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THE STAND
EVIL AND INHUMANE

Those were the words used by Pope Benedict XVI referring to Islam.

Actually, they were not the words of the Pope, original as such, but rather quotations from a medieval text. No matter. Muslims the world over were outraged and the words fueled the fire which rages in Islam today.

It did not matter that they were not the words of Benedict XVI himself who, in politically correct fashion, apologized saying:

“I am deeply sorry for the reactions in some countries to a few passages of my address which were considered offensive.”

May, and especially many Muslims, felt such an apology was inadequate, and in fact did not address the offense or the offensive words themselves. The Pope went on to say that those words “evil and inhumane”, do not in any way express his (my) personal thought but rather were intended in their totality as an invitation to frank and sincere dialogue “with great mutual respect”.

None of that mattered. It seems as though so many Muslims are ready at any turn to seize upon the slightest matter as an invitation or opportunity for angry or violent response. Their hatred of the West and all other religions runs deep and needs very little provocation for expression. The words used by Pope Benedict XVI were words already existing, spoken and recorded long ago. But that mattered not at all to Muslims ready for a fight.

So, the anger poured forth, and of course the world, and especially the West, and even more especially the secular West, listened and responded. Or perhaps rolled over is a better way to put it. It is so interesting, is it not, that any time there is any form of Muslim outrage, the non-Muslim world backs off. Small wonder that militant and aggressive Muslims think of the West and the non-Muslim world as cowards, easily intimidated and very much afraid of threat or violence. They cry, or rather scream foul, even as they ignore those very things which the West views as evil or inhumane in terms of the practices of extreme Islamists, including the incredible and horrific actions of the terrorists. For example, one day before the Pope’s remarks, five churches were fired bombed in the West Bank and one in Iraq. But, of course, nobody in the Muslim world, extremist or not, said anything at all about those events, much less condemn them. We hear so much about the vast majority of Muslims being peaceful, God-fearing, moral human beings. Where I wonder are they? Why do they not stand up and condemn all such actions and protect the good and the human in their religion from that which is evil and inhumane? Their silence is deafening. However many good and faithful Muslims there may be, the violent factions, the Isalmo-fascists rule the day, carry the message, and invoke the greatest and in fact in some cases, the only response from the West. If moral human beings who embrace Islam do not stand up and condemn terrorism and violence in every form, if they are silent

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in the face of death and destruction, or if they secretly condone all such actions, how can they, the good and the peaceful, be any different than the radical terrorist when all is said and done.

Verbally, the world over, it is open season on Christians. Christianity has been called things worse than evil or inhumane, or just as bad by millions who hate Christianity and in many cases Christians themselves. But no one was killed, like the Italian nun who was shot to death following the remarks. Any war waged is verbal and the dialogue, which the Pope sought, goes on. Many of us Christians are used to being attacked, verbally, and it is a way of life. We are ready to defend our faith and we will do it aggressively, verbally and emotionally. But I know of no Christian who would kill anyone who disrespected Christianity or libeled its tradition or value. So many fanatic Muslims are ready to kill to “defend” the faith, even for verbal slights.

Jews and Judaism are constantly attacked. They are bitterly and brutally criticized, mocked and disrespected. So is their religion. They are, say the aggressive verbal critics, no more chosen than any. Israel is plain old terra firma, nothing close to a so-called Holy Land. But no Jews I know would kill anyone who verbally attacked them or their religion. Jews are fair game. It is open season, verbally, on Jews, but not on Muslims. Some of the things which the world of Islam has said about the Jews is in fact as evil and inhumane as language can be. But the world fails to protest and just ignores those verbal attacks which are commonplace.

Any religion can go astray in its practice and implementation. Christian Crusaders killed tens of thousands in the name of Christ. The Old Testament is filled with war and killing by the Israelites. Cults have killed. The early Roman Catholic church burned heretics at the stake. Protestant armies marched in Germany and other nations killing Catholics. And the list of atrocities in the name of religion goes on, and on. All of it is wrong, dead wrong, for thou shalt not kill. Whether Muslim, Jew, Christian, or some other, THOU SHALT NOT KILL! In today’s terrorist environment, the world it seems must live with the constant threat that angry, evil and inhumane terrorists spawned by a jihad mentality are in fact ready to kill and to die themselves for their faith. Words today that can never be used for dialogue and rapprochement but only for provocation and incitement. There can be no peace in this world if Muslims will not come to the dialogue table, ready to discuss, debate and even disagree, but leave that table with respect for other human beings and differing philosophies and religious beliefs. If that kind of dialogue ever truly occurs, it is few and far between. How much easier it is to get mad, deeply and viciously angry, and kill in the name of religion. But it is also simply not fair that Christianity, Judaism and virtually all other religions are subject to aggressive and often vitriolic criticism and verbal attack and Islam is not. If you are not prepared to criticize Islam, then you have no right to criticize Christianity, Judaism or any other religion. Islam means business. If one criticizes, or characterizes, or denies, or mocks, then that one must be prepared for any kind of consequence. That includes life itself. What a world.

We who love peace and goodwill for all mankind can only hope that every religion in this world will do anything possible to excise anything which is “evil and inhumane” from that religion, including and especially the practice and implementation of those religious beliefs. The world in which we live has no chance for survival unless men and women of good will demand that happen and do whatever is required to make that happen.