

Is Incremental Islamicisation Inevitable? – As Some People Think

A Muslim Future For Britain?

A while ago I heard a story about the Dean of an ancient English cathedral showing a Muslim imam around his church. “Very impressive!” Was the visitor’s reaction, and, “I fancy there are many like this, in England ... Of course, they will all be mosques, *one day*”. Whether the story is apocryphal or not, it suggests an anxiety that many British Christians feel (and, indeed, I have heard other similar stories concerning Paris’s Notre Dame cathedral).

Will Britain one day become a predominantly Muslim society (as many Muslim radicals clearly wish)? Many would say yes, that there is a definite drift towards incremental Islamicisation (if only caused by demographic factors – the differing birth rates). Perhaps, though, we could take a more “constitutionally realist” view, and say that Parliament, the judiciary, and the police, will never allow any take-over by the advocates of Sharia law, and while there may be compromises by the authorities, at local level (eg. education authorities agreeing to the use of halal food for all school meals), a major constitutional shift will never come, and that there is no real evidence of any such change taking place. Others claim that we, as Christians, must ultimately trust God to aid us in preventing, what would be a catastrophe, from overwhelming us.

History tells us that major changes in population and their religious affiliation – and the occurrence of one racial/religious group taking power over the territories of another – *has* happened, and thus, perhaps, can happen again. For Christians, the destruction of the Byzantine Empire (perhaps the only Christian empire there has been), and the taking of Constantinople in particular (1453), is the single most tragic event that history records. We may hope and pray that God does not allow such a thing to happen in Europe, or the West; but the people of Constantinople hoped and prayed, and had no less faith in the Lord than we do. The Christian church – and, we might imagine, God’s Spirit – has a habit, in history, of moving on, from the land of Jesus’s earthly life, to Western Europe, to North America and the English-speaking world ... and maybe its next home will be in the southern continents, as many would argue, and European Christianity may go the way of that in late-Classical north Africa, which was once among the flowers of Christian civilisation.

But nothing like this will inevitably happen; maybe historical processes need *not* repeat themselves, and our prayers for our renewal and resurgence – for the coming of light into our present darkness, for the unmasking of the Evil One’s plans and schemes, here, in the West – will be answered. But we must always regard this world – enemy-occupied territory, as C. S. Lewis had it – as something that we (as individuals, *and* the Christian Church) are just passing through, and we must hold to no comfortable illusions about what, in our society, *cannot* by any means ultimately occur. As so often, we have to have hope without naivety, realism without despair.

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