

Christians In The Middle East

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has said that by invading Iraq the British and American governments have made life **more difficult** for Christians in the Middle East. In particular, large numbers of Christian refugees are leaving Iraq in fear for their lives. But it's not the Coalition forces whom they fear. The alleged responsibility of the British and Americans is indirect. What is it?

Islamists say that Christians are crusaders trying to dominate the Middle East along with the American and British governments. Hence the Islamists' campaign of terrorism against them is not unprovoked religious persecution and mass murder but simple self-defence. That the Islamists made that argument is not news. But why has Rowan Williams accepted it?

On the purely factual level he is simply wrong. For example, in Sudan, Islamists have been trying to **exterminate** Sudanese Christians on and off since 1955. The American government can't have prompted this campaign of genocide by invading Iraq. And, as **Daniel Pipes** points out, Christians have been disappearing from Iraq and most other countries in the region for several decades.

Williams blames the American and British governments because he has a cartoonish view of the world in which foreign people are only ever poor or violent because the rich Western countries have persecuted them. He doesn't treat Islamists in the Middle East as human beings, responsible for their actions, but only as ciphers, their deeply held convictions mere reflexes, determined by the decisions of Westerners. That's why he doesn't say that the Islamists are to blame for murdering and persecuting people, and instead blames the American and British governments who are trying to prevent the Islamists from doing that.

In doing so, he isn't just slandering the West, he is also doing a disservice to the Islamists by not expecting them to act as civilised human beings. And by publicly transferring responsibility for their crimes specifically to those who are trying to stop them, he is collaborating with them against their victims, including many Christians. Williams may be well-intentioned, but his moral relativism can only make the terrible situation in the Middle East worse.

You've said it all. Thanks.

by **AIS** on Tue, 01/09/2007 - 02:23 | [reply](#)

Reframing the issues

Hi, Apart from all the other misconceptions, offences against reason and confusion of ideas, originating from a relativist world view and its tendency to live exclusively in the here and now, is the hole in our historic awareness. And so it happens that without that knowledge we are re-framing the story of ourselves through the eyes and in the terminology of Islam. This apparently extends to the Anglican archbishop, which is a shame. He of all people should know better. We've now heard so often about our appalling record (crusades, imperialism, slave-trade, colonialism), that we have come to believe it ourselves and are repeating it in those terms. Perhaps it's time the truth be told, that without Christian civilization, built on the ruins of Athens and Rome, we would today be quite a different lot. And that we owe Christianity Universal Human Rights (not the U.N. as some are fond to point out), the rule of law, labour rights, science and all the other human achievements that are presently claimed by the children of the Enlightenment. Yes, we owe Christians in the East a great deal as well; they are the original inhabitants of Asia Minor and the Near East, that have been conquered, reduced to dhimmitude and left to fend for themselves. By the way, it is another misunderstanding of relativism to think that if you "talk yourself down", correspondingly you "talk the other up". Quite the contrary is the case!
Nice blog! Keep it up! Cheerio! Cassandra
<http://millennium-notes.blogspot.com/>

by **Cassandra** on Tue, 01/09/2007 - 13:25 | [reply](#)

Tolerance of Intolerance

Relativistic thinking leads to a peculiar problem. If one person cannot judge another's behavior because he does not live in his skin and cannot see through his eyes, then how should disagreements be settled? If each antagonist's conflicting idea about what each will do is determined by equally valid but differing perspectives, then a philosophy that starts out sounding tolerant to each, devolves into a philosophy that supports conflicting patterns of behavior, otherwise known as violence.

By uncritically accepting the Islamists perspective that Westerners are "Christian Crusaders", no doubt in the name of being tolerant, the Archbishop unwittingly accepts the legitimacy of the consequences of that worldview, namely the massacre of Christians -- surely the height of intolerance.

The Archbishop, like relativists who argue similarly, adopts a morally inconsistent and therefore morally wrong position: The tolerance of intolerance.

by a reader on Wed, 01/10/2007 - 00:54 | [reply](#)

Your comment

Really enjoyed and appreciated your comments! I used them today in a post by your leave. You can find them here:

<http://millennium-notes.blogspot.com/2007/01/impossible-made-possible-dictatorship.html>

If you have any objections or would again like to comment, please by all means.

Best, Cassandra.

by **Cassandra** on Fri, 01/12/2007 - 21:56 | [reply](#)