

special **ATTACK ON AMERICA** edition

The Operation Reveille
Shofar

Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a house divided against itself falls (Luke 11:17).

FEATURE

Kingdoms in Conflict: Radical Islam Collides with American Way

by Bruce Sidebotham

The attack at Pearl Harbor should never have caught America by surprise. For years Japan had been expanding her "Co-Prosperty Sphere" through brutal invasions. However, had America not been devastatingly surprised, Hitler and Hirohito might have ruled Europe and Asia to this very day.

The next major world polarization is not between Fascism and freedom. It is not between capitalism and Communism. It will be between secularism and Sharia law, and this second Pearl Harbor may galvanize America into its leadership role.

Radical Islam has been consuming human life and freedom more and more. Sharia law opposes freedoms for conscience, expression and women, the way communism opposes private ownership. In Pakistan, Ayub Masih faces death by hanging for allegedly insulting Mohammed. In Afghanistan, women are denied education, employment, and medical care. Honor killings are growing in Turkey where mothers and fathers kill their teenage daughters for socializing with boys to the tune of at least 200 a year.

Systems that press people into bondage have always sought to subdue

others who are free. Wealth from Mideast oil and Central Asian opium is financing varying degrees of genocidal slaughter. Hostagetaking insurgents are fighting for Sharia law in parts of the Philippines. Chechnyan rebels want an independent Muslim state. Indonesian and Sudanese radical militias have been exterminating whole Christian villages while meeting minimal outside interference.

It may help to differentiate among Muslims between practitioners and implementers of Sharia law. Many practicing Muslims are aghast at what has happened and many governments of Muslim majority countries are secular. It is the latter subset behind climaxing atrocities where even women and children are considered to be combatants.

However, radical Muslims see themselves as victims. Middle Eastern morality is external and based upon appearances rather than upon actual guilt or innocence. Sexual desires, for example, are not self controlled, but



Spiritual conflicts have physical manifestations.

are controlled with strict rules about how women dress and act. The variety of dress and behavior brought to the heart of Islam by Israel and inescapable Western media destroys Muslim social control. As Christian control over western culture deteriorates, Christianity itself remains intact, but without control over its people, Islam dies. Advocates of strict Islamic law are battling desperately against encroaching Western influence to preserve the "purity" of Islam for future generations. Suicide bombers and kamikaze pilots are desperate people.

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Secularism and Sharia law are on collision courses. Secularism promotes promiscuity and undermines traditional male and female distinctions. Radical Islam oppresses women and undermines personal freedoms.

We are witnessing upheaval in a kingdom divided against itself (Lk 11:17). The Kingdom of God will surely collect some spoils. When contrasting private aspirations for Islam with the evil recently exposed, many Muslims and many politically correct secularists may rethink their spiritual allegiances.

To gather these war spoils, Christians need to disassociate themselves from ungodly elements of

secularism better than Islam can be parted from Sharia law. Otherwise, the association of Christians with excessive liberty looks no better than the connection of Muslims with extreme oppression.

Perhaps, with increasing hostility to Christians in public sectors like schools, government, and entertainment, God is already facilitating this necessary cultural separation.

American willingness to defend freedom at nearly any cost has historically led her to avoid confrontation for as long as possible. A menace to this godly value of freedom has been steadily growing.

From the days of Mohammed, radical Islam has been stamping out Christian and non-Christian liberty. Now that America herself has been violently struck, black Sudanese men, white Afghani women, and brown Indonesian children are her people's blood brethren. Will America join them in their struggle?

Since we must render to Caesar what is Caesar's (Mt 22:21), we might as well sacrifice our conscriptable children and selves to defend the philosophical system which has historically afforded Christianity the most opportunity while trying at the same time to avoid becoming an inseparable part of it.

NEWS AND NEEDS

Saudi Arabia Raids Homes, Arrests Expatriates for Christian Worship

Saudi Arabia has begun cracking down on expatriate Christians.

Since mid-July, at least 13 foreign Christians have been arrested in Jeddah. They come from India, Ethiopia, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Eritrea, and are members of expatriate house church groups.

Immigrant workers compose one-third of Saudi Arabia's population. Many of these are Christians from the Philippines, India, Korea and elsewhere. They are not permitted to display any Christian symbols or Bibles. They may not meet publicly to worship or pray.

Some Christians have reported that upon entering the country their personal Bibles were taken away and placed into a paper shredder before their eyes. Saudi Arabia has no churches.

This latest wave of arrests may stem from a farewell party in late June for a house church leader that was attended by some 400 guests.

The Rev. Steven Snyder, president of the International Christian Concern, a Washington-based human rights organization, charged that the Saudi government is infringing on the rights of Christians to practice their faith. He pointed out that only Muslims are allowed to practice their religion in the country.

"It appears that the Saudi authorities are extremely paranoid about protecting Islam in their country," Snyder said.

Eskinder Menghis, an Ethiopian, was arrested in a midnight raid. Bibles, books, family photos and video and audiotapes were confiscated.

A week earlier, Prabhu Isaac, a Christian hospital worker who had lived in the country for 10 years with his wife, was dragged from his home in the middle of the night by the Muttawa religious police.

Among Isaac's seized belongings was his computer which contained names and addresses of other Christians in the country. One of those names was that of Menghis.

The case of a Nigerian named Buliamin is particularly disturbing. Although a Christian, his passport identifies him as a Muslim, so he could be charged with apostasy.

Buliamin may have converted away from Islam, or he may be a Christian who identified himself in his passport application as a Muslim to make it easier for him to get a job.

Whereas most foreign nationals arrested on charges related to their religious faith are eventually deported, this would not necessarily apply to the Nigerian. The penalty for apostasy is death.

Saudi authorities appear to have launched the crackdown to expose the underground Christian network. Although no one has been executed recently for his or her faith, some report

that Saudi converts to Christianity have been executed on trumped up capital charges, such as dealing drugs.

The U.S. government has been slow to confront Saudi Arabia over religious freedom. Last year's State Department report on international religious freedom said, "Saudi Arabia is an Islamic monarchy without constitutional protection for freedom of religion, and such protection does not exist in practice."

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom that was created by the 1998 Religious Freedom Act has recommended every year that Saudi Arabia be listed with other countries like China and Iran as a country of particular concern for which the President must report to Congress on action that he intends to take. Each year the recommendation has been ignored. This October will be the Bush administration's first opportunity to decide whether or not to place Saudi Arabia on the list.

Once listed, there are fifteen levels of action which can be taken within diplomatic, cultural and economic spheres. These range from a private diplomatic rebuke to halting financial assistance. The President may also suggest other measures or he may decide to waive any actions based on other U.S. interests that go beyond the human rights realm.

Pakistan Limits Free Expression: Insulting Mohammed is Capital Crime

A regional high court rejected the appeal of Pakistan's highest profile Christian prisoner in late July, upholding a lower court verdict to execute Ayub Masih for alleged blasphemy against Mohammed.

Amnesty International considers Ayub Masih to be a prisoner of conscience, held solely for his religious beliefs, and has repeatedly urged the government of Pakistan to immediately and unconditionally release him.

Ayub was arrested on 14 October 1996 in his village of Arifabad after a complaint filed by a Muslim, Muhammad Akam, who alleged that he heard Ayub saying, "If you want to know the truth about Islam, then read Salman Rushdie."

According to reliable sources, however, the charges were fabricated in order to force fifteen Christian families to drop a land dispute in Ayub's village. Since Ayub's arrest, the other Christian families have been evicted from their homes. Their land was confiscated on the same day that Ayub was arrested. The Catholic Church's National

Commission for Justice and Peace reports that the house belonging to Masih's family is now occupied by his accuser.

Proceedings have been heavily influenced by pressure from Islamic fundamentalists. On the day of the initial trial, extremists gathered outside the court to intimidate the judge and the defense lawyer. Protestors tried to snatch the case file away, and they shouted threats. "Even if the court releases Ayub Masih, even then we will kill him," they vowed, "and we will kill you also."

The case was transferred from Arifwala to Sahiwal for fear that pressure from extremists would jeopardize the legal process.

On 6 November 1997, Muhammad Akam shot at Ayub in the Sahiwal courtroom. No action against Muhammad Akam was taken.

The closed prison trial, at which Ayub was denied the right to a defense, concluded on 27 April 1998 with the Session Court judge of Sahiwal district sentencing Ayub to death by hanging.

Ayub Masih

The death penalty against Ayub was suspended on the 11 May 1998, pending this appeal that was just rejected. Appeal to the Supreme Court of Pakistan was filed on 22 August 2001 by defense counsel Abid Mito.

Ayub continues to languish in solitary confinement in Multan prison with no light, no toilet facility and no fan to cool him from intense heat. The temperature in his four-by-six foot cell often exceeds 120° F.

Agenda to Spread Shari'a Law Manifested in Nigeria

Nigeria's northern states will receive assistance from Saudi Arabia, Iran, Libya, Sudan and Malaysia at implementing the Shari'a Islamic legal system.

Governor Alhaji Ibrahim Saminu Turaki of northern Nigeria's Jigawa state told Muslim leaders in his office in Dutse on

August 14 that these countries are willing to assist in training Muslim clerics and judges who would implement and enforce the Islamic legal code.

His administration has sent judges from Jigawa to Malaysia and Sudan to study implementing Shari'a. Both countries have provided books on Islamic jurisprudence.

Jigawa adopted the Islamic legal system on 2 August, becoming the sixth state in northern Nigeria to declare itself Islamic. Addressing a press conference, the secretary to the Jigawa state government said that all conventional state judicial courts were converting to Islamic courts.

Nigeria is Africa's most populous state. It is almost evenly divided between Muslims and Christians. Muslims predominate in the north.

The government is also divided along religious lines. Vice President Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives Alhaji Ghali Na'abba are both Muslims and favor Islamic law. However, President Olusegun Obasanjo is a Christian and has declared that Shari'a law is unconstitutional.

Hundreds of Nigerians have died from religious violence this year.

