

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

## What Can Be Done?

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“Truth advances, & error recedes step by step only; and to do to our fellow-men the most good in our power, we must lead where we can, follow where we cannot, and still go with them, watching always the favorable moment for helping them to another step.”

*Thomas Jefferson, 1814*

On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in favor of gay marriage. In the United States, this led to an outcry among those disagreeing with the decision. In the Middle East, it led to butchery.

Members of ISIS threw homosexuals off the roof of a building. On social media, they even used the hash tag “#Love Wins” to mock the Court’s decision.



That same month, ISIS put other victims in a steel cage and lowered them into a pool of water. Cameras were attached to the cage so that a global audience could watch these “infidels” suffer a horrific death as the water rose to the roof the cage, drowning those inside.

Still another set of victims had wires put around their necks, so a video camera could record their heads being blown off.

None of these shocking forms of murder is going to make most of the world care, and here’s why: We’ve been deceived. We’ve been rendered blind. We’ve been trained by phony politicians in Washington to focus on bogus “injustices” on the home front—the so-called wars on women or against gays.

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There *is* a war against women going on, to be sure. There is a war against gays under way. But these wars are not here in America. They are over there. They are in the Muslim world. But we don't hear Lena Dunham or George Takei talking about that.

Try to lecture a gay man in Iran—if one dared to surface—about American “intolerance” to homosexuals and he'd laugh at you. Tell a Yazidi refugee about the “plight” of American women being denied birth control and she'd scoff at you. The petty nonsense we preoccupy ourselves with in America is laughable. Even worse, it's dangerous.

There simply is no comparison.

Real injustices are happening right now—in plain view—but we can't see them, since so many contrived, phony injustices are constantly placed in our way.

We have to start over. We have to get back to basics. We have to relearn how to become strong men and women. Strong in faith. Strong in values and principles.

We have to reset our own priorities. And then lead others to the light.

Jihad's cost to civilization is incalculable. Over the centuries Muslim armies have burned libraries, razed cities, and conquered large swaths of the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Europe. They have enslaved, starved, and massacred millions of men, women, and children—all in the name of Islam.

As we've seen, the jihadists are *not* distorting their religion. They believe they're acting in accordance with their faith and they can cite chapter and verse to justify every beheading, crucifixion, act of vandalism, and degradation of the “infidels” who happen to get in their way.

Our elected leaders often refuse to acknowledge these facts. President Obama says our enemies are “people who have perverted Islam.” President George W. Bush said that al-Qaeda terrorists were “traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself.”

Their reticence is understandable in some ways. The Bush administration wanted to head off accusations that the United States was at war with Islam, and by extension more than 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide. President Bush, in fact, often described the War on Terror as “a war against individuals who absolutely hate what America stands for” and as “a war against evil, not against Islam.”

The problem with those descriptions is that they obscure who we're fighting and what victory might look like. There's no question that evil does exist. But it has a name: *Islamism*. Saying that Islamism has nothing to do with Islam is like saying that a particular

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cut of beef has nothing to do with a cow. They are inexorably linked; one grows inside the other. There are plenty of ways to practice Islam—and plenty of choices in cuts of steak—but they all come from the same place.

President Obama himself said in a CNN interview in February 2015 that there is “an element growing out of Muslim communities in certain parts of the world that have . . . embraced a nihilistic, violent, almost Medieval interpretation of Islam.” But, he then added, “It is absolutely true that I reject a notion that somehow that creates a religious war because the overwhelming majority of Muslims reject that interpretation of Islam. They don’t even recognize it as being Islam.”

In reality, tens of millions of Muslims *do* recognize it as being Islam. It does no good to sugarcoat the truth. Our leaders may say we’re not fighting a religious war, but the jihadists most certainly are.

This book is a start at arming you with the truth. But it’s just a start. We have to do more. An educated citizenry needs to fight back. And here’s how to do it.

## 1. WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE ENEMY

We cannot be afraid to understand our opponents—domestically or internationally—on their own terms, defined by the rules and teachings that motivate them and organize their philosophy.

Yet our inability, or perhaps our unwillingness, to come to terms with an enemy that openly declares its philosophy, the laws under which it operates, and its goals is a reflection of what our society has become.

Our willful blindness—whether due to political correctness or outright fear—is *killing us*.

Too many Americans still take at face value the lies of our nation’s leaders that Islam is fundamentally “a religion of peace” and that the likes of ISIS, Boko Haram, and al-Qaeda have distorted it and are therefore “not Islamic.” We also take for granted the separation of church and state in America. But there is no separation of mosque and state in orthodox Islam. The only true law is the law of Allah.

As we’ve seen throughout this book, Islamic rules of war and for the proper subjugation of pagans, Christians, and Jews have been spelled out clearly for Muslims from the very beginning, more than 1,400 years ago. Their teachings about war, conquest, and submission remain central to orthodox Islam today. Those messages are heard every

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Friday in mosques from Ann Arbor and Boston to London and Cairo, and all the way to Islamabad and Jakarta.

ISIS is literally razing the birthplace of human civilization in Iraq and Syria to build a new Caliphate. In early 2015, the Islamic State pillaged and smashed priceless artifacts in Iraq's Mosul Museum. A masked ISIS spokesman explained in a video that the ancient Assyrians and Akkadians were "polytheists," so it was right to destroy what remained of their civilization: "These statues and idols, these artifacts, if God has ordered its removal, they became worthless to us even if they are worth billions of dollars."

Soon afterward, ISIS vandals demolished the ruins of Hatra, a key stronghold and trade center of the Parthian Empire, which had been a major power in ancient Persia some two thousand years ago. They also pillaged and demolished hundreds of artifacts in the ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud, where the Tower of Babel once stood, before leveling the entire place with explosives. In some cases, ISIS's religious objections to supposed "idols" are secondary to making a profit off them. The group has smuggled and sold millions of dollars' worth of ancient artifacts. "They steal everything that they can sell, and what they can't sell, they destroy," said Iraq's deputy minister for antiquities and heritage.

Boko Haram—a group whose name translates roughly to "Western education is forbidden"—has slaughtered thousands of Christians in Nigeria. The group, which formally pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in March 2015, takes Christian girls as young as nine or ten years old as sexual slaves. Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau, is completely unapologetic about the practice. "There are slaves in Islam," he said in 2014, "you should know this. Prophet Muhammad took slaves himself during [the] Badr war."

The Badr "war" was the decisive battle in A.D. 624 that led to Muhammad's conquest of his home city of Mecca and, eventually, the entire Arabian Peninsula. Twenty-first-century jihadists would like nothing more than to repeat that history.

Jihad's depredations aren't limited to the Middle East, Africa, or South Asia. Al-Qaeda made its intentions—and its total rejection of Western norms—known to the United States and the world long before Osama bin Laden became a household name. A document discovered in Manchester, England, called "The Al Qaeda Manual," in fact, transparently lays out the organization's mission:

The confrontation that we are calling for with the apostate regimes does not know Socratic debates . . . Platonic ideals . . . nor Aristotelian diplomacy. But it knows the dialogue of bullets, the ideals of assassination, bombing and destruction, and the diplomacy of the cannon and the machine gun.

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... Islamic governments have never and will never be established through peaceful solutions and cooperative councils. They are established as they have [always] been:

“by pen and gun;  
“by word and bullet; and  
“by tongue and teeth.”

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Never before in our history has the United States had to account for the personal and private beliefs of its enemies. When the United States fought Nazism and fascism, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the *New York Times* didn't say, “Not all Germans . . .” or “Not all Italians . . .” Most Americans understood that “not all Russians” wanted to eradicate the United States during the Cold War. Nevertheless, the regimes of Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and Soviet Russia were implacable foes and existential threats to our way of life. They needed to be defeated militarily *and* ideologically.

The same must be said of Muslims who rally under the black flag of jihad. In February 2015, the left-leaning *Atlantic* magazine published a blockbuster story by Graeme Wood titled “What ISIS Really Wants.” I talked about it at length on my radio program. The article is a must-read for anyone who seeks genuine understanding about the Islamic State's goals.

Wood begins by assuring his readers that “nearly all” Muslims reject ISIS. “But,” he writes, “pretending that [the Islamic State] isn't actually a religious, millenarian group, with theology that must be understood to be combatted, has already led the United States to underestimate it and back foolish schemes to counter it.”

Wood points out that many Americans “tend to see jihadism as monolithic, and to apply the logic of al-Qaeda to an organization that has decisively eclipsed it.” That's a mistake, he argues. I agree with him that while there are different shades of jihad, all of those factions rely on the same holy book, traditions, and religious laws.

More important, Wood argues, the Islamic State's jihadists are “not modern secular people, with modern political concerns, wearing medieval religious disguise. ... In fact, much of what the group does looks nonsensical except in light of a sincere, carefully considered commitment to returning civilization to a seventh-century legal environment, and ultimately to bringing about the apocalypse.”

As we've seen, the voices of jihad have made their purpose plain again and again. They are bent on a new Holocaust, one that engulfs Christians and Jews in the Middle East and around the world. So how many more innocent Christians need to be crucified or

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beheaded until we start taking ISIS at its word? How many Jews have to die before we understand that Hezbollah and Hamas, along with their patrons in Iran, really mean what they say about wiping Israel off the map?

It's true that many Muslims in the United States and abroad reject and condemn violent jihad. But it doesn't follow that the violent jihadists of ISIS, al-Qaeda, and their confederates are not truly Islamic. And it certainly doesn't mean that Muslims reject everything that ISIS, al-Qaeda, and the others espouse.

A 2013 Pew poll found sizable minorities of Muslims in eleven countries—including nominal U.S. allies—held favorable views of al-Qaeda, Hamas, and Hezbollah. One in five Egyptians approve of al-Qaeda's work, while 23 percent of Indonesians—a nation with a "moderate" Muslim population of more than 202 million, the largest on earth—say they support the terrorist group's goals. Overall, about one-third of Muslims approve of Hamas, and one in four think highly of Hezbollah.

If that isn't worrisome enough, 15 percent of Muslims in Turkey support suicide bombing and a little over half of all Turks whom Pew surveyed say they aren't the least bit worried about Islamic extremism. Don't forget, Turkey is a NATO ally that has long aspired to join the European Union. Islamism's resurgence in the former seat of the Ottoman Empire appeared to suffer a setback in June 2015, when President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's "Justice and Development Party" lost its parliamentary majority for the first time since 2002. It's a hopeful sign, but whether extremism begins to lose its appeal in Turkey remains to be seen.

Apologists for jihad, whether it's the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the Islamic Society of North America, agenda-driven pseudo-academics such as Karen Armstrong and Juan Cole, or their stenographers in the mainstream press, insist against all evidence to the contrary that the ideology of ISIS and Boko Haram and al-Qaeda "comes from nowhere."

Even our military's top brass seemingly cannot grasp the enemy's religious aims or theological appeal. The *New York Times* in 2014 highlighted the work of a special civilian task force assembled by Major General Michael K. Nagata, commander of U.S. Special Operations forces in the Middle East, to make sense of ISIS and its goals. "We do not understand the movement, and until we do, we are not going to defeat it," Nagata said, according to confidential minutes of a conference call with several experts that the *Times* obtained. "We have not defeated the idea. We do not even understand the idea."

The report relates how Nagata's team consists of more than three dozen outside experts, including business professors and neuroscientists, to figure out the "intangible means"



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the Islamic State uses to control large populations, and the “magnetic, inspirational” way ISIS attracts so many young men and women from around the globe to fight. “I do not understand the intangible power of ISIL,” Nagata said. “This may sound like a bizarre excursion into the surreal, but for me it is about avoiding failure.”

General Nagata is right to worry about failure. We are failing. But with all due respect to the general, who has served his country with distinction for more than three decades in some of the worst places on earth, he won’t find the answer he’s looking for in cutting-edge neuroscience or marketing research. Our cultural and political elite may be steeped in secularism and liberalism, but our enemies are deadly serious about their faith and traditions.

When ISIS leader Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi says, “O Muslims, Islam was never for a day the religion of peace. Islam is the religion of war,” he means it. When al-Baghdadi says, “Your Prophet . . . was dispatched with the sword as a mercy to the creation. He was ordered with war until Allah is worshipped alone,” he isn’t being obtuse. When the self-proclaimed “Caliph” quotes Muhammad addressing the “polytheists” of Arabia and says, “ ‘I came to you with slaughter.’ ... He never for a day grew tired of war,” that isn’t a mixed message in need of expert parsing.

Why is that so difficult to understand?

Stop and think about the madness of our nation’s cultural and political elite. They lack the moral and intellectual clarity to win this *religious* war. They cannot tell friend from foe. They’re ignorant of the lessons of history. They have no courage of their convictions, because their convictions are hollow.

If we rely on them to understand our enemy it will be too late. It’s up to us.

## 2. WE MUST BE UNAFRAID TO SPEAK

Do not be deceived. Our enemies understand better than our leaders do that jihad is expansive. And so is our enemies’ desire to change America. They would have us cower in fear and shame, censoring our thoughts and words in accordance with their standards.

Gradually, they expect, the United States through guilt and well-intended tolerance will submit to sharia law — and eventually to the Caliphate.

Given all that we’ve seen and learned in the years following the 9/11 attacks, it still comes as a shock to see how the highest levels of the United States government have pandered

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to Muslim radicals. As noted, the Obama administration has welcomed members of the Muslim Brotherhood to the White House and to meetings with representatives of the State Department.

This pattern is not unique to President Obama, however. The Bush administration made similar overtures to Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. According to the Clarion Project, President Bush was due to meet personally with Muslim leaders—many with Brotherhood connections—in 2001. One of the invitees, Abdurahman Alamoudi, had also met with officials in the Clinton administration. Alamoudi would later be sentenced to twenty-three years in prison for plotting with Libyans to assassinate the crown prince of Saudi Arabia.

That meeting, which was to happen on September 11, was, of course, canceled. But President Bush—along with every other American—nonetheless became well acquainted with radical Islam that day.

These are the people our government apparently listens to. It has gone on for years. If we want those in power to instead listen to the American people, we have to make sure they cannot ignore our message. We must understand the truth, and once armed with that knowledge, we cannot be afraid to speak up.

The most deadly thing the jihadists can do—short of detonating a nuclear weapon or electromagnetic pulse—is to get us to subvert our own precariously dangling Constitution to accommodate them.

That plan of attack is already well under way. We've already seen how criticism of Islam or Muslims is routinely denounced as "Islamophobia." We've seen how intimidation, fear, and violence are directed against people who dare speak out. We witnessed the disgraceful media response to the thwarted terrorist attack on the "Draw Muhammad" contest in Garland, Texas, which laid the blame for a shoot-out that left two ISIS-inspired gunmen dead on the free speech event's organizers. And we've seen how the Brotherhood's "civilization jihad" is working in parallel to the more violent jihadist efforts in the Middle East.

You would think our press would recognize the threat. After all, aren't they in the First Amendment business? Haven't the *New York Times* and other newspapers insisted on publishing U.S. secrets in the fight against al-Qaeda in the name of the public's right to know? Yet, at the same time, they've gone out of their way to deny, deflect, and deceive the public when it comes to the truth about jihad and radical Islam. They seem to be in total denial that Islamic extremists pose a bona fide threat, or that a Caliphate is something that *anybody*—let alone tens of millions of Muslims—actually wants.



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Fourteen years after 9/11, the press, with few exceptions, still refuses to consider the *possibility* that a terrorist plot or attack may be the work of jihadists with global designs rather than a simple “lone wolf” or disgruntled individual who happens to be Muslim. They won’t call radical Islamists by their proper name. Either the media elite are afraid to tell the truth, or they’re afraid of what the American people will demand upon learning the truth.

For example, the media readily accepted the Defense Department’s line that Major Nidal Hasan’s November 5, 2009, shooting rampage at Fort Hood in Texas—which left thirteen people dead—amounted to a tragic case of “workplace violence.” At best, Hasan was a “lone wolf” who acted on his own initiative. Any relationship between his shouts of “Allahu Akbar” as he gunned down his victims with the same battle cry used by countless jihadists in Iraq and Afghanistan must have been purely coincidental.

Never mind the lengthy email correspondence Hasan carried on with Anwar al-Awlaki, the American-born radical Yemeni cleric who was a major influence among English-speaking jihadists before he was killed in 2011 by a U.S. drone strike. And never mind Hasan’s lengthy monologues to practically anyone who would listen about how he was “on the wrong side” in the U.S. Army, and how he considered himself a “Soldier of Allah.”

As Hasan awaited his court-martial in 2012, he wrote: “I, Nidal Malik Hasan, am compelled to renounce any oaths of allegiances that require me to support/defend [sic] man made constitution (like the constitution of the United States) *over the commandments mandated in Islam*. ... I therefore formally renounce my oath of office ... this includes my oath of U.S. citizenship” (emphasis added). That doesn’t sound like a man who simply had a problem with the army’s human resources department.

After seeing the government and media cognitive dissonance play out over and over again in their coverage of the latest jihadist atrocity, I probably shouldn’t be surprised about anything anymore. But even I was shocked at the media’s response to the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013. ABC News wasted no time asking, “Could this be homegrown terror?” and was likely disappointed when the answer came back “no.” The bombing, it turns out, was carried out by brothers Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, who just happened to be Muslim émigrés from Chechnya who were radicalized in Boston.

Tamerlan died from injuries he sustained in a gun battle with the Boston police, during which his brother Dzhokhar ran him over with a stolen SUV. Dzhokhar was eventually captured after a standoff with police when a homeowner found him hiding in a boat behind his house in the Boston suburb of Watertown. Expecting he wouldn’t survive his

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confrontation with the authorities, Dzhokhar scrawled a note inside his hiding place. It read, in part: “[W]e Muslims are one body, you hurt one you hurt us all, well at least that’s how Muhammad (pbuh) wanted it to be ... the ummah is beginning to rise ... know you are fighting men who look into the barrel of your gun and see heaven, now how can you compete with that. We are promised victory and we will surely get it.”

Predictably, within days of Tamerlan’s death and Dzhokhar’s arrest, U.S. officials were telling the media that the brothers were “lone wolves” motivated by radical Islam but not connected with any terrorist group. In the first six months of 2015, the FBI had announced arrests of at least thirty U.S. citizens involved in a “lone wolf” terrorist plot of some kind. That’s on top of the recent “lone wolf” attacks in Canada where, in separate incidents, terrorists murdered a soldier in Quebec and then, just two days later, another soldier in Ottawa. Reports say that both killers had recently converted to Islam.

A “lone wolf” here, a “lone wolf” there—at some point, you’d think the media would press law enforcement officials and our leaders to admit we have a growing pack of jihadi wolves stalking us in our own backyard.

Instead, they tiptoe around the truth. Homeland security secretary Jeh Johnson says the government is concerned “about the independent actor, and the independent actor who is here in the homeland who may strike with little or no warning.” Yet Johnson is maddeningly vague about who those independent actors might be or what cause they might espouse. It could be a right-wing militia member for all he knows, or maybe the Weather Underground is making a comeback. The people responsible for defending the nation simply won’t publicly admit the connection between jihad abroad and the threat of jihad at home.

The government is not just wishy-washy about connections to Islam; it also often provides halfhearted defenses of free expression in the face of repeated attacks. In response to the Danish cartoon <sup>scandal</sup>, Bush State Department spokesman Sean McCormack called the illustrations offensive and said, “Anti-Muslim images are as unacceptable as anti-Semitic images, as anti-Christian images, or any other religious belief.”

First of all—no—none of these things are unacceptable; they are the very definition of protected speech. But even if we go along and play that game, the obvious difference is that Christians and Jews don’t try to murder people who publish anti-Christian or anti-Jewish cartoons.

The Obama administration actually took the side of the jihadists over free speech. The president, along with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and U.S. United Nations ambassador Susan Rice, tried to blame an anti-Islam YouTube video for the September

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11, 2012, attacks on the U.S. embassy in Cairo and the horrific murders in Benghazi, Libya, of U.S. ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other consulate personnel. The administration went so far as to arrest the video's producer and director, Nakoula Nakoula, for allegedly violating conditions of his parole in a completely unrelated case. Nakoula wound up spending a year in a federal prison cell because the Obama White House apparently needed a scapegoat for its inept handling of a foreign policy disaster.

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Two weeks after the Benghazi debacle, the president addressed the United Nations and made an outrageous comparison between Americans who insult Muslims and Muslims who want to kill Americans, Christians, and Jews. "The future must not belong to those who slander the prophet of Islam," the president told the assembled dignitaries, most of whom routinely persecute and jail political and religious dissenters in their home countries.

"Yet to be credible," he added, "those who condemn that slander must also condemn the hate we see when the image of Jesus Christ is desecrated, churches are destroyed, or the Holocaust is denied."

The president could have set an example to the nation and the world by standing before the General Assembly and saying the future must not belong to those who would kill for the prophet of Islam. He could have made a clear and unequivocal statement that the United States stands for unfettered freedom of speech and true freedom of religion. Instead he descended into moral equivalence and political pandering.

In the face of this crisis, the United States not only needs leaders to stand in the face of violence and intimidation; it needs citizens who are unafraid to speak the truth about the origins of the threat we face and hold our leaders accountable when they resort to political correctness or refuse to call a spade a spade.

### **3. WE MUST UNDERSTAND OUR TRADITIONS – AND OURSELVES**

At this moment, all around the United States, mosques and community organizations affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood are quietly pushing to introduce sharia law into the fabric of our society and our judicial system. And they're succeeding.

As we covered earlier, Muslims in the Dallas suburb of Irving, Texas, established what the Christian Broadcasting Network described as "the first official shariah law system in the United States." Tribunal judge Imam Moujahed Bakhach denied that the sharia court he runs with three other local imams is anything like what orthodox Islamic teachings

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say. “The misconception about what they see through the media is that sharia means cut the head, chop the heads, cut the hands and we are not in that,” he said. “We are not here to invade the White House or invade Austin.”

It’s true that sharia isn’t *only* about cutting off heads and hands as punishment. Islamic law also has rules about what Muslims may eat and drink, how Muslims should dress, how a woman’s court testimony is worth only half of a man’s, and how religious minorities must be treated as inferiors. But groups like the Council on American-Islamic Relations don’t want to talk about any of that.

Mustafaa Carroll, executive director of CAIR’s Houston chapter, told the *Austin Chronicle* that sharia is an essential part of a practicing Muslim’s life—just as Christians and Jews have their own religious guidelines to follow. “Sharia is getting married, getting buried,” Carroll said. “It is the Islamic principles that Muslims live by.”

That’s true as far as it goes. But, as we’ve already seen, sharia law is *central* to Islam. Orthodox Muslims and Islamic State jihadists alike believe that man-made law is un-Islamic. Democracy itself is un-Islamic—a man’s vote cannot supersede God’s law. Sharia does not respect individual rights, as the West has understood the concept for centuries. Sharia is incompatible with our Constitution and the principles of equality and liberty embodied in our Declaration of Independence.

Needless to say, Carroll and his fellow activists have been working hard to downplay those differences. They’re also successfully lobbying against legislation that would prevent state courts from using sharia in their proceedings. A Texas anti-sharia bill failed again in 2015—the third time in three years. The liberal Texas press portrayed the legislation’s Republican sponsors—Representatives Jeff Leach and Molly White—as bigoted kooks because they had the nerve to ask members of the Muslim community to publicly announce their allegiance to America and our laws.

The threat is real, and it must be stopped. But how?

In our ongoing struggle with the barbarity that appears tragically inherent in Islam, we need to return to first principles and restore the integrity of our nation’s heritage.

Easier said than done, I realize. Our leaders have failed us. Our media is against us. Our Constitution is being eroded away and our culture is becoming ever more secular. Many of us have forgotten who we are as a people and a country. We’ve forgotten God.

Our enemies have turned many of our strengths into weaknesses. Americans are the most tolerant and charitable people on the face of the earth. We have welcomed millions of refugees from across the globe in the course of our history. That was fine and noble when

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America had a strong assimilationist ethic. But the past thirty years have seen a shift from assimilation into the melting pot toward a divisive and dangerous form of multiculturalism that encourages ethnic separation.

The United States has had a strange immigration policy since 9/11. Our Muslim population has doubled to more than 2 million between 2001 and 2010. We're accepting thousands of Syrians displaced by the civil war and Democratic lawmakers want the Obama administration to open the gates even wider. In May 2015, a group of fourteen U.S. senators wrote a letter to the president urging the resettlement of as many as 65,000 more Syrian refugees, despite the fact that the FBI says there is no way it can possibly screen the hundreds of people who've entered the country from that war-torn country already.

If our experience with Somalian refugees is any indication, taking in tens of thousands of Syrians would be a recipe for disaster. Since 1991, more than 100,000 Somalis have resettled in the United States. Almost all of them are Muslim and the vast majority of them have planted roots in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis, which has become known as "Little Mogadishu." Not coincidentally, Minneapolis has become a hotbed of jihadi recruitment, with at least forty young men having traveled from Minnesota to join the Islamic State.

A sane immigration and resettlement policy would take careful account of who these newcomers are, and where they've come from.

I think an excellent way to approach America's Muslim population—especially immigrants and refugees—would be to emulate George Washington.

In 1783, the year our fledgling nation finally won its independence from King George III, General Washington wrote a letter welcoming Irish Catholic immigrants who had recently landed in New York City. Remember, many Americans of the founding generation considered Catholics to be wholly undesirable citizens. They were subjects of the pope, not cut out for freedom in a young republic—or so the opinion went. John Adams summed up the sentiment in a letter to his daughter-in-law, Louisa: "Liberty and Popery cannot live together."

Washington disagreed. "The bosom of America," he wrote on December 2, 1783, "is open to receive not only the Opulent and respectable Stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all Nations and Religions; whom we shall welcome to a participation of all our rights and privileges, if by decency and propriety of conduct they appear to merit the enjoyment."

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In a private letter a few months later to Tench Tilghman, Washington asked his former aide-de-camp if he could hire a bricklayer and a house joiner to work on his estate at Mount Vernon. “I would not confine you to Palatines (Germans),” he wrote. “If they are good workmen, they may be of Assia [*sic*], Africa, or Europe. They may be Mahometans, Jews, or Christians of any Sect—or they may be Atheists.”

But perhaps the statement most relevant to our challenge right now is President Washington’s August 1790 letter to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island. “The Citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy: a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship,” he wrote.

“It is now no more that toleration is of, as if it were the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights,” the president continued. “For, happily, the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.”

Understand what Washington was saying: The United States is the first nation on earth to embrace true religious liberty. Your rights as an immigrant or as a citizen do not depend on your profession of a particular faith or creed. Everyone has a God-given liberty of conscience.

But also notice that in each of those letters, Washington adds a crucial condition: newcomers enjoy all of our rights “if by decency and propriety of conduct they *appear to merit* the enjoyment”; we will pay little mind to where they come from or what they believe if they are “good workmen”; and they may practice their religion freely as long as they “demean themselves as good citizens” and give the country “*on all occasions their effectual support*” (emphasis added).

President George W. Bush seemed to echo Washington in an April 30, 2002, speech in San Jose, California, promoting “compassionate conservatism.” “America rejects bigotry,” he said. “We reject every act of hatred against people of Arab background or Muslim faith. America values and welcomes peaceful people of all faiths—Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and many others. Every faith is practiced and protected here, because we are one country. Every immigrant can be fully and equally American because we’re one country. Race and color should not divide us, because America is one country.”

The question facing us now is whether America is still one country.



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We remember the 2,997 innocent lives taken in service of that awful mission on 9/11, but many people may not realize how much else the nineteen hijackers stole from our culture and Western civilization that day.

Countless historical documents, records, and irreplaceable artworks were lost forever when the twin towers fell. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings, drawings, and sculptures by the likes of Pablo Picasso, Roy Lichtenstein, and Auguste Rodin were obliterated. Five World Trade Center was home to the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Broadway Theatre Archive, and a collection of forty thousand negatives of photos by Jacques Lowe that recorded John F. Kennedy's presidency. Underground archives below Six World Trade Center housed millions of objects and artifacts of New York dating back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The tiny Church of St. Nicholas, a Greek Orthodox parish crushed by debris from tower two, contained relics of fourth- and sixth-century saints and icons dating from nineteenth-century Russia.

The list goes on and on. All of that art, architecture, culture, and history turned to rubble and ash in the name of jihad.

If we are not careful, jihad will take from us much more than physical artifacts—it will destroy our entire way of life.

## 4. WE CANNOT REFORM ISLAM—ONLY MUSIMS CAN DO THAT

One of the greatest mistakes the United States made in the aftermath of 9/11 was to adopt the idea that the lessons of history did not apply in the war against radical Islam.

Our leaders believed without a shadow of a doubt that the Muslims of the Middle East—men, women, and children who had known nothing but despotism and dictatorship—desperately wanted everything that Americans have and enjoy. As one enthusiastic Iraqi put it shortly after the fall of Baghdad in 2003: “Democracy, whiskey, sexy.”

President George W. Bush gave this idealistic worldview a more elegant spin in his 2004 State of the Union address: “[I]t is mistaken, and condescending, to assume that whole cultures and great religions are incompatible with liberty and self-government. I believe that God has planted in every human heart the desire to live in freedom.”

As we've learned at tremendous cost in lives and treasure, the more condescending view was to assume that most Iraqis' understanding of freedom was the same as ours. It's just not true. The Islamic State believes in freedom. But it's the freedom that comes with submission to Allah and his laws.

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As long as we harbor misunderstandings about what is and what is not “true Islam,” we’ll get nowhere. For years, we’ve heard talk about the need for an Islamic reformation like the Protestant Reformation of five hundred years ago. If we were to go back in time and tell Martin Luther that papal indulgences had nothing to do with Christianity, we’d look like idiots. For good and for ill, indulgences were an integral part of European Christian life in the early 1500s. That’s how the vast majority of Christians understood their lives and their world.

We tend to downplay how difficult—and how bloody—the Reformation turned out to be. Protestantism unleashed roughly two centuries of religious warfare, decimated large swaths of continental Europe, displaced millions of people, and ultimately led to the full flowering of individualism and liberal democracy in the New World.

Would an Islamic reformation play out in much the same way? Who knows? It’s safe to say, however, that any reforms would be incredibly difficult. As the late, great political scientist James Q. Wilson observed in 2004, the prospect of reshaping the Islamic world along similar lines as the Protestant Reformation is “highly doubtful.”

“There is neither a papacy nor a priesthood against which to rebel; nor are mosques comparable to churches in the Catholic sense of dispensing sacraments,” Wilson wrote. “There will never be a Muslim Martin Luther or a hereditary Islamic ruler who, by embracing a rival faith, can thereby create an opportunity for lay rule.”

*Never?* I know that many would-be reformers—Muslim and non-Muslim alike—hope Wilson is wrong.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the ex-Muslim who has written heroically about her life growing up in Somalia and her escape to freedom in the Netherlands and the United States, argues that, as recently as the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, parts of the Muslim world made a steady transition into modernity. “By the end of World War II,” she wrote, “the central features of sharia had been replaced in many Muslim countries by laws based on European models. ... At the same time, Islam itself was increasingly being reinterpreted as part of a long continuum in man’s attempts to achieve social justice, even being used at times to validate socialist doctrines of redistribution and other efforts to remake society.”

Liberal Islamic convert Thomas J. Haidon has argued, “Any genuine movement for Islamic reform must first seek to acknowledge that aspects particular to Islam and our understanding of Islam are problematic, and hence they need critical re-evaluation.” The biggest stumbling block is the view that Islam is simply impervious to change because it

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is “the essence of perfection: the undisputed word of God, and the comprehensive tradition of the Prophet Muhammad.”

But, Haidon says, “Unless reformist organizations develop effective, grass roots strategies to achieve goals that are firmly rooted in theological principles . . . the reformist discourse will prove to be nothing but rhetoric.”

If there is a glimmer of hope in the unrepentant barbarism of the Islamic State, it is that their “management of savagery” as they call it is beginning to offend Muslims, even the hardcore Islamists. A case in point is a gentleman by the name of Abd al-Rauf Kara, a hardened Libyan Salafist who is neither a friend to democracy nor a peacemaker. He’s the head of Islamist militias that have helped create chaos in the country in the months after the U.S. compound in Benghazi was attacked. But he’s finding that Daesh, as the Islamic State is known locally, is too brutal even for him. “Daesh now has a 70-kilometer stretch of the coast,” says Kara. “It is a key stretch for launching people-smuggler boats, and Europe should be worried that Daesh can disguise their people as migrants.” This is hardly a reformation, but it may be an encouraging sign that more and more Muslims will stand up to oppose the Islamic supremacist ideology that threatens the free world.

I believe that only when Muslims themselves decide they need a reformation will there be a real chance at one. But it isn’t for you or me to say. I’m not a Muslim. I cannot tell a Muslim how he or she needs to resolve the deep—and perhaps irreconcilable—conflicts between their faith and freedom.

What I can do—what we all can do—is cast a harsh, bright light on the Muslim Brotherhood and other seemingly mainstream groups that are working to undermine our country’s institutions from within. We can support serious scholars attempting genuine reform—devout Muslims such as Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im, Khaleel Mohammed, Ahmed Mansour, and Kassim Ahmad, who are making arguments rooted in the Quran but not smothered by it. We can highlight and support the work of American Muslims such as Nonie Darwish, Wafa Sultan, Asra Nomani, Irshad Manji, and Zuhdi Jasser, who founded the Phoenix-based American Islamic Forum for Democracy.

But in the end, Islam will either reform itself or it will destroy itself. If it’s the latter, then our job is to trust in God, speak without fear, and make sure America isn’t destroyed along with it.

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Beck, G. (2015). *It IS About Islam: Exposing the Truth about Isis, Al Qaeda, Iran, and the Caliphate*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Threshold Editions, pp. 239-267.