



The Inscrutable Question: Potential Ihabod of America: Russell Kirk's *The Roots of American Order*: "The Law and the Prophets"; The Islamic War: Cal Thomas

- 17- Dr. Kirk's second chapter takes up the spiritual roots of our nation and he begins his comments with Moses at Mount Sinai:

Kirk, Russell. "The Law and the Prophets." Chap. 2 in *The Roots of American Order*. (La Salle: Open Court, 1974), 11-15 passim:

Through Moses, the moral principles that move the civilization of Europe and America and much more of the world first obtained clear expression.

"Revelation" means the unveiling of truths that men could not have obtained from simple experience in this world. It is a communication of knowledge from some source that transcends ordinary human perception. To the Israelites, Moses made known that there exists but one God, Jehovah; that God had made a covenant with His people; that He had decreed laws by which they should live. From that revelation have grown modern ethics and modern social institutions and much besides.

"Exodus" means departure: the Israelites were departing from Egypt and also from the old moral order of the cosmological empires—from that old order's conspicuous deities and arbitrary priest-kings—into a new moral order which would be called, later, the faith of Judaism. Later still this moral order revealed at Sinai would become the foundation of the moral order called Christianity.

Some twenty-nine centuries after Moses heard the voice from the burning bush, a smaller band of wanderers would embark upon another exodus, farther in distance but swifter in time than the exodus of the Israelites. The people of this later exodus were sailing for the New World.

The moral commandments revealed to Moses upon Mount Sinai were broken by the Israelites almost as soon as they were made known. Yet without knowledge of that moral order, the men of ancient Israel and Judah could not have lived in community. And so it is with the people of modern America, and of lands which inherit the moral understanding of Judaism or of Christianity.

In the dawn of every religion, some such figure as Moses may be discerned: the "seer" who sees what others cannot see. The seer communicates such truth to his followers, teaching them how to order their lives and to live together in community. The other creeds of the ancient world are dust and ashes now, but the Decalogue of Moses and the understanding of man's existence under God which Moses communicated to the people remain a living power, a source of order.

All the aspects of any civilization arise out of a people's religion: its politics, its economics, its arts, its sciences, even its simple crafts are the by-products of religious insights and a religious cult. For until human beings are tied together by some common faith, and share certain moral principles, they prey upon one another. In common worship a community forms. At the heart of every culture is a body of ethics, of distinctions between good and evil; and in the beginning, at least, those distinctions are founded upon the authority of revealed religion. Not until a people have come to share religious belief are they able to work together satisfactorily, or even to make sense of the world in which they find themselves. Thus all order could not have come into existence, had it not grown out of general belief in truths that are perceived by the moral imagination.

Thomas, Cal. "Bishop Doesn't Think Islam Is Peaceful." (Tribune Media Syndicate, 2001), 23 Oct. 2001.

Cal Thomas

Bishop doesn't think Islam is peaceful

October 23, 2001



vouching for the "peaceful" nature and intent of Islam. Oprah Winfrey has done a show on "modern Muslim women" -- none of whom would be allowed to dress in contemporary clothing, be educated, or even appear on television if they lived in radical Muslim states.

I ask the Right Reverend Bullen Dolli, an Episcopal Bishop in Sudan, what he believes about the nature and intent of contemporary Islam. "It is a militant religion," he tells me and laughs at those who serve as its character witnesses.

Bishop Dolli was in Washington last week at the invitation of the Institute on Religion and Democracy. He attempted to warn Congress and anyone else who would listen of the dangers to his country and the United States posed by Islam, especially in its militant form.

In Sudan, says Bishop Dolli, the coercive instruments of the state use brutal force to insure that no other religion but Islam is practiced. The congregation of All Saints Cathedral in Khartoum, a peaceful assembly of Christians, was recently disbanded and many members were arrested, tried in kangaroo courts and either imprisoned or punished by caning.

Bishop Dolli says former Sudanese President Sadiq el-Mahdi has prophesied that by 2010, the world will be dominated by Islam. His prophecy is written in Sudanese school textbooks.

In Sudan, says Bishop Dolli, many Christian church buildings have been either bulldozed or bombed from the air. Non-Muslims suffer persecution in employment, and all women, whether Muslim or not, are forced to wear the black chador and veil. The government army has been renamed "Jundy Allah" (the Army of Allah) and they fight jihad (holy war) against those in Southern Sudan and non-militant Moslems.

Slavery continues to be practiced by the murahaleen, members of government-backed militias who regularly conduct raids against Christians in Southern Sudan. The murahaleen have killed thousands, enslaved children and young women, stolen cattle, plundered and burned food stores and crops and are reported by various human rights organizations to have raped both men and women.

Over 2 million Sudanese civilians are estimated to have died since 1983 as a result of the continuing warfare, according to the IRD. Many millions more have been forced to flee their homes. Bishop Dolli says radical Islam's goal is to dominate the entire African continent with its militant, oppressive, dangerous and increasingly popular brand of religion. So-called "Islamic moderates," in the bishop's view, are among the first targeted for extermination by the extremists, even before they go after Jews and Christians.

If Sudan is too far away to worry about, is Potomac, Md. close enough? The Washington Post's Marc Fisher recently visited a Muslim school in that D.C. suburb. What he found ought to send chills up every American spine. An eighth grader told Fisher: "If I had to choose sides, I'd stay with being Muslim. Being an American means nothing to me. I'm not even proud of telling my cousins in Pakistan that I'm American."

The school principal said: "Allegiance to national authority is one thing, but the one who gives us life is more entitled to that authority. This is the story of religion through all time. When national laws and values go counter to what the Creator believes, we are 100 percent against it."

When Christians, Jews and those of most other faiths disagree with the American government, they have worked within the system to change it, or in extreme cases (as with Martin Luther King Jr.) have been willing to suffer government's punishment for violating our laws for a nobler purpose. It is different with militant Islam, which seeks to dominate the nation in which it grows and, when in control, diminishes the rights of all who disagree.

Don't think so? Is there a country controlled by Islamic militants that guarantees equal rights for all? Why are we allowing Muslim schools in this country to promote ideas that are seditious? Bishop Dolli knows better. Why don't the rest of us, especially after Sept. 11?

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The judgments of God are manifest in the world of today. The time has come to bring home to men that these are right judgments on human sin; that men bear these consequences inevitably, because they are morally responsible beings who have denied their own nature in denying their responsibility to their neighbors.

- 18- This was an extended reading but the principles discussed by Dr. Kirk highlight the essentials required for the continuance of a civil social order. And the key element which he emphasized is the statement, “At the heart of every culture is a body of ethics, of distinctions between good and evil; and in the beginning, at least, those distinctions are founded upon the authority of revealed religion.”
- 19- Cicero in *The Republic* compared Roman culture to a picture whose colors had faded over the centuries. This is a way of stating that the glory of Rome grew dim and could only be brightened by a return to the permanent things found in the absolutes of a moral and civil order.
- 20- The colors of our nation’s glory have faded over the past forty years. We have lost touch with our founding principles that were based on revelations from Sinai and it is reflected in the loss of harmony within the institutions of the commonwealth.
- 21- When any client nation allows the spiritual underpinning of its culture to fade it will be replaced by the human viewpoint, human good, and evil provided by the devil’s lie communicated to the masses by duplicity and deceit.
- 22- Over four decades the nation’s consciousness has absorbed these doctrines of demons and as a result we have replaced the essential standards required of a free people with notions and opinions that cannot withstand the wrath of a righteous God that demands justice upon deviations from His righteousness.
- 23- Our national consciousness has developed an officious set of ethical standards producing a supercilious code of public morality through complete rejection of biblical guidance and results in a set of values that support human good and promote evil. As these notions gain ascendancy the colors of our nation’s glory continue to fade accordingly. Here are some examples of principles upheld by the new morality that document America’s fading glory.