

DIANE CHARLES BRESLIN, EX-CATHOLIC, USA (PART 2 OF 3)

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Description: Diane's readings of Islam cause her to again love Jesus and Mary, but a true love in a new light.

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The Others

It was in my preparation for my master's degree that I first heard of the Quran. Up until then, as most Americans, I knew only of "the Arabs" as mysterious, dark predators out to plunder our civilization. Islam was never mentioned – only the surly, dirty Arabs, camels and tents in the desert. As a child in religion class, I often wondered who were the other people? Jesus walked in Caana and Galilee and Nazareth, but he had blue eyes — who were the other people? I had a sense that there was a missing link somewhere. In 1967 during the Arab-Israeli war, we all got our first glimpse of the other people, and they were clearly viewed by most as the enemy. But for me, I liked them, and for no apparent reason. I cannot to this day explain it, except to now realize that they were my Muslim brothers.

I was about 35 when I read my first page of Quran. I opened it with the intention of a casual browse to get acquainted with the religion of the inhabitants of the region I was majoring in for my Master's Degree. God caused the book to fall open to Surat al-Mu'minun (The Believers) verses 52-54:

“Verily, this your nation is one nation and I am your Lord so keep your duty to Me. But they broke up their command into sects, each one rejoicing in its belief. So leave them in their error until a time.” (Quran 23:52-54)

From the first reading, I knew that this was certain truth- clear and forceful, revealing the essence of all humanity and verifying all I had studied as a History major. Humanity's pathetic rejection of the truth, their unceasing vain competition to be special and their neglectfulness of the purpose for their very existence all set forward in a few words. Nation states, nationalities, cultures, languages – all feeling superior, when in fact, all these identities mask the only reality which we ought to rejoice in sharing- that is to serve one master, THE ONE Who created everything and Who owns everything.

I Still Love Jesus and Mary

As a child I used to say the phrase “Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen,” found in the prayer “Hail Mary”. I now see how much Mary has been maligned by the misrepresentation of her as the mother of the godhead. It is quite enough to view her as chosen above all women to bear the great prophet Jesus by the Virgin Birth. My mom would often defend her constant pleas for Mary’s help by explaining that she too was a mother and understood a mother’s sorrows. It would be far more useful for my mom and all others to contemplate how the most pure Mary was slandered by the Jews of her time and accused of a most despicable sin, that of fornication. Mary bore all of this, knowing that she would be vindicated by the Almighty, and that she would be given the strength to bear all of their calumnies.

This recognition of Mary’s faith and trust in God’s mercy will allow one to recognize her most exalted position among women, and at the same time remove the slander of calling her the mother of God, which is an even worse accusation than that of the Jews of her time. As a Muslim you may love Mary and Jesus, but to love God more will gain you the Paradise, as He is the One whose rules you must obey. He will judge you on a day when no one else can help you. He created you, and Jesus, and his blessed mother Mary, as He created Muhammad. All died or will die – God never dies.

Jesus (Isa in Arabic) never once claimed to be the godhead. Rather, he repeatedly referred to himself as being sent. As I look back on the confusion I experienced in my youth, its root lay in the church’s claim that Jesus was more than he himself admitted. The church fathers formulated a doctrine to invent the concept of Trinity. It is this confused rendering of the original Torah and Injil [Gospel] (scriptures given to Moses and Jesus) which is at the core of the issue of Trinity.

In honest fact, it is enough to simply state that Jesus was a prophet, yes, a messenger who came with the word of the One Who sent him. If we view Jesus, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, in this correct light, it’s easy to then accept Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, as his younger brother who came with the very same mission – to call all to the worship of the Almighty ONE, Who created everything and to whom we shall all return. It is of no consequence whatsoever to debate their physical features. Arab, Jew, Caucasian, blue or brown eyes, long or short hair – all totally irrelevant as to their importance as bearers of the message. Whenever I think of Jesus now, after knowing about Islam, I feel that connectedness which one feels in a happy family – a family of believers. You see Jesus was a “Muslim”, one who submits to his Lord above.

The first of the “Ten Commandments” state:

1. I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have false gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy god in vain.

Anyone who knows the correct meaning of “la ilaha ill-Allah” (there is no god but God) will immediately recognize the similarity in this testimony. Then we can really start to bring together the real story of all the prophets and put an end to the distortions.

“And they said the Most Merciful has taken a son. Indeed you have brought forth a terrible evil thing. Whereby the heavens are almost torn, and the earth split asunder, and the mountains fall in ruins.” (Quran 19:88-90)

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