

Christianity, Islamic *Shariah*, and Civil Rights

By

William Wagner

Introduction

Recent events in France, where the government has attempted to force Muslim girls to remove the Islamic headscarf (*hajib*), have created an explosive situation in Europe. Muslim leaders felt that this action was meant to target only Muslims but it should also be mentioned that Jewish skullcaps and large Christian crosses were banned. This new law is again proof that the hopes of many western governments to create a melting pot society are not as simple as first believed. The basic question being asked is - if Muslims living in a western society need to be governed by western law or can they also live under *Shariah* law? This problem will not go away but rather will increase in importance in the very near future. The secular school system of France had achieved a good balance in this area until a sizeable religious minority, firmly entrenched in French life, began to insist on a new set of rules. Rules that were dictated by a religious based legal system. There is a new concern in the western world that the existing order would be upset if Islam were allowed to seek world dominance.

Recently there was a poll taken among Ivy League students in the United States. The question was simple. Do you believe that your life style would change if the United States became Islamic? More than 70 percent of those asked replied negatively. They did not see any change in their life style. This shows a real ignorance among most Americans concerning the social implications of an Islamic takeover. Most felt that the civil rights that they had as Americans living in a democracy would remain unchanged. If Islam were to become dominant in this country, one of the most observable results of such a change would be the implementation of *Shariah* law.

Shariah law is not considered as an option for the Muslims but rather an obligation. If a country becomes an Islamic Republic, then this Muslim legal system becomes the law of the land. All living in the country, Muslim and non-Muslim alike are under its rules and regulations. Another possibility, that will be discussed later, is the

possibly that if a Western country has a sizeable minority then there could be parallel legal systems, one for Muslims and one for the rest of the country. Most legal scholars see this leading to complete anarchy. At the present time this is an important is several states in Canada where some want to allow Muslims the right to be governed under *Shariah* in social matters.

How big is this topic. One of the first to address this topic academically was Samuel P. Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilizations, Remaking of World Order*. This author says that this is not only a clash of civilizations but a clash of the components of civilization that includes culture, religion, economics systems, legal systems and, of course, the understanding of civil rights. The Western legal system bases its value system upon Judo-Christian values which emphasize the individual while Islam strongly advocates community. The very topic of this paper must attempt to deal with two completely different systems. Most from the West are familiar with their system, thus this paper will first attempt to help the reader understand *Shariah*.

Understanding *Shariah*

Definition of *Shariah*

The literal definition of the term is “a path or way to a water hole in the desert”. For the early Muslims it was seen as a utopian way of life that was given to men to prepare them for the heavenly society. The term is really divine and eternal and describes the perfect way man should live. But since this is not possible, the Muslims have another term that relates more to the way that this divine law is practiced here on earth. This second term is called *fiqh*. However, in general lineage the term *Shariah* is used to refer to the Islamic law as practiced by Muslims.

Another explanation is given by Ghulam Sarwar in his book *Islam, Beliefs and Teachings*. This book is used in England to teach the Muslims school children the basics of their belief. Sarwar writes:

Shariah is the code of law for the Islamic way of life that Allah has revealed for mankind and commanded us to follow.... *Shariah* or Islamic law consists of the code of conduct for Muslims and is based on two main

sources: The *Qu'ran* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. It aims towards the success and welfare of mankind both in this life and life after death.¹

Muslims like to see their *Shariah* law as having come down to mankind from God while they see all other legal systems as being “Man-made Laws”. They claim that it a complete and perfect system and guarantees them success, welfare and peace in this life on earth as well as life after death. In understanding how Muslims compare *Shariah* to other legal systems, let us return to what Sarwar and see what he wrote to those who are trying to understand the basics of their faith. He compares the two in the following chart:

Man-made Law	<i>Shariah</i> or Allah's Law
1. Men make laws when they feel the need. These laws start from a few and then grow in number over the years.	Islamic Law is complete, perfect and includes all aspects of human life.
2. Man-made laws are not permanent; they can be changed according to the time and circumstances. For example, in a particular country at a particular time, drinking alcohol may be banned; but this can change when public pressure grows. The American Government once banned alcoholic drink but removed the ban after a time because it could not be applied.	<i>Shariah</i> is permanent for all people all the time. It does not change with time and conditions. For, example, drinking wine and gambling are not allowed under Islamic law. And no one can change this; it is a law that is valid for all time and for all places.
3. Man does not have knowledge of the future. Hence, man-made laws cannot stand the test of time.	Allah is All knowing and All-powerful; He is the most Wise and His laws are the best and are complete.
4. Man is a created being. His laws are the creation of the created.	Allah is the Creator and his laws are for Man, His creation.
5. Man-made laws may be suitable for a particular nation or country. They cannot be universal.	Allah's laws are for all nations, all countries, and for all time. They are universal.

<p>6. Men make law to suit their own needs. Suppose, members of parliament want to decrease the rate of tax on the rich, they would do so, even if the majority of the people suffered and there was a high unemployment in the country.</p>	<p>Allah is above all needs. He is not dependent on anything, so His laws are for the good of all people and not for a few, selfish people.</p>
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It is very apparent that Muslims feel that their legal system is far superior to that of the West, thus it is understandable that they would do all possible to seek to institute *Shariah* as the one universally accepted system. In other words, an Islamic state is equal to *Shariah*.

The Five Main Schools of Jurisprudence

In understanding *Shariah*, it should be noted that there is not universal agreement on the details. Over the 1400 years of the existence of Islam there have been five definable schools of *Shariah* that now exist. They all agree on the *Qu'ranic* basis for their legal system but they do differ in the interpretations. One example would be in determining the time for the start of Ramadan. *Shariah* defines this act and this event begins at the start of the new moon. The problem is who will determine when the new moon is seeable. In the early days it was to be accomplished by looking at the sky and when a small sliver of the moon could be seen then the start of Ramadan was declared. Problems began to come such as what do you do if the sky is cloudy or the Imam has poor eyesight or if one person claims they can see the moon while others disagree. Each of the legal systems has defined exactly how to determine when the first sightings of the moon are acceptable. One system says that if three men see the new moon this is sufficient. Others say that since the testimony of two women equals that of a man it is acceptable for any combination of men and women (with two women being equal to one man) is acceptable. Another system states that it must be the leader of the community that makes the determination. There are differences in the details, but the fact remains that the Muslims must adhere to the month of fasting or be in danger of punishment. The five main schools are:

Hanafi School	Created by Abu Hanafi, considered the most tolerant of differences of opinion. (Most influential, mostly in Turkey, The Balkans, Central Asia, Chinese Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India)
Malikis	Centered on customary and legal practiced in Medina. Mostly in Spain, North and West Africa, where it remains the most important legal school.
Shafi'is	Use of <i>Hadith</i> and analogy. (Egypt, Arab States of the Middle East, the Kurds and Muslims in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia. Founder was a student of Ibn Anas.
Hanbalis	Based on the use of authentic <i>Hadith</i> in preference to analogy.” dominates Arabian Peninsula...sprung from a pioneer of Islamic Fundamentalist Ahmad Ibn Hanbal.
Jaf'aris	Followed by most Shi'as. ³

Shariah and its Relationship to Christians and Jews

The Pact of Umar

The Pact of Umar (sometimes called the Code of Umar or the Covenant of Umar) was an agreement with the Christians of Jerusalem that concluded on the occasion of the conquest of that city by the Muslims. During this time Umar rescinded the Roman decrees that had banished Jews from Jerusalem and accorded Jews all the rights granted Christians. Thus Umar saw both the Christians and the Jews as people of the book and desired to treat them the same. The pact allowed “The People of the Book” who had been conquered by the Muslims to be treated equally. Historically Muslims have claimed that this pact shows how tolerant Islam was in dealing with non-Muslims in newly invaded territories. Contrary to this claim both Jews and Christians were oppressed and were made to become second-class citizens of their own countries. Today the “Pact of Umar” reflects the general attitude of Muslims towards the non-Muslims. Muslims claim that this pact shows how tolerant Islam is in dealing with non-Muslims in the newly invaded countries. There is no reason to believe that there has been a change in either attitude or practice in today’s world. Christians living under Islamic rule today could expect to be treated the same as those of earlier periods. In fact millions of Christians who continue to live in Muslim countries today live as second-class citizens.

In 638 AD or soon after the death of Mohammad, the Caliph Umar Ibn Khatib made the agreement. It was purportedly written by the conquered Christians themselves since most statements begin with the statement, “We shall...” but it was really a condition forced upon them by the Muslim conquerors. In exchange for agreeing with the conditions the non-Muslims were allowed to live in the country and they had the benefit of protection. Among the laws restricting non-Muslims were:

- Non-Muslim males to pay a poll tax plus a land tax
- Non-Muslims not allowed to be engaged in military service
- No new churches or synagogues to be built; existing ones can only be renovated with permission
- No display of crosses and no religious processions
- A Christian’s house could not be built taller than those of Muslim neighbors
- Clothes must be different from those worn by Muslims
- Non-Muslims forbidden to ride on horses and had to ride on mules or donkeys—and not ride at all if Muslims were walking
- Non-Muslims had to show respect to Muslims, i.e., by giving up their seats to them.
- The testimony of a Christian or Jew could not be accepted against a Muslim in a court of law.

Dhimma Status

The Arab word *dhimmi* means “protected people” and is directly related to the Pact of Umar. Those under a *dhimmi* status refer to the Christians and Jews living in a covenant relationship with their Muslim conquerors. This status is open to many different interpretations and is often ambiguous or contradictory. This status does not define the rights of the person living in this status as it also does not always define the penalties for those who break the covenant. Down through history different rulers have interpreted these laws differently. Leaders from Islam will point with pride when the Muslim leaders have treated the conquered people with dignity. However they have a short memory when they have been treated harshly. Often the conquered people had only the same choice as that afforded to non-people of the book, and that was conversion or death.

One author has stated that *dhimmi* status is based on two important concepts that are:

First, that Muslims are superior to any other religious group (Ye are the best community that has been raised up for mankind' 3:110), and secondly, that Christians and Jews who had not accepted Islam should be conquered, humiliated, and subjected to the payment of the tribute poll tax, the *jizya*, not payable by Muslims ('fight against those who have been given the scripture and ...follow not the religion of truth until they pay the tribute readily, being brought down' 4:29).⁴

Unification of all mankind seems to be one of Islam's most dominant propaganda themes, but when the religions are closely studied there is a great deal of separation. People are placed in boxes, each with its own definition and rights or lack of rights.

Shariah within Islam

Islamic Law and Radical Islam

The social implications of the establishment of a Global Islamic State together with the institution of *Shariah* Law are frightening, but this is the aim of many Muslims. Dr. Kalim Siddique, director of the London Muslim Institute who called upon Muslims to murder Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*, states clearly that the goal of the contemporary Muslim movement is "to eliminate all authority other than Allah and His Prophet; to eliminate nationalism in all its shapes and forms, in particular, the nation-state; to unite all Islamic movements into a single global Islamic movement to establish the Islamic State; to reestablish a dominant and global Islamic civilization based on the concept of *tawheed* (the unity of Allah)."⁵

The Wall Street Journal on April 15, 2003 published an article entitled "In Law Seminars, A Saudi Group Spreads Extremism." The article began by saying, "In late February, more than 300 young men from across Europe gathered for a weekend seminar on Islamic Law put on by the Al-Waqf al-Islaami Foundation."⁶ The article went on to explain that the most famous graduates from the seminar were half a dozen members of the group of young men from Hamburg, Germany, who plotted the September 11th attacks. The language of the Seminar was Dutch, but "the message was imported from Saudi Arabia, via Saudi books and lecturers who taught a strict orthodox interpretation of

Islam.”⁷ One of those who attended was quoted as saying, “I don’t want a separation of state and religion. I want *Shariah* (Islamic Law) here and now.”⁸

Financing for this and similar conferences comes from the *Wahabi* dominated World Muslim League. The leader of the conferences, Mohammed Cheppih, spokesman for the Al-Fruqaan Mosque and Al-Waqf Foundation, stated that he does not know how much money the Al-Waqf Foundation spends on its programs in the Netherlands. He does say, “The local branch of the Muslim World League (which he represents) spends \$50,000 a year to offer courses on Islamic Law and beliefs in Rotterdam and Amsterdam, among other activities in the Netherlands.”⁹

The teaching of *Shariah* and radical Islam have a history of being closely related. Al-Waqf and other Muslim organizations have helped to create a world where there is a division between Muslims and non-Muslims. The next step is the separation of governments of the world into two groups: those who have *Shariah* and those who do not. There will be constant pressure on the non-Islamic states to conform to the Muslim idea of the *Umma*.

Shariah and the Failure of the Islamic State

“Almost the entire Muslim world is affected by poverty and tyranny.”¹⁰ This statement comes from the pen of Bernard Lewis, the respected Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. In his chapter entitled “The Failure of Modernity,” he speaks about the failure of the Muslim states to keep up with the rest of the world. In statistic after statistic Islamic countries lag behind. The countries that practice *Shariah* as the law of the land, such as Iran, Afghanistan, and Sudan, rank close to the bottom in most categories. Lewis says, “In the listing of economics by Gross Domestic Product, the highest ranking Muslim majority country is Turkey with 64 million inhabitants, in twenty-third place between Austria and Denmark with about five million each. The next is Indonesia, with 212 million, in twenty-eighth place, following Norway with 4.5 million and followed by Saudi Arabia with 21 million.”¹¹

In other categories, such as “purchasing power, living standards, industrial output, manufacturing output, life expectancy, and ownership of computers the Islamic countries are far behind.”¹² A report on Arab Human Development in 2002 prepared by a committee of Arab intellectuals working with the United Nations reveals some more

interesting facts. Lewis quotes, “The Arab world translates about 330 books annually, one-fifth the number that Greece translates. The accumulative total of translated books since the Caliph Maa’moun’s (sic) time (the ninth century) is about 100,000, almost the average that Spain translates in one year.”¹³ He goes on to comment on the economic situation, which is no better stating, “The GDP in all Arab countries combined stood at \$531.2 billion in 1999—less than that of a single European country, Spain (\$595.5 billion).”¹⁴

One is tempted to ask, “What does this have to do with the religion known as Islam and what is the connection with *Shariah*?” Today, the more astute students of Islam realize that, in the mind of the average Muslim, Islam is much more than just a religion, it is a complete way of life. Politics, economics, social actions are all together, thus the condition of Islamic dominated societies must be observed. Quoting Lewis again, we learn, “Most (Muslims) would agree that God is concerned with politics, and this belief is confirmed and sustained by the *Shariah*, the Holy law, which deals extensively with the acquisition and exercise of power, the nature of legitimacy and authority, the duties of ruler and subject, in a word, with what we in the West would call constitutional law and political philosophy.”¹⁵

Extreme Islam has its eye on the West with the attitude that the utopian society can be created if they fell to Islam and their wealth could be under the control of an Islamic republic. They fail to look at the possibility that is exactly life under *Shariah* that has led to the miserable conditions in which so many people in their countries live.

Examples of Shariah Law

It might help in giving a few examples of areas of the world where Islamic law is being pushed and practiced. It should be understand this at the present time this topic is being discussed all over the world

Social Implications of Shariah Law in Central Asia

Much of Central Asia had been predominately Muslim prior to the culmination of the U.S.S.R. and its communist form of government. There was some limited freedom afforded to the Muslims in such countries as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Prior to the early 1900s these areas were not radically Islamic as we define

them today. With the imposition of atheism, some began to search for their own identity and began to recruit dissidents from all of Central Asia's major ethnic groups. Ahmed Rashid stated: "With little to offer except the deposition of the current regimes and the institution of *Shariah*... Support flowed in from across the region, and funding comes from as far away as Saudi Arabia—as well as from the narcotics and weapons trade out of Afghanistan."¹⁶ The rallying cry from many of the various radical groups, some of who are aligned with El Queda seems to be the establishment of *Shariah*. This way they do not need to define the types of reform that they plan nor how they will run the government. They just want to establish *Shariah*. This was also the case in Afghanistan, but we have already seen what the results were of that experiment.

...In Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is the home of the *Wahabi* movement and is considered one of the strictest of the Muslim countries. It is here that *Shariah* law can be seen as practiced in its strictest form and because this society has had little outside influence for several centuries it has stood the test of time. In a report by David Wallechinsky in *Parade Magazine*, he described what life was like in Saudi Arabia. He wrote:

In Saudi Arabia, one must not criticize the royal family. Trials often are held in secret. Adultery and abandoning Islam are crimes punishable by beheading, and people given the death penalty often are not told their sentence until the execution itself. Lesser crimes are punishable by flogging: Using a cell phone on an airplane earns 20 lashes. Floggings often are given in shopping malls and announced on the public-address system.¹⁷

In describing the effects of Shariah on the women of the country he writes:

Saudi women may not drive. If they walk alone in the street, they risk being stopped, beaten or detained as suspected moral offenders. Last March, at a girl's school in Mecca, 15 students died in a fire. Witnesses said the religious police prevented the girls from escaping because they hadn't put on their headdresses and denied male rescuers access because they are not allowed to mix with females.¹⁸

There are no Christian meetings or churches allowed even among the expatriates. Islam is the only religion allowed to be practiced; thus freedom of religion is an unknown concept. Saudi Arabia is one of the world's most closed societies, both because they do

not desire for outsiders and tourists to come and influence their people and also because there are few that desire to travel to that country for fear of their harsh legal system. Shariah law in this country is one of the best examples of what would probably become universal if a Global *Umma* were established in the world.

...In Iran

After the revolution in Iran in 1979, the social consequences of an Islamic Republic were severe. They included a government constitution that invested final authority in the *fiqih* as the supreme religio-political leader of the State. He is the final interpreter of Islamic law, appoints the Council of Guardians, the heads of the military and judiciary, revolutionary guards, and acts as a check on the president, prime minister, and parliament where he has the right to overrule each. John Esposito reports, “All other parties were suppressed, neither criticism of Khomeini nor of the ideological foundation were tolerated. Opposition newspapers were banned, censorship occurred, and Islamic programming was introduced to promote their beliefs and values.”¹⁹ Esposito continues to show how the revolution changed the State. The Office for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Sin addressed moral ills of society in banning music and dancing in public. Drugs, prostitution, gambling, alcohol, homosexuality, and pornography were banned. Nightclubs and bars were closed. Prostitution and drug trafficking were made subject to capital punishment. Thousands of teachers were purged, textbooks revised, and co-ed institutions were transformed into single-sex schools. Islamic associations were formed on campuses and are used to monitor un-Islamic behavior. Women were punished who wore make-up or did not dress modestly or Islamically.²⁰

Christiane Bird, in her book *Neither East Nor West*, describes how “every Iranian lives in two worlds—the public and the private. The public is for wearing dark colors, obeying the laws of the Islamic society, and generally presenting a serious and pious face to the world. The private is for enjoying forbidden music and literature, watching banned videos and TV shows, wearing miniskirts and halter tops, drinking alcohol and doing drugs, and criticizing the Islamic government.”²¹

Secularism under the Shaw has been completely transformed under a state that practices and enforces *Shariah*. Iran remains the best example of what could happen if Islam extremists were to take control of a Western country.

Comparison of *Shariah* and Western Values

The issues that divide Islam and the west are many and varied. Human rights are just one area where the two cultures come into conflict. An Islamic core state will see civil rights much differently than those in the West. Four basic differences can be analyzed to show the intensity of the conflict.

1.) Freedom of Religion

A core value in the West is the separation of church and state. Another is the right of every person to choose the religion that they think is best. This right was written into the Human Bill of Rights at the United Nations. At once there is a conflict in that Islam does not separate the state from religion: In fact they see all aspects of life as integral parts of their religion. Thus *Shariah* should govern all aspects of life in an Islamic State.

Several years back I was working in one of the North African Islamic countries. While I was there practically every Christian citizen of the country was arrested on a Friday night. That same day Dr. Jimmy Draper, the president of the Southern Baptist Convention arrived in the country. On Saturday we went to the American ambassador of the country with the complaint. A result of this contact was that we spoke with the Minister in charge of the internal affairs of the country. We informed him of the situation and reminded him that his country signed the U.N. Bill of Human Rights. His reply seemed to represent how many Muslim see this problem. He Stated “ It was the foreign Department that signed the Bill of Rights but they were the Department of the Interior and they were not bound by what the Foreign Department did. In the end we were successful in getting most of the Christians out of prison in three days.

It is a known fact that there is no freedom of religion in the core Islamic states. They refuse adherents of others religions permission to build their houses of worship and even do not allow those already standing to be repaired. This happens while new Mosques are appearing all over the world and especially in the West.

2.) *Women's Rights*

Women are second-class citizens in Islam. The Koran states that the testimony of a man is the same as that of two women. They are not allowed to worship in the same area of the Mosque as the men in some countries may not even come to the Mosque. The women's main responsibility is to take care of the family and the house. In Afghanistan, women were not allowed to attend school, work or even go out of the house by themselves. The explanation given by those defending Islam is that these harsh penalties are put into place because of their great respect for women. They say that instead of being oppressive it is really a sign of great respect. Most understand it as the opposite.

Those in the West understand that women and men are equal, but Islam has a long way to go before it begins to grant women equal rights. Some say that this is only a cultural problem but when looking at the Koran it is very clear that men are superior to women. *Shariah* law does not afford equal rights to women in any society or culture and as long as Islam continue to require *Shariah* as the norm, women will be granted only the same rights as those who lived in the Arabian Peninsula area in the seventh century.

3.) *Lying in Islam*

Civil rights are built upon values. When the values of societies differ then it is difficult to come to an agreement on what are really basic Civil Rights. One area that needs to be looked at is "What is Truth". One Islamic scholar stated that common Muslim beliefs states that there are four occasions where lying is permitted. They are:

1. To save one life,
2. To affect a peace or reconciliation,
3. To persuade a women,
4. When making a trip, 22

A fifth could be added to this from other sources;

5. In winning someone to Islam.

Some will say that Christian theologians advocate and support a belief in situational ethics, which also allows Christians to tell, lies when the situation demands it.

However the basis of the Islamic view on truth does not come from the situation but rather it comes from their emphasis on community. It could be argued that in each of these above cases we are dealing with relative truth and many Muslims will not define this as lying. At least this is the Islamic view of the problem while Christians would see it differently. Christians hold to a much higher understanding of truth. In fact Jesus himself said that he “is the truth” (John 14:6).

When a Muslim tries to win someone to the Islamic faith, the use of truth is not always the best way to proceed. If a praiseworthy aim is attainable through the telling of a lie, then this is allowed. There is no more praiseworthy aim; than that of bringing someone to an acceptance of Islam. In this way the whole community benefits.

Many who have carried out business transactions with Muslims have been surprised to see that the deal has been built on deceit. The grounds given for such is that lying is permitted when on a journey, and the journeys during the time of Muhammad were almost always business trips. Therefore, in business, the truth may not always be accepted when the common good is to be achieved. The question comes not in the ethics of lying but in what is the common good. the person telling the lie generally defines the common good.

Often when I have taken part in dialogue sessions with Christians and Muslims, I come away with the distinct feeling that the two sides have never really met on the same plane. Differences of the understanding of truth make it difficult for the two to have a real understanding and a true meeting of the minds.

4.) Punishment

Again we must be reminded that the never changing Shariah law comes out of the middle of the seventh century. At this time the punishment practiced for minor crimes were the cutting off of hands or feet or some other violent means of punishment. More serious crimes led to death often by beheading. Today we see Islamic Republics meting out the same forms of punishments.

A missionary friend living in Yemen experienced a break in at their home and a video player was stolen. Several weeks later the police come to the home and told the missionary that they had caught the young man and that my friend had to make a

decision. Was his punishment to be a sentence of ten years in prison or to have his right hand cut off? The Christian said he did not want to press charges but was told he had to make the decision or be sent out of the country. That was the law. He knew that a ten-year sentence in Yemeni prison probably meant death but he chose the ten years hoping he could get out earlier.

Apostasy is another big question in Muslim – Western dialogue. In Islam a person who was at one time a Muslim and leaves the faith is sentenced to death. There are many cases of Christians who were born in a Muslim family but brought up by Christians being sentenced to death for leaving Islam. Many Islamic scholars are wrestling with this topic. Only recently a high level conference on this subject was held. One of the arguments put forth was that the punishment for apostasy should be left up to God and the punishment should not be immediate but rather the punishment should come after death. It appears as if this reasoning was rejected for several reasons. One being that the Koran was clear on this subject and to change it would not be acceptable. A side issue was a fear that if the immediate punishment for apostasy were lifted many Muslims would leave Islam.

Punishment for crimes committed by Muslims is another major area of differences between Christian teaching and that of Islam. It is apparent that there are two completely different views on civil rights in this area of discussion.

Conclusion

Democracy is a form of government that is best defined by being ruled by the people. It respects the civil rights of the individual while Islam places more importance on the community. Islam, on the other hand, with its doctrine of *Shariah* could be best defined by being ruled by God (Theocracy). Is it possible for these to coexist? There is in Islam itself a debate on this very subject. Muslim states that have signed the United Nations declaration of Human Rights find themselves ruled by two contradictory laws. One law gives citizens the freedom of thought, while the *Shariah*, in its official interpretation based on *ta'ra* (obedience), condemns it. Some argue that it is not only possible but is being practiced in the United States today. The only way they can be brought together is for a more moderate form of Islam to win the debate. History has

shown us that the more fundamental forms of Islam have not been ready to accept any form of government other than its own form of Theocracy with its own definition of *Shariah*. Some say that Islam will be mollified in today's Global village, but the last twenty years has proven that when Islam takes over a state or country the institution of *Shariah* is not far behind. I doubt that Democracy and Islam can live and function on a longtime basis without there being intense conflict. This was one of Samuel Huntington's reasons for predicting a Clash of Civilizations in the future.

There are many aspects to the strategy used by Islam including student organizations promoting *da'wah*, taking political control at the municipal level, and eventually taking control at the parliamentary level. Their ultimate goal is the changing of the legal systems of non-Muslim countries so as to be in conformance with Islamic law. *Shariah* not only limits religious and political freedom, making second-class citizens of both non-Muslims and the "people of the book," but Islamic law also robs societies of freedom of speech, dress, and behavior. Islamic law is clearly designed to advance Islamic religion and stop Christian growth and missions as illustrated by the mandates of capital punishment for those who convert out of Islam. *Shariah* law has proven itself to be both a burden for Muslims and a threat to the rest of the world.

Notes

1. Ghulam Sarwar, *Islam, Beliefs, and Teachings*, (Chicago: Kazi Publications, Inc., 1993), 161.
2. Stephen Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 42.
3. Ibid., 41.
4. *The Concept of Dhimma in Islam and its Ramifications* [online]. [Accessed 17 February 2003]. Available from <<http://www.angelfire.com/az/rescon/DHILMMI.html>>, 1. INTERNET.
5. Quoted by Antony Flew, *Islam's War Against the West, Can It Abide a Secular State?*, *Free Inquiry*, 22, (Spring 2002), 43.
6. Ahmed Rashid, Jihad, *The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). Page 9.
7. "In 'Law' Seminars, A Saudi Group Spreads Extremism" by Ian Johnson and David Crawford, *The Wall Street Journal*. April 15, 2003, A1.
8. Ibid., A10.
9. Ibid.
10. Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*. (New York: Random House, 2003), 113.
11. Ibid., 114.
12. Ibid., 114-115.
13. Ibid., 115.
14. Ibid., 116.
15. Ibid., 8.
16. Johnson and Crawford, "In 'Law' Seminars, A Saudi Group Spreads Extremism," A10.
17. *Parade Magazine*, "The 10 Worst Living Dictators," David Wallechinsky. February 16, 2003, 4.

18. Ibid.
19. John L Esposito and John O. Voll, *Islam and Democracy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 65.
20. Ibid., 67-68.
21. Christiane Bird, *Neither East nor West*, (New York: Washington Square Press, 2001), 51-52.
22. *Comparative Index to Islam: Lying*, <http://answering-islam.org/index/lying.html> (accessed 4 August 2002), 1.