

The Militant Face of Islam

A Christian Response

Five Faces of Islam

1. The Missionary Face – Islamic Da’wah or Call/invitation to the “straight path”
2. The Mystical Face –Sufism/*Tasawwaf* – Islam as a spiritual path (*tariqa*), eclectic
3. The Ideological Face –Islamism or political Islam – Islam in public sphere, emphasize Islamic state/law
4. The Militant Face –Physical struggle in the path of Allah for the sake of Islam to establish Islamic governance
5. The Progressive Face – Critical re-reading of Qur’an, Traditions and calls for reformation in Islam

Militant Islam



- Seeks to achieve political ends through the use of violence and warfare. Examples includes al-Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram
- Literal reading of the Qur'an, inspiration from other Islamic texts and romanticized history – Flouting the laws of jihad

Qur'anic Basis

- “But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practise regular charity, then open the way for them.” (Q 9:5)
- “Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.” (Q 9:29)

The Marrakesh Declaration (Jan 2016)

- Issued by more than 250 Muslim religious leaders, heads of states, and scholars "defending the rights of religious minorities in predominantly Muslim countries."
- "Urge Muslim educational institutions and authorities to conduct a courageous review of educational curricula that addresses honestly and effectively any material that instigates aggression and extremism, leads to war and chaos, and results in the destruction of our shared societies"

The Marrakesh Declaration (Jan 2016)

- “Call upon representatives of the various religions, sects and denominations to confront all forms of religious bigotry, vilification, and denigration of what people hold sacred, as well as all speech that promote hatred and bigotry;”
- “AND FINALLY, AFFIRM that it is unconscionable to employ religion for the purpose of aggressing upon the rights of religious minorities in Muslim countries.”

Understanding ISIS: Kamel Daoud



- “ISIS is first and foremost a culture, not a militia, how do you prevent future generations from turning to jihadism when the influence of Fatwa Valley and its clerics and its culture and its immense editorial industry remains intact?”

Understanding ISIS: Kamel Daoud



- “Daesh has a mother: the invasion of Iraq. But it also has a father: Saudi Arabia and its religious-industrial complex. Until that point is understood, battles may be won, but the war will be lost. Jihadists will be killed, only to be reborn again in future generations and raised on the same books.”

Lessons from the Reformers

- Luther and Calvin viewed the Islamic challenge in terms of spiritual warfare, and the key to Christian victory in repentance and return to biblical teaching.
- Both insisted that war against militant Islam is just but is the sole duty of the state; "it should be fought at the Emperor's command and under his banner, and in his name!" Not under the cross!

Beware of the Radicalizing Effect

- Joseph Cumming: “It used to be commonly said that Islam was Satan’s greatest masterpiece. I believe that is not true. I believe that Satan’s greatest masterpiece was the Crusades. Why? Is it because the Crusades were the worst atrocity that ever happened in history? I think Hitler was worse. Stalin was worse. Pol Pot was worse. What is so horrible about the Crusades is that it was done under the symbol of the cross, that Satan succeeded in distorting the very heart of the Christian faith... Satan succeeded in taking the very heart of the Christian faith, and turning it around to mean not just something different, but to mean the exact opposite of what it was supposed to mean.” (Cumming 2008: 330)

Satan's master scheme

“What would be a greater victory in the post-9/11 world? Would it be to tempt Osama bin Laden to hijack a few more airplanes? That would be a minor victory for Satan. Or would it be to tempt the Christian community to abandon their historic faith in Jesus Christ, delivered once for all to the saints and to turn it into a tribal, henotheistic religion predicated on enmity with our neighbors? I think that would be a much greater victory for Satan.” (Cumming 2008:332)

The Jesus Way

- “soft” vs. “tough” approaches
- **“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also **“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...”** (Matt. 5: 38-44).**

Fighting Hate



- “Through violence you may murder the hater, but you do not murder hate... Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

Miroslav Volf

- “There is no claim in Islam that God ‘justifies the ungodly’ and no command to love one’s enemies. But these are the signature claims of the Christian faith. Take the redemption of the ungodly and the love of enemy out of the Christian faith, and you un-Christian it.” (M. Volf)

Matthew 7:16-18

- “By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.”

The Human Face of Islam

