

Who Needs Reconciliation?

By

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Following my previous two essays; “**Reconciliation: The choice of peace makers**” and “**360 degrees love**”, friends wrote and asked what is so urgent? Why so much focus on reconciliation? Who needs reconciliation? Who needs to be engaged in this effort and why? Are American Muslims ready for this and do they need it? And are the churches in the U.S. ready to accept Muslims as their neighbors when so many are saying that the enemy is Islam?

To an observer, the trend in the U.S. especially among church goers in general and Evangelists in particular is of growing anti-Islamic sentiments. “In a recent conference, the speakers participating in "Jihad: America's Third Rail," an "unofficial" panel at the [Conservative Political Action Conference](#) (CPAC), wanted their standing-room only audience to know that there's more to fear than *jihad* – it's Islam itself that is the threat.

"Everyone knows Islam is a religion of peace that has been hijacked by a tiny minority," said Robert Spencer, sarcastically and to a great amount of applause and guffaws. Spencer, executive director of Jihad Watch and associate director of the Freedom Defense Initiative, which he recently founded with Atlas Shrugged blogger Pamela Geller, told his audience everyone believes that "like they believe in Santa Claus though no one has ever seen it."” [Fox News, 19 February 2010](#).

In Small-Town, USA, loving one’s neighbors is nice. However, when Small-Town is divided and one half of its population is throwing rocks at the other half, reconciliation stops being a luxury and become an urgent need. Your neighbor becomes your enemy and it is more urgent to learn to love your enemy if you are to obey Jesus.

As an American Muslim, I saw and felt the tension experienced by all Americans after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and until this minute, Muslims in the States and beyond, are suspects. They were all put on the defensive through the media and they never stopped trying to prove their innocence. For them, explaining to others what Islam is all about became an urgent necessity especially in view of the hate theology preached by Islamophobics¹.

¹ In a 2007 article in *Journal of Sociology* defines Islamophobia as anti-Muslim racism and a continuation of anti-Asian and anti-Arab racism. Similarly, [John Denham](#) has drawn parallels between modern Islamophobia and the [antisemitism](#) of the 1930s. So has [Maud Olofsson](#), Professor [Jan Hjärpe](#), and [George Galloway](#).

However, no one in the media ever pointed out that on September 11th, Islam in the USA was also attacked. Many Muslims died in the WTC tragedy and the rest of them became hostages to fear, intimidation and insecurity about their future². “All the progress they had made for the last 50 years is reversed and some immigrant Muslims even started to question whether they should go back to the country they came from. Of course, those American Muslims like my children who were born here have no place to go. This is their home”³.

During that infamous morning my wife Eman was in our house in Fairfax, VA with my boys Omar and Yasser who were attending George Mason University. I was in Saudi Arabia’s Eastern Province doing a project for a Saudi Prince. My wife suddenly came on the Hotmail Messenger and asked me if I was watching TV. I didn’t know what she was talking about as I was busy, intently working on a business plan. She said, “Oh my God, a plane hit the World Trade tower and another plane is going to hit the second tower!” She sounded horrified, and she asked again, “Are you watching?!” I could tell from her voice I should stop what I was doing, so I asked what channel to turn to. She said CNN, or any station. I turned to CNN to see the most horrifying event I witnessed ever. A plane hit the second tower as I glanced at the screen. Suddenly it dawned on me this is not an accident, but a disaster of colossal dimension was taking place in front of my eyes. Additional disastrous events took place that day to make it one of the darkest days ever for American Muslims.

My wife and I spoke several times that day. We were confused, angry and scared. That evening my wife called to tell me that she was afraid and worried about the boys’ safety. Her friend Muna suggested that she join friends at the Cedars,⁴ a community refuge, for prayers. This was her first visit to the Cedars where she was welcomed and felt among friends but most importantly the group started praying and my wife was in for the surprise of her life. The group was praying for Ousama Binladen’s forgiveness. This was the first time this Muslim woman was exposed to the concept of loving your enemies. I remember the long conversations I had on the phone with my wife about that concept and about Jesus. Human sense teaches us to kill our enemies while Jesus teaches us to love them. Talking about Jesus and his teachings seemed to take our minds away from the tragedy that surrounded us to another dimension of love. While 9/11 was a disaster for many, it was my first exposure to love, Jesus-style. However, to know Jesus, to really know Jesus, comes with a heavy price. Once you know him and you decide to follow his principles, you need to be ready to put up with a lot of ignorance and hatred that surrounds you.

² According to Islamophobia Watch, 1444 acts of violence have been documented against Muslims in the U.S. <http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/islamophobia-watch/category/usa>

³ Shahid Athar M.D. is Clinical Associate Professor of Internal Medicine and Endocrinology, Indiana University School of Medicine Indianapolis, Indiana, and a writer on Islam.

⁴ A mansion located on a quiet residential street, the Cedars sits at the highest point of the Potomac River, with spectacular views of Washington. It is owned by the Fellowship, a nonpartisan group of Jesus followers that sponsors the National prayer Breakfast.

“Why did *they* do that?” is a deceptively simple question which sadly opened a key phase in the U.S. recent engagement with the Muslim world which began with the tragedy of 9/11. It is a distressing question because it immediately disclosed, through the simple use of the word “they”, an implicit and dangerous lumping together of Muslims in all their diversity with the perpetrators of these attacks. This move was made all the easier when a common denominator of Islam was specifically invoked by those who claimed responsibility. The fact that the perpetrators had invoked Islam in the justification of their violence made it all too inviting to commit the error of moving from the quantifier, “some”, to “all” and thus connecting all Muslims with the violence. Too many were sadly willing to take that which was committed by a tiny few and place the blame upon all. This error has again and again been refuted, but its effects clearly linger on and forging this linkage has sadly been one of the greatest successes of those committed to acts of terrorism.

But beyond this, it has generated a deeper difficulty, in that it has allowed the context of Muslim-West dialogue to be framed by disaster with a consequent tendency to focus the goals of dialogue in preventative and negative terms. Rather than beginning by asking what the ideal state of Muslim-West relations should be, the tendency is to ask merely what can be done to avoid further disaster.

In view of this threat, it seemed that Muslims needed to take the initiative to engage others. Thankfully, Muslims throughout the world have risen to this challenge.

In the wake of the devastating terror attacks of September 11, 2001, the Islamic world has openly sided with the United States against the terrorists. The misconception in the United States, that all Muslims hate Americans, is easily proven to be false by the outpouring of sympathy and cooperation offered by the Islamic world since September 11. This response is not solely confined to countries with which the United States gets along, but every state with a Muslim majority in the world, with only two exceptions (Afghanistan and Iraq). Even states that the United States views as hostile - Libya, Syria, Sudan, - have not only condemned the attacks, but have offered their resources on behalf of the United States led effort against international terrorism.

Every time a Muslim speaker stands in front of an American audience he will be eventually asked the obvious question: if you are against terrorism, why you don't publicly condemn it? “How many times does (one) need to publicly and unconditionally condemn violence and terrorism against innocent civilians? How many times does (one) need to state that more Muslims have been victims of Al Qaeda terrorism than members of other faiths. How forcefully do (one) need to say that my religion does not condone violence, by reminding myself and my audience of the Qura'nic verse that says: “if anyone kills a person—unless in retribution for murder or spreading corruption in the land—it is as if he kills all mankind, while if any saves a life it is as if he saves the lives of all mankind..” 5:32.

Why do I have to account for the despicable acts of fellow Muslims with whom I have no contact or relations? Why conversely, am I not rewarded or at least acknowledged for the thousand and one acts of kindness performed by fellow Muslims every day? I am not a lesser Muslim because

of the acts of a few extremists who may profess my faith. Does it make you less of Christian with Timothy McVeigh and Adolf Hitler being Christians? Does it make you less of Jew because Dr. Baruch Goldstein--who massacred thirty Moslems in a mosque in Hebron, was a Jew"?⁵

The predictable question that follows the first one will always be: If most Muslims are moderate, why don't Muslim leaders condemn terrorist acts? Again I go through the list of Muslim leaders that condemned the 9/11 terrorist acts and all subsequent acts of terrorism. In fact, I personally don't know any Muslims that condone terrorist acts.

'The recent developments in the United States constitute a form of injustice that is not tolerated by Islam, which views them as gross crimes and sinful acts.' ---Chairman of the Senior Ulama' Board in Saudi Arabia, Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Shaikh, 9/15/01

We've identified, through simple research, several websites⁶ that carry condemnation of the tragic attacks of 9/11 from various Muslim leaders. This goes to illustrate the international reaction to the terror attacks of the fifty-one countries around the world in which Muslims constitute the largest single religious community. In many of these instances, the American press has not gone out of its way to show these state's responses, or the American reaction to these state's positions. Little attention has been paid to the detailed responses of most of the Islamic world. At the same time, the Western press has afforded disproportionate coverage of those tiny minorities who publicly praised the attacks, from the thirty children in occupied Jerusalem to the couple hundred demonstrators in Somalia and Nigeria. We recommend this site <http://iir.internetactivist.org/> for a comprehensive response by country. The purpose of this site is to set the record straight and to show that the United States does have the sympathy and cooperation of the vast majority of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims. For these moderate peaceful Muslims, the question is, do they have the sympathy of Americans – especially the conservative Evangelists and American churches in general?

A young Muslima (feminine) told me that “since 9/11, easily a million Muslims have died in Iraq and Afghanistan, directly or indirectly, as a result of the invasions. We mourn the “terror” attacks that killed 3000 people (including Muslims). But despite the injustice that is being perpetrated against Muslims in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Pakistan, we turn to the West and offer sympathy, empathy, support and cooperation. Are we receiving the same sympathy from Americans? Why not turn around and demand that they show the love they were ordered to show their enemies? Is a Muslim life less valuable than an American one? How can they condemn Islam and Muslims when they have been the cause of more destruction, sorrow, war than has ever been perpetrated by the Muslim world”?

Why not “first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye” Matthew 7:5.

Do American Evangelists need reconciliation with American Muslims and Muslims in general?

⁵ Dr. Aref Assaf of New Jersey is president of the American Arab Forum.

http://blog.nj.com/njv_guest_blog/2009/11/please_do_not_call_me_being_an.html

⁶http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&client=gmail&rls=gm&q=related:groups.colgate.edu/aarislam/response.htm+Muslim+leaders+response+to+9/11&sa=X&ei=xfJ6S7DFK8TAjAep_sykDA&ved=0CAgQHZA

What do American Muslims want and what do American Evangelists want? Do they share enough common ground to build on the bridges of reconciliation?

Muslims are fairly new to the American scene. In general I don't know if they share common views on domestic issues. Nor do they all have the same commitment to Islam. They are not that well organized and I cannot identify a leadership that claims to represent or speak for all American Muslims. However they all have the same concern about their constitutional rights. They came to the States for various reasons but chief amongst these reasons is the issue of freedom followed by the issue of opportunity; the freedom to express one's self, to meet freely, to worship freely or not to worship; freedom from taboos and cultural inhibitions that limit one from reaching his maximum potentials. Constitutionally guaranteed liberties are essential to all American Muslims and equally important is to be able to fulfill your potential and to live the American dream. So why are American Muslims perceived as a threat? Usually, when invited to speak about Islam, I am asked about "Wahabies" and how strong is their influence among Muslims? An often heard comment is "you are nice, but what about those "Wahabies", they support terrorism don't they?"

I know the so called "Wahabies" in fact there is no such thing as Wahabies⁷. But the American media insist on using this term to stereotype Saudis. The majority of Muslims at this time have realized that fanatic views and support of violence against civilians will result in catastrophes for Muslims in Muslim majority countries such as Saudi Arabia and in other countries such as the United States. The intellectual Saudis also realize that the only door open nowadays is the door of dialogue with the other. In addition King Abdullah, of Saudi Arabia, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, is personally and strategically for dialogue and reconciliation. So is there a real threat from Muslims? Yes. This threat is from those very frustrated Muslims that see the U.S. not as it is represented by President Obama but as a cartel of the Military Industrial Alliance along with the Neo Cons that went to Iraq under false pretenses, destroyed it, fragmented it and caused hundreds of thousands of Iraqis to lose their lives. They see the U.S. as the country that will back Israel right or wrong against Palestinians who are losing their houses, their land and their lives every day on live television, while consecutive American Presidents give lip service to the two states solution.

The Palestinian/Israeli problem and justice to the Palestinians are important issues to all Muslims whether Americans or not. Muslims see that Palestinians have the right to their land and to their own state, based on United Nations resolutions. This is the same official stand of the American government. The Palestinians' rights issue is deeply rooted within the psyche of every Muslim. Muslims perceive what happened to the Palestinian people to be a great injustice and they perceive the United States' unconditional support for Israel to be unfair and oppressive. They also perceive the Evangelists' unwavering support to Israel to be theologically motivated and

⁷ "Wahhabi," a term that many adherents to this tradition do not use (reject). They prefer to call themselves *Muwahhidun* ("Unitarians", or "unifiers of Islamic practice"). They use the term *Salafi* or *Ahlul Sunna wal Jama'a*. The teachings of the reformer Mohammad Bin Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792) are more often referred to by adherents as *Salafi*, that is, "following the forefathers of Islam."

unfair to at least Christian Palestinians. The Muslim public does not necessarily understand why this is taking place. These views and the continuous oppression of Palestinians perpetrated so arrogantly by the Israelis settlers on live television, amounts to giving the fanatical Muslims a weapon to use against the United States. So what do Muslims want? The two States solution that President Bush called for in Annapolis and President Obama is calling for since he took office. This is thought to pull the rug from under the extremists and allow the moderates to engage in true reconciliation in the Middle East.

Traditionally, American Evangelists are known for their unwavering support to the State of Israel. The roots of Evangelical support for Israel lie in the long tradition of Christian thinking about the millennium.

As the year 1800 approached, John Nelson Darby (1800-82), a renegade Anglican priest from Ireland, popularized and systematized eschatological themes⁸ while simultaneously developing a new school of thought which has been called "futurist premillennialism."

Through Darby's influence, premillennial dispensationalism⁹ became a dominant method of biblical interpretation and influenced a generation of evangelical leaders, including Dwight L. Moody. Perhaps the most influential instrument of dispensational thinking was the Scofield Bible (1909) which included a commentary that interpreted prophetic texts according to a premillennial hermeneutic. Another early Darby disciple, William E. Blackstone, brought dispensationalism to millions of Americans through his best seller *Jesus Is Coming* (1882). Blackstone organized the first Zionist lobbying effort in the U.S. in 1891 when he enlisted J. P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, Charles B. Scribner and other financiers to underwrite a massive newspaper campaign requesting President Benjamin Harrison to support the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

Similar efforts were under way in England, led by the social reformer Lord Shaftesbury, who, like Blackstone, was so taken with Darby's eschatology that he translated it into a political agenda. These seeds of the Christian Zionist movement preceded Jewish Zionism by several years. Loni Shaftesbury is also credited with coining an early version of the slogan adopted by Jewish Zionist fathers Max Nordau and Theodor Herzl: "A land of no people for a people with no land." Both Lord Arthur Balfour, author of the famous 1917 Balfour Declaration, and Prime

⁸ Eschatology (lit. 'study of the last') is a part of theology and philosophy concerned with what are believed to be the final events in history, or the ultimate destiny of humanity, commonly referred to as the end of the world.

⁹ Beliefs about the end of the world come out of a complex system of biblical interpretation known as dispensationalism, which is a version of premillennialism (the belief that Christ will return before setting up his millennial kingdom). The system detected two distinct divine plans, one for an "earthly" people (Israel) and the other for a "heavenly" people (the church). The key to this entire prophetic plan is the refounding of Israel as a nation state in Palestine. http://www.nyu.edu/fas/projects/vcb/ChristianMedia/prophecy_premdisp.html

Minister David Lloyd George, the two most powerful men in British foreign policy at the close of World War I, were raised in dispensationalist churches and were publicly committed to the Zionist agenda for "biblical" and colonialist reasons.

The new generation of Evangelicals set as their goals to abandon a militant Bible stance. Instead, they would pursue dialogue, intellectualism, non-judgmentalism, and appeasement. They further called for an increased application of the Gospel to the sociological, political, and economic areas. Not all conservatives are pleased with the new direction. One author has termed it "the apostasy within Evangelicalism."

Who else needs reconciliation? Do Evangelists and Muslims need it? Yes they do. Especially when Evangelists are at times more Zionists than the Israelis. The Muslim/Christian tension in the States is in many ways related to the Middle East Conflict. "One thing I can tell you, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is somewhat unique in America in that it is a foreign policy issue, with vital foreign policy and national security implications, but it functions more like a domestic political issue. I was serving at the State Department in the lead up to Annapolis and it was incredibly clear that we did not have a sizable, organized constituency in support of US leadership *for* conflict resolution in the Holy Land.

All this points to the importance of building a constituency in Western democracies to advocate for international leadership to support peace in the Holy Land¹⁰."

Actually Todd Deatherage as a diplomat was very polite when he made this statement. He meant to say that there are forces in the U.S. that are opposed to peace in the Middle East. These forces are mainly Evangelist groups who understand that the second coming of Jesus is related to certain biblical prophecies that they understand in a particular dispensationalist perspective.

At this juncture, wrote Donald Wagner¹¹ on November 4, 1998 it appears that the hard-line Likud position has the backing of both houses of Congress, the major Jewish lobbies, and the Christian Right. President Clinton and those who advocate the Israeli Labor Party peace formula, or the Oslo Accords, have little leverage with Likud. Palestinian Christians and their supporters fear that the Christian Right's alliance with Likud may in the end serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy, heightening tensions in the region and leading to a new round of conflict in the Holy Land, which the Christian Zionists will readily interpret as "the final battle."

¹⁰ Remarks made in Jerusalem, January 2010, at a gathering of Catholic bishops by Todd Deatherage, Executive Director and Co-founder of the Kairos Project. Todd spent the past 16 years working in Washington DC, both on Capitol Hill, as chief of staff to a US Senator, and at the State Department.

¹¹ Donald E. Wagner teaches at North Park University in Chicago. He is the author of *Anxious for Armageddon* (1995) and *Dying in the Land of Promise: Palestine and Palestinian Christianity from Pentecost to 2000* (revised edition, 2003). This article appeared in *The Christian Century*, November 4, 1998, pp. 1020-1026. Copyright by The Christian Century Foundation; used by permission. Current articles and subscription information can be found at www.christiancentury.org. This article prepared for Religion Online by Ted & Winnie Brock.

So who are the main players in this human dilemma? They are the American Muslims in particular and Muslims in general, American Evangelist Christians and the Israelis. All of this points out toward a path for action. But before we talk about this path of action let us examine the field where all this action is taken place. In fact the players are all competing to influence the flow of a great river called the American public opinion. The flow of this river is affected by a major current called the conservative movement¹² and inside this movement you will find the Evangelical Christians. But again if you look closely you will find a struggle to claim Jesus. Each one of these groups is fighting to claim Jesus for themselves except the Palestinians. Some of them already follow Jesus and are wondering why are they ignored by their fellow Christians.

Some Arabs want to defend the Palestinian rights by building a lobby in Washington similar to APAC, others hold the view that what was lost through force can't be recovered except through force. As a peace maker I see the rights of the Palestinians attained when they stop being victims and become peace makers. Of course this sounds like a puzzle and it is until you listen to the teaching of the Prince of Peace who taught us how to have the ultimate victory against an aggressor. When faced with aggression, do not seek revenge and retaliation but seek forgiveness and reconciliation. When a person is faced with oppression, his reaction will either pull him down to the same level as the oppressor when he responds violently, or raise him above when he responds with love and forgiveness.

During the February 2009 National Prayer Breakfast, my wife Eman heard Sami Awad¹³ from Bethlehem talking about loving your enemy as a command from Jesus to all. Jesus, Sami said, did not ask us to consider loving our enemies or to think about it but he ordered us to love our enemies. I met Sami a few months afterwards and heard him speak about living and suffering under the Israeli occupation, yet he had to love his enemy. This is not someone living in Denver, CO thinking about how to sort intellectually the issue of loving your enemy, but rather someone just like Jesus¹⁴ living under occupation and suffering the wrath of the occupier yet having the ability to show love and compassion toward his oppressor.

How should the three main players of this triangle; Muslims, Christians and Jews, respond to this challenge they are facing at this time in history? One alternative is already being exhausted, the one that says maintain military superiority and subjugate the other. Israel is excelling in this role. But after sixty years of military superiority it was not able to achieve long sought after peace. The U.S. is following the same path, encouraged by forces that find it easier to accept the loss of the best of our American young men and women and a huge number of Muslims lives in a war of

¹² According to a June 2009 Gallup poll, 40% of Americans identify themselves as conservative, compared to 35% moderate and 21% liberal.

¹³ <http://www.holylandtrust.org/>, <http://samiawad.wordpress.com/>

¹⁴ Jesus lived under the occupation of the Romans

attrition and call it collateral damage, instead of following the teaching of the Prince of Peace that will lead to eternal success.

On October 13th 2007 in *A Common Word Between Us and You*¹⁵, 138 Muslim scholars, clerics and intellectuals unanimously came together for the first time since the days of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to declare that common ground exists between Christianity and Islam. The signatories to this message came from every denomination and school of thought in Islam. Every major Islamic country or region in the world was represented in this message, which was addressed to the leaders of all the world's churches, and indeed to all Christians everywhere.

A Common Word Between Us and You was first presented at a conference in September 2007. In the letter, the authors and signatories suggest that the most fundamental common ground between Islam and Christianity, and the best basis for future dialogue and understanding, is the love of God and the love of neighbor.

While the message was mainly directed to Christian leaders, it did not go unnoticed by Jewish scholars. Many took a very positive stand and applauded this reconciliation movement:

“we noted, said the Joint Communique of the Chief Rabbis of Israel and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the recent letter from Muslim scholars and religious leaders to the Christian Churches. The 'Common Word', though addressed to Christian Churches, also makes clear its respect for Hebrew scripture in citing directly from the Book of Deuteronomy and in acknowledging the inspiration that this provided for their understanding of the Quranic teachings on the unity and love of God and of neighbour. In promoting these values we commit ourselves and encourage all religious leaders to ensure that no materials are disseminated by our communities that work against this vision.”¹⁶.

In a letter to “A Common Word” Peter Ochs said: “The world, says Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, rests on three things: Hadin, HaEmet, V'Hashalom: on justice, truth, and peace (Pirke Avot, 1:18). God bless “A Common Word” and receive it as a powerful contribution to the peace, truth, and justice that uphold the world. This Word is worthy of the tradition of Aaron, and it enhances and extends the tradition of the sage Hillel, who taught that the “disciples of Aaron love peace and the pursuit of peace, love their fellow creatures and seek to draw them to the study of God’s word” (Pirke Avot, 1:12)¹⁷.

“All too often, religion is associated with violence and intolerance, and the compassionate ethos, which lies at the heart of every major faith, gets pushed to the sidelines. The assertion of the principle of love, which is so central to both the Muslim and the Christian traditions, should be paradigmatic of the religious response to the fearful realities of our time. We must reclaim our

¹⁵ <http://www.acommonword.com/>

¹⁶ <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2007/10/31/ACNS4332>

¹⁷ **Speaking the Truth (Dabru Emet):** A response by Peter Ochs, Edgar Bronfman Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Virginia and Co-founder of the Society for Scriptural Reasoning. <http://www.acommonword.com/index.php?page=jewish-responses&item=8>

traditions from the extremists. Unless the major faiths emphasize those teachings which insist upon the absolute holiness of the "other", they will fail the test of the 21st century. The coming together of Muslims and Christians, who have such an unhappy history of hostility, is a beacon of hope and an example to the whole of humanity¹⁸.

Love is our only hope. It is at the heart of the teachings of Jesus and the Qur'an. In Fussilat (41:34), God says, "Good and evil cannot be equal. [Prophet], repel evil with what is better¹⁹ and your enemy will become as close as an old and valued friend."

The Bible teaches: "You shall not avenge, but love your neighbor as yourself, I AM THE LORD" (Leviticus 19:18).

This isn't just about reconciling Muslim and Evangelicals; it's about the future of faith in the United States. It is about whether people of faith can live together based on the best their religions have to offer. When our country is divided and one half of its population is throwing rocks at the other half, reconciliation stops being a luxury and become an urgent need. Your neighbor becomes your enemy and it is more urgent to learn to love your enemy if you are to obey God. So this is about whether we want to let God down and fight in His name rather than love each other in His name. It is your choice. I have already made mine.

¹⁸ Karen Armstrong [29/10/2007] in her response to "The Common Word" initiative

¹⁹ What is better: kindness, forgiveness, good manners, honesty, transparency, integrity etc...