

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH, JEWS AND BRITISH MULTICULTURALISM

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“We celebrate the diversity in our country, we get strength from the cultures and races that go to make up Britain today.” Those words of Prime Minister Tony Blair, uttered on October 2, 2001, soon after 9/11, find a broad echo in the British public. For multiculturalism in Britain remains generally popular. A Mori poll for the BBC in August 2005, following the London July bombings, showed that, although 32% of the population thought that multiculturalism “threatens the British way of life”, 62% believed that “multiculturalism makes Britain a better place to live.”¹ Significantly, there was no marked upsurge of racial intolerance following either 9/11 or the London bombings. Ben Macintyre, writing in *The Times* on September 8th, 2006, noted “just how restrained the public reaction has been. There have been no calls for mass round-ups, no hate campaigns against Muslims.” British multiculturalism is solidly founded on commitment to equal respect and an interpretation of equality as meaning that non-assimilation is acceptable.² It has great strengths. Its heterogeneity is remarkable: children in London schools speak over three hundred languages; in London alone there are Muslims from over fifty ethnic backgrounds.³ Britain’s official encouragement of plurality without assimilation permits hybrid and composite identities rare in France or Germany.

Yet since summer 2001, following riots by disaffected young Muslim men in northern cities, in which unemployment of South Asian young men can be up to 40%, commentators have increasingly questioned the notion of multiculturalism. Arun Kundnani, a left-wing anti-racist, had long criticised multiculturalism for stifling ethnic radicalism and causing cultural stagnation, especially among Asian communities; he argued that the Cantle Report on the northern riots, *Community Cohesion*⁴ – of which he was highly critical – implied “the death of multiculturalism”, which he welcomed as a “good thing for anti-racists.”⁵ From a different political perspective, Trevor Phillips, Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, has argued that multiculturalism is out of date and no longer useful; worse, it encourages “separateness” between communities and facilitates extremist indoctrination of young Muslims. There was an urgent need to “assert a core of Britishness” across society. (*The Times*, April 3, 2004). Following last year’s November riots in France, Phillips stated in an interview in *Le Monde* (November 12, 2005) that Britain had gone too far in allowing immigrants to express the “historic identities of ethnic minorities.” By encouraging ethnic minorities to live in their own communities in the name of multiculturalism, Britain was slowly evolving into a segregationist society.⁶

Following the London bombings by British-born Islamists on July 7, 2005, the broadcaster and writer Kenan Malik wrote that multiculturalism as a political ideology has helped to create a socially fragmented, “tribal Britain with no political or moral centre....Britishness had come to be defined simply as a toleration of difference.” He argued that the politics of identity, asserted partly through a sense of

victimhood, had created a “siege mentality that makes Muslim communities more inward-looking and more open to religious extremism.”⁷ In August 2005 the Shadow Home Secretary, David Davis, urged the government to scrap its “outdated” policy of multiculturalism, which allowed “people of different cultures to settle without expecting them to integrate into society....Often the authorities have seemed more concerned with encouraging distinctive identities than with promoting common cultural values of nationhood.”⁸ Most recently, in August 2006, an Asian online magazine, CultivAsian.org and the 1990 Trust held a one-day conference in London entitled ‘An epitaph to British multiculturalism?’.

Other commentators have argued that multicultural policies, particularly the failure to promote formal learning of English, prevent integration and cause inter-ethnic tensions and ghettoization into separate enclaves with high unemployment and social alienation. (75% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi families are classified as living in poverty, while 35% of Muslim children live in ‘workless’ homes (both parents unemployed).⁹ Non-intervention in culturally sensitive issues or autonomous community institutions can lead to human rights abuses. Muslim women, in particular, are rendered vulnerable to forced marriages and ‘honour killings’, without recourse to due legal protection. In March 2006 the Muslim Parliament of Great Britain itself requested that the government should regulate the 700 or more unregulated madrassas for up to 100,000 Muslim children in Britain, in order to avoid possible physical or sexual abuse.

Professor Werner Menski has highlighted further issues. While acknowledging the “systematic violation of non-white people’s basic rights and clear evidence of various forms of unredressed and systematic discrimination”, he notes that many recent immigrants have established effective exclusive networks providing “multiple strategies of self-help and loyalty.” These can provide informal access to upward social mobility. Such networks tend not to exist among the white working-class poor, who find themselves marginalized and alienated.¹⁰

Melanie Phillips claims in her new book, *Londonistan: How Britain is creating a terror state within* that the culture of equality for all minorities causes “the radical deconstruction” of “the indigenous British culture”, including its religion: “the ‘diversity’ agenda is... a cover for an attack on Christianity.”¹¹ She argues that the ‘multicultural ideology of victimhood’ – especially Muslim victimhood, “has created a state of paralysis across British institutions”,¹² including the Anglican Church. Consequences include: appeasement of terrorism; the inversion of aggressors into victims and vice versa; the gradual Islamization of Britain; and “the increasing marginalisation of British Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and other minorities caught in a pincer movement between radical Islamists...and a craven establishment that is pandering to Islamist extremism.”¹³

Moreover, British Jews are affected by what Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks described on January 1, 2006, as a ‘global tsunami’ of antisemitism.¹⁴ Figures for anti-Semitic attacks in 2004 and 2005 were at an all-time high; for the first time, violent

attacks on British Jews outnumbered attacks on Jewish property.¹⁵ Dr. Patrick Sookhdeo, an Anglican cleric and commentator on Islam, notes that “anti-Jewish hate propaganda has permeated all levels of Muslim society and has given rise to a new form of Muslim anti-Semitism.” During 2002-3 in the UK, France and Denmark “the perpetrators of anti-Semitism were increasingly Muslims and Palestinian sympathisers.”¹⁶ One symptom of Muslim antisemitism is arguably the refusal of Muslim leaders to participate in national events marking Holocaust Memorial Day.

There is, however, a new, wider, ideologically based antisemitism, which was termed Judeophobia in 2003 by Barry Kosmin and Paul Iqanski. It fosters “vilification against Israel as a state” and “a manifest hostility towards Jews.” Twinned with passionate anti-Americanism, British Judeophobia creates a “campaign of vilification” resulting in “the demonization of Israel, and Jews by association, wherever they may be.”¹⁷ Judeophobia resides among “certain left-liberal elites in the media, churches, universities, and trades unions” and provides “a coalition of interest in Britain for the new left, the far right, radical Islamists, and human rights campaigners and activists.”¹⁸

Boycotts of Israel are one direct result. In 2002 the Association of University Teachers called for a boycott of Israeli academics and in 2005 advocated a boycott of Israeli universities. This proposal was rescinded within a month due to international protest but was taken up and intensified by the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, which in May 2006 called for a policy of boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel.¹⁹ On a wider front, some branches of Marks & Spencers have been picketed, and there have been recent short-lived boycotts of Israeli musicians and architects by British counterparts. Jewish societies have been banned from some university campuses.

The Anglican Church has lent its moral weight to this anti-Israel stance. In September 2004 its Anglican Peace and Justice Network, representing the 77 million member Anglican Communion, toured the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem for eight days, meeting Yasser Arafat, Palestinian Church representatives and Israeli Arabs, but no Israeli government officials. Their report, entitled *Give Sight to the Blind and Freedom to the Captives*, was one-sided. It exclusively condemned Israel and its “draconian conditions” imposed on Palestinians, and attributed violence solely to the Occupation. The report recommended immediate dismantling of the “separation wall”, withdrawal of the Israeli army to pre-1967 borders, unconditional recognition of a sovereign state of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital and the right of return for Palestinian refugees.²⁰

This report and its recommendations were officially adopted in June 2005 by the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), which in turn recommended to Anglican provinces worldwide a policy of disinvestment from companies “supporting the occupation” of Palestinian lands.²¹ On February 6, 2006, the Anglican General Synod backed overwhelmingly a call from the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East to disinvest from “companies profiting from the illegal occupation” of

Palestinian territories.²² Lord Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury, had described the previous disinvestment plea by the ACC in September 2005 as “disastrous”, “another knife in the back” for already traumatised Israelis.²³ Following the Synod’s decision, Lord Carey declared that he was “ashamed to be an Anglican.”²⁴ The Church’s Ethical Investment Advisory Group later rejected the Synod’s decision.²⁵ Yet it remained hugely symbolic, being supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, and coming soon after the election of Hamas in January 2006. The Chief Rabbi described the synod action as “ill-judged” and argued that Israel, facing threats from Iran and Hamas, needed “support, not vilification”; he foresaw “the most adverse repercussions on...Jewish-Christian relations in Britain and argued that the policy would immediately “reduce the Church’s ability to act as a force for peace between Israel and the Palestinians.”²⁶ The Synod’s controversial call for disinvestment reflected recent parallel moves in the World Council of Churches and in the Presbyterian Church and United Church of Christ in the USA. But it also reflects the prolonged campaign against Jewish and Christian Zionism by key Anglican clergy, including Bishop Kenneth Cragg and Canon Colin Chapman, whose anti-Zionist books from the 1980s remain influential.²⁷

Palestinian liberation theology is even more influential. Canon Naim Ateek of St. George’s Anglican Cathedral, Jerusalem, formulated this theology in 1989 during the first intifada. Ateek’s Palestinian theology is founded on vilification of Israel as “intransigent” and “arrogant.” In Israel, “the centuries-old hatred of some Jews for Gentiles has been incarnated in their hatred of the Arabs, particularly the Palestinians.”²⁸ In 1992, Ateek attacked Zionism, both Jewish and Christian, as embodying “false theology, false reading of the Bible, and a false concept of God.”²⁹ Ateek has recently co-authored a strong attack on Christian Zionism. He condemns neither Palestinian terrorism nor violence against Christians. He does, however, condemn Christian Zionism as a “Christian heresy” and Christian supporters of Israel for their “false teachings”, their “violent...very dangerous theology” which, he claims without evidence, “promotes the massacre of millions of people.”³⁰

During the first *intifada*, Canon Ateek founded the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem. Sabeel renews the teachings of contempt for Jews and Judaism which Vatican II had rejected and invokes traditional anti-Jewish themes.³¹ Ateek’s Sabeel Easter message in 2001 stated that: “Jesus is the powerless Palestinian, humiliated at a checkpoint...Jesus is on the cross again with thousands of crucified Palestinians around him...It only takes people of insight to see the hundreds of thousands of crosses throughout the land, Palestinian men, women and children being crucified...Palestine has become one huge Golgotha. The Israeli crucifixion system is operating daily. Palestine has become the place of the skull.”³²

Sabeel vigorously promotes an extreme anti-Israel agenda among Protestant churches in North America and Israel. It supports the divestment campaign and attacks Christian Zionists, who number many millions worldwide. It drew 500 international participants in 2004 to its five-day conference against Christian

Zionism. Its influence is especially marked in Britain, where its anti-Israel stance is becoming normative within the Anglican Church. Sabeel's hostility to Israel parallels that of the Anglican Living Stones Network and of Christian Aid, which is "driven by a radical anti-Israel ideology", focussing "primarily on political and ideological denunciations of Israel, including active promotion of 'apartheid' rhetoric and justification of terrorism."³³ It recently issued a Christmas poster highlighting the injuries of a young Palestinian girl under the headline "A Child in Bethlehem".³⁴ Key supporters of Sabeel include Bishop Riah of Jerusalem, the Right Revd. John Gladwin, Bishop of Chelmsford and Chair of the Board of Trustees of Christian Aid, and Afif Safieh, the PLO representative in London.

Sabeel's most prolific supporter is Rev. Stephen Sizer, whose writings and lectures are highly influential. His book, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* (InterVarsity Press, Leicester 2004) is endorsed by many leading British and American bishops, theologians and clergy, who share his views. In praising Sizer's book, for example, Prebendary Dick Lucas attacks the "dubious theology and destructive consequences of Christian Zionism" and questions the validity of Jewish nationhood: "God's continuing love for the Jewish people must not be confused with aspirations for an earthly kingdom which Jesus has already repudiated."³⁵

It is worth briefly examining Sizer's ideology, on account of its influence and because it typifies a major strand of Christian hostility to Israel. Sizer utterly opposes Christian support for "Rabbinic Judaism" and for Israel. He tends to cite the most radical or populist strands of Christian Zionism, ignoring moderate or liberal writers and distinguished post-Holocaust theologians who championed Christian support for Jewish restoration to Israel, such as David Torrance, Franklin Littell, Roy Eckardt, and Paul van Buren.³⁶ Nor does he cite distinguished Anglican leaders such as the former Archbishops of Canterbury, Lord Coggan and Lord Runcie, and the newly retired Bishop of Oxford, Richard Harries, all of whom, while not Zionist, did have high regard for Judaism. Like other anti-Zionists, he ignores the devastating consequences of both Christian and Arab anti-Semitism, and decontextualizes Israel politically.

Sizer's own theological position is, in essence, pre-Vatican II, and seems unaffected by mainstream post-Holocaust Christian theology. While he does not explicitly affirm 'replacement' theology ("the idea that the spiritual church, as the 'new Israel' has replaced physical Israel within God's purposes"), nevertheless his theology of 'covenantalism' is indeed essentially anti-Judaic replacement theology: "Covenantalism affirms that the church is Israel renewed and restored in Christ but now enlarged to embrace people of all nations". Sizer denies any validity to Judaism, quoting the leading Anglican evangelical, Rev. Dr. John Stott: "to suggest... that the Jewish people continue to have a special relationship with God, apart from faith in Jesus... is, in the words of John Stott, 'biblically anathema'."³⁷ Sizer takes Paul's rhetorical equation of "its Christ-renouncing Jerusalem with Hagar and her slave children" (Galatians 4) to argue that "Paul nullifies any future exclusive Jewish claim

to be the authentic children of Abraham, with all its covenantal privileges, apart from through faith in Jesus Christ.”³⁸ He attacks Christian Zionists for identifying with “the shadows of the old covenant” (ie. Judaism), and insists on exclusive adherence to “the reality of the new covenant [Christianity].”³⁹ This narrow theology, which interprets Paul in an anti-Judaic way not shared by many major commentators, invalidates both Judaism and any Jewish biblical claim to the land: “In the Christological logic of Paul, Jerusalem as much as the land, has now been superseded. They have been made irrelevant in God’s redemptive purposes.”⁴⁰

In his entire book, Sizer makes not one mention of Palestinian terrorism, nor of the military threats faced by Israel. He is strongly antagonistic to Israel on both theological, political and moral grounds, portraying it as unique aggressor. This leads him to caricature Christian Zionism grotesquely as “providing a theological endorsement for racial segregation, apartheid and war”; its consequences are “inherently and pathologically destructive” and include “tacit acceptance of the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.”⁴¹ In his absolute rejection of Christian support for Israel, he concurs with John Stott, who argues: “I myself believe that Zionism, both political and Christian, is incompatible with biblical faith.”⁴²

This is strong stuff. Indeed, such intense anti-Zionism and anti-Judaism can even meld into antisemitism, as Canon Andrew White, the Archbishop of Canterbury’s former envoy to the Middle East, noted in 2003. White stated that anti-Zionist attitudes in the church “go beyond legitimate criticism of Israel into hatred of the Jews”, and argued that it was Palestinian Christian revisionism which had provoked a revival of anti-Judaic replacement theology.⁴³

Anglican anti-Zionism is both highly significant and hugely influential. The Anglican Church traditionally tolerates dissent and embraces a breadth of theology. To my knowledge, only Christian support for the Jewish state – and for rabbinic Judaism – has been anathematised in this way by influential clergy. There are several contributory causes. Within parts of the Anglican Church, replacement theology, teaching that Christians are the true inheritors of God’s promises to and covenant with the Jews, still thrives. Indeed, Bishop Riah of Jerusalem said of Palestinian Arab Christians in December 2001: “We are the true Israel...no-one can deny me the right to inherit the promises, and after all the promises were first given to Abraham and Abraham is never spoken of in the Bible as a Jew...He is the father of the faithful”.⁴⁴ In April 2006 he announced on Israel Radio that Christians have replaced Jews in God’s economy of salvation. God’s gift of the Law to Moses at Sinai was “conditional.”⁴⁵ Unlike Roman Catholicism, the Anglican Church has never renounced its mission targeted at Jews; the Church’s Ministry among the Jews (CMJ) still seeks exclusively to convert Jews, while Jews for Jesus operated for a time from All Souls’, Langham Place, John Stott’s own church.

The established Church, haunted by post-colonial shame, is uneasy about particularism and nationalism, especially Jewish particularism and nationalism. Yet, paradoxically, regular prayers focussed –sometimes almost exclusively –on suffering

Palestinians. These prayers are almost part of weekly liturgy in many churches, creating strong sympathy for *Palestinian nationalism*. The Anglican Church morally condemns the treatment of Palestinian Christians and Muslims by the Jewish state, yet for decades has been virtually silent on the persecution of Palestinian Christians.⁴⁶ It is no less silent about the oppression and large-scale massacres of Christians subject to *jihad* in some Muslim states, notably East Timor and Sudan, where over two million Christians have been slaughtered and many enslaved. Indeed the Archbishop of Canterbury was recently accused when visiting Sudan of maintaining a “strange silence”, though he did refer obliquely – and evasively – to events in Sudan as a “self-destructive tragedy” and decried the “deepening spiral of violence”.⁴⁷ This unwillingness to speak out partly reflects the long-standing influence of Middle East clergy, reluctant to condemn Muslim oppression for fear of reprisals against Christians, and virtually forced to demonstrate loyalty to the Arab cause.

Its multicultural environment also affects the Anglican Church in Britain. Inner-city clergy commonly serve dwindling Anglican congregations in parishes often dominated by other faiths, especially Islam. Birmingham now has a Muslim majority. Local clergy do participate in inter-faith dialogue and often passionately champion inter-religious harmony, especially following 9/11. Yet at national and local level, the perceived influence and actual membership of the Anglican Church are declining. Since 1992, the Anglican Church has been losing an average 20,000 members annually. Usual Sunday attendance figures have shrunk from 1,606,000 in 1968 to 903,000 in 2004; they are relatively low even at Easter and Christmas (in 2004 1,512,700 and 2,629,300 respectively). Due to demographic changes, the number of regular Anglicans worshipers is shrinking relative to both Roman Catholics and, especially, Muslims. Some Muslim leaders argue that practising Muslims may already outnumber practising Anglicans. This trend will continue. Some demographers and Muslim leaders believe that by 2013, British Muslims – over half of whom are under 25 – will number at least 5-6 million, by then approximately equalling the likely total number of active Christians in Great Britain.

Anglican chapels in hospitals and prisons are being transformed increasingly into multi-faith prayer halls, used mainly by Muslims. The Royal Commission has recommended reducing the number of bishops in the House of Lords from 26 to 16. The Prince of Wales, future head of the Church of England and advocate of Islamic spirituality, wishes to be known as ‘Defender of faith’, rather than ‘Defender of the Faith’ in any specifically Anglican or Christian sense. Lord Carey’ for his part, has urged that the next coronation should be “multi-faith” rather than exclusively Christian.⁴⁸ Conversions to Islam are increasing rapidly; *da’wa*, Islamic proselytising, annually attracts thousands of converts, termed ‘reverts’, especially among white elites and Afro-Caribbean prisoners.

Moreover, Anglicanism as a whole seems to be gradually uprooting itself from its Judaic heritage. It is no longer normative for Anglican clergy to know Hebrew, and if clergy have studied another religion at theological college, it is likely to have been

Islam rather than Judaism. Liturgical changes, and aspects of feminist and liberation theology, have further distanced some clergy and congregations from the Hebrew Scriptures. Sometimes the distancing leads to outright libels against The Jewish Holy Scriptures. The Right Rev. David Ison, former Canon of Exeter Cathedral and now Dean of Bradford, described the Old Testament in 2002 as “a horrifying picture of genocide committed in God’s name.”⁴⁹

The 1988 Lambeth Conference affirmed the importance of dialogue with both Islam and Judaism and urged Anglicans to show “a willingness to listen to the partner; to try to see with their eyes and feel with their heart.” The Conference noted that “Judaism has a special bond and affinity with Christianity.”⁵⁰ Yet now the dialogue partner is far more likely to be Muslim than Jewish. Despite the optimism embodied in the 2002 Alexandria Declaration, brokered by the Anglican Church, Dr. Edward Kessler, Director of the Cambridge Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, warned in June 2005 of a growing distance between Anglicans and Jews. Arguing the need for new Anglican-Jewish initiatives, Kessler urged Anglican leaders to build bridges before the gulf became dangerously wide.⁵¹ Subsequently, in a speech marking both the 350th. anniversary of the resettlement of the Jews in England and Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2006, the Archbishop of Canterbury confirmed the distinctiveness of Christian-Jewish dialogue: “from a Christian perspective the dialogue between Christians and Jews is not only historically the most senior, but also theologically distinct.”⁵²

One Anglican-Jewish initiative finally came to fruition on September 5th. 2006, partly in response to Dr. Kessler’s plea. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the two Chief Rabbis of Israel, Shlomo Amar and Yonah Metzger, signed an historic agreement in Lambeth Palace. Based on “mutual trust and respect”, the agreement is designed to facilitate a new joint dialogue process between Judaism and the Anglican Communion. It affirms the unique relationship between Christians and Jews, carefully distances the dialogue from evangelism and conversion, and acknowledges the “rights of the state of Israel to live within recognise and secure borders and to defend itself by all legal means.”⁵³ Lambeth Palace already facilitates occasional informal ad hoc dialogue meetings, and future high-level meetings are anticipated as a sequel to the September agreement.

Yet, welcome though these recent developments might be, they are not yet, a fully adequate response to the theological trends we have analysed or to the fall-out from the Anglican disinvestment campaign which increased the sense of isolation and vulnerability within the Jewish community. It is to be hoped that this newly-reinvigorated Anglican-Jewish dialogue will eventually be underpinned by institutional and financial support, and that it will not be overshadowed by the Christian political critique of Israel. For in his contribution to Naim Ateek’s *Challenging Christian Zionism*, Archbishop Rowan Williams emphasised the Christian “responsibility...to hold Israel accountable to itself and its God...engaging Israel in the most searching and critical reflection on its practice”. He reiterated a demand

that Israel, “the *paradigm* nation”, display “wisdom and justice” and stressed “the essential place of [Israel’s] accountability” in ...”the whole theology of Jewish-Christian relations.”⁵⁴

But these are surprising and disturbing omissions in the September 2006 agreement. True, it acknowledges the Church’s complicity in the history of antisemitism and affirms the importance of the relationship between Christians and Jews, “rooted in the one overarching covenant of God with Abraham to which God remains faithful through all time”. But nowhere does it mention God’s covenant with Moses, nor does it – despite the language of respect for each other’s faiths – specifically affirm Judaism. This omission is all the more striking since recently the Anglican Church has taken major steps to affirm Islam as a fellow ‘Abrahamic faith’. Indeed, there is arguably a new realignment of Anglicanism with Islam, which may represent a seismic shift within the Anglican Church, reflecting a wider British preoccupation, even fascination, with Islam following 9/11.

This unprecedented Anglican/Muslim dialogue, expressed in the fact that several bishops have recently invited Muslim clerics to preach from their pulpits, has been cemented in three major, and generously financed initiatives. Most important, perhaps, is a high-powered Christian-Muslim seminar created by leading Anglicans. Entitled ‘Building Bridges’, it was convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury in Lambeth Palace soon after 9/11, in January 2002. The subsequent annual seminars have been held in Doha, Qatar, Sarajevo and Georgetown University, Washington DC. Church House publishes the conference lectures and discussions in book form. The three-day ‘Building Bridges’ seminar gathers annually dozens of Christian and Muslim leaders and academics from around the world on a basis of equality and mutuality.

The proceedings of the 2002 inaugural seminar stress “the shared journey of Christians and Muslims”...“the importance of deepening our dialogue and understanding”, especially following 9/11.⁵⁵ The papers by forty Muslim and Christian scholars are diverse and fascinating. They tend to avoid conflict and suggest at times equivalence, even unity, between Islam and Christianity. Bishop Kenneth Cragg, for example, states astonishingly: “*Magnificat* and *Allahu akbar* are the sure doxologies with which our two faiths begin.” “In the mystery of our created human trust”, he muses, “two faiths are one.”⁵⁶ Professor David Kerr portrays Christian-Muslim relations “not as a convergence of separate circles, but as a single circle: a shared human community of faith, differentiated by beliefs and institutional traditions, yet eschatologically united in the struggle (*jihad*) to discern...the purposes of God.” Kerr explains radical Islam “as a form of liberation theology.”⁵⁷ Most recently, opening the 2006 Building Bridges seminar in Washington, the Archbishop of Canterbury underlined the uniqueness of the Christian-Muslim friendship it embodies, calling the seminar “an absolutely unique and, to me, deeply precious fellowship.”⁵⁸

Another new venture, the Anglican/al-Azhar Joint Committee for Dialogue was finalised, ironically, on 9/11. Its remit includes encouraging the exchange of Christian and Muslim scholars and students to further understanding the faith of the other community. Conferences are held annually; the proceedings of the 2004 conference were published in a book entitled *Distorted Images*.⁵⁹

A third initiative, the nationwide Christian Muslim Forum, was launched in January 2006 by Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, as its Founding Patron. The Forum is explicitly “designed to help us...to think not of a clash of civilisations but of a shared religious humanism.” Constituted as a charitable company, the Forum is well-funded and has two full-time directors; it will draw together Christian and Muslim specialists and scholar consultants three times a year and aims at “fostering the common agenda” shared by Christian and Muslim communities at grassroots level.⁶⁰

The rapprochement of Anglicanism and Islam has encouraged a process in which any critique of Islamic nationalism or Islamism is either extremely muted or completely absent. Typical of the times is the willingness of the General Council of the United Church of Canada in August to consider a proposal to acknowledge formally the prophetic witness of Muhammad.⁶¹ Following his earlier controversial remarks on Islam and violence, Pope Benedict XVI quickly beat a retreat informing Muslim diplomats on September 25, 2006, that “our future” depends on dialogue between Christianity and Islam.⁶² The rapprochement has also had political consequences akin to those of multiculturalism. Like the senior British police officer who stated after the London bombings that “Islamic and terrorist are two words that do not go together,” Anglican clergy are keen to distance Islamist terrorism from the Muslim religion.⁶³ Typically, the vicar of St. Pancras Church, near one of the London bombings, told his congregation following 7/7: “We must name the people who did this as criminals and terrorists; we must not name them as Muslims.”⁶⁴ This stance can, unfortunately, lead to the marginalisation of Jews. Preaching last November in St. Paul’s Cathedral at the Memorial Service for victims of the 7/7 bombings, who included several British and Israeli Jews, the Archbishop of Canterbury mentioned neither the terrorists’ religion nor Jewish victims: “It does not matter to the killers if their victims are Christian or Muslim, Hindu or Humanist.”⁶⁵

This eirenic Anglican yearning for reconciliation is clearly intended to foster good Muslim-Christian relations. Yet Anglican pragmatism may prove short-sighted, in that it fails to recognise the ideology, strategy and power of *da’wa*, Muslim mission and promotion of Islam. Muslim multiculturalists are now calling for a radical post-multicultural agenda which would emasculate Anglicanism and might ensure eventual Muslim demographic supremacy. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown urges the *disestablishment* of the Church of England, the repeal of the blasphemy law, the legalisation of Muslim polygamy, and withdrawal of funding from all religious state schools – most are Anglican or Roman Catholic. Religion should not be practised in any state-funded school.⁶⁶ Since Anglican schools could expect no financial assistance from the

overstretched resources of the Church of England; many would probably disappear. But Muslim schools would find private financial support from overseas, as many mosques already do. At the same time Professor Tariq Modood recommends replacing the Anglican/Christian link with the state by a pluralized religion-state link.⁶⁷ Yasmin Alibhai-Brown believes that post-multiculturalism will, for example, have foreign policy implications for Britain, particularly in promoting internationalism.⁶⁸ Some Muslim leaders are more insistent, demanding that British foreign policy adopt a more Muslim-oriented agenda, which would lead to an even greater isolation of Israel. This view has been widely echoed since the London bombings, notably during the 2005 election campaign, when Sheikh Dr. Abdalqadir as-Sufi, writing in the *Muslim Weekly*, called for the replacement of British parliamentary democracy with “a new civilisation based on the worship of Allah.”⁶⁹

Multiculturalism undoubtedly implies equality of all cultures. Yet, since the mid-1990s, Muslim leaders have begun to demand a privileged position for Islam over Hindus, Sikhs, other ethnic minorities and white Britons, on the grounds that Muslims suffer the double victimhood of racism and Islamophobia. The report *Islamophobia: A Challenge for us all*, published in 1997 by the Runnymede Trust’s Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, advocated 60 policy recommendations designed to combat specifically anti-Muslim forms of racism. Some have already been implemented; for example, in 2003 the Crown Prosecution Service published new policies to ensure that religiously aggravated offences now attract higher sentences.⁷⁰ Further recommendations were made in 2004 in a later report, *Islamophobia: Issues, challenges and action*, by the Commission on Muslims and Islamophobia, which noted approvingly the setting up by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of services in Saudi Arabia to support British Muslim pilgrims performing the *Hajj*.⁷¹

Since 9/11 and especially since Britain’s entry into the Gulf War in 2003, there is evidence that Islam is increasingly and uniquely privileged and protected in state education, the media and other areas of public life. Incredibly, during the protests against the Danish cartoons in November 2005, the Metropolitan Police arrested not a single protestor carrying placards calling for the murder or beheading of those who “insult Islam”.

Simultaneously, Muslim attachment to multicultural Britain and its laws is however lessening. Many British Muslims came from the Deobandi and Bareilwi movements on the Indian sub-continent, and brought with them traditions of keeping isolated from the national cultural and religious mainstream and fostering a supra-national Muslim identity. Humayun Ansari argues that: “The behaviour of many...[British] Muslims is governed by their perception that they are part of a world-wide community which does not recognize national or racial differences - ...the *umma*. Closely linked to this idea is their belief in the supremacy of the ‘God-given’ code of Quran and the Sunna.”⁷² Globalisation, with its new technology, is leading to increasing integration and electronic connection within the Muslim *umma*.⁷³

Polls taken in December 2005 show that 50% of British Muslims consider themselves Muslim first, British second, while 25% have little or no attachment to Britain. 7% considered suicide bombing in Britain to be justifiable, and no less than 37% regarded the Anglo-Jewish community as a legitimate target in the struggle for justice in the Middle East.⁷⁴ Still more shocking were the results of a NOP poll in August 2006 which revealed that 45% of British Muslims regard 9/11 as a conspiracy by America and Israel; nearly 25% saw the 7/7 bombings as justified; as many as 30% would prefer to live under sharia law than under British law; and 28% expressed the hope that the UK will one day become a fundamentalist Islamic state; 9% could be described as “hardcore Islamists.”⁷⁵

According to Gilles Kepel, London became in the 1990s “the world capital of Islamism. In return for this hospitality, the militants declared Britain a sanctuary.”⁷⁶ But since Britain’s entry into the Gulf War in 2003, some Islamists, including Omar Bakri Muhammed, former head of the recently banned Al Muhajiroun, no longer term Britain *dar al ahd* (land of contractual peace) but *dar al harb* (land of war); it may be legitimately attacked, as on July 7, 2005.⁷⁷ Kalim Siddiqi, founder of the Muslim Parliament in 1989, envisaged, along with other Muslim leaders, that the majority “Christian” population will accept Islam, leading to the transformation of infidel Britain, termed *dar al kufr* (the domain of unbelief), into an Islamic state.⁷⁸ There is already a process of gradual Islamization in Britain, where domestic *sharia* is recognised de facto and financial institutions are creating sharia-friendly banking.⁷⁹ Postal voting in elections has been championed primarily in order to increase Muslim votes. Muslim leaders have long been lobbying to incorporate elements of Islamic *sharia* law in various areas of English law and urge that Muslim identity should be part of the public space⁸⁰. The charismatic Islamist Tariq Ramadan, like other key Muslim leaders, has been recently given “broad access to the machinery of power.”⁸¹

Since the 1990s, Islamist organisations and even some moderate Muslim leaders, including the late Zaki Badawi, began to describe Britain no longer as *dar al ahd*, but as *dar al Islam*⁸² within which Muslims undertake a *hijra* parallel to Mohammad’s withdrawal to Medina. This theoretical sacralisation – and politicisation – of multicultural Britain as a “domain of Islam” has serious implications. It might encourage further withdrawal by some Muslim communities from aspects of Britain which they deem *kufr*, infidel. It might encourage more British-born terrorists and the tiny minority of radical Islamists who preach terror. There are certainly legal implications: “It will...require concerted attempts on the part of host cultures to rethink current legislation in ways that respond to Islam.”⁸³ Moreover, it was during the *hijra* that Mohammad began his elimination of pagans and Jews. Some extremist Wahhabi/Salafist preachers now redefine Christians and Jews – traditionally protected *dhimmi* – and even non-Wahhabi Muslims, as *mushikrun*, polytheists who can be killed. This theological hostility to non-Muslims may be psychologically reinforced by the regular ritual cursing of unbelievers and Allah’s enemies in the formal prayers, *Qunoot-e-Nazala*.

Several Islamic militants (Abu Hamza, Abdullah el Faisal, Omar Bakri Mohamed and Abu Qatada) have been accused and some imprisoned for distributing anti-Semitic material⁸⁴. Abu Izzadeen posed a sermon on the Saved Sect website (an al-Muhajiroun offshoot) that “all Jews and Christians are going to hell fire” and praised the London bombings as “completely praiseworthy.” Abu Muwahhid urged that all sinners be killed, while the radical lawyer, Anjem Choudary, stated in September 2006 that the Pope deserves to be executed for his comments about Islam.⁸⁵ He has not so far been arrested by the Metropolitan Police. Abu Qatada, a key Jordanian Islamist with Al Qaeda connections, reportedly advocated in London the killing of Jews, as did Jamaican convert Abdullah el Faisal in one of his taped sermons.⁸⁶ The Islamist radical Abu Hamza, who recruited at least 4000 British Muslims for training in *jihad* camps in Afghanistan, was jailed in February 2006 for inciting murder and race hatred. He taught that it is part of a Muslim religious duty to kill “infidels”; Allah decrees continued torture for the Jewish people; “the Jews will be destroyed, the state will be destroyed.Killing a *kuffar*(unbeliever) for any reason, you can say it is OK even if there is no reason for it.” Abu Hamza urged stabbing, the “needle of bleeding the enemy”, as the first stage of *jihad*.⁸⁷

In the theory of contemporary holy war, it is a duty for the *mujabed* to fight the nearest enemy first⁸⁸ There may come a time when radical Islamists in Britain decide that the Anglo-Jewish community is not only a legitimate but a necessary target of violence in the war to eradicate the Jewish state. Radical Islamists clearly intend for Britain to become a monoculture, which would be neither Anglican, multicultural nor tolerant.

Notes

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