

458 Robust Gospel Conversations

No sooner was the “ink dry” on our last week’s Reflection, concerning Daniel’s prayer of repentance for his people, than there occurred the foul murder of Sir David Amess in Leigh-on-Sea. There has been much well-deserved praise for this fine man from his fellow Members of Parliament and from many of his constituents in Southend, but yet also in some quarters a strange silence. From the police, the politicians and the mainstream media there was barely a mention of Islam and Islamic jihad. Instead the message seems to have been initial puzzlement over the killer’s motives, expectation of his probable disturbed mental state, and then the usual scratching of official heads as to how to tackle “radical extremism”.

This virtual silence has continued from within the Muslim community, with scarcely a peep of condemnation coming from imams, Islamic scholars and ordinary Muslims. Why not? This has to be because such jihadist deeds, far from being extreme, are in fact mainstream Qur’anic teaching: groups such as al Qaeda, Boko Haram, al Shabaab, ISIS and the Taliban are simply putting into practice what they are instructed to do in both the Qur’an and the other Islamic teachings. Members of such groups, plus “lone wolf” jihadists in the West, are only “extremists” in the sense that – mercifully – comparatively so few Muslims, especially in western societies, put these teachings into actual practice.

So here is the dilemma facing Muslims living in western democracies, with all the advantages that such democracies provide for them. On the one hand is the Qur’anic teaching they receive, in which jihad is taught as an obligation among other obligations; and on the other is their desire to get on with ordinary living in a non-Sharia western country. This dilemma explains both their widespread silence after jihadist attacks, and the usual angry claims over Islam being a peaceful, much misunderstood religion, with any honest criticism of Islam being rejected, of course, as “Islamophobic, racist and bigoted”.

We have a fine example of this approach in this short letter, published in the Daily Telegraph on the morning after the murder: “Sir, Sir David Amess lost his life while serving his constituents with dignity. Politicians should be free to practise their profession without fear. It is our solemn obligation to thwart hatred and injustices. This is the most sobering way of remembering people like David Amess and Jo Cox”. (Written by) Dr Munjed Farid Al Qutob, London NW2. Few people would disagree with the first two sentences. In the third, the thwarting of “hatred and

injustices” presumably refers to the catch-all crime of “Islamophobia”, and in the fourth, the two murders are treated as being identical despite the entirely different motives of the murderers. So the writer is suggesting that such terrible deeds are found right across society, with Islam having no particular culpability for such crimes. Unfortunately the historical and present-day facts demonstrate that that argument is nonsense, as Dr Qutob must very well know. “TheReligionofPeace.com” website shows the number of “deadly terror attacks since 9/11 by Islamic terrorists” currently stands at 40,246, and that number steadily rises. In comparison, the number of (equally foul) attacks by so-called “right-wing extremists” must be minimal.

This Reflection, concentrating on Islam this time because of recent events, seeks simply to “lift the lid” on what is really going on, namely this fundamental clash between “western” (originally Christian) values, and Islamic values. The Islamic agenda, far from hidden, is to take over these western host countries and to impose Sharia law.

Progress towards that goal is remorseless: in Cologne for example - a city now with 35 mosques - the authorities have agreed, as “a sign of respect”, to the broadcasting of the Islamic “call to prayer” (the Adhan), which states: “Allah is greater (Allahu akbar); // I testify that there is no God but Allah; // I testify that Mohammed is Allah’s Prophet; // Come to prayer; // Come to security/salvation; // Allah is greater; // There is no God but Allah”. This steady Islamic advance is aided by understandable fears in the host countries of stirring up social unrest; by higher birth rates in Muslim communities; and by waves of Muslim immigration into Europe, both legal and illegal.

But, as with everything else currently going on, thankfully this Islamic advance is being allowed by Almighty God within His “end-times” biblical prophecies, as the emergence of the antichrist figure himself draws nearer (eg., I John 2.18-25). There is no need for Christian fear or gloom, but much need for Christian “standing up and speaking out” in robust Gospel conversations (egs., Psalm 27.1 / John 16.33 / II Corinthians 5.17-21 / Ephesians 6.10-12). As with Daniel, we too lift our earnest prayers, for Muslims, for other not-Christians, for our fellow Christians, and for our political leaders. All of us have sinned, and all of us need Christ.

Thanks be to God, His victories in Christ stand assured, and His truth, comfort and guidance within His Word stand unassailable (from I Corinthians 15.57 / Psalm 119.105 / II Timothy 3.16-17).

Jesus Christ is Lord.

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(On the This Week page of the website this time is a helpful 3-page pdf article “Almost a Christian”, “from a treatise by M.Meade, 1661” – well worth a careful read)