

CHRISTIANITY vs. ISLAM (?)

BY: BRAD CULLEN – JANUARY 8, 2003

CHRISTIANITY VS. ISLAM? MY SPIN...

I awoke abruptly this morning remembering the definition of a word that is being bandied about more than a bit negatively at the moment. The word is Islam. This led to my remembering the definition of another word... I'll start with the second word first... that word is Decision...

Literally, "the cut." The origin of the word decision means to lop, or cut off all other possibilities. To truly decide something means to choose without any possibility of a change of mind. It is over and done with.

Lopping off implies leaving jagged and imperfect, perhaps even dangerous edges. Along with decision there is incision (cutting inward) and precision (cutting carefully on the basis of a clearly defined pattern). Human decisions are best made with incisiveness... going inward to base the cut (choice) on inner, eternal or unchanging values. By first going inside -- a template can be made so that the cut can be made precisely with no potentially harmful jagged edges.

THE OTHER WORD I AWOKED WITH? ISLAM.

The religion that uses that word to describe itself is based on the teachings of Mohammed. A man who considered himself to be a prophet... and thus the followers of Islam, Muslims, consider him to be a prophet as well.

Mohammed certainly thought that he was proclaiming the same singular God, Allah, that Jesus proclaimed. The God of Abraham... the father of Isaac and the religion of the Jews and also the Father of Ishmael and the religion of the Arabs. There we have it... Jew, Moslem and Christian... all the seed of Abraham.

Self-professed followers of Jesus and Mohammed miss the essence of the teaching of both men... when they treat anyone with anything less than practical love and tolerance...

Islam literally means "submission to God"... (or Allah, same, same in the mind of Mohammed).

Where Christianity and Islam both stumble, slip and fall is under the direction of men who by their actions miss the "will" (desires and purposes) of God/Allah.

Mohammed and Jesus both proclaimed that the essence of being submitted to God worked itself out in the individual by the loving of one's enemies and the "returning of good for evil."

Only the narrowest interpretation of the Bible or the Koran will lead to Holy (as determined by men) wars, in which the sole purpose is to destroy those who believe differently than they.

Both Jesus and Mohammed were vehemently opposed to this. Therefore, Christian/Muslim armed battles are ludicrous. Trying to tell this to a devout fundamentalist, Christian, Muslim, Jew, or for that matter, Hindu... falls on deaf ears and at best brings on verbal justifications for the hatred.

As for me... I go inward and decide to submit to God. If another person, who says he is submitted to God, chooses to kill me for my decision... his fate is in the hands of Allah.

Jesus and Mohammed said to love our enemies... It is written in the Scriptures of the Jew... Vengeance is mine says the Lord.

Turning the other cheek is obviously a conundrum thought up by somebody who just wasn't familiar with the problems brought on by the existence of Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus on one planet.

Now then, let's go retaliate!

A personal note to all of this... I was invited to go to Pakistan several years ago by a local Pakistani Christian pastor in Lahore, Pakistan to go as an evangelist to Muslims. He was, himself, converted to Christianity from Islam. I arranged for my air travel... and made extensive plans for the trip... with much excitement and anticipation, never having been to that part of the world.

I knew that Pakistanis who converted to Christianity feared for their very lives. I was excited about the possibility of being a part of such a noble and worthy cause.

I went into a period of fasting and intense prayer for direction and preparation. One morning while literally lying on my face on the floor... I dozed off and had a vivid dream of thousands thronging to Christ as a result of my speaking...

Then I saw that what the throng was doing was supplanting one shadow of reality, i.e., the religion of Islam for another shadow of reality... the religion of Christianity and still missing God!

“What do I do?” I asked God... I clearly heard, DO NOT GO! I “tested the spirits” and knew this was a message for me from God.

I told the American Christian man through whom the invitation had been given and who was underwriting the finances of my trip what had happened to me. He arranged for another American evangelist... to go. I had some very mixed emotions. I was surprised by two of the emotions I could identify. Jealousy on the one hand and relief on the other.

After thinking on it... I realized I was jealous because I had wanted to go very badly and wanted to be known as a man that had brought many Muslims to Christ! I was relieved because I knew the other man... a renowned international evangelist would “do a good job” and thus felt relieved of the responsibility to go.

I was deeply troubled by the clear look at such obvious ego centeredness on my part. One of the other emotions was the dismay at the fact that the man that had arranged for the finances of my travel had disregarded the message I had been given from God. I was also relieved that he didn't seem to judge me for my decision not to go. Still trapped in my ego driven thoughts... I finally realized that it simply wasn't my time or place to go.

Through incision, precision and decision I will know when it is my time. God's promise to all... “you will seek Me and find me when you search for Me with all your heart.” Out of the mouth of the Jewish prophet, Jeremiah... no less.

Ah, Islam!... a precise decision to be submitted to God..

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