

Politics

Politics: Muslim View

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The Qur'an issues a challenge to human beings. They are to strive to create morally upright individuals (based on the concept of God-awareness - *taqwa*) and to establish a just social order. It is the latter dimension that this article will focus upon.

The Qur'an does not use the term caliphate in the sense that it is used in modern times. In the Qur'an, the term refers to all human beings as the representatives of God. In this sense, all human beings are God's caliphs. Furthermore, the Qur'an does not issue any directive as to the form that a political order should take. In fact, the Qur'an talks of the purpose (establishment of a justice and equality) rather than the form of rule within a Muslim community. The Qur'an also posits some measures and principles for the establishment of a social order. These include promoting good and forbidding evil (*al-amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa'l nahy an al-munkar*), the charity (*zakat*) tax, and other moral-social axioms enjoining human beings towards virtue and compassion. Although offering no details of political organization, the Qur'an is clear that the processes of rule and consultation should not ignore the designs of God.

The Prophet Muhammad established a Muslim community (*umma*) in Medina that replaced tribal affiliations with submission to one God and acceptance of his prophethood. The authority that Muhammad was claiming was comprehensive in that he was a spiritual, military, and political figure, thereby enhancing his already considerable religious authority. Thus, the all-embracing authority of Muhammad meant that to be a Muslim necessitated acceptance of his religious, moral, legal, and political, authorities. The Qur'an also recounts stories of Prophets like David and Solomon who exercised political authority in God's name.

After the Prophet Muhammad's death in 632 C.E., the early caliphate during the times of the rightly guided caliphs (632-661) was also conceived along politico-religious lines. These caliphs undertook many religious and political functions of the Prophet. It was at this time that the institution of the caliphate was established. It must be noted that the state as an organ of rule came into being in early Islam not from a Qur'anic directive but from the experience and agreement by the Muslim community. The terms traditionally used for political governance (*siyasa*) and political order (*nizam*) are absent in the Qur'an. Thus, it is correct to state that the institution of the caliphate that was established by the early Muslims was not divinely ordained. Rather, the Muslims constructed a system of governance that suited their needs in a particular socio-political context.

After the assassination of the fourth caliph 'Ali in 661 C.E. the Umayyad (661 – 750) and 'Abbasid caliphs (750-1228) established dynastic empires. The Umayyad caliphs appropriated the title *khalifat Allah* (God's Caliph), a title that had religious connotations

since it symbolized the fusion of religious and political authority. The 'Abbasid caliphs proclaimed themselves to be the shadow of God on earth. Such concepts clearly indicated that the caliphs saw themselves as both religious and political figures.

The Umayyad and 'Abbasid caliphs wielded much authority in the Muslim community in the eighth and ninth centuries. Acceptance of this authority was normally expressed by giving the oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) to the caliph. The *bay'a* was an important vehicle that was designed to recognize and assert the authority of a ruler and to promise him obedience.

The formulation of a theory connecting rule and religion was left to a genre of literature of Greek and Persian provenance known as "mirrors-for-princes," i.e. advice literature, in which it was argued that salvation in the next world was contingent upon socio-political prosperity in this one, mainly for two reasons. First, sociopolitical chaos was not conducive to performing the religious obligations by which one attained salvation and, secondly, the revealed law the commands and prohibitions of God that define the Muslim community — could only be enforced by a well-established rule, including various organs of governance and bureaus of administration.

Later political discourse among Muslim scholars like al-Mawardi, Baqillani, and al-Ghazali centered on the qualifications, rights, and obligations of a ruler and under what conditions could a ruler be disobeyed or deposed. The scholars also delineated the rights and obligations of the citizens. The concern for the articulation of duties and obligations by these scholars was based on the need to ensure that dominion in human hands should not be reduced to the exercise of power over others. Rather, the exercise of political authority was conceived as implementing the Qur'anic vision of justice and equality that will lead humankind to the religious and moral life ordained by God.

Modern political discourse has centered on the possibility of checking the powers of the rulers and incorporating notions like a parliamentary system of government and democracy in Muslim states. Scholars like 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq have argued that the Qur'an does not sanction any form of government and that setting up a government in Islam was not required. Others have appropriated the Qur'anic principle of consultation (*shura*) to argue for a consultative assembly within the context of a modern Islamic state. However, other Muslims have argued that the establishment of an Islamic state is a divine requirement. Such a state is defined by the implementation of Islamic law (*shari'a*) and the fusion of church and state.

The Political Order: Christian View

Dr. Michael Hollerich

Christianity is inherently *dualistic* in its conception of the political order: religion and politics, church and state, are distinct spheres or entities which cannot be collapsed into

one another. Even in situations of religious establishment, their respective functions remain distinct.

On the one hand, Jesus says to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (Jn 18:36); on the other hand, in his last words to his followers he says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Mt 28:18) – and the word for “authority” (*exousia*) certainly includes political authority, as in Rom 13:1. The first utterance reflects Jesus’ refusal of power under the conditions of this age (see also Jn 6:15); the second reflects Jesus’ Lordship after his resurrection and exaltation. *Christian dualism is thus grounded in Christianity’s distinctive eschatology, in the tension between this age, still under the control of the powers of evil, and the new age that is breaking in and which Christianity is called to realize but which will not come in its fullness until the return of Jesus at the end of time.* This eschatological tension is sometimes described in terms of “already but not yet”: the Lordship of Christ and his kingdom are already established by Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection; but they have yet to be fully and visibly realized until God wills the complete defeat of the powers of evil.

Origins

The Christian Bible (Old and New Testaments) bears rich witness to this dualism. In the Gospels Jesus announces that “the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near” (Mk 1:14). The kingdom in question is both this-worldly (meaning that it bears on the way human beings relate concretely and actually to one another here and now) and other-worldly (meaning that it presumes and calls for a radically transformed human nature, and posits a final realization of God’s justice in a transformed world. The Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7) is the essential expression of this call to a way of life that anticipates reversing the long consequences of the eviction from paradise (Gen 3) through a restructuring of human nature from within by what Jesus calls *conversion*, the giving of a new heart, as a result of which all the institutions of the old order – family, sexuality, economy, state – are over-turned and remade.

This transformation entails above all the renunciation of violence even in self-defense (Mt 5:39,43-44). The contemporary context is the political turmoil inspired by the Roman occupation. Jesus repudiated violent resistance, as he says when his followers would resist his arrest: “For all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Mt 26:52). Jesus’ mission nevertheless leads to his arrest and execution by the Roman authorities. Though he dies in despair (Mt 27:46), his resurrection from the dead becomes the inaugural event of the new age (see Peter’s Pentecost sermon in Acts 2:14-36).

The New Testament’s narrative recounts the following sequence of events that will adumbrate all future Christian understanding of the state and the political order:

- The kingdom promised to Israel is deferred (Acts 1:6-8).
- In its place the outpouring of God’s Spirit creates a new community, the Church, which will try to realize the kingdom (see efforts towards common ownership of wealth and property, Acts 2:43-47, 4:32-37).

- The Church will inherit some of the judicial prerogatives of Jesus himself, who summoned his inner circle of the Twelve to be the nucleus of a restored Israel, and promised that in the new age they would sit on thrones judging the Twelve Tribes (Mt 19:28). (Cf. also Acts 5:1-11 and 1 Cor 5:1-5, 5:9-6:6.) This judicial prerogative is given first of all to Peter (Mt 16:13-19), who stands in a unique way for the community as a whole.
- Such judicial functions mean that Church thus also takes on the character of the citizen assembly (*ekklêsia*) of the ancient polis (cf. the legal formula of a town council's enactment in Acts 15:28, "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..."). It is not itself a state but takes on certain state-like features. Its coercive powers, however, are eschatological, not this-worldly.
- The Church as the Body of Christ: especially in Paul's letters the Church is equated with the body of Christ, who is its head – cf. the extended use of the body metaphor in 1 Cor 12 and Rom 12:3-8. In Ephesians 1 the Church, and Christ, take on cosmic dimensions: "...and he [God] has put all things under his [Christ's] feet and has made him head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph 1:22-23).
- The Church is on pilgrimage in this world ("For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come" Heb 13:14). But even here it already has access "to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven..." (Heb 12:22-23).
- At the end of time Christ will return, the heavenly Jerusalem will descend, and God's kingdom will be definitively established (see the book of Revelation, esp. Rev 19-22).

According to the New Testament, the state – and the only state which the NT knows is the Roman Empire – is an interim institution, to exist until the final coming of the kingdom. The NT reflects at least three distinct attitudes to the state:

- Jesus' radical depreciation of the state: Jesus absolutely privileges duty to God but also enjoins payment of taxes: "Render therefore to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (Mt 22:21), a saying which certainly recognizes a distinction but *not* a "partitioning," as if part of the world was not under God's sway and we did not owe everything to him (cf. Mt 22:35-40).
- Paul's endorsement of the state as "God's servant (*diakôn*) for your good...he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer" (Rom 13:4 – the whole section, 13:1-7, is the locus classicus for the NT doctrine of the state – cf. also 1 Pet 2:13-17: "Fear God. Honor the emperor."). The Acts of the Apostles also reflects a positive view of the Roman Empire as a peace-keeping operation.
- From an apocalyptic perspective, however, the state is regarded as the instrument and possession of Satan, and his persecuting agent (Rev 13 and passim).

Historical development: from persecuted minority to state establishment

Christianity's subsequent development falls into three phases: illegality and persecution; state establishment; and toleration and religious freedom.

Illegality and persecution

During the first phase Christianity lost the protective legal umbrella of Judaism and was subject to occasional though brutal persecution. The expectation of Christ's imminent return waned but could flare up again during persecution. Apocalypticism invariably entailed a hostile view of the Empire, but this became a pronouncedly minority position. Mainstream Christianity adopted the Pauline-Lucan apologetic approach and saw the Empire as part of God's salvific plan to pacify the world for the spread of the Gospel. Apologists liked to correlate Augustus' establishment of the Pax Romana with the birth of Christ, the Prince of Peace. Though Christian teaching continued to frown on military and government service, Origen said Christians would pray for the Emperor if he were fighting for a just cause – the leading edge of the development of a Christian version of the just war theory. The prohibitions against government service began to break down in practice in the third century, if not sooner. Christianity lived like a state within the state ("in the world as the soul is in the body," in one famous apologetic statement). The anchoring of the churches' government in the office of the bishop created a world-wide (ecumenical, in the ancient sense) federation that had no true analogy in any ancient religion. Episcopacy was a key to Christianity's survival and flourishing in the Roman Empire's peculiar mixture of religious permissiveness and experimentation, alongside occasional ruthless repression.

State establishment

With the conversion of Constantine, Christianity entered a new era that would last, in various places, right into the twentieth century – Catholic Christianity did not formally renounce its expectation of legal protection and subsidy until 1965, at the Second Vatican Council. The partnership which was inaugurated in the fourth century was premised *institutionally* on mutual support and a division of labor between church and state, *exegetically* on texts like Rom 13:1-7, *dogmatically* on the Incarnation (in which Christ's assumption of a complete human nature can be seen as entailing the integration in himself of the whole social order), and *metaphysically* on the concept that the unity of the world is grounded in and reflects the unity of God. With the benefit of historical hindsight, the deficiencies of this partnership are clear. We need only mention such consequences as the compromising of the Gospel by proximity to wealth and power; manipulation of the church by the state for the state's own purposes; the use of coercive state power to deal with internal religious dissent and with external unbelievers such as pagans and Jews; and the identification of Christianity with the interests of a particular culture and a particular state. All of these were to have a long and baneful history from which modern Christianity is still struggling to recover.

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that for many hundreds of years Christians saw nothing wrong or inappropriate with state establishment, which has more points of compatibility with Christianity than many modern Christians may care to believe.

The following essential developments in the era of state establishment must be noted:

1. The emergence of two distinct models of how church and state were to share in the government of a single Christian society.

- We may call one the *Constantinian* model, according to which the emperor or king receives his authority to rule directly from heaven, without the mediation of the church, and has responsibility before God for the welfare of the whole Christian society, the church included. The emperor calls councils and enforces their decisions. But he does not usurp the special sacramental and doctrinal powers of the church. The pure type is the emperor-dominated *symphonia* (“harmony”) which characterized church and state in the Byzantine Empire. In the medieval west the church will gain an increasing role in the consecration of the ruler, beginning with the papacy’s alliance with the Carolingian dynasty in the eighth century. But most western rulers will continue to assume, as did Constantine and so would Charlemagne, that they have final responsibility for the welfare of their realms, the church included – the age of feudalism and the proprietary church in the west, when church office and property are in the gift of powerful laymen, will reinforce that ambition, as will the nascent national kingdoms of the later Middle Ages.
- The other model we may call the *ecclesiastical* model, in which the emperor is regarded essentially as another layman subject, like all the baptized, to the disciplinary powers of the church. The parade case in early Christianity is Bishop Ambrose of Milan’s excommunication of the Emperor Theodosius I in 391. The locus classicus might be the famous letter of Pope Gelasius I (492-496), written in 494 to the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius: “Two there are by whom this world is chiefly ruled, the sacred authority of the priests, and the royal power...” Gelasius claims that the former is greater insofar as priests must render an account to God even for the behavior of kings.

1. In the medieval period in the west, the papally led Gregorian Reform of the eleventh century will draw out the ultimate implications of the episcopacy’s pastoral responsibility for the welfare of souls, and the result will be an unprecedented intensification of the dualism inherent to Christianity. The goal of the reformers was to ensure the “freedom of the church” (*libertas ecclesiae*) by liberating it from lay control and organizing the clergy as an international corporation, with its own fiscal and legal systems, under papal auspices, in order to be the spiritual conscience of the one *corpus Christianum*. Beginning with Gregory VII (1073-1085), popes will claim the duty to intervene in political affairs *ratione peccati*, whenever a question of sin is involved, and even to depose rulers, not merely to excommunicate them. The long struggle between popes and western emperors will have the double effect of stripping rulers of much of their traditional quasi-sacramental legitimacy, but also of exhausting the participants and clearing the ground for new conceptions of freedom and limited government in the public sphere. Here are discernible the first outlines of a genuinely secular view of the state – and the church had a hand in the doing. The development of new theories

of sovereignty in the later Middle Ages, based on recovered Roman civil law and on Aristotelian political philosophy, will open the door to notions of sovereignty “from below” rather than descending from God in heaven, thus lending legitimacy to civil efforts to cut the international clerical order down to size and to domesticate and appropriate its resources.

2. The political fracturing of Christendom, which occurred in two stages: first into east and west, when the papacy recreates the Roman imperial title by crowning Charlemagne as Emperor of the Romans in 800; and second, when the western empire gives way to a congeries of national dynasties and independent principalities in the later Middle Ages. The ecclesiastical mirror of this double political fragmentation is the schism between Orthodoxy and Catholicism in 1054, and the breakup of western Christianity in the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. *These developments make impossible the ancient ambition of a cohesive Christian commonwealth and any realization of a territorial conception of Christianity in a supra-national sense.* The Peace of Westphalia (1648), ending the Thirty Years War, established the early modern international state system and, by excluding the papacy from the peace conference, in the process secularized diplomacy and international relations.
3. The last stage of the era of state establishment is the nationalization of Christianity because of the Reformation, and the eventual subordination of the Christian churches everywhere, even in Catholic countries, to the absolutist states of the early modern period, when churches were essentially departments of religious affairs in state bureaucracies. This applies in spades to the colonialist projects undertaken as a result of global exploration: governments successfully kept a firm grip on the church in newly conquered territories, and conversion became an intended by-product of colonial annexation.
4. A coda to the foregoing list is the new appearance – or re-appearance? – of Christian groups which seek to dissolve the church and state marriage brokered by Constantine, by returning, as it was imagined, to purely biblical principles, withdrawing from participation in government, and re-implementing the voluntary principle. Such groups, not wrongly called “sects” in the sociological typology made famous by Ernst Troeltsch, were forerunners of the post-Constantinian future – and were often fiercely persecuted for their efforts.

Modernity and the present: secularization, globalization, and disestablishment

This is not the place to rehearse the sequence of events, primarily in Great Britain and the Netherlands, by which religious toleration was gradually implemented, leading to the eventual legal separation of church and state as mandated by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Suffice to say that since the 18th c. Christianity has lived under any number of political arrangements: ongoing if modified state establishments; as a missionary church in colonial and post-colonial regimes; as by turns the ideological handmaiden and persecuted victim of various authoritarian and Fascist regimes; as an intimidated (usually – Poland being an obvious exception) and repressed entity under Communist dictatorships; and as a sometimes uneasy beneficiary of the freedoms of the

liberal democracies, though these too range from the bitterly anti-clerical (e.g. the French Third Republic) to the relatively benign (e.g. the U.S.).

It makes more sense to outline the huge changes that mark the transition to modernity, over the course of the last approximately four hundred years. These can be grouped under two headings:

- Secularization: however we define the word, it seems indisputable that multiple changes have had the cumulative effect of restricting the collective areas of human life in which religious institutions, laws, beliefs, and sanctions are operative, as compared with the state of affairs in earlier ages. In the intellectual sphere, we have the scientific revolution(s) and the attendant triumph of instrumental reason and efficient causality, which entail a conception of reality (materialist, developmental, and empirically verifiable) that is not easily reconcilable with the supra-empirical conception presumed by Christianity (and by all religions?). In the political sphere there is the triumph of democracy, understood in the broad sense that sovereignty must come “from below,” from the people, however that sovereignty be exercised, whether by a dictatorial party, a charismatic and authoritarian leader, a junta, or elected representatives. In whatever form, however, the modern state does not tolerate competition to its sovereignty. In the social sphere there is the emancipatory dynamic that has led to the enfranchising of hitherto passive social actors now as *subjects*, what Pope John Paul II would call “acting persons” (in our own time, see movements for racial and sexual equality). In the ethical sphere there is the supreme modern value of freedom. In the religious sphere there is a return to the religious pluralism that once characterized the Roman Empire, but now in a cultural climate that is singularly unfavorable to totalizing claims of the sort that Christianity has always made. *The effect of all of these is to reduce Christianity’s claim on public space, to privatize it, to reduce its truth claims to the non-cognitive level, and to complicate its efforts to propagate itself as a normative tradition in continuity with its origins.*
- Globalization: ever since the age of global explorations, the human race has increasingly experienced its inter-dependence in a single world: trade, manufacturing, communication, migration, transportation, technology, environmental change, even war, have combined to force human beings into ever greater proximity to other human beings.

For Christianity the cumulative implications have been enormous. They lead ineluctably to the conclusion that Christianity must abandon the last vestiges of its Constantinian legacy. That means returning to persuasion and witness and example as its instruments of propagation, and eschewing state assistance.

At the *national* level, speaking here of life in liberal democracies, Christianity has to strike a delicate balance. It must adhere to the rules of engagement in public debate, but it cannot do so at the cost of neutering itself and discarding all that is specific to its own beliefs and values. In America the normal fate of churches is to become, willy-nilly, mere denominations, meaning that they screen out what is peculiar to them for the sake of

emphasizing commonalities, lest they be “divisive”. The coming of Christ’s kingdom tends to blur imperceptibly into the political program of a particular party, or simply an endorsement of current national policy. By the same token, if Christians are serious about presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ and actually letting it be heard, they will have to learn how to be genuinely persuasive instead of simply shouting louder or by getting a hand on whatever levers of governmental power they can still reach. The balancing act is all the more complex and challenging in view of the way that secularization continues to peel away the Christian vestiges of nations and governments, and Christians must learn where best to commit their resources (moral, financial, electoral, caritative, etc.).

If nationalism is still one of Christianity’s greatest rivals – and that has certainly been the case in the modern period, particularly since the French Revolution – that means that Christians must learn again how to live *in via*, mindful that they have dual citizenship (cf. Phil 3:20).

At the *international* level Christianity must also learn to live with an unprecedented degree of religious pluralism, and this time without the coercive support of European colonial regimes. Since Catholicism says that the Church is to be like a sacrament of the unity of the human race (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 1), Catholic Christianity is uniquely positioned to fulfill such a role. The Vatican city-state, a vestige of the medieval papacy’s temporal power, has in the last century, and especially under the charismatic, globe-trotting Pope John Paul II, assumed its old aspiration to be the spiritual conscience of the whole social order, but now longer in a territorially-defined Christendom, as in the Middle Ages, but a global humanity newly conscious of its manifold inter-dependence. Catholicism, it has rightly been said, was the first multi-national corporation, and one with a branch office virtually everywhere on the planet. The challenge will be in some way analogous to what Christianity faces at the national level of the liberal democracies: how civilly to engage other religions, and also an emerging secular super-culture, while holding fast to its most authentic traditions and sense of mission.

Points of Agreement:

In both Islam and Christianity, there is no organization of the political order specified in the scriptures. Therefore, both religions are compatible with a number of different political systems, from monarchy to representative government to democracy. In fact, there have been Christian monarchies (England, *ancien regime* France), representative governments and democracies (the U.S., most European governments). The same is true of Islam: there are Islamic monarchies (Saudi Arabia, Jordan), representative governments (Pakistan), and democracies (Indonesia, Bangladesh).

Points of Disagreement:

As Michael Hollerich notes (above article) Christianity is inherently dualistic in that it sees the political order and the religious order as distinct spheres, with distinct forms of government. This was even true of countries and epochs which had established religions, like medieval Christendom, and England. It is all the more true of modern Christian

countries (if there are Christian countries), which have more and more tended toward a separation of church and state. True, there are a few European countries which still have state churches (England, Norway), but even in these countries there is a wide degree of religious pluralism. Most countries where there is a Christian majority have followed the pattern of separation of church and state which was begun with the United States constitution. And the tendency is towards a greater degree of separation of church and state, not less, to the point where it is debatable whether the church has much influence on the politics of the state at all.

Islam, on the other hand, has tended to resist the separation of religion and the state, and has favored a much closer union between religion and the state. Indeed, the military expansion of Islam from the 7th century on was not focused on forced conversion (cf. Qur'an: 2:256: "Let there be no compulsion in religion."); rather it was an expansion of Islamic political rule and authority, which nevertheless allowed non-Muslim religious groups (Jews, Christians, and eventually Zoroastrians, Hindus, and Buddhists) to exist within it. Ismail al-Faruqi, in his short book, *Islam* (1984) writes this about the Islamic political order:

Indeed, Islam asserts that the territory of the Islamic state is the whole earth.... Part of the earth may be under the direct rule of the Islamic state and the rest may yet have to be included; the Islamic state exists and functions regardless. Indeed, its territory is ever expansive. So is its citizenry, for its aim is to include all humankind.... The Islamic state is thus not an exclusively Muslim state, but a federation of *ummahs* of different religions and cultures and traditions, committed to live harmoniously and in peace with one another... That is why Muslim theorists have called the Islamic state "the House of Peace," a real world order. All that lies outside of it is the "House of War." (*Islam*, pp. 62-65)

However, it would be a mistake to conclude from this that a majority of Muslims favor imposing Islamic law, (*Sharia*), as the law of the state. In most Islamic countries, (for example, Egypt) *Sharia* law is separate from civil law; *Sharia* law governs family matters, such as divorce, inheritance, and so on, whereas secular civil law governs all other areas. In some Islamic countries (such as Jordan, Pakistan Afghanistan, and Bangladesh), a majority want *Sharia* law as the only source for legislation; in other countries (Iran, Indonesia) only a small percentage (Iran= 12%; Indonesia = 14%) want *Sharia* law as the only source for legislation (Esposito, Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam?*, p.48.).

It is a typical position of extremists, both Muslim and Christian, to insist that the law of the land be based on religious scriptures. This is not the position of the majority of Christians (for example, in the U.S. only 9% say that the Bible should be the only source for legislation). It would seem not to be the position of the majority of the world's Muslims. But generally, most Muslims seem to favor a law of the state which closely reflects Islamic values.

Points for Further Discussion:

The main point of discussion would seem to be this: to what extent should religion be separated from the law of the state. This is a serious issue for Muslims, but also for Christians. How many Christians, for example, would be happy with a law which legalized infanticide? Christians in the U.S. certainly favor the separation of church and state, but it is doubtful if they would favor state laws which were hostile to Christian values. So the degree of separation of church and state, or mosque and state, is a question which concerns both Christians and Muslims.