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Excerpts from this essay:

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## **Introduction**

The faith of "no-religious-affiliation" is the fastest growing segment of the American population.<sup>1</sup> Its power over our peoples' perceptions of spiritual truth undermines national security and sabotages peacekeeping among Muslims.

Here is how that undermining works. Civic structures cannot survive without underlying values that are based upon popular beliefs. Structure for government, justice, education, public works,

civil defense, marriage, and family must connect to underlying values, which in turn are based upon spiritual beliefs. If religious affiliation is deemed irrelevant, then all religions are viewed as basically the same. If all religions are viewed in that way, then different religions are not the source of relevant differences in values. Viewed from that perspective, civic structures become interchangeable between societies that have different majority religions. Therefore, peacekeeping and stability operations do not need to accommodate values that are rooted in religion; a wholly secular methodology will suffice to bring about the desired result. But if religions are different, and they lead to different moral convictions and values, then civic structures are not interchangeable between societies with different majority religions. In that case, it is absolutely essential for peacekeeping and stability operations to understand and accommodate religious differences; otherwise they are doomed to failure. This may well be the flaw in our strategy in Iraq over the past ten years that is leading to great concern today.

This essay will explore six areas of theology to demonstrate that significant differences exist between Islam and Christianity. It will also show how those differences impact spiritual and moral behaviors that ultimately lead to vastly different, and even philosophically opposed types of civic-structures. Those structures are not amenable to the efforts of Westerners to enact a plug-and-play methodology between societies that have such widely different religious heritages, convictions and values.

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### The First Major Difference: What is God?

The Christian concept of God is three persons in one essence, while the Muslim God is a single, autonomous unity. The English technical term for the three-in-one Christian God is "trinity."<sup>2</sup> The Arabic technical term for the solitary singularity of the divine essence is *tawhid*

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Muslim scholars claim that *tawhid* is the most important article of Muslim faith and that all other Muslim doctrine springs from it. *Tawhid* means not simply that there is only one God (one person who alone is the true God, not three-in-one); it also means

that nothing in creation can be associated with God, and God cannot associate himself with anything in creation. Allah is entirely separate from creation and isolated from the material world. The dominant position of

*tawhid*

in Muslim thinking generates a spiritual void among the common people filled by Sufism, folk Islam, and rampant witchcraft.

In chapter one of *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*, Francis Schaefer writes,

The Persons of the Trinity communicated with each other and loved each other before the creation of the world.... This is not only an answer to the acute philosophic need of unity in diversity, but of personal unity and diversity. The unity and diversity cannot exist before God or be behind God, because whatever is farthest back is God. But with the doctrine of the Trinity, the unity and diversity is God Himself — three Persons, yet one God.

Honor, glory, love, integrity, morality, and truth demand relationships. These qualities cannot exist within a singularity. However, they can exist in a trinity. Eternity for glory, honor and love is possible because the persons of the trinity have been glorifying, honoring, and loving each other for eternity. Eternity for integrity, morality and truth is possible because the persons of the trinity have been holding each other accountable for eternity.

But if God is a singularity, then no interpersonal relationships exist within God, and moral qualities that depend upon relationships cannot be eternal. In that view, honor, glory, love, integrity, morality, and truth must be created. Therefore, God's glory and honor are not eternally innate to him but depend upon his relationship with creation. If God has no innate honor, then he cannot potentially have innate shame. If God can potentially do nothing by himself to shame himself, then his behavior has no moral boundaries. He can lie, cheat, and steal without shame because God is only accountable to himself. If there are no relationships within God, then God has no accountability.

*Now, how do these two beliefs about God affect civic structures?*

In Christian society, nothing and no one can embarrass or dishonor God. His honor and glory remain intact no matter how people treat him. They are part of his eternal essence and depend

on nothing other than God himself. Nothing in creation can ever change or diminish God's honor and glory — even if God becomes a man and dies a humiliating death on a cross. Only God himself could even potentially shame himself, because the trinity has accountability within itself.

But in Muslim society, people must guard and protect God's glory. Nowhere on earth and at no time in history (even when theocratic governments had anti-blasphemy laws) do we find Christians violently protesting in the streets when people insult God, his prophet, or his holy books. People in Christian societies know that God does not need his honor protected. But Muslims around the world and throughout history are paranoid about the glory of God. "*Allah Akhbar*," the Arabic words for "God is Great," are constantly on their lips. Insulting the prophet receives a death penalty in many Muslim countries. Defiling a Qur'an instigates murderous protests around the world.

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In Christian societies, God's honor is certain and his integrity is an innate attribute. Christian doctrine holds that God's integrity constrains his behavior so that he cannot lie. If God were to lie, then he would shame himself. Therefore, in Christian societies, integrity is more important than honor, and society expects people to tell the truth even if it means embarrassing themselves, their families, their business, or their leaders.

But in Muslim societies the relative esteem for integrity and honor is reversed. According to Muslim doctrine and according to the Qur'an itself, "Allah is the best deceiver."<sup>5</sup> In Islam, God's honor depends upon how creation treats him, and integrity is not an innate part of his eternal essence.

Power, as an attribute, can be independent of relationships. Not surprisingly, therefore, power rather than integrity is the most vaunted attribute of the Muslim God. As a result, in Muslim societies, honor is more desirable than integrity, and people are expected to deceive in order to protect themselves, their families, their businesses, or their leaders from shame. Among Muslims, the notion that God would stoop to become a man and suffer at the hands of men is one of the most offensive blasphemies to comprehend.<sup>6</sup>

Because of *tawhid*, the Muslim God can only be dishonored by his creation, and he cannot dishonor himself. However, because of the trinity the Christian God can only be dishonored if He chooses to permit it, and He cannot be dishonored by creation. For example, no level of

disobedience or idolatry in mankind can ever bring shame upon God, but Jesus became *sin*

(2 Corinthians 5:21),

*a curse*

(Galatians 3:13),

*forsaken*

(Mark 15:35), and

*shame*

(Hebrews 12:2) for us. As a result, Christian societies do not worry about protecting God's honor and care more about truth than honor, but Muslim societies are paranoid about God's honor and care more about honor than truth.

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## **The Second Major Difference: What is man?**

*Tawhid* has implications for the nature of man as well as the nature of God. It means not only that there is one God, but also that nothing in creation can be associated with God and that God cannot associate himself with anything in creation. It means that the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ is metaphysically impossible. It also means that there can be no image of God in human beings.

Since the Christian God is a trinity with eternally relational moral attributes like integrity and love, when God bestows those attributes upon part of His creation, then that part of creation becomes "made in the image of God." But the Muslim God, as a singularity without eternal relational attributes, cannot bestow moral attributes upon any creatures as any portion of his own nature.

*How does belief about man affect civic structures?*

In Christian anthropology, the moral attributes of human beings participate in the infinite and eternal qualities of God. This makes each human life equally sacred and valuable with each

other human life. God is infinite, so the likeness of God in mankind is also infinite. Compared to the infinity of God's likeness in mankind, other differences between people (like gender, race, status, intelligence, disability, or religious affiliation) disappear into relative insignificance. Compared to infinity, anything else that is not also infinite resolves to zero. Therefore, before God all people are not only equal, but also significant because they participate in infinity. If human beings are "made in the image of God," then laws against oppression based on race, or persecution based on religion, or discrimination based on disability, or disadvantage based on gender, are rooted in the eternal nature of God.

But in the Muslim theology of mankind, nothing in man can be anything like God. This means that mankind's worth and moral attributes are part of creation and have no part in God or in eternity. Therefore, anti-discrimination laws in Muslim societies cannot be rooted in values associated with God's nature, but must be rooted in values associated with creation. No part of human essence is either divinely sacred or joined to infinity in a way that by comparison eclipses physical and social differences. Islam does teach that God has created human beings with higher dignity than the rest of creation (Qur'an 17:70). However, in Islam, differences in gender and religious affiliation matter. In most versions of Muslim law, a man's testimony has more weight than a woman's.<sup>7</sup> Even in its most liberal interpretations, Muslim law has different citizenship categories for Muslims and non-Muslims.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, in Muslim law, only non-Muslims have the freedom to change their religion. Non-Muslims may convert to any faith they choose, but Muslims are not free to leave Islam.<sup>9</sup>

Because of *tawhid*, in Islam, human dignity for Muslims flows from the specific, concrete ways that people are created or from the way that people behave rather than from any infinite likeness of God in mankind. As a result, human dignity varies from person to person depending upon physical characteristics, behaviors, and social affiliations. Because of the trinity, in Christian thought human dignity for each person flows from his infinite likeness to God rather than from specific varieties of created characteristics or chosen behaviors. As a result, human dignity is the same among all people regardless of their differences or affiliations. Muslims, Buddhists, and Christians are all worth the same as human beings created in the image of God. Gender, race, and interfaith relations are a challenge in all societies, but gender, race, and religious discrimination pose much greater problems in societies with Muslim majorities such as Egypt than in societies with Christian majorities, all because of different beliefs about the image of God in man.

### **The Third Major Difference: How does man relate to nature?**

The image of God in man makes people different from everything else that God created, and it results in a divine expectation for people to be stewards of the rest of creation. In the Christian Scriptures it is written that on the sixth day of creation God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (Genesis 1:26).

Furthermore, in the Christian gospels it is written that Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, and calmed the storm (Acts 2:22). For Christians, Jesus is the behavior (way), character (truth), and will (life) of God incarnated into human flesh (John 14:6). Therefore, Jesus demonstrates the will of God for mankind (John 20:21). As a result, Christians believe that fighting against sickness, death, and natural disasters is fighting against evil and is according to the will of God.

#### *How does belief about nature affect civic structures?*

Western civilization has a rich heritage of struggling to improve and prolong human life with medical care, emergency services, community development, and disaster relief. However, most of the world, and particularly most of the Muslim world, does not share the Christian passion for excellence and constant improvement in medical care, emergency services, community development, and disaster relief. A natural disaster anywhere in the Muslim world almost always kills far more people than an equivalent disaster somewhere in the Western world.

When I was living among Muslims in Indonesia, I saved a man from drowning by performing mouth-to-mouth artificial respiration on him. The lifeguards at the pool had been performing the long discredited back-pressure-arm-lift method of resuscitation. I got him breathing again but not back to full consciousness, so he had to be taken to the hospital where the doctors and nurses thought that I had sucked the water out of his lungs in order to revive him. An article in the paper the next day said that fortunately for the young man a foreigner happened to be there to give him assisted breathing while removing the water that he had swallowed.<sup>10</sup>

While serving among embedded military advisors in Iraq, I observed that it was very difficult for American advisors to persuade Iraqi soldiers and military leaders to wear protective equipment, like eye protection, body armor, and helmets during security operations. The Iraqi response was always, "*Insyallah*." They seemed to be saying that whether they lived or died was God's will, so they did not need to bother with wearing protective equipment. Of course they will take cover behind walls or sandbags from direct fire, but bullets that are flying differ from those that might never fly. They perceive a difference between a bullet that *is* flying and one that only *might* fly. Potential hazards are left in God's hands, but when active combat ensues a Muslim soldier seeks cover and concealment.

Wearing protective equipment or trying to resuscitate a drowned man reveals a lack of spirituality and a lack of submission to God's will. From the Muslim perspective, every phenomenon in the world, other than man, is administered totally by God-made laws. All natural events obey God and submit to his will. They are said to be in the "State of Islam."<sup>11</sup> That is very different than the Christian view. The apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Romans that all of creation is in bondage to decay and waits patiently for restoration through the ones who are becoming children of God (Romans 8:20-22).

The word "Islam" comes from the Arabic root word "*Salema*" which means peace, purity, submission and obedience. At its essence, Islam is submission to the will of God and obedience to His law.<sup>12</sup> If nature is in a state of submission to the will of God, then that means that sickness, death, and natural disasters are according to his will. According to Muslim thinking, only human beings have the capacity to rebel against the will of God. Mankind is invited to submit to the will of God and to obey God's law through the religion of Islam. Islam teaches that submission to the good will of God, together with obedience to his beneficial law, is the best safeguard for man's peace and harmony.

At its logical conclusion, this thinking means that resisting the forces of nature that manifest themselves in sickness, death, and natural disaster is equivalent to resisting the will of God. In the Christian view, nature itself has been disturbed by evil, and one of God's purposes for humanity is not only to struggle against evil in oneself, but also to struggle against evil in nature. In the Muslim view, however, God completely controls all of nature.

Islam does call upon humanity to struggle. The word for struggle is *jihad*.<sup>13</sup> Muslims are called to *jihad* against everything that sets itself up against the will and law of God.  
*Jihad*

can be an internal personal struggle against sin, and it can be an external communal defense of Islam. But Muslims are not called to

*jihad*

against death, sickness, and natural disasters the way that Christians are.

<sup>14</sup>

Nature, for the Muslim, is still under the control and will of God.

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### **The Fourth Major Difference: How do people get to heaven?**

In both Christianity and Islam, salvation depends upon an exclusive faith-based identity. Muslims believe that forgiveness comes exclusively through Islam,<sup>15</sup> and Christians believe that forgiveness comes exclusively through Jesus (John 14:6). But the similarity stops there.

Muslims believe an angel on the right shoulder records good deeds, and angel on the left shoulder records bad deeds. Going to heaven instead of hell depends upon being a Muslim and upon God's mercy in evaluating one's good and bad deeds.<sup>16</sup>

In Christianity, people cannot mitigate their own sins with words and deeds. Only God can mitigate sin. Theologians call the process "atonement."<sup>17</sup> It happens through the historical sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. God forgives sins, people repent, and a broken relationship gets restored.

Repentance for Christians involves confessing and taking responsibility for sins, and then turning away from sin through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. Christians call this "salvation by grace through faith, not of works" (see Ephesians 2:8-9). It means salvation is not affected by good deeds but is a free gift to all who reconcile with God through a faith allegiance to the identity and work of Jesus Christ. Because forgiveness starts with God and is guaranteed, Christians have assurance that God won't punish them when they confess and repent of their sins (1 John 1:9). From a relational point of view, forgiveness is not yet a relationship. Forgiveness merely forgoes the right to demand justice, punishment, or restitution. Forgiveness

and repentance are both essential to a restored relationship.

*How does belief about salvation affect civic structures?*

The concept that people relate to one another based upon the way that they relate to God is part of Christian tradition. Jesus taught his followers that they were to forgive one another just as graciously as their heavenly Father had forgiven them (Matthew 6:12-15). In societies that follow the pattern for reconciliation set by God in Jesus Christ, people expect to be forgiven when they repent – that is when they take responsibility and promise to change. They expect mitigated consequences when they sincerely apologize.

In my experience among Muslims, people in Muslim societies rarely apologize as an initial step towards reconciliation. Rather, the offender will usually work on restitution and try to reestablish relationship first. If forgiveness from God is affected by merit, then forgiveness from one's neighbor will be too. The more responsibility one accepts for an offense, then the higher the price of restitution. Muslims will often ask for forgiveness without admitting responsibility. Muslims who want to be in relationship will often mutually blame uncontrollable circumstances, someone else, or even God as a way to reduce the price for restoring the balance of good and bad deeds between them.

Apologizing for accidentally burning Qur'ans<sup>18</sup> or for the existence of videos and cartoons that insult Muhammad<sup>19</sup> is a mistake. So is apologizing for past offenses like the Crusades or Colonialism.<sup>20</sup>

It's like a doctor apologizing for accidentally sewing his scissors into a patient after removing an appendix. It just increases liability and the cost of settlement. Islam is a legal system as well as a religion. Forgiveness is earned. It may or may not follow restitution. Apologizing admits responsibility, so the more abject the apology, then the greater the admission of responsibility, and the greater the admission of responsibility, then the costlier the settlement.

Also, among Muslims, potential for reconciliation is higher for insiders than for outsiders. In the Christian theology of salvation, people reconcile with God first, and then they become "true" Christians. In Muslim salvation, people become "true" Muslims first, and then they can be reconciled with God. The Christian God treats everyone the same. He offers forgiveness to everyone who will receive it, whether Christian or non-Christian. The Muslim God treats Muslims and non-Muslims differently. Like their God, Muslims categorize insiders and outsiders

differently.

Actually, Muslims often ask each other for forgiveness. In fact, requesting forgiveness from friends and relatives is an important part of Muslim holiday celebrations.<sup>21</sup> In my experience of Muslim cultures, however, personal maturity and good character don't require admitting faults or taking personal responsibility for mistakes. Offenses are often forgiven without anyone ever admitting guilt. It's like a legal settlement out of court, or no-fault insurance where money changes hands but no one admits that they were wrong.

From a Muslim perspective, it is the Christian pattern for reconciliation that miscarries justice. It requires that the offended party be ready and willing to forgive once a sincere apology is offered. It means people don't actually need to do anything in order to be forgiven. It means that even the wickedest person can reconcile with God and have absolute certainty of eternal salvation. It puts the offender rather than the offended in control. It turns justice and divine sovereignty upside down.

Christians believe that salvation to eternal life flows from a restored relationship with God through repentance and forgiveness, and that makes one a Christian. Muslims believe salvation into paradise happens only for Muslims as God mercifully considers their good and bad deeds. In interpersonal relationships, Christians are expected to grant forgiveness for sincere apologies while Muslims grant forgiveness when it is earned. These differences profoundly influence human relationships, resulting in different behaviors and social structures.

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### **The Fifth Major Difference: What is the ideal future?**

Muslims believe that Muhammad established an ideal society under Muslim law when he ran the government in Medina and eventually in Mecca. Most Muslims desire to return to that ideal by implementing Muslim law as closely as possible to the way that Muhammad would apply it under conditions that exist today.<sup>22</sup>

Christians, on the other hand believe that, since the rebellion of mankind against God by Adam and Eve in the long-gone Garden of Eden, ideal civilization is impossible unless God establishes it himself. Christians believe Jesus is God, and they believe that Jesus will return to earth from heaven some day. Therefore, Christians believe that God will establish the ideal society on earth through Jesus. Christian waiting for Jesus is patient but not idle. Christians believe that while Jesus is gone they should do their best to follow Jesus' example, but they do not believe it is possible to have an ideal society without Jesus.

*How does belief about a future ideal government affect civic structures?*

These different visions for the ideal future lead to different ways that Christians and Muslims engage in politics. Christians try to influence government and politics, but they no longer try to establish a theocratic government as the Byzantine emperors attempted from the fourth to the eleventh centuries. Jesus taught that his dominion was spiritual and non-material. He told the Roman governor who ordered his crucifixion that if his kingdom had been of this world his followers would have been fighting for him (John 18:36). He told the Jewish leaders who wanted to rebel against Rome to pay their Roman taxes. He said give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's (Matthew 22:17-21). This teaching from Jesus establishes the concept in Christian theology for of a separation of powers between church and state.<sup>23</sup>

Muslim theology has no such church-state separation paradigm. The Muslim ideal strives for uniting political and religious power rather than separating those powers.

Christianity grew and thrived for over three centuries as a persecuted religion in both Roman and Persian empires. But, as Bernard Lewis writes in his book, *What Went Wrong* (published by Oxford University Press in 2002):

Muhammad achieved victory and triumph in his own lifetime. He conquered his promised land, and created his own state, of which he himself was supreme sovereign. As such, he promulgated laws, dispensed justice, levied taxes, raised armies, made war, and made peace. In a word, he ruled, and the story of his decisions and actions as ruler is sanctified in Muslim scripture and amplified in Muslim tradition. (p. 101)

Lewis also notes:

The idea that any group or persons, any kind of activities, any part of human life is in any sense outside the scope of religious law and jurisdiction is alien to Muslim thought. There is, for example, no distinction between canon law and civil law, between the law of the church and the law of the state, crucial in Christian history. There is only a single law, shari'a, accepted by Muslims as of divine origin and regulating all aspects of human life: civil, commercial, criminal, constitutional, as well as matters more specifically concerned with religion in the limited, Christian sense of that word. (p. 100)

Both Christianity and Islam are idealistic and triumphalistic; however, Christians believe that only Jesus can establish an ideal society, while Muslims strive for an ideal civilization on the earth through Muslim government and law. The results of these theological differences play out everywhere on the world stage. Politicians and diplomats ignore or minimize these differences to their peril.

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### **The Sixth Major Difference: What is divine revelation?**

Both Christianity and Islam believe in angels and prophets and in a God who communicates through Holy Scriptures, but their prophets and scriptures are functionally opposite to each other.

In Muslim theology, the Qur'an is a verbatim incarnation of God's word. It is an extension of divine essence and a part of eternity.<sup>24</sup> In Christian theology, Jesus fulfills that role. While to most Christians the original manuscripts of the Bible were divinely inspired and thus without error, they do not believe it to be an extension of God's essence. The Bible quotes God, but it is not word for word, in every word, a direct quote from the mouth of God.

Christians believe that Jesus is divine (John 10:30-33), so that every word of Jesus is a word straight from the mouth of God. That is how Muslims view the Qur'an. Christians believe that the Bible is divinely provided and protected in order to show us Jesus (John 5:39). Muslims believe that about Muhammad. They believe Muhammad was divinely provided and protected in order to give us the Qur'an.<sup>25</sup>

*How does belief about revelation affect civic structures?*

As a result, in Muslim theology, burning a Qur'an would be like crucifying Christ or desecrating the Eucharist. Burning a Qur'an is exponentially more explosive than burning a Bible. In Indonesia, I saw a man die in a hospital from a beating after he'd been arrested for allegedly burning some verses of the Qur'an that were supposedly mixed in with some magic charms that he was destroying. In Christian theology, burning the Bible is like burning a valuable and special book, but it is nothing to Christians like burning a Qur'an is to Muslims. Functionally, for their respective groups, the Bible and the Qur'an are different, so the responses of the respective groups are different as well.

Functionally, the Muslim equivalent to the Christian Bible is the prophet Muhammad as he is known through the *hadith* and *sunnah*.<sup>26</sup> The *hadith* are written records of the sayings and actions of Muhammad. The *sunnah* is the "way" of Muhammad that the *hadith*

reveals. Without knowing the "way" of Muhammad, there can be no authoritative application of the Qur'an. Similarly, without the Bible, there can be no authoritative knowledge of Christ.

Muslims do not study the Qur'an devotionally the way that Christians study the Bible. Rather, what Muslims study devotionally is the life of Muhammad. Muslims find life lessons in the way that Muhammad talked, ate, drank, slept, washed, and even had sex. Muhammad for Muslims is devotionally equivalent to the Bible for Christians. Functional equivalence between Christianity and Islam is between book and person and not from book to book or person to person.

Muslim clerics are legal scholars as well as theological ones. Muslim people leave interpreting the Qur'an to trained clerics the way that Americans leave interpreting the Constitution to trained lawyers. Muslims often memorize large portions of the Qur'an. But memorizing the Qur'an does not give one authority to interpret and apply it any more than memorizing the U.S. Constitution gives one credentials for practicing Constitutional Law.

For Christians, their political ruler is Jesus. Though he rules a heavenly rather than an earthly kingdom, he still rules. Christians call Jesus their Lord as well as their Savior. The Muslim equivalent to Jesus is the Qur'an. Muslims are devoted to the Qur'an the way that Christians are devoted to Jesus, and they treat it legally the way that Americans treat the U.S. Constitution. The Qur'an is a Muslim's highest sovereign in the same way that Jesus is a Christian's highest sovereign.

Both Christianity and Islam have prophets and scriptures; however, those prophets and scriptures don't correlate with one another. Christians revere the man Jesus as the essence of God, whom they receive and understand through the Bible. Muslims revere the Qur'an as an essence of God, which they receive and understand through their prophet Muhammad. Functionally Muhammad correlates to the Bible and the Qur'an correlates to Jesus. Correlating Jesus with Muhammad and the Bible with the Qur'an is a mistake for Muslims trying to understand Christianity and for Christians trying to understand Islam.

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### Conclusion

Many more comparisons beyond these on God, man, salvation, nature, the future, and revelation could be made. Islam and Christianity are very different from each other. We must not embrace the logical consequence of having no religious affiliation, which is that all religions are essentially the same. Western civic structures are founded in a Judeo-Christian religious heritage. Conversely, Middle Eastern and Central Asian civic structures are founded in a Muslim heritage. Structures for government, justice, education, public works, civil defense, marriage, and family are connected to the corresponding, underlying beliefs and values of these two very different religious systems.

If all religions are basically the same, then civic structures would be interchangeable between societies regardless of different religious heritages. But Islam and Christianity are not the same. Their belief and values systems are different, and those differences result in vastly different behaviors and different civic structures. The cultural momentum in America towards denying the

relevance of religion is causing military leaders and diplomats to treat democratic civic structures as if they are plug-and-play components between different societies. But they are not, and blindness to this reality is sabotaging efforts to facilitate democratic reform in the Muslim world.

Blindness to these spiritual realities not only undermines world peace, but it threatens religious freedom in America as well. If Christianity and Islam are essentially the same, then their fundamentalists are also the same. A potential challenge to religious freedom in America will likely come from people with no religious affiliation. These people may well begin to treat Evangelicals as if they were the same threat to civic order as their fundamentalist counterparts in Islam.

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### Endnotes

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