

because job scarcity has left huge numbers of them inexperienced at something other than South Dakotans, with their 4 percent unemployment rate, take for granted. Chronic alcoholism compounds the problem. "If somebody came here and wanted to open a factory with 50 workers, we wouldn't be able to supply enough people," says Elsie Meeks, a Lakota who lives in Pine Ridge and specializes in reservation development nationwide.

Cornell and Kalt are probably the most respected experts on reservation economies, and they agree that tribal sovereignty is the key to success. "We cannot find a single case of successful economic development and declining dependence where federal decision makers have exercised de facto control over key development decisions," they write. Devolving power away from the federal government and toward the tribes—as units of local government—should appeal to conservatives, who have often been hostile to the concept of Indian sovereignty. But Cornell and Kalt don't go far enough. The tribes themselves must devolve power away from their own governments and toward the people these governments are supposed to represent. The most important thing they can do is demand that the land now held in trust be returned to the people. It should be given back—not to the tribe or its governing council, but to the individuals who make up the tribe. This would mark the end of reservations as we know them, but the time has come for them to go the way of the buffalo: Indians, too, deserve the chance to live an American dream of material prosperity.

Ian Frazier has noted that there were probably never more than 70,000 members of the western Sioux tribes during the Indian wars, but that from this small group emerged a disproportionate number of genuine heroes—warriors like Crazy Horse, Red Cloud, and Sitting Bull, who fought a valiant but losing campaign against white encroachment, and helped give their people a proud history that all Americans may respect and honor. The next wave of Lakota heroes won't be so famous, but theirs is a struggle that must be won—a struggle for individual economic rights and against collectivism; a war to end the reservation system as we know it.

The odds are long, but the Lakota may yet prevail. When I visited Pine Ridge in December, I stopped by the site of the Wounded Knee massacre. There isn't much to see—some barren land, a cemetery on a hill, and a hand-painted billboard describing what happened. For a while, I just looked around. Nobody else was there. Then a car pulled up from the south, and an old Indian man got out. He had one of those bulging noses that comes from too much drinking. We talked about Wounded Knee, and he pointed out a few local features. As our conversation drew to a close, he changed the subject. "There aren't too many jobs around here," he said. I was afraid he was going to ask for a handout. Instead, he offered to sell me a small drum and a dreamcatcher. I had been trying to find something for my kids, but hadn't seen anything appealing. In fact, I hadn't seen much of anything at all—there just aren't that many stores in Pine Ridge. So we began a negotiation, settled on a price, and shook hands. Then he drove off. Alone again on the rez, I was left with a single thought: It should be this easy for them. **NR**

## Religion of Peace?

Islam, without the comforting clichés

ROGER SCRUTON

**W**ESTERN societies—when faced with immigrants who adhere to traditional faiths and customs, and who maintain a suspicion-laden distance between themselves and the surrounding civil order—tend to respond with overtures of friendship. The message relayed to the new communities that have sought protection in the West is one of tolerance and understanding. By showing that we are no threat to them, we hope to ensure that they will be no threat to us. This strategy has worked with Hindus and Jews and the many sects of migrating Christians. But will it work with Muslims? When from the pulpits of the mosques that have been built in our major cities there sounds the call to *jihad* against the infidel, along with exultant cries of triumph over the recent terrorist atrocities, we might reasonably wonder whether our attempts to live side by side with Islam are doomed to failure.

Its official advocates insist that Islam is a religion of peace—after all, that is the meaning of the word (or, at least, one of its meanings). But the peculiar thing about Islam is that its official advocates have no authority to speak for it. Although each sect has its mosques, there is no such institution as "The Mosque," to set beside the various Christian churches. Nor is there any human institution whose role is to confer "holy orders" on its members. Muslims who have religious authority—the *ulama* ("those with knowledge")—possess it directly from God. And those who take on the function of the *imam* ("the one who stands in front"), so leading the congregation in prayer, are often self-appointed to this role. Islam lacks the chain of human accountability that stems from the corporate personality of an organized church. Thus the only way to settle the question whether Islam is or is not a religion of peace is to study the actions of individual Muslims, and the text from which their religion derives.

The Koran is considered the final authority on all matters it touches upon—and that means just about all matters that impinge on the lives of ordinary mortals. Its style is exhortatory, and its mood imperative. It resounds with threats and imprecations and, for all its many passages of lyrical beauty, it is the biggest joke-free zone in literature. It occupies the space reserved in the human psyche for obedience, and leaves no room for any merely human jurisdiction. The Koranic conception of law as holy law, pointing the unique way to salvation and applying to every area of human life, therefore involves a *confiscation of the political*. Those matters

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which, in Western societies, are resolved by negotiation, compromise, and the laborious work of offices and committees are the object of immovable and eternal decrees. The rules are either laid down explicitly in the holy book or discerned there by some religious figurehead—whose authority, however, can always be questioned by some rival imam or jurist, since the *shari'a* (holy law) recognizes no office or institution as endowed with any independent lawmaking power. The *shari'a*, moreover, is addressed to the faithful, wherever and with whomsoever they find themselves; it does not merely bind Muslims but isolates them from the secular society by which they are surrounded. In any crisis secular law will count for nothing, since the law of God eclipses it.

#### MAN AND CITIZEN

The contrast with Christianity is instructive. St. Paul, who turned the ascetic and self-denying religion of Christ into an organized form of worship, was a Roman citizen, versed in the law, who shaped the early Church through the legal idea of the *universitas* or corporation. The Pauline Church was designed not as a sovereign body, but as a universal citizen, entitled to the protection of the secular and imperial powers but with no claim to displace those powers as the source of



### **The intense longing for that original and pure community once promised by the Prophet involves a turning away from reality.**



legal order. This corresponds to Christ's own vision in the parable of the tribute money: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." The Church has therefore tended to recognize the business of governing human society as a human business, and the Christian as both a servant of God and a citizen of the secular order. It is a distinctive Christian achievement to propose secular government as a religious duty, and religious toleration as an avenue to God. The Enlightenment conception of the citizen, as joined in a free social contract with his neighbors under a tolerant and secular rule of law, derives directly from the Christian legacy.

This contrasts radically with the vision set before us in the Koran, according to which sovereignty rests with God and his Prophet, and legal order is founded in divine command. True law is holy law, whose precepts derive from the four sources of Islamic legal thought: the Koran, the Sunna (customs authorized by the Prophet), *qiyas* ("analogy"), and *ijma'* ("consensus"). These are the sources to which the classical jurists referred when giving judgment, and they none of them acknowledge any law-making institution of merely human provenance. They are the means for discerning God's will, and so attaining the posture of submission (the literal meaning of *islam*).

When Islam first spread across the Middle East and the Southern Mediterranean, it was not by preaching and con-

version in the Christian manner, but by conquest. The conquered peoples were given the choice: believe or die. Exceptions were made for the "people of the Book" (Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians), who could enjoy the subordinate status of *dhimmi*—i.e., being protected by treaty. But the treaty offered no right to worship, and forbade all attempts to proselytize. Other religions existed within the *dar al-islam* on sufferance, and religious toleration was regarded as a regrettable expedient rather than a political virtue.

Under the Ottoman Empire, Islam steadily lost both its belligerent attitude to other faiths and its ability to maintain itself through religious law. In the 19th century the Ottoman sultans began to borrow laws, institutions, and secular customs from the West, so that when the empire collapsed after World War I, its center was able to jettison the perimeter and reshape itself as a modern secular state on the Western model. Thus was born modern Turkey, the creation of Kemal Atatürk, and the one durable democracy in the Muslim world. Turkey endures as a democracy because it has secularized its institutions and excluded the clergy from power. In no sense, however, can it be seen as the product of a Muslim "Enlightenment," equivalent to the Enlightenment that transformed the legal and political order of Europe. Turkey is a deliberately *Westernized* state.

Elsewhere in the Islamic world the democratic idea has not taken root—not because people have rejected it, but because their culture, habits, and institutions make no room for it. Secular government is kept in place by dictatorship, or by ruthless expedients that confer no legitimacy but only power on those who deploy them. In the Middle East, dictatorships designed to retain power in the hands of a single person, a single family, or a single dominant tribe exist side by side with a near-universal nostalgia for another and purer form of government, in which the holy law delivered to the Prophet will bring lasting peace and justice under the rule of God.

It has often been said that Islam has turned its back on modernity, which it cannot encompass through its law and doctrine. And to some extent this is true, the efforts of Westernizers and legal reformers notwithstanding. Much more important, however, is the intense longing for that original and pure community once promised by the Prophet but betrayed repeatedly by his worldly successors and followers. Like every form of nostalgia, this longing involves a turning away from reality, a refusal to accommodate or even to perceive the facts that might undermine it, and an endlessly renewable anger against the Other who refuses to share in the collective dream. This is the mood that inspires the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Wahhabi sect in Saudi Arabia, and the Shi'ite revival of Ayatollah Khomeini. And it is the mood that animates the Islamist terrorists.

Rulers of Islamic states are aware of the danger posed by this immovable nostalgia. They know that it recognizes no loyalty to dynasty, territory, or secular law, but only to God and His promises. Hence they ruthlessly suppress the Islamist movements in their midst—as Hafez al-Assad suppressed the Muslim Brotherhood in the town of Hama in Syria, leaving 10,000 dead and a great medieval town in ruins. Similar measures have been taken in Egypt, Iraq, Tunisia, Algeria, and

Saudi Arabia. But the threat is always there, and the measures must always be renewed.

#### A THREAT TO PEACE

It is in the light of such facts that we should assess the claim that Islam is a religion of peace. Long periods of peace have indeed been enjoyed in the heartlands of Islam, and there are good historical reasons for believing that Muslim communities can live at peace with their Christian, Jewish, or Zoroastrian neighbors. But these periods of peace are periods of lethargy, laxity, and decline. Muslim revivals, when they occur, take a belligerent form. The message that inspires them is not, like the Christian message, one of renunciation and forgiveness, but one of exhortation and triumph. No Christian sect poses the kind of threat to government that the Muslim Brotherhood has posed in Egypt and Syria. And even if we disapprove of the ruthless methods used to suppress the Brotherhood, this very ruthlessness is an indication of the danger.

Western societies tolerate and even welcome dissent, and our disputes are resolved through compromise and dialogue. Thanks to our Christian legacy we see political action not as a means to achieve the kingdom of God on earth, but as a way of maintaining equilibrium between people who share a territory but who may not share a religion, and whose conflicts can be resolved through a common national loyalty and a common territorial law. None of that is accepted by the Islamists. By offering them a home we free them from the chains in which the tyrants of the Middle East try to bind them. But we do not free them from the pathological hatred of our sinful world, nor from the desire to make the ultimate sacrifice in the *jihad* against it. Hence while we offer them a home, what they receive is a "base"—the literal meaning of *al-qa'eda*.

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That is why we should regard our current situation as dangerous. We are not dealing with ordinary criminals of the IRA variety, whose sentimental nationalism conceals a self-centered search for gangland profits and power. We are dealing with people in the grip of religious zeal, for whom everything is permitted that leads toward their goal, and whose goal is destruction. The weapons that we use against ordinary criminals are therefore ineffective against the Islamists. In order to protect ourselves against them we must take pre-emptive measures. This does not mean that we should ghettoize or persecute our Muslim communities. But we must be prepared to break up Islamist cells, and to prevent them from obtaining the arms and the knowledge that would enable them to engage in the longed-for *jihad*. And we shouldn't deceive ourselves. This *jihad* really is longed for, and if we are not vigilant, it really will occur. **NR**

## A Christmas Carol

ALOÏSE BUCKLEY HEATH

*A Heath family Christmas-carol program always seems like a good idea . . .*

**N**ONE of the Heath children was born on Sunday, but many of them almost were, which may account for the fact that, although bright and bonny and good and gay they are not, bonny and gay they indubitably are.

They may get A2 in handwriting and D4 in word analysis; they may get "wholeheartedly enthusiastic" in sports and "constantly inattentive" in social studies, but they are the bonniest crew—not in the whole country; that's ridiculous, I always tell people—in New England. Though, I admit it, I don't know the rest of the country very well.

It is regrettably true that they forge their father's name to undone-homework slips (remember those A's in penmanship) at 8; that they fall in love with and torture members of the opposite sex at 11; and that by the age of 12 they have discovered that you can smoke into the exhaust fan of the first-floor lavatory with absolute safety, whereas smoking out of the third-floor bathroom window means Mother calls the Fire Department. (They learn about cigarettes young because when we catch them smoking, we beat them.)

And gay my children unquestionably are. They rollick into the house from school, burst into paroxysms of laughter at the extraordinary coincidence of their reunion from various carpools, plan their far-flung wickednesses in gales of muffled giggles, are scolded with eyes twinkling above insufficiently suppressed grins, and fall asleep in the midst of a choked chuckle at eight, nine, or ten o'clock, according to whether their bedtime was at seven, eight, or nine.

And they sing. Lord, how they sing! They sing alone or in unison, in harmony, cacophony, or competition, and if two of the stubborn ones simultaneously embark on "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top" and "Silent Night," an immediate popularity contest ensues, as other children drift into the room and join in one song or the other. If the singers are equally popular, you just have to break it up. (Not by saying, "Break it up," you understand. Who's listening? What I usually do is play "The Stars and Stripes Forever" very loudly on the piano.)

With all the gaiety and caroling that goes on in our house all year round, it is only natural that we plan, early every December, a Christmas-carol program to put on tape after it is absolutely perfect, and send to the children's grandmother as an absolutely unique, unprocurable-in-stores Christmas gift.

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*Reprinting a Christmas story by the late Aloïse Buckley Heath is an NR tradition. The collection Will Mrs. Major Go to Hell?, in which this and Mrs. Heath's other Christmas stories appear, is available from National Review Books.*

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