

# **Discerning a Biblical Approach to Peacemaking and Engaging Muslims: Exposing Biblical Blind Spots, Hermeneutical Imbalance and Indiscriminating Cultural Analysis**

by Rick Love, Ph.D

President, Peace Catalyst International

Consultant for Christian-Muslim Relations

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In this paper I hope to model how the church practices discernment in the midst of diversity and discord. I will expose biblical blind spots, hermeneutical imbalance and indiscriminating cultural analysis when it comes to peacemaking and engaging Muslims. I will seek to do this in such a way as to discern the good, pleasing and perfect will of God when it comes to loving “the other.”

I use six concrete biblical examples to stimulate thought, challenge mainstream interpretations and illustrate the practice of theological and cultural discernment.

One of the ways that Paul the apostle would argue his point is through rhetorical questions.<sup>1</sup> He used this literary device to refute faulty deductions people might draw from his assertions.<sup>2</sup> For example, in Romans 6:15 Paul said: “Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!” (NASB). The phrase translated “may it never be” is *me genoito* – which can also be translated “by no means!” or “of course not!”

Following Paul’s example, I want to frame my paper around six rhetorical questions as it relates to peacemaking and ministry to Muslims:

1. Do Jesus’ exclusive truth claims trump His inclusive love aims?
2. Do Jesus’ words about bringing a sword trump his teaching about bearing peace?
3. Does building peace within the church trump bridging peace with all people?
4. Does our end times theology trump social ethics?
5. Does total depravity trump common grace?
6. Does the war on terror trump the work of peacemaking?

First an initial word about methodology.<sup>3</sup> As I said in the introduction I hope to model discernment rather than write about the topic. However, it will be helpful to make explicit three broad principles that shape my thinking and guide my method: 1) The Wesleyan Quadrilateral of Scripture, tradition, experience and reason.<sup>4</sup> 2) The importance of the Reformation concept of *Tota Scriptura* (the whole of Scripture).<sup>5</sup> 3) The importance of “both-and” thinking in contrast to “either-or” thinking.<sup>6</sup>

### 1. Do Jesus’ Exclusive Truth Claims Trump His Inclusive Love Aims?

Jesus taught and modeled exclusive truth claims. He continually called people to follow Him, and He demanded exclusive devotion: "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37-38). Moreover, a person’s eternal destiny ultimately depends on his or her relationship with Jesus: “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36).

Also, Jesus modeled inclusive love aims. He loved the unloved and marginalized of His society: lepers, women, tax collectors, adulterers, and Samaritans. Because of this, Jesus earned the nickname “friend of sinners”: "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'" (Matthew 11:19).

Jesus not only modeled inclusive love aims, He taught them as well. “Love your enemies, ... and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*” (Luke 6:35). Moreover at the cross Jesus modeled and taught inclusive love. Jesus loved us and laid down His life for us, “while we were enemies” (Rom 5:10; cf. Col 1:21). On the cross, Jesus prayed, “Father forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34) – enemy love with nails in His hands!

The strong “both-and” nature of this radical Jesus unnerves many people. The majority of evangelicals contend earnestly for Jesus’ exclusive truth claims but miss or minimize Jesus’ inclusive love aims. They boldly affirm, “Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6) but quietly ignore His command to “Love your enemy” (Matthew 5:44)! To deny either truth or love is to deny Jesus.

Jesus shatters our theological and political categories. Exclusive truth challenges the liberal, and inclusive love challenges the conservative. Jesus is so inclusive in His love aims as to shame the most inclusive liberal. And He is so exclusive in His truth claims as to shame the most exclusive fundamentalist.”<sup>7</sup>

Is there anything in the Scripture that may help us understand how this exclusive-inclusive Jesus might engage Muslims if He lived in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? I think so. The relationship between Christians and Muslims today parallels the racial and religious tensions between Jews and Samaritans in New Testament times. Both Jews and Samaritans were monotheists. Both Jews and Samaritans worshipped the God of Abraham. Yet the Samaritans were seen as heretics – syncretistic in faith, ethnically inferior, excluded from the true worship of God.

The animosity and hostility between these two communities is explicitly mentioned twice in the gospels:

“Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?’ (*For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.*)” John 4:9 NASB (emphasis mine).

“But the people [Samaritans] there did not welcome him [Jesus], because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, ‘Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?’ But Jesus turned and rebuked them” (Luke 9:53-55).

The similarities are stunning. James’ and John’s hostile response to the Samaritans does not reflect the Spirit of Jesus. It sounds hauntingly similar to how some Christians respond to Muslims today.

Muslims are the new “Samaritans.”<sup>8</sup> So how would our Master, Jesus Christ, have us respond to today’s “Samaritans”?

Jesus’ interaction with the Samaritan woman in John 4 provides profound insights. First, Jesus began by purposely putting Himself among Samaritans. This is no little thing, since it was typical for Jews traveling from Galilee to Jerusalem to avoid Samaria like the plague. They would go far out of their way to evade contact with these impure heretics. So Jesus was being counter cultural here. He resisted the prejudices of His people.

In fact, Jesus actually engineered the encounter. He took the initiative to engage the Samaritan women. Instead of the animosity or hostility typical of Jewish-Samaritan interaction, He began His discussion with the Samaritan as a bridge-builder.

Jesus masterfully drew the Samaritan woman into spiritual dialogue by using a mundane earthly topic like water to point her to spiritual realities: living water. Next, He had a prophetic word for her about having five husbands. Then she turned the conversation to a debate about religion: "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem" (John 4:20). Notice carefully how Jesus responded.

"Jesus declared, 'Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.' The woman said, 'I know that Messiah' (called Christ) 'is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.' Then Jesus declared, 'I who speak to you am he'" (John 4:21-26).

Jesus modeled both exclusive truth claims and inclusive love aims. He began with dialogue (love aims) and addressed doctrine (truth claims).<sup>9</sup> He clearly stated: "Salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22). But He didn't say she had to be a Jew to be saved. Instead He talked about the new thing God was doing. And He told her that He was the coming Messiah. This true faith and new thing centered on Jesus the Messiah.

Jesus overcame religious, racial, gender, educational and even moral barriers to connect with the Samaritan women. No condemnation. No finger wagging. No debate. Bridges of love. Bridges that led her to Himself. That's Jesus one-on-one with the Muslims of His day.<sup>10</sup>

To follow Jesus is to embrace both His truth claims and His love aims. And we don't have to sacrifice one for the other. We can do both. Brian Zahnd, in talking about these principles as they relate to the issue of homosexuality, prophetically notes:

"Let's get this clear – loving the homosexual is no more an endorsement of homosexuality than Jesus' refusal to stone the adulterous woman was an endorsement of adultery. Because Jesus would not stone an adulterer did not mean Jesus was pro-adultery. Because Paul addressed the pagans of Athens respectfully did not mean Paul was pro-paganism. As we learn to sincerely love and respect secularists, homosexuals and Muslims, it does not mean that we advocate secularism, support gay marriage or endorse Islam. It simply means we are attempting to be authentic followers of Christ."<sup>11</sup>

Do Jesus' exclusive truth claims trump His inclusive love aims? *Me genoito!*

## 2. Do Jesus' Words about Bringing a Sword Trump His Teaching about Bearing Peace?

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). He also said, "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). How do we reconcile these two famous peace passages in Matthew's gospel?

First, the wide-angle look. "Blessed are the peacemakers" is found in the first of five blocks of teaching in Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). This discourse describes *the Ethics of the Kingdom*. "I did not come to bring peace but a sword," is found in the second discourse, which describes *the Mission of the Kingdom* (Matthew 10).<sup>12</sup> As I hope to demonstrate, the ethics of the Kingdom and the mission of the Kingdom are not in tension. The mission of the Kingdom is carried out in harmony with the ethics of the Kingdom.

Now the detailed look. I have two observations about peacemaking in Matthew 5:9. First, Jesus pronounced "blessing" upon peacemakers, which means that God's favor and approval rests upon them.<sup>13</sup> Second, Jesus described these peacemakers as "children of God." They were called children of God because they act like their Father: the God of peace (Philippians 4:9 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23), who sent the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) to bring about a world of peace (Luke 2:14). Peacemakers imitate God. God's children are children of peace!

Also, I have two observations about the "sword" verse. First, Matthew 10 described Jesus' commission of His disciples to extend the Kingdom. First, He told them to go in peace, "If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace" (Matt 10:13 NASB). When Jesus sent out the seventy disciples, He described this process in a slightly different way, "Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace *be* to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you" (Luke 10:5-6).<sup>14</sup>

This passage implies that in some sense those on mission are bearers of peace (cf. John 14:27), whose fruitfulness depends on the discernment of peace in evangelistic contexts.<sup>15</sup> While the practical

implications of how to do this needs to be verified through further experience and reflection, no one who takes Scripture seriously can doubt that peace is related to bearing witness according to Jesus.

The second mention of peace in Matthew 10 relates to persecution and suffering brought about because of fruitful evangelism:

"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law – a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:34-38 NIV).

Jesus' followers are peacemaker-evangelists who speak the blessing of peace on families where they stay. Nevertheless, response to the message of the Kingdom will be mixed; some will accept the message, others will reject it. Because of this, families will be divided, conflict will ensue.<sup>16</sup> But please note: Jesus used the metaphor of the sword to describe the divisive fallout that sometimes accompanies the extension of the Kingdom. This is confirmed by the parallel passage in Luke: "Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division" (Luke 12:51). He did not use the metaphor of the sword to depict any form of violence or belligerence on the part of His followers.<sup>17</sup>

Among Evangelicals, Matthew 10:34-38 ("I came to bring a sword") rather than Matthew 5:9 ("Blessed are the peacemakers") seems to provide the dominant perspective regarding peace and evangelism in the New Testament. In other words, there is the assumption that conflict will prevail. With this mindset, could it be that conflict sometimes ensues because of the non-irenic manner in which we communicate the message? Could this be a something of a self-fulfilling prophecy?

How do we reconcile Matthew 10:34-38 with Matthew 5:9? At the very least we need to affirm both truths, since the Bible does. Walter Kaiser gives wise guidance: "When Jesus said that he had come to bring "not peace but a sword," he meant that this would be the *effect* of his coming, not that it was the *purpose* of his coming."<sup>18</sup> As children of God, our purpose is to represent the Prince of Peace, regardless of the effect it has.

Do Jesus' words about bringing a sword trump His teaching about bearing peace? *Me genoito!*

### 3. Does Building Peace within the Church Trump Bridging Peace with All People?

“Christians do very well as compared to the rest of society. They are neighborly, forgiving and caring for the poor” – so writes, Bradley R.E. Wright in his book *Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites ... and Other Lies You've Been Told*.<sup>19</sup> Bradley's book is a welcome corrective to so much negative stuff written about the church. This is good news.

But even this positive book acknowledges that Christians as a whole still do not like people of different races, religion, and sexual orientation.<sup>20</sup> Christians struggle with loving the “other.”

Evangelicals seem to struggle most with three communities: Muslims, illegal immigrants (usually Latinos or Hispanics), and the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) community. It is worth repeating what I said earlier about Jesus. Jesus taught and modeled exclusive truth claims and inclusive love aims. The Pharisees and many evangelicals zealously uphold the truth claims but do poorly in the love aims.

Yet the commands to love our neighbor and enemy push us towards these very communities. So do the biblical commands to pursue peace.

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18).

“Make every effort to live in peace with everyone” (Hebrews 12:14).

The first clause in Romans 12:18, “If it is possible,” indicates that peacemakers are not always peace achievers. And the second clause, “as far as it depends on you,” indicates that we are called to be proactive in conflict resolution. The author of Hebrews adds a further dimension, commanding us to “make every effort” towards peace with everyone. This command indicates the intense effort necessary on our part. In a world of conflict, peace just does not happen. It demands earnest striving. It takes work.

God commands us to pursue peace with everyone, not just fellow Christians, morally upright citizens, people we get along with, or those in our same political party. If we follow God's command, we will interact with and work with lots of diverse groups and different people if they also desire peace.

Some might object, thinking that it is impossible to have peace with non-Christians. While I understand why some may believe that, I respectfully disagree on two counts. First, we do not even have peace between all Christians. So let's not pretend we have our act together; we don't! Second, everyone has a longing and a capacity for peace because they are created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-28).

This spark of the divine in all people enables them to do what is right. Jesus alluded to this two times in His teaching: “If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:11). Jesus said we are both evil *and* can do good deeds. He made a similar point in Luke, “And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same” (Luke 6:33). According to Jesus, everyone can do good things, even bad people.

We are not responsible for success in our attempts at peacemaking. As I have noted, peacemakers are not always peace achievers. But we are responsible to pursue peace with everyone and to love our neighbor and our enemy. God’s comprehensive peacemaking plan pushes us toward people outside the church.<sup>21</sup>

Does building peace within the church trump bridging peace with all people? *Me genoito!*

#### **4. Does our End Times Theology Trump Social Ethics?**

“You shouldn’t work for peace in the Middle East because the Bible teaches there will never be peace there. What you are trying to do is contrary to Scripture. The Bible teaches that the end times will be an age of horrendous persecution and spiritual darkness. Your efforts are useless!” According to Pat Robertson, it is worse than useless, we are risking the wrath of the almighty God if we pursue peace there!<sup>22</sup>

I hear stuff like this all the time.

Yes, the Bible is full of statements about future darkness and persecution. It makes important predictions about the end times. The books of Daniel and Revelation reveal the future return of Christ in rich symbolism and mind-boggling imagery. Our coming King will judge an evil world. He will heal and restore a broken creation. As my mentor, Vern Poythress of Westminster Seminary used to say with a big smile on his face, “The book of Revelation can be summarized in two words: God wins!” That much is crystal clear. What is not clear are the details of how it will happen!

Many Bible scholars weave together complex prophetic schemes about the end times, especially from Daniel and Revelation. They act like they understand all the details, and they think their interpretation describes what is going on in our world today. They seek to make these prophetic interpretations, rather than the truth of Christ’s return, central to our faith.



But these “end times experts” break the basic rules of biblical interpretation. We are supposed to interpret the unclear texts in light of the clear texts. I like how our founder John Wimber used to say it: "The main things are the plain things, and the plain things are the main things." We need to focus on the plain things: following Jesus, loving our neighbors, and making disciples.

So this “end times” focus actually distorts our discipleship. This doomsday message about the future paralyzes present engagement with a broken world. It produces a siege mentality and an attitude of hostility. It leads to fear and becomes an excuse not to obey Jesus in the present.

Let me dig a little deeper. Theologians say that there are two aspects of God’s will: that which is *decreed* and that which is *declared*.<sup>23</sup> God’s decreed will is secret and known only to Him. God’s declared will is made clear in Scripture. We build our lives on God’s declared will not His decreed will.

End times teachers want us to think they understand God’s decreed will, that they have it all figured out. But a preoccupation with the minutiae of the end times should NEVER trump the clear commands of Christ. Never!

Moses had some important insights for us: "The LORD our God has secrets known to no one. We are not accountable for them, but we and our children are accountable forever for all that he has revealed to us, so that we may obey all the terms of these instructions" (Deuteronomy 29:29 NLT).

We are accountable for what God has clearly revealed to us. So let’s stop speculating about the end times and start obeying what Jesus calls us to do right now.

Does our end-times theology trump social ethics? *Me genoito!*

## 5. Does Total Depravity Trump Common Grace?

As a wet-behind-the-ears graduate student in 1983, I was troubled about the strong emphasis on total depravity at Westminster Theological Seminary. So I asked my mentor, the late Dr. Harvie Conn, about it. He pointed out that many Reformed theologians focus so much on total depravity that common grace gets overlooked – at least in their practice.<sup>24</sup> But Harvie emphasized common grace. He was fond of saying that we find the "footprints of God" in other cultures and religions.

N.T. Wright described something similar to the “footprints of God” in his book, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*. Wright argued that there is a hunger for justice, a thirst for spirituality, a

longing for relationship, and a recognition of and a desire for beauty in everyone. He called these traits an echo of God's voice in all people.

My friend, Jeff Cannell, the pastor of the Central Columbus Vineyard, has a great saying, "Many people get gripped by the agenda of the King before they know the King of the agenda." In other words, many people who do not know Christ are drawn to justice, spirituality, relationship and beauty before they recognize that their heart-longings come from God.

Common grace recognizes that "every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father" (James 1:17). Common grace refers to God's grace overflowing to every creature on earth.<sup>25</sup> Through His common grace, God has given humanity four gifts:

- The blessings of the physical world,<sup>26</sup>
- The ability to do good,<sup>27</sup>
- A general knowledge of God or a sense of the divine,<sup>28</sup> and
- The ability to be culture-makers.<sup>29</sup>

An understanding of common grace helps every follower of Jesus see things differently. We discern the footprints of God, the echo of God's voice and the agenda of the King in people around us. This leads to a profound gratefulness. God IS working in people around us. His beauty shines through them – even though imperfectly and without their realizing that God is the one who is actually producing this through them.

Common grace shows us that we have common ground with unbelievers, helping us build bridges for peace, partner for human flourishing, and bear witness with wisdom and grace. Embracing common grace is revolutionary.<sup>30</sup>

Does Total Depravity Trumps Common Grace? *Me genoito!*<sup>31</sup>

## 6. Does the War on Terror Trump the Work of Peacemaking?

A salesman once asked me what I did. I explained to him that I was a peacemaker and a consultant on Christian-Muslim relations. He then said smugly, as if he were making a brilliant point, "All Muslims are not terrorists, but all terrorists are Muslims."

This common viewpoint is blatantly false! Timothy McVeigh was not a Muslim. And what about the blond-haired, blue-eyed "Christian" terrorist, Anders Behring Breivik, who shocked the world by killing

over 90 people in Norway in 2011? The Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka are not Muslim. The Catholics and Protestants of Ireland are not Muslims. The Basques separatists of Spain are not Muslims.

Hating and killing in the name of God knows no religious boundaries. So let's get this straight: There are extremists among all races and all religions. And we must stand against all types of violent extremism!

I can imagine the kind of questions that come to mind when I mention terrorism in a paper on peacemaking. "Ok, Rick, how can we be true peacemakers when we face the evil of terrorists? These people purposely murder innocent people to make a political point! Doesn't the Bible say a lot about justice and punishing evil people?"

Weighty questions demand worthy answers. To address these important questions we will study the relationship between church and state in Romans 12-13. We will seek to answer the question: "How can we love Muslims and Deal with Terrorists?"

DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE VAST MAJORITY OF MUSLIMS AND THE MINISCULE NUMBER OF TERRORISTS. | First, we need a view of Muslims that is as accurate as possible. The church needs to discern the nature of Islam and its relationship to terrorism. How can we "examine everything carefully" and "hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB)? I am concerned about accuracy for two reasons. First, we are accountable to God for how we speak about Muslims. As I note in my *Grace and Truth* booklet:

"Overstatement, exaggeration and words taken out of context are commonplace in the media and politics. But this should not be the case among followers of Jesus, for he calls us to be careful about the words we speak (Matt 12:36). God commands us not to bear false witness against our neighbor (Ex 20:16) and to do unto others as we would have them do unto us (Matt 7:12). Thus we strive to speak truthfully about Muslims, to respect Muslims' own interpretation of themselves, and "not to compare the best of Christianity with the worst of Islam."<sup>32</sup>

Second, we must be careful of simplistic, monocausal perspectives on conflict.<sup>33</sup> As my mentor, J. Dudley Woodberry wisely cautions: "We do well to avoid stereotyping Muslims based on news sound bites or the reductionism of focusing primarily on religion as the cause of conflicts between Muslim and Christian communities. There are many perspectives in the Muslim community, and even these are changing. Conflicts between Muslim and Christian communities in places like Indonesia and Sudan have ethnic, economic, and political, as well as religious, roots."<sup>34</sup>

It is hard to wade through the cacophony of voices. A few say that Islam is a religion of peace, while the vast majority maintains that Islam is violent, oppressive and to be feared.<sup>35</sup> Let me suggest four methodological guidelines:

1. We discern the nature of any religion by examining both its sacred texts and its actual practice.<sup>36</sup> In other words, we discern through exegesis, personal relationship and cultural analysis.
2. We discern the nature of any religion by examining it both locally and globally.<sup>37</sup>
3. We discern the nature of any religion by understanding and acknowledging our own assumptions. I write as a critical realist. The naïve realist will see things very differently.<sup>38</sup>
4. We discern the nature of any religion by acknowledging that our spiritual gifts influence how we perceive other religions. Peacemakers will seek to build bridges, evangelists will want to find redemptive analogies, and teachers will want to refute error.<sup>39</sup>

The Muslim world is radically diverse. There are over 1.5 billion Muslims, comprising about 2,000 unique ethnic groups in more than fifty-two Muslim-majority nations, with large minorities in another forty countries. There are huge differences and varied expressions of Islam. For instance, women must be fully covered in some countries, while they do not adopt a “Muslim” dress code in others. Women are omitted from the public sphere in some societies, while they serve as heads of state in others.<sup>40</sup> There are Islamic states where government and religion are intertwined, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, and states with secular government, such as Turkey.

The Islamic World contains significant theological and ideological diversity as well. Islam has two major sects: Sunni, comprising 85 percent of the Muslim world and Shia comprising 15 percent, with eight recognized schools of Islamic jurisprudence.<sup>41</sup> Islamism<sup>42</sup> is on the rise, and at the same time important voices in the Muslim world are articulating an interpretation of Islam that calls for peaceful relations with non-Muslims.<sup>43</sup>

Sūfism is a widespread mystical tendency, expressing itself through many diverse Sūfī orders and organizations existing within various forms of both Sunni and Shia Islam. Some estimate that as many as 50 percent of the world’s Muslims may be Sūfīs in the widest sense of the term.<sup>44</sup> The impact of Sūfism on the various branches of Islam can be compared to the Charismatic movement’s permeation of Christianity.

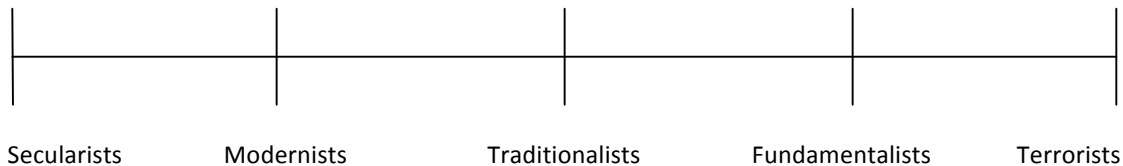
In light of the massive diversity mentioned above, how should we understand Muslims?

How can we discern between the average Muslim and the terrorist? Colin Chapman encourages us to find a middle path between demonization of Islam and naïve political correctness:

“Many Christians feel that if they condemn the naivety of many secular people (and some Christians) who are willing to give in to Muslim demands/requests, the only alternative is to demonise Islam and take a hard line on every public issue related to Islam. A middle way between these two extremes would mean (a) being realistic about the real intentions of *some*

Muslims, (b) recognizing the diversity among Muslims and relating to them as individuals and groups with openness and honesty, (c) taking a firm stand on issues of human rights, (d) working for the common good of the whole society, (e) demonstrating a fundamental respect for Islam without agreeing with all its teaching, and (f) unapologetically commending the Christian faith through word and deed.”<sup>45</sup>

The chart below describes the spectrum of Muslims in the world today:



Secularists reject Islam as a guiding force for their lives, whereas Modernists have a “West is best” approach to Islam. They want to change and adapt Islam to the modern world. Traditionalists view Islam as a source and treasure which must be wisely and flexibly applied to the modern world.

Fundamentalists are literalists who strive to obey the Qu’ran and the Hadith, while ignoring or rejecting many of the classical traditions of Islam. They seek to model their lives after Muhammad and his earliest disciples. Terrorists are militant Muslims who espouse violence to force all peoples to follow Shariah law.

So when someone makes categorical statements about Islam we need to ask, “Which Islam? Which sect? Which cultural manifestation?” There are multiple versions of Islam (just like there are multiple versions of Christianity).<sup>46</sup> The vast majority of Muslims are just like you and me. They want to live in peace. They want a good job and a good education for their children. They want to be treated with dignity and respect.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, most prominent Muslim leaders have taken a strong and public stand against any form of terrorism.<sup>48</sup>

DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH AND THE ROLE OF THE STATE <sup>49</sup> | Flag-waving patriotism and Bible-believing faith often go hand in hand in the United States. This fusion of church and state, however, can be problematic when it comes to relating to Muslims. This is most apparent when we seek to reconcile the challenge of loving Muslims with dealing with terrorists.

Romans 13 is unequivocal regarding the role of the state: “For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servant, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer” (Romans 13:4). The state is God’s

servant. The state bears the sword as an agent of God's wrath. The state has a God-given responsibility to promote the common good, uphold justice, and protect their citizens. No love of enemy here!

So how do we reconcile what Paul teaches here with Jesus' call to love our enemy? We must read Romans 13 in context. Paul prefaced his teaching on government by calling the church to radical peacemaking in Romans 12:

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil...

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Do not take revenge ...

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:17-21).<sup>50</sup>

Next, after the teaching about the role of the state (Romans 13:1-7), Paul shifted back to the role of the church with an emphasis on love. Love does no harm to one's neighbor and is the fulfillment of the law (Rom 13:8-10). In other words, Paul sandwiched this teaching on the role of the state with the church's call to pursue peace (Romans 12:17-21) and embody love (Rom 13:8-10).

The contrast between the role of the church and the state is staggering. Whereas Jesus' followers are called to a peacemaking ethic of sacrificial love, the state is called to bring justice. The church extends the olive branch, while the state bears the sword.

A deeper look at Romans 12 and 13 further highlights the radical difference between the role of the church and state. Paul described a Christian response to evil in these chapters.<sup>51</sup> He used the terms *kakos* and *poneros* (which can both be translated as "evil" or "wrong") nine times in this short section:

"Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9).

"Never pay back evil for evil to anyone" (Romans 12:17).

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

"For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil... But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil" (Romans 13:3-4).

"Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:10).

Paul's reflection on evil can be summarized in five propositions:

1. Evil is to be hated.
2. Evil is not to be repaid.
3. Evil is to be overcome with good.
4. Evil is to be punished by the government.
5. Evil is never to be done to a neighbor.

Propositions 1, 2, 3, and 5 describe a peacemaking ethic of sacrificial love. They reflect a non-violent response to evil and encourage love of enemy. Nothing is said about punishing evil.<sup>52</sup> By contrast, proposition 4 says the government is expected to punish evil. How do we reconcile this? The Scripture indicates we need to differentiate between the role of the church and the role of the state.

As followers of Christ, we have a dual allegiance. Jesus taught that we must "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). Implicit in this command is the fact that the church and state have distinct roles and responsibilities. We are citizens of heaven and citizens of earth – with responsibilities to both.<sup>53</sup>

We are called to submit to the governing authorities because they are servants of God for our good. As good citizens, followers of Christ we should support our governments' struggle against the evil menace of terrorism. But exactly how this finds expression varies according to a person's conscience, especially when it comes to "war." Some of us embrace Pacifism,<sup>54</sup> others Just-War theory,<sup>55</sup> and still others Just-Peacemaking.<sup>56</sup>

Implicit in the teaching about government in Romans 13:1-7 is that governments are accountable to God for supporting good and punishing evil. History and Scripture teaches us that governments in fact often suppress good and perpetuate evil. So it is important to balance the teaching of Romans 13 on government with the teaching of Revelation 13 – which describes government as a totalitarian beast. Government can be a servant of God or an instrument of Satan.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, there are times we prophetically resist the state when we believe its actions contradict God's moral standards. There are cases of civil disobedience in scripture. For example, the Hebrew midwives feared God and refused to obey the Egyptian King's command to kill all Jewish male infants (Exodus 1:15-20). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to the golden statue of King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:9-18). Daniel refused to obey the ordinance against praying to any god except the King (Daniel 6:6-10).

Paul protested when he was unjustly imprisoned and tortured in Philippi, “They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out” (Acts 16:37).<sup>58</sup> And in the most compelling case of civil disobedience, when the apostles were commanded not to preach about Jesus, they boldly affirmed before the religious authorities, “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).<sup>59</sup>

As followers of Christ we are called to pursue peace and embody love. As U.S. citizens we support and challenge our government. We need to obey both Romans 12 and Romans 13. We are called to love Muslims and deal with terrorists.

Does the war on terror trump the work of peacemaking? *Me genoito!*

## Conclusion

The approach to peacemaking and engaging Muslims I propose seeks to expose biblical blind spots and hermeneutical imbalances. This means we resist either-or thinking, take all Scripture seriously, and become both-and thinkers and doers of the Word. This approach also means that we become more discriminating in our textual and cultural analysis of Islam and Muslims. In light of the present one-sided emphasis on certain biblical themes, it is time for us to put a greater emphasis on living out Jesus’ inclusive love aims, increasing our efforts at making peace with all people – including peace in the Middle East, focusing more on common grace in engagement with those outside the church, embracing the peacemaking role of the church and supporting the role of the state in bearing the sword, while prophetically speaking against the state when it fails to restrain evil or promote the good.

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<sup>1</sup> The use of rhetorical questions is part of a method of teaching known as diatribe. “Diatribe was a method or mode of teaching and exhortation used in the ancient schools of philosophy. It was a facet of the Socratic method in which the teacher, using dialogue and question and answer, led the student from error to truth through censure (of incorrect thoughts and behavior) and protreptic (persuasion to a certain philosophy). See “Diatribe” in Hawthorne, G. F., Martin, R. P., & Reid, D. G. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993) 213.

<sup>2</sup> He used this literary device 14 times in his letters – 10 times in Romans: 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; 1 Co. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14

<sup>3</sup> We will address four additional methodological guidelines at the end of my paper when we address Islam and terrorism.



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<sup>4</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wesleyan\\_Quadrilateral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wesleyan_Quadrilateral)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/tota-scriptura/>

<sup>6</sup> I have embraced the importance of both-and thinking for well over a decade. <http://peace-catalyst.net/blog/post/evangelical-peacemakers-both-and-thinkers----and-doers>. However, Rich Nathan's excellent work on the topic has enriched and sharpened my thinking on the issue. <http://ricklove.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/rich-nathan-building-a-both-and-church.pdf>. See also his forthcoming book: *Both-And: Living the Christian Life in an Either-Or World* (InterVarsity Press, Summer 2013).

<sup>7</sup> I got these insights from Andres Duncan in a personal email. Here's what he said: "Jesus is so inclusive in his love aims as to shame the most inclusive liberal, (who tends to love those who are rejected by others but to be vicious and self righteous in their attack to whoever she/he paints as "the enemy"), but Jesus is so exclusive in his truth claims as to shame the most exclusive fundamentalist (who has to realize that he/she is wrong in his self-righteousness because only the Christ is right and therefore must submit to all his teachings, even those that seem "liberal"). Exclusive truth of course is a challenge for the liberal and inclusive love to the conservative. But the biggest challenge is to admit we are even wrong/weak in the areas we see as our own virtues."

<sup>8</sup> For more on this see my article, "Our Muslim Neighbors" in *A New Evangelical Manifesto: A Kingdom Vision for the Common Good* edited by David P. Gushee. (Atlanta: Chalice Press, 2012) 94-102 .

<sup>9</sup> See Eckhard J. Schnabel's magisterial *Early Christian Mission: Jesus and the Twelve Volume One*, Pages 242-247 for an excellent summary of Jesus' engagement with the Samaritan woman.

<sup>10</sup> The Samaritan woman's progressive understanding of who Jesus is worth noting. In many ways it is paradigmatic of what happens to monotheists who become followers of Jesus. First she sees Jesus as a Jew. Then a prophet. Next the Messiah and finally the Savior of the world. She was suspicious of the Jew, respectful of the prophet, longing for the Messiah and finally adoring of the Savior.

<sup>11</sup> Zahnd, Brian. *Unconditional? The Call to Radical Forgiveness*. Charisma House, 2011 p 146

<sup>12</sup> Matthew structured his gospel around five major discourses, each of which ends with the words "when Jesus had finished ..." (7:28;11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). These five major discourses described what kingdom disciples are called to be and to do. The first discourse, the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7), described *the Righteousness of the Kingdom*. Jesus taught His followers kingdom ethics – the blessings, demands and life of the kingdom. The second discourse described *the Mission of the Kingdom* (Matt 10). Jesus wanted His followers to imitate His ministry and extend His Kingdom. Thus He sent them out on a short-term training mission to preach and heal. The third discourse centered on parables – *the Mysteries of the Kingdom* (Matt 13). These parables described the presence of the Kingdom, the expansion of the Kingdom, the future of the Kingdom and the supreme worth of the Kingdom, helping His followers live within the tension of the "already-not yet" of Kingdom life. The fourth discourse described *the Community of the Kingdom* (Matt 18), highlighting the priority of humility, accountability, reconciliation, discipline and forgiveness among Jesus' followers. The fifth and final discourse described *the Consummation of the Kingdom* (Matt 23-25); Jesus was helping His followers steward their gifts and live their lives in light of the future Kingdom and coming judgment.

<sup>13</sup> The theme of peacemaking – if not the term – pervades the Sermon on the Mount. The following subjects in Jesus' famous discourse relate directly to the task of peacemaking:

- Anger and reconciliation (5:21-26)
- Not reacting violently against the one who is evil (5:38-42)<sup>13</sup>
- Loving ones enemies (5:43-48)
- Forgiving (6:12,14,15)
- Not judging others (7:1-5)

Moreover, Jesus' use of the terms *opponent* (Matthew 5:42); *gentiles* (5:47; 6:7; 6:42), *enemies* (5:43-44), *unrighteous* (5:45), and *persecution* (5:10, 11, 12, 44) in the Sermon on the Mount indicates that peacemaking is not restricted to believers only. It takes place in an unbelieving world, beyond the boundaries of the Church. Thus, it relates to broader social and global challenges such as racism, terrorism, poverty, and war.

<sup>14</sup> The concept of discerning and working with a man or woman of peace is a well recognized missiological principle. People of peace become bridges to reach others because they respond to the gospel or because they at least support those sharing the gospel. What is not a well recognized missiological principle is the spiritual dynamic of discerning the person of peace by imparting or withdrawing peace!

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<sup>15</sup> Most Western readers may see this as nothing more than a formality, a mere greeting (typical in the Jewish world, “shalom aleichem” and in the Muslim world, “Assalamualaikum”). But Jesus’ guidelines for these sent ones describe something more dynamic and spiritual than a greeting. According to New Testament scholar Donald Hagner, peace “is a benediction or blessing ..., which cannot ultimately be separated from the deeper sense of well-being associated with the gospel and its reception. The peace that the disciples can bestow is not available where the gospel and its messengers are rejected.” Hagner, Donald A.: *Word Biblical Commentary : Matthew 1-13*. electronic ed. Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998 (Logos Library System; Word Biblical Commentary 33A), S. 272.

<sup>16</sup> I am well acquainted with the painful consequences that can ensue because of the gospel. I have had friends who were renounced by their families because they were followers of Christ. I have had friends and acquaintances who were imprisoned and even martyred for the gospel. And I realize the greatest peacemaker who ever lived was crucified.

<sup>17</sup> It is worth commenting on a few other texts regarding Jesus and the sword. In Luke 22:36-38 Jesus said, “But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.” The disciples said, “See, Lord, here are two swords.” “That is enough,” he replied.

Some people interpret this as indicating that Jesus affirmed violence and that He wanted His disciples to use the sword. However, when they drew their swords to protect Jesus during His betrayal, He stopped them immediately: “Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword” (Matthew 26:52). And as Jesus stood before Pilot he said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place” (John 18:36). Jesus modeled and proclaimed a Kingdom that was extended non-violently, through love and persuasion, not the sword.

<sup>18</sup> Kaiser, W. C., Peter H. Davids, F.F. Bruce. *Hard sayings of the Bible*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996) 378.

<sup>19</sup> Wright, Bradley R.E. *Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites ... and Other Lies You've Been Told*. (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2010) 179.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 155-179.

<sup>21</sup> For more on this topic see my article “The Church as Reconciling Community: Reflections on the Comprehensive and Multi-Dimensional Nature of Peacemaking,” a paper presented for the Society of Vineyard Scholars. Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 26-28, 2012. [http://s3.amazonaws.com/churchplantmedia-cms/peacecatalyst\\_az/the-church-as-reconciling-community-web.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/churchplantmedia-cms/peacecatalyst_az/the-church-as-reconciling-community-web.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/robertson-america-asking-wrath-almighty-god-pursuing-mideast-peace-plan>

<sup>23</sup> See for example, Grudem, W. A. (1994). *Systematic theology : An introduction to biblical doctrine* (213ff.). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House 9 (electronic version), and Grenz, S., Guretzki, D., & Nordling, C. F. (1999). *Pocket dictionary of theological terms* (35). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press (electronic version).

<sup>24</sup> These Reformed theologians so stress the fact that humanity “suppresses the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom 1:18) that they minimize the fact that humanity also has a true yet imperfect knowledge of God (Rom 1:19-21).

<sup>25</sup> See the excellent article on common grace by Scott Kauffmann titled, “The Problem of Good” [http://s3.amazonaws.com/churchplantmedia-cms/peacecatalyst\\_az/problem\\_of\\_good.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/churchplantmedia-cms/peacecatalyst_az/problem_of_good.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> We live in a world filled with brilliant colors, stunning beauty and breathtaking scenes. This is God’s common grace to all: “The LORD is good to all and his compassion is over all that he has made” (Ps. 145:9). God “causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous?” (Matthew 5:45). God “has not left himself without testimony: he has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy” (Acts 14:17).

<sup>27</sup> Jesus makes two profound comments about human nature: “If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him” (Matthew 7:11)! Jesus says we are both evil *and* we can do good deeds. He makes a similar point in Luke: “If you do good to those who do good to you what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same” (Luke 6:33). According to Jesus, bad people do good things.

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This kind of ethical tension resides in the heart of every human. The spark of the divine, known as the image of God (Genesis 1:26-28) enables us to do good deeds. At the same time, because of humanity's rebellion against God (Genesis 3) the image has been defiled, resulting in a bent towards the dark side. Theologians describe this tension in terms of "dignity" and "depravity."

<sup>28</sup> All people have some knowledge of God and an inward sense of right and wrong – as Paul makes clear in Romans:

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made... (Romans 1:20)

Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them (Romans 1:32)

Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them (Romans 2:14-15).

<sup>29</sup> Because we are created in God's image, we reflect God's creative ability. We naturally figure out ways to rule the earth! We make culture; we build; we produce. Science and technology, music and art testify to this inherent drive and creative capacity in everyone.

In developing and exercising dominion over the earth, men and women reflect the wisdom of their Creator. They demonstrate God-like qualities of skill and moral virtue. Though all of these activities are tainted by sinful motives, they still reflect the excellence of our Creator and therefore bring glory to Him.

By common grace, unbelievers do good; in fact they often do amazing things. And we should see God's hand in it. We should be grateful that God's common grace operates in every friendship, every act of kindness, every scientific discovery, every technological advance. For all of this is ultimately from God.

<sup>30</sup> Harvie Conn also mentored Timothy Keller, the bestselling author and well-known Presbyterian pastor in New York. A huge part of Keller's success in the city is due to his strong emphasis on common grace. See for example, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* by Timothy Keller and Katherine Leary pp. 186-192.

<sup>31</sup> See also <http://peace-catalyst.net/blog/post/common-grace--common-ground--and-the-common-good--part-1->  
<http://peace-catalyst.net/blog/pos/common-grace--common-ground--and-the-common-good--part-2->  
<http://peace-catalyst.net/blog/post/orthodoxy--heresy-and-bridge-building>

<sup>32</sup> *Grace and Truth: Toward Christlike Relationships with Muslims*, by Rick Love. Vineyard USA, 2010. p.12-13.  
<http://www.vineyardresources.com/equip/content/grace-and-truth-toward-christlike-relationships-muslims>

<sup>33</sup> See this thoughtful analysis by Jennifer Bryson: <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2013/04/9961/>

<sup>34</sup> "Terrorism, Islam, and Mission: Reflections of a Guest in Muslim Lands" by J. Dudley Woodberry, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, January, 2002, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> See the disturbing article titled: "Fear, Inc. The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America" <http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/08/pdf/islamophobia.pdf>. For other good resources on this topic see <http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/islamophobia/islamophobia-studies-journal>, *The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims* by Nathan Lean; *Between Naivety and Hostility: Uncovering the best Christian responses to Islam in Britain* edited by Steve Bell and Colin Chapman; *The Myth of the Muslim Tide: Do Immigrants Threaten the West?* By Doug Saunders; *Who is my Enemy? Questions American Christians Must Face about Islam – and Themselves* by Lee C. Camp.

<sup>36</sup> This would include an historical analysis of how the religion was practiced in various eras and regions.

<sup>37</sup> For example, I have met many former Muslims who now follow Christ (usually referred to as Muslim background believers or MBBS). They assure me that they understand the nature of Islam better than I do because they were once Muslim. They do understand the nature of Islam in their country. But that isn't the whole story. The Muslim world is not monolithic. It is massively diverse. I lived almost nine years in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim

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country. I led an organization that served in over fifty Muslim countries. I have walked the streets of over twenty Muslim countries. I have had coffee with rich Muslims in the Gulf and tea with poor Muslims in Africa and Asia. I have had meals and enjoyed meetings with high level Muslim Princes, sheikhs and Grand Muftis around the world. I have seen secularized Muslim women with hair and face uncovered, wearing tight clothes and short dresses, and Muslim women fully covered. I have personally met the late Benazir Bhutto, a female Muslim head of state (former Prime Minister of Pakistan). So when someone says Islam teaches this or that, we need to ask, Which Islam? Which sect? Which cultural manifestation? There are multiple versions of Islam just like there are multiple versions of Christianity.

<sup>38</sup> See *The New Testament and the People of God* by N.T. Wright pp 32-46 and *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts: Affirming Truth in Modern/Postmodern World* by Paul G. Hiebert. The Wikipedia article on critical realism is also very helpful [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical\\_realism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_realism).

<sup>39</sup> There is a division within Evangelicalism regarding how to approach Islam. There are those who view Islam negatively and engage Muslims polemically and those who build bridges and focus on modeling the gospel and positive proclamation of Jesus. Martin Accad of Fuller Theological Seminary describes this as follows: “The other side of the story, however, is that this mutual discovery has also managed to split the Evangelical community into two camps. The first camp is made of those who, in their evangelistic methods, have traditionally adopted a more exclusivist and polemical approach to other religions, including in their approach to Islam. Many in that group have expressed their dismay and disbelief that Evangelicals should actually be willing to engage in dialogue with Muslims. The other is the more ‘inclusivist’ camp, the several hundred represented by the signatories of the Yale Response. These represent the position that the Gospel proclamation needs to be primarily a positive proclamation, and therefore that it is not in conflict with the principles of dialogue. Perhaps one of the most striking elements is that on both sides of this deepening divide, there are some top caliber theologians and highly seasoned missionaries. Moreover, neither side is willing to give up evangelism and mission, and all recognize and have pointed out that Islam’s persecution of Muslim converts to Christianity under the rubric of the infamous ‘apostasy law’ is unacceptable and needs to be addressed.”

<http://cms.fuller.edu/content.aspx?id=3039&terms=Common%20Word>

<sup>40</sup> I have lived in a Muslim country that has had a female head of State (Megawati Sukarno of Indonesia), and I have personally met the late Benazir Bhutto, a female Muslim head of state (former Prime Minister of Pakistan). As Madeleine Albright, the former Secretary of State notes, “The countries with the largest number of Muslims – Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Turkey – have each elected a female head of government; this is a distinction that neither any Arab state nor the United States can claim” *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs*, p. 116).

<sup>41</sup> The Amman Message 2008:16-17 refers to four Sunnī schools (*madhāhib*) and four non-Sunnī schools.

<sup>42</sup> Islamism - “a fundamentalist Islamic revivalist movement generally characterized by moral conservatism and the literal interpretation of the Koran and the attempt to implement Islamic values in all aspects of life”

(<http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=islamism>)

<sup>43</sup> For example, the The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Jordan

<http://www.aalalbayt.org/en/index.html>. See also Kamali 1998, Aslan 2006 and Bhutto 2008.

<sup>44</sup> Schwartz 2008:17

<sup>45</sup> Chapman 2007:5

<sup>46</sup> For more on this see *Grace and Truth: Toward Christlike Relationships with Muslims*.

Stafford, TX. Vineyard USA 2010

<http://www.vineyardresources.com/equip/content/grace-and-truth-toward-christlike-relationships-muslims>

<sup>47</sup> (See

[http://storage.cloversites.com/peacecatalystinternational/documents/grace%20and%20truth%20exposition%20of%20website\\_3.pdf](http://storage.cloversites.com/peacecatalystinternational/documents/grace%20and%20truth%20exposition%20of%20website_3.pdf))

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, “Global Movement Against Radical Islam” (<http://www.gmari.com>) and “Islamic Peacemaking Since 9/11” (<http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr218.html>).

<sup>49</sup> John Stott describes four possible ways the church relates to the state: “Relations between church and state have been notoriously controversial throughout the Christian centuries. To oversimplify, four main models have been tried—Erastianism (the state controls the church), theocracy (the church controls the state),

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Constantinianism (the compromise in which the state favours the church and the church accommodates to the state in order to retain its favour), and partnership (church and state recognize and encourage each other's distinct God-given responsibilities in a spirit of constructive collaboration). The fourth seems to accord best with Paul's teaching in Romans 13." Stott, J. R. W. *The message of Romans : God's good news for the world*. The Bible speaks today. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001) 339.

<sup>50</sup> As usual, John Stott does a brilliant job of summarizing Paul's thought in this section of Romans 12: "The most striking feature of this final paragraph, if we add verse 14 which anticipated it, is that it contains four resounding negative imperatives:

1. 'Do not curse' (14).
2. 'Do not repay anyone evil for evil' (17).
3. 'Do not take revenge' (19).
4. 'Do not be overcome by evil' (21).

All four prohibitions say the same thing in different words...The Christian ethic is never purely negative, however, and each of Paul's four negative imperatives is accompanied by a positive counterpart. Thus, we are not to curse but to bless (14); we are not to retaliate, but to do what is right and to live at peace (17-18); we are not to take revenge, but to leave this to God, and meanwhile to serve our enemies (19-20); and we are not to be overcome by evil, but to overcome evil with good (21). Stott, J. R. W. *The message of Romans : God's good news for the world*. The Bible speaks today. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001) 334-335.

<sup>51</sup> John Stott's excellent chapter on "Loving our Enemies" in *The Cross of Christ* (1986:295-310) has greatly influenced my thinking on this subject.

<sup>52</sup> 1 Peter 3:9-11 reflects a similar peacemaking ethic: "Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it."

<sup>53</sup> While it can be overstated or misapplied, Martin Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms captures the sense of Romans 12 and 13. Luther taught that God rules the world in two ways. He rules the earthly or left-hand kingdom through the state, which bears the sword. He rules the heavenly or right-hand kingdom through the church, which is governed by the Word (see Plass 1972, 1:292-296).

<sup>54</sup> <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/war/#4>

<sup>55</sup> <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/war/#2>

<sup>56</sup> For more information or to see a summary of Stassen's excellent Just Peacemaking practices, see the Appendix or visit: <http://justpeacemaking.org/the-practices/>

<sup>57</sup> John Stott notes, "Further light is thrown on the ambivalent nature of the state's authority when Romans 13 is compared with Revelation 13. Some thirty years have elapsed since Romans was written, and the systematic persecution of Christians has begun under the Emperor Domitian. Now the state is no longer seen as the servant of God, wielding his authority, but as the ally of the devil (pictured as a red dragon), who has given his authority to the persecuting state (pictured as a monster emerging out of the sea). Thus Revelation 13 is a satanic parody of Romans 13. Yet both are true. 'According as the State remains within its limits or transgresses them, the Christian will describe it as the Servant of God or as the instrument of the Devil.' Stott, J. R. W. *The message of Romans : God's good news for the world*. The Bible speaks today. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001) 343.

<sup>58</sup> On another occasion: "Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day." <sup>2</sup> At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. <sup>3</sup> Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!" <sup>4</sup> Those who were standing near Paul said, "You dare to insult God's high priest?" <sup>5</sup> Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'" (Acts 23:1-5).

<sup>59</sup> I was part of a group of evangelicals that spoke out against "torture" in the early years of the so called "war on terror." Our focus: No Torture, No Exceptions. I served on the advisory board of "Evangelicals for Human Rights" an organization that eventually became the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good. Ultimately the board of the National Association of Evangelicals (which represents more than 45,000 local churches from forty different

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denominations) endorsed our statement: “An Evangelical Declaration Against Torture: Protecting Human Rights in an Age of Terror.” See <http://www.nae.net/government-relations/endorsed-documents/409-an-evangelical-declaration-against-torture-protecting-human-rights-in-an-age-of-terror>.