is mainly used in risk-free modalities"(5).

11- Disgrace and shame undermining the Catholic Church

People in the West also embrace Islam because of the bad example the Catholic Church has set to its adherents. The Roman Catholic Church has been rocked by a series of clergy sex scandals around the globe.

The Catholic Church in the United States is facing mounting criticism following allegations that it covered up cases of abuse for decades. The Catholic cardinals were charged of sex abuse. The cost to the U.S. Roman Catholic Church of sexual predators in the priesthood has climbed past \$ 1 billion, according to tallies by American bishops and an associated Press review of known settlements. This figure is guaranteed to rise, probably by tens of millions of dollars, because hundreds more claims are pending.

Allegations of sexual misconduct by priests and cases of sex abuse were launched by the victims against the archdioceses of Boston, Dallas, Davenport, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Louisville, Portland, San Diego, Spokane and Tucson.

Dioceses around the United States have spent at least \$ 1.06 billion on settlements with victims, verdicts, legal fees, counseling and other expenses since 1950. In December 2006 the Archdiocese of Los Angeles agreed to pay out of 60 million dollars to settle 45 of the over 500 cases pending concerning abuse by priests. In July 2007 the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles agreed to pay \$660 million settlement to hundreds of people who claimed to have been abused by clergy (6).

At least 325 priests of America's 46,000 priests were removed from duty or resigned since the scandal began in January, 2002.

There have been allegations that the church tried for years to cover up cases of abuse, rather than admit the problem.

The crimes committed by priests have physically, psychologically and spiritually damaged thousands of children and their families. In his annual letter to priests, Pope John Paul II referred to the "sins of our brothers", and admitted that some priests had succumbed to "the most grievous form of evil". He said in another occasion that the sexual abuse rocking his church caused "a deep sense of sadness and shame," but he urged Catholic youth to support the vast majority of priests who do good. Advocates for victims of sexually abusive priests, however, complained that the pope's comments seemed to sympathize more with priests than with Roman Catholics who were molested. The church was accused of covering up misconduct by priests, in some cases by moving known abusers from job to job.

Scandals of sex abuse are not only related to priests and bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States, but also to TV evangelists and Christian leaders who are important members of the Christian Coalition.

Beverly Russel, a powerful member of the Christian Coalition admitted molesting his stepdaughter Susan Smith when she was 14 or 15. According to news reports, he would come home from putting up campaign posters for Pat Robertson to fondle her. Beverly Russel admitted that he continued having incestuous relationship with her until shortly before she drowned her children in John D. Long Lake (7).

Father Bruce Ritter, the founder of Covenant House in 1966, was accused by Kevin Kite in December 1989, a former male prostitute and pornographic actor, of

having sexual relations after meeting him in New Orleans and flying him to New York to live at Ritter's expense. Several other men came forward after Ritter's allegations leading to Ritter's removal as president of Covenant House. There were allegations of financial improprieties involving a \$1 million trust fund (8).

Jimmy Swaggart, America's leading television evangelist, has resigned from his ministry after it was revealed he had been consorting with a prostitute. He hired prostitutes so he could look up their dresses (9).

James Orsen Bakker, an American televangelist, a former host of the *PTL Club*, a popular evangelical Christian television program. Bakker admitted that he had a one time 1980 sexual encounter with a Long Island church secretary, Jessica Hahn, and making subsequent hush-money payments. He was convicted of fraud in 1989 for over-promising heritage privileges to more than 152,000 special contributors. He served five years in prison and had to resign from the ministry (10).

In this connection it is worth mentioning that the US Episcopal Church consecrated V. Gene Robinson as bishop in a heart felt ceremony, making him the first openly gay man to rise to that rank in any of the world's major Christian bodies!

Outside the USA cases of church-related sexual abuse were recorded in Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Ireland, Mexico, and Philippines.

Canada has also faced devastating sex abuse scandals. Indians in that nation have filed 2,500 compensation claims over physical and sexual abuse at boarding schools run by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and the order filed for bankruptcy protection.

Archbishop Alphonsus Penny of St. John's, Newfoundland, became the first prelate to resign for poor administration when he quit in 1991 after more than 20 of his clergy were charged with molesting boys.

Australian cases began surfacing in the late 1980s and during the past nine years at least 50 priests and brothers have been sentenced for sexual offences.

In Ireland, the church faces "the greatest institutional crisis in its modern history", the Irish times editorialized. An estimated 3,000 victims at church-run schools and orphanages will share up to \$500 million under a January deal, with the church contributing about \$110 million and Irish tax payers the rest. Each victim who applies to a compensation tribunal would receive at least \$50,000 on condition they drop other claims against the church or government.

Among the cases revealed in Ireland were the rape of teenage girls on the altar of a church by one priest, and the use of blackmail by another priest to force children to perform sex acts on him.

One of the worst examples of a clergyman using his links with families to facilitate sex abuse also occurred in Ireland. One priest systematically raped and sexually abused hundreds of boys between 1945 and 1990. The scandal over the Fr. Brendan Smyth case, and the systematic obstruction of justice in his case by

the Norbertine Order caused immense damage to the credibility of the Catholic Church in Ireland, as did other cases. The ten-year drop in percentage of Irish people attending weekly Mass (from 63% to 48%) was related to these events (11).

Twenty-one priests were convicted of molestation between 1995 and 1999 in England. There, as in Ireland, bishops have set up a child-protection office.

In 1995 several former high school boys charged Austria's primate, with molestation. He went into exile amid thanks from the Vatican for his service; no full explanation or apology has ever been given.

Poland's archbishop, formerly part of the Pope's personal staff, denied priests' allegations of past sexual harassment but resigned in March anyway.

The Pope accepted the resignation of Auxiliary Bishop of Mainz, Germany, who was accused of sexually abusing and injuring a woman during an exorcism.

In France, the secretary general of the bishops' conference says nearly 30 priests have been convicted of molestation over the past decade. That prompted the bishops to set new guidelines, pledging abusive priests will not be shielded from the law.

In Italy, however, if instances do occur "It's almost impossible that a priest would be accused," given the nature of the country's heavily Catholic culture, said author Giordano Bruno Guerri.

Archbishop Giovanni Tonucci, the Vatican representative to Kenya, said he knows of three or four abuse cases that occurred during the past six years in east Africa. The Rev. Livingstone Kanylike, chaplain of Uganda's Makerere University said that priestly misconduct in Africa "has more to do with women than boys." (11).

These incidences of sex abuse caused immense damage to the credibility of the Catholic Church worldwide.

The Catholic pastors, bishops and priests involved in such heinous sexual scandals are most hated in the sight of Allah because they say that which they do not. They enjoin piety and righteousness and every act of obedience on the people and they forget to practice it themselves, when they peruse the Bible and have knowledge of its text! The Koran says:

Will you bid others to piety, and forget yourselves while you recite the Book? Do you not understand? (Al-Baqarahh, 44).

Allah's Messenger said"

"A man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and cast into Hell, and his intestines will pour forth in Hell, and he will go around in them as an ass goes around with its milestone. The inhabitants of Hell will gather around him and say: 'What has happened to you? Were not you enjoining us to do what was reputable and forbidding us to do what was not?' He will reply: 'I

was enjoining you to do what was reputable, but was not doing it myself; and I was forbidding you to do what was not, but was doing it myself." (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 9, Hadith No. 218).

Christians are divided among themselves. Division between Christian sects and cults became more evident when in 2007; the Vatican issued a 16-page document claiming that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true Church of Jesus Christ. The document further stated that Protestant denominations – called Christian communities born out of the reformation – are not true churches, but ecclesial communities. These ecclesial communities which, specifically because of the absence of the sacramental priesthood...cannot, according to Catholic doctrine, be called 'churches' in the proper sense.

In spite of some opposition here and there, America, Canada and the European nations have legalized homosexuality and lesbianism as their citizens' human rights. The Islamic countries however, are the only nations upholding the higher standard of morality. To them the Koran and the Sunnah of the Prophet are the only sources which govern their social, cultural and ethical dimensions of life. The Koran and the Prophet have vehemently condemned same-sex carnal relationship.

The Koran while recounting the lecherous approach of the people of Sodom and Gommorah quote the Prophet Lut as saying to his people:

What, do you come to male beings, leaving your wives that your Lord created for you? Nay, but you are a people of transgressors (As-Shu'ara 165, 166).

And Lot, when he said to his people, 'What, do you commit such indecency as never any being in the entire world committed before you? See, you approach men lustfully instead of women; no, you are a people that do exceed.' (Al-A'raf 80, 81).

Allah then poured His wrath on the people of Lut for committing such terrible sin of homosexuality.

So when our command came, We turned it (the cities of homosexuals) upside down, and rained on it stones of baked clay, one on another, marked with thy Lord, and never far from the evildoers (Hûd, 82).

The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said:

"If anyone is found involved in the act of sodomy, both the actors, active and passive, be killed." (Vide: Al-Tirmidhi, Al'jami al-Sahih, Vol. IV, Kitab al-Hudud No. 1460).

Homosexuality is considered by Muslims as inhuman, unnatural, criminal, and unethical as well as a divinely cursed act. The so called 'developed world or enlightened part of humanity' is threatened to be effaced from the surface of the earth as the sodomese were destroyed only to be cursed for ever.

Muslims make themselves subservient to Allah with their own free will; they choose to remain constrained within the divinely ordained restrictions, despite enjoying the freedom to remain unrestricted.

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