**Islam – A Christian’s Perspective**

*by Stan Cox*

Most are aware of the mass shooting in Orlando this past week. As of this writing, 49 are reported dead with 53 wounded. The shooter, Omar Mateen, claimed allegiance to ISIS in a telephone conversation with police prior to the SWAT team assault that ended the standoff.

Taking the man’s words at face value, there are several points I would like to make about Islamic terrorism and the religion of Islam in general, all from my perspective as a Christian.

Regarding my perspective, I believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God. Understood correctly, I believe it to be the unique infallible guide for mankind, and that it is to be followed diligently. As such, most manifestations of “Christianity”, both throughout history and today, I believe to be counterfeit. The Catholic church, protestant denominationalism, and any nationalism behind the banner of the cross of Christ have no authority from Christ Himself. Too, the liberal practice of tolerating what the Bible clearly describes as sin is not a “Christian” practice at all. The true expression of love that Christ expects of us is to convict the sinner of his sin, to bring him to the point of repentance.

Much evil has been done by those who call themselves Christians. I repudiate fully and totally any who would kill, war or deceive in Christ’s name. I decry any attempt to nationalize Christianity. Any attempt to compel faith is absurd, as believing must be a matter of personal will. Faith proclaimed under duress can not secure salvation.

I know that many Muslims do not believe it right to compel others to their religion. They are tolerant, decry nationalism, and condemn totally the acts of terror that are done in the name of Allah. I do not know what the global ratio is between those who think that physical warfare (jihad) is called for, and those who believe it to be a distortion of their faith.

I do know that there is a very real difference between the Christian faith and that of Islam This difference is personified by the leaders of the two religions.

Jesus Christ was an itinerant preacher who lived 2000 years ago. He never commanded an army. Only one time it is recorded that a man drew a sword to defend Him and His kingdom. He told the man, *“Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword”* (Matthew 26:52). Though a king, He never sought to establish His kingdom upon the earth, *“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here”* (John 18:36). He taught His disciples to love, even their enemies (cf. Matthew 5:43-48). His true disciples do not seek to accomplish their purpose with the sword, but with words. Paul wrote, *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled”* (2 Corinthians 10:3-6).

Muhammad was an illiterate merchant who lived 1400 years ago. From the time he began to preach his message, he came into physical conflict with his opponents. Unlike the pacifistic Jesus and His followers, Muhammad fought physical wars to consolidate land and rule. In December of 629, in his late 50’s, he led an army of 10,000 and took the city of Mecca, which is now known as the seat of Islam.

There is no provision for national government in Christianity. (All such examples of said nationalism are in direct conflict with Biblical teaching). In fact, Old Testament prophecy shows that the Christ would break down national boundaries. Christ’s kingdom consists of individuals from all nations (cf. Isaiah 2:2), and has no physical government or land.

In contrast, Islamic Sharia law is a public legal system based upon Islam. There are no true “Christian nations” because Christ never established one. However, there are many “Muslim nations” because it was Muhammad’s intention that such be so.

Secular leaders often do not understand the nature of true religious faith. To them, complete surrender to the tenets of one’s religion is evil, dangerous, fanatical and unreasoning. A man who defines himself first by his faith is viewed as a threat. Today, most who identify themselves as Christian or Muslim are unwilling to fully embrace the literal and actual teaching that is contained in their respective Holy books, and personified in their respective heads.

True Christians (devoted followers) emulate Jesus Christ and are as *“harmless as doves”* (cf. Matthew 10:16). True Muslims (devoted followers) emulate Muhammad and seek through jihad to eradicate infidelity if possible, and if not then at least to diminish and subjugate it.

I have no problem with a Muslim who tolerates religious liberty and does not seek to subjugate those who disagree with him. I believe Islam to be false, but as I stated before I believe most who claim to be Christians have corrupted their religion as well. I do fear the Muslim who embraces the spirit of his prophet, and who fully devotes himself to the teaching of the Quran. I believe this fear to be both valid and legitimized by Omar Mateen and his kind.

[As posted on ***Sound Teaching***, June 14, 2016]