

“Religious Freedom for Me but Not for Thee?” by Paul Crookston, *National Review*, February 21, 2017; “Europe’s Islam Problem and U.S. Immigration Policy” by Shannon Gilreath, *Washington Blade*, January 19, 2017.

National Review’s Collegiate Network Fellow and Gordon College graduate, Crookston, rightly notes: “America’s enshrinement of religious freedom is as exceptional as it is valuable”. Here, he reports on disputes within the Southern Baptist Convention over an *amicus* brief filed by SBC’s International Mission Board and SBC’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. Along with similar support from the National Association of Evangelicals and Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, this brief has backed the right of Muslims to build a mosque in New Jersey. The court has ruled in the Muslims’ favor.

Baptist opposition to religious freedom flies in the face of historic Baptist support for such freedom in the founding the Rhode Island colony as a haven for Baptists, as well as for Quakers, Jews and all others, safe from persecution by intolerant Puritans. Yet, an angry SBC preacher objects: “I want no part in supporting a false religion.” Of course, in America, his right not to hold what he takes to be false belief exists alongside another’s right to hold that belief. So Crookston rightly assesses the angry protester to be mistaken.

Ironically, though Crookston doesn’t refer to it specifically, the Federal government is assaulting the religious liberty of his own *alma mater* through its Title IX restrictions on the college’s views on homosexuality. He does note: “Unfortunately, many on the left snidely put ‘religious liberty’ into scare quotes, arguing that it’s time to put florists out of business in order to assert the state’s absolute right to legislate progressive morality.”

Crookston says: “It seems clear that the ERLC would not be facing this kind of pressure over its standard practices if Russell Moore [ERLC’s *antigay* president] had quietly acquiesced to Trump’s rise. Instead, [Moore] wrote at *National Review* and elsewhere about Trump’s shortcomings on matters of social conservatism.” Crookston says that Moore’s enemies are “using the mosque case as a pretext [for] retribution against” him.

On the other hand, one should need no pretext for warning about immigration policies and the trickery of Islamist terrorists. Islamist hatred of *kuffar* has led to the slaughtering of non-Muslims since the 7th century. The *gay Washington Blade’s* essay by Gilreath, a professor of law as well as of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies, is such a warning.

But with his non-PC defense of “tighter U. S. controls on the immigration of Muslims”, Gilreath deems it wise to affirm his progressive credentials up front: “I come from the American Left. I am a feminist. I am a gay rights activist. These commitments form the core of my professional and personal life.” He’s expressed other contrarian views, e.g., on same-sex marriage – not with excuses put forth by *antigay* opponents – but because he fears marriage can become an institutionalization of gays and lesbians that risks what he calls, “assimilationist erasure of Gay identity.” His most recent book is, *The End of Straight Supremacy: Realizing Gay Liberation* (Cambridge University Press).

It shouldn’t be necessary for him to note another self-evident observation, but current distractions of political correctness necessitate his stating unequivocally: “Islam is endemically antithetical to the well-being of gay people.” He knows that “American liberals don’t want to hear this argument” and he discerns that this is so “because they share, ironically, with American conservatives a rather unreflective commitment

to the defense of religion at all costs.” If this is confusing at first, he explains: “Increasingly, liberals seem to think that the answer is simply more religion – something they like to call diversity.” Indeed, *selectively privileged, politically correct* “diversity” is the idol of dictatorial progressivism. And secular progressives’ failure to “get” the threat of *Islamic* fanaticism is a function of their refusal to relate to the reality of *any* traditional “religion”.

Says Gilreath: “Because I am a lawyer, evidence matters to me.” He notes the violence carried out against the *kuffar* in the name of Allah and observes that these victims are so often, so predictably, gay men. Besides all the *antigay* lashings and executions in *Sharia-controlled* countries, Gilreath points to Amsterdam – a city that he calls the “gay capital” of his day – “gay bashings and murders have risen sharply with the influx of Muslim immigrants and ‘refugees’, with some primarily Muslim neighborhoods now being entirely off-limits to Dutch gays”. He frankly concludes that, “those of us who cherish ideals like gay rights and the equality of women and men – cannot afford political correctness. We cannot afford the propaganda.”

Of course, gays aren’t the only victims of Islamic law. Merely leaving Islam, allegedly “disrespecting” the Qur’an, refusing to submit to an arranged marriage and otherwise “dishonoring” one’s family, etc., are all capital crimes.

A surprising amount of feedback to Gilreath’s essay – particularly on an historic LGBT publication’s blog – was supportive of his argument, e.g., “A wise and courageous piece”, “Refreshing”, “Thank you.”, etc. Of course, one who disagreed with him listed allegedly *antigay* Bible verses, as if they are equivalent to actually murdering gay people around the world today. So another respondent pointedly answered this person: “When is the last time Christians and Catholics have beheaded, blown up, tortured, raped or thrown off the top of buildings those who have disobeyed the Bible?” Still, the politically correct propagandist persisted, alluding to an unidentified Christian Right “terrorist arm” and to “red states”, though he failed to accuse any particular Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Benedictines, et al. Finally exasperated, this man announced, “I can’t argue about this anymore. ... I’ve got a rally to run to with my LGBTQ allies and friend to support our Muslim brothers and sisters under attack.” Meanwhile, another person provided nearly an hour’s worth of undercover video from the U.K.’s Channel 4. It reveals in chilling scenes, the violent sermons against gays and *all other* “unbelievers”, delivered from the pulpit of London’s major mosque. And *The London Times* reports that only one in three British Muslims says he’d tip off the police about a suspected terrorist plot.

Gilreath’s concerns are rational and relevant, not only for the welfare of gays but, for the protection of men, women and children in general, and for the stability of America’s freedoms. Secular Muslim and Brookings Institution scholar Shadi Hamid says: “Jesus told His followers to give unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s. Islam has no such separation between mosque and state.” Physician and evangelical apologist Nabeel Qureshi says: “I left Islam because I studied Muhammad’s life. I accepted the gospel because I studied Jesus’ life.”

