

## **A Christian's Guide to the Koran, Lesson 6, Islam: The Ecumenical Approach**

Not a lot to say about the ecumenical approach to Islam, except this: It will not work. A fish and an alligator may try to be ecumenical but eventually one will be inside the other. The history of ecumenicity thus far is that the most aggressive group tends to swallow up the others. Look closely at the line of Protestants marching back to Rome, denying the Reformation, denying the significance of salvation by grace through faith, denying that the Scriptures are enough, believing it is Rome out of which we came, when we all actually descended from the events that transpired in an upper room of a house in Jerusalem, A.D. 33. Hear the big sucking sound as Rome's vacuum brings them in from every corner of the earth? Rome calls to ecumenicity, but ends in devouring.

And, no, there is also no way to unite with Islam either. Its premise, its god, its book, its main character, its doctrines, its goals, its final destination, all are radically different from the Christian's. So you see similarities? To use another animal analogy, does it matter that a man and a bear both have legs, eyes, and skin? They are two different species, and one who confuses them does so at his own peril. We look not for the similarities of our religions, but for the dangerous and deadly differences, so that we may warn others.

When I think of "Chrislam", the ill-fated attempt of some to combine Christ with Muhammad, and the motivations behind it, I cannot help but think of the beloved Billy Graham, a man whom I honor to this day for the Gospel he placed in my heart as a young man.

Billy had an approach to Catholicism in his early days that differed radically from his later method. In those first days, Billy and his team went door to door in Catholic neighborhoods, winning Catholics to Jesus Christ. Catholics came to his crusades and were saved.

But his approach changed. There came a time when to offend a Catholic and the Catholic powers that ruled certain cities became an issue. He made a conscious decision not to be offensive, to unite with Catholicism in his Crusades and messages. He began to praise the current Pope. He promoted Catholic books. In turn he received an honorary degree from a Romanist college, and unceasing public praise from Romanist powers. And in his Crusades, priests and nuns were among the counselors that welcomed seekers into the fold following a repentance-inducing message.

Though the ecumenical approach opened doors for him personally, in Latin America and elsewhere, the confusion mounted. What were Catholic bishops doing on the platform of Billy's meetings? The missionaries and nationals wanted to know what to tell people who had just been rescued from the works-based Catholic religion. Were they now to go back? Ecumenicity always confuses, and waters down.

One wonders what might have happened to Billy Graham if he had continued his early approach, a simple Gospel message to Romanists everywhere, Papal power notwithstanding?

In those early days, Brother Billy grouped Catholicism with Communism and the present subject of discussion, Islam, as the world's three greatest threats. He was right on then and he is right on now. Rome will rise again. That's another story. Communism has never left us. That too is another story. Islam is here, and Christians, many of whom should know better, are getting cozy with it.

May no Christian ever be anti-Muslim. Let's draw that line now. Or anti-Catholic, or even anti-Communist. People are people, lost and groping for answers and victims of birth and geographical location and faulty thinking. But may we be totally opposed to the lies that detract from the supremacy of Christ and His Cross. May we be anti-Islam.

Not that the Koran is all wrong. It takes talent to make a book 100% false. I speak of the poisonous denials of the faith of Jesus found on so many pages of Islam's holy book.

When dealing with Muslims or Christians who believe that basically we serve the same God and have the same general purposes, we must use the words of the Koran itself. It is to this end that I am going to take you through the Koran to see these words, coupled with the Bible statements which they attempt to supersede.

I listen not to those who proclaim Islam to be a peaceful religion, except in the sense of the *Pax Romana*, the peace of the Roman Empire that squashed all opposition by brutal force, nor to radicals who can only hate. I read the Koran's doctrines for myself, and make my own judgments. True it is that translated Arabic lends itself to much in the way of interpretation, even among Muslim scholars, who, just as Christian scholars, fuss among themselves. True also that Eastern thought is not Western thought. But enough in the Koran is in plainly-to-be-understood language. The intention of the Koran's creator to offset Jewish and Christian belief is obvious. Those who know the Bible and believe it with all of their hearts, should have no trouble seeing the Koran for what it is.

Did Jesus call His people to dialogue or to declare? To have friendship or to confront people with truth? To a mutual respect or to a radical repentance? To political correctness and acceptability or predictable persecution and rejection? I've made my decision.