

[A Western Dhimmi's Unending Propaganda for Islam- Part II](#)

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By Jacob Thomas

At this critical moment in the relations between the West and Islam, one is astonished by the attitude of those Western scholars who continue to portray Islam as a religion of peace.

In my previous, [article of 23 February, 2008](#), I contrasted John Esposito's exposition of Islam, with that of two Eastern Christian scholars, John of Damascus (676-754), who lived under the Umayyads, and Al-Kindy who lived in Baghdad in the 800s, during the golden age of the Abbasid Caliphate. Both of these men, who enjoyed close contacts with the highest Muslim authorities of their time, did not hesitate to speak the truth about Islam, and to defend their own faith.

After referring to the works of those Eastern Christian scholars, I mentioned Professor Esposito's impassioned defence of Islam, when he spoke at BookExpo America, held at **McCormick Place Convention Center** in Chicago, on 5 and 6 June, 2004. Four years later, John Esposito continues his campaign to "enlighten" the Western public on how to view Islam.

In this article, I pursue my study of the influence of Esposito, by quoting and commenting on an article by Cinnamon Stillwell, posted on 15 February, 2008, on [Front Page Magaine](#) under the title of **Esposito at Stanford**.

Here are some excerpts from her article:

"Georgetown professor John Esposito, director of the Saudi-financed Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding has a reputation as an apologist for radical Islam. And it's one he lived up to with Stanford University speech last week titled, 'Dying for God? Suicide Terrorism and Militant Islam.'

"Esposito claimed that Islamic terrorism grows primarily out of a sense of political and economic grievance and, of course, 'occupation' on the part of 'neo-colonial powers.' This spin allowed him to deflect responsibility for Islamic terrorism to the West while negating the need for self-reflection among Muslims.

"When an attendee asked him why no other impoverished or oppressed group around the world resorts to suicide bombings, Esposito stonewalled for several minutes before giving one of the few straight answers of the night: 'I don't know.'

"Esposito displayed contempt for anyone calling for the theological and cultural reform of Islam. He described Middle East Forum director Daniel Pipes and Princeton

professor Bernard Lewis as "among the Darth Vaders of the world," and Pipes and Islam scholar Robert Spencer as "Islamophobes." Others on the receiving end of Esposito's vitriol included Martin Kramer, Fouad Ajami, V.S. Naipaul, Max Boot, and Steven Emerson. "Esposito has a penchant for laying into his opponents, but this juvenile behavior fails to answer the substance of his detractors' points."

Thus far my quotes from the Front Page Magazine article.

To begin with, Esposito's claim that "*Islamic terrorism grows primarily out of a sense of political and economic grievance,*" has been refuted by many studies that proved most terrorist acts were perpetrated by middle class and well-educated Muslims, such as *Muhammad Atta*, the leader of the 9/11/2001 attack on the United States.

Esposito's description of Robert Spencer and Daniel Pipes as "*Islamophobes,*" is baseless. And his dismissal of men like Fouad Ajami and V. S. Naipaul is utterly ridiculous.

To tell the truth about Islam is not a sign of *Islamophobia*; on the contrary it indicates the courage of men who defy the reigning orthodoxy of political correctness, and fearlessly recount the history of Islam and expound its tenets with complete honesty and objectivity.

For example, in Robert Spencer's book, **Islam Unveiled: Disturbing Questions About The World's Fastest-Growing Faith**, he responded to the claim that both Christians and Muslims have indulged throughout their history in persecuting others:

"When confronted with this kind of evidence, many Western commentators practice a theological version of 'moral equivalence,' analogous to the geopolitical form which held that the Soviet Union and the United States were essentially equally free and equally oppressive. 'Christians,' these commentators say, 'have behaved the same way, and have used the Bible to justify violence. Islam is no different: people can use it to wage war or to wage peace.'" P. 33

Spencer's quotation from V. S. Naipaul's book, "**Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey**," is an excellent portrayal of the mindset of modern-day Muslims. In *Islam*, says Naipaul, "*The West, or the universal civilization it leads, is emotionally rejected. It undermines; it threatens. But at the same time it is needed, for its machines, goods, medicines, warplanes, the remittances from the emigrants, the hospitals that might have a cure for calcium deficiency, the universities that will provide master's degrees in mass media. All the rejection of the West is contained within the assumption that there will always exist out there a living, creative civilization, oddly neutral, open to all to appeal to. Rejection, therefore, is not absolute rejection. It is also for the community as a whole, a way of ceasing to strive intellectually. It is to be parasitic; parasitism is one of the unacknowledged fruits of fundamentalism.*" P. 129

In my previous article, I mentioned Esposito's total silence about the brutal and little-known Ottoman practice of the *Devshirme*. Spencer recounts this heart-breaking story

that should bring tears to our eyes:

“Another source of the fear in which dhimmis lived in the Ottoman Empire was the notorious devshirme. Begun in the fourteenth century by Sultan Orkhan and continued until late in the seventeenth century, this was the seizure and enslavement of 20 percent of the Christian children in various predominantly Christian areas of the empire. These boys were given the choice of Islam or death, and, after rigorous training, were enrolled in the janissary corps, the emperor’s elite fighters. At first these unfortunate boys were torn from their homes and families only at irregular intervals --- sometimes every seven years and sometimes every four --- but after a time the devshirme became an annual event. By the time it ended, around 200,000 boys had been enslaved in this manner.” Pp. 152,153

In Chapter Ten, Spencer asks **“Does the West Really Have Nothing to Fear from Islam?”**

“Whether or not Islam ever becomes dominant in Western Europe or elsewhere in the former lands of Christendom, the wars will not end. Militant Islam will not go away with the death of bin Laden, or Arafat, or Saddam Hussein, or anyone else. It will clash increasingly with the weary secular powers that it blames for all the ills of the umma. No one can predict the features of the world that will emerge from these conflicts, except that it will be new, and that it will be difficult --- unless there is some wondrous intervention from the Merciful One.” P. 176

I now turn to V. S. Naipaul, another writer who was on the receiving end of Esposito’s vitriol. A few words of introduction are in place. Naipaul was born in Trinidad of Indian ancestry in 1932. He immigrated to England at the age of 18, and studied at Oxford University. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for services to literature, in 1990.

In 1981, Naipaul published *“Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey;”* then, he wrote a sequel in 1998, *“Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions among Converted People.”*

I now quote from Daniel Pipes’ review of the book in the **Middle East Forum** (August 2, 2001):

*“In 1979, the distinguished writer V. S. Naipaul set off for an extensive tour of four Muslim countries. His reports from Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia had a quirky but brilliant quality. In each of his destinations, Naipaul **found a surprising contradiction: those intent on rejecting the West in the name of Islam are also adamant about gaining the fruits of the West’s achievements.** [Emphasis mine]*

*“Nearly two decades later, Naipaul retraced his steps and visited the same four countries, sometimes even visiting the same individuals he’d talked to a generation earlier. His quick vignettes, word sketches, and pieces of conversation make **Beyond Belief** a pleasure to read. In Iran, Naipaul finds that the revolution of 1978-79 has run its course and is virtually defunct. Regulations, Naipaul finds again and again, are*

everywhere, ‘deforming people's lives.’ They have taken the place of spontaneity. The government's heavy-handed use of religion has turned many Muslims against their religion. Hypocrisy has become rank: Men grow beards for job applications, to enhance their religiosity.

“In significant ways, Naipaul finds Iran to be an Islamic-flavored version of the Soviet Union. Like residents of the Soviet Union in the 1980s too, this is a people worn out by their history and their current misery. The country, Naipaul observes, ‘had been given an almost universal knowledge of pain.’ And out of this has come not new hope, not new wisdom, but a shattering new nihilism, again reminiscent of the Soviet experience.”

It is an extremely shocking phenomenon that John Esposito, who occupies an important position at a prestigious Catholic university in Washington, D.C., goes on pouring his contempt on a number of contemporary scholars on Islam. It baffles me to no end that an institution of higher education such as Georgetown University, gives a propagandist for Islam, the platform and opportunity to confuse the minds of the young scholars who study under him.

Quite often, I wonder whether Esposito has ever thought of the great anomaly that his position illustrates! While he benefits from the largesse of a Saudi prince who underwrites his *Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding*, would Saudi Arabia be willing to allow a chair on Christian studies at the University of Riyadh? After all, shouldn't there be a quid pro quo in the relationship between Islam and the West?

Unfortunately, I do know the answer. Saudi Arabia allows Christians to work in the kingdom, but forbids them to come together for fellowship, Bible reading and prayer in the privacy of their homes. At the same time, within a few blocks of the White House in Washington, D.C., the Saudi-financed *Islamic Center*,* freely and openly spreads its Islamic propaganda. Shame on those Western scholars who aid and abet this intolerable and asymmetrical relationship with Islam.

Note

Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey, by V. S. Naipaul. Published by Vintage Books, A division of Random House, New York, 1981

Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted Peoples, by V. S. Naipaul. Published by Random House, New York, 1998

Islam Unveiled: *Disturbing Questions About The World's Fastest-Growing Faith*, by Robert Spencer. Published by Encounter Books, San Francisco, 2002

**The Islamic Center in Washington* houses a mosque, library and bookstore. It is

located on Embassy Row. As soon as one clicks on its website, the *Call to Prayer* is intoned in Arabic: *Allahu Akbar*.