

Etienne Bovey

**WHY IS EUROPE
OPENING UP
TO ISLAM?**

**A citizen and
christian perspective**

EHB

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Why is Europe opening up to Islam?

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Pourquoi l'Europe s'ouvre-t-elle à l'islam?

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The Islamisation of Europe is desired and clearly announced by the OIC (Organisation for Islamic Cooperation) which groups together fifty-seven States in the world. It has developed in particular after the last world war, gradually, through various pressures and thanks to very effective action at the highest level of European political and judicial bodies. This raises many questions!

Why have the leaders and intellectual elites chosen to open their arms to Islam and so easily accept an Islamisation strategy that elaborates, for Europe, the "project of an alternative civilisation based on authentic Islam"?

Why does a large section of the Church tolerate, or even support, such an opening?

Why is our society willing to renounce its roots, especially its Judeo-Christian roots?

This book also deals with the problems of welcoming foreigners, especially Muslims, when the latter claim the right to live according to their own laws (the sharia) and, in addition, seek to impose them on the receiving society.

The author tries to answer these questions in a simple and concrete way, drawing on the expertise of Islamologists, theologians, lawyers, politicians and journalists, while searching the Bible for explanations and solutions.

* * * * * *

"This is a well-informed book for the general public. All citizens and Christians who love Switzerland and Europe should read it.

Like a good watchman, Etienne Bovey brings to light the dangers and drifts that could uproot and destroy us.

Shafique Keshavjee, theologian, author of *L'islam conquérant*.

Jesus to the crowd:

You know how to recognize the appearance of the earth and the sky; how is it that you do not recognize this time? And why do you not discern for yourselves what is right?

Luke 12:56-57

The author

Etienne Bovey was born in Lausanne in 1952. He worked there for forty years as an ophthalmologist, specialising in retinal surgery.

From his youth, he was passionate about the study of the Bible. In 2005, he undertook to summarize three voluminous commentaries by Frédéric Godet (1812-1900), an outstanding theologian from Neuchâtel who had a great influence in his time. These summaries, published in 2007 (The Epistle to the Romans), 2010 (The Gospel of Luke) and 2011 (The Gospel of John) are precious tools for personal or group Bible study.

Since his retirement in 2017, Etienne Bovey has devoted himself even more to writing. His first personal book (*Un Roi, des Sujets et une Terre*, 2017) is a great fresco of the Kingdom of God in the Old and New Testaments and describes God's walk with believers throughout history. His latest book (*Christ en moi: qui fait quoi?* 2018) recounts the author's testimony in his quest for a healthy and responsible relationship with Christ.

Acknowledgements

This book has been reviewed by some thirty friends from a wide range of backgrounds. In order to preserve the desire for discretion expressed by many of them, I will not mention their names. However, I would like to express my gratitude for the help they have given me. Their judicious advice has been invaluable and their encouragement has helped me to pursue this long work to the end. I owe them a lot!

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Introduction

A little over ten years ago, I had the opportunity to eat with Brother Andrew, the founder of Open Doors¹. We had a great time together. Knowing that he had the situation of the Church in the Middle East at heart and that he was very familiar with the problems of Islam, I asked him this question which preoccupied me: "What do you think of the Islamisation of Europe?" He took his time to reflect... and replied: "What worries me most is not the rise of Islam in Europe, but rather the fact that the Churches are emptying themselves". He did not want to tell me more. So I was a little bit unsatisfied, but his words remained engraved in my memory. Was there a link between a certain dechristianization of Europe and the spread of Islam? Or was it a coincidence? In any case, Brother Andrew was more concerned about the progressive abandonment of the Christian faith in Europe than about this danger that I called "Islam".

Much later, I understood the wisdom of his answer when I sought to find out more.

The years passed and I left this subject aside, having to devote myself fully to my professional activity.

As soon as I retired, I joined a group of theologians and experts in Islamology². My understanding of Islam has changed a lot since then. It has deepened. The above question was formulated a little differently: I wanted to know whether there was really a connection between the spiritual state of the Church and the rise of Islam, and whether there were other possible causes for such a development outside the Church. I also wanted to understand how, since the last war, the Islamisation of Europe had been able to advance so rapidly at the highest institutional level. In short, I wanted to understand why Europe had opened and continues to open up to Islam.

That's how I started my investigation; it lasted about two years.

In 2018, Alpaslan Kavaklioglu MP, a member of the ruling AKP³ and chairman of the Turkish parliament's Security and Intelligence Committee, said: "The Muslim population will be larger than the Christian population in Europe... There is no way out. Europe will be Muslim. We will be effective there, Allah willing".

¹ International organization serving persecuted Christians.

² www.iqri.org

³ The AKP, Justice and Development Party, is an Islam-conservative party, which has been in power in Turkey since 2002.

Is this really an inevitable reality? Can't Europe get out of its drowsiness? Can it not understand, in a burst of lucidity, what are the real consequences of the choices it has made in recent decades? This book will try to answer these questions.

In order to lighten the presentation of this difficult subject, I have included dialogues with two fictional characters, Rachid and John. Their names are abbreviated by the letters R and J (I logically assigned myself the letter E, the initial of my first name). They are both, in a way, the spokespersons of the various specialists I have met, but also of the authors cited in the bibliography. So, I hope to be able to take you better in this adventure...

You will notice very quickly that the dialogues are not those of real life! You don't discuss these deep and complex subjects in the same way as you would talk about your car or the results of the last football matches! Let's call them "literary dialogues".

I often talk about the Church, using a capital C, to describe the Christians who make it up. However, I am well aware that not everyone thinks or acts in the same way! Thus, when I use this term, I am not necessarily referring to the Church as a whole, but rather to an important or majority trend within it.

When I speak of Europe, I am not implying that all European countries behave in the same way and that what is said applies to each of them. However, I have seen in my readings that from one country to another the same cause produces the same effects. It is therefore not foolish to make some extrapolations with regard to the rise of Islam in Europe. On the other hand, as we shall see later, the willingness of Muslim countries to extend the influence of Islam in the Western world is not limited to a few European countries, but to the whole of Europe.

Let's get down to a few practical details.

Biblical texts are italicized. Unless otherwise indicated, they come from the English Standard Version of the Bible. Their complete reference is indicated in the footnote. John 3.16 means: Gospel of John, chapter 3, verse 16.

The verses of the Koran are written in normal type. I have not italicized them to differentiate them from the biblical texts. The reference is placed at the beginning of the verse. "Koran 98.6" means that it is verse 6 of the 98th Sura. Let me remind you that there are 114 suras (or chapters) in the Koran, and that they are classically ordered in descending order of length of the text. Some translations arrange them in chronological order, which has the

great advantage of allowing the reader to better grasp the whole evolution of thought during the life of Mohammed¹.

In the english translation of the Koran (ClearQuran.com), I have replaced the word "God" with "Allah" to clearly differentiate the God of the Bible from the God of the Koran. I will explain the reasons for this later.

¹ I mention here Sami Aldeeb's translation, available on his website:
blog.sami-aldeeb.com

A curious case

In a café in Lausanne, Friday 24 November 2017

After doing some shopping in town, I settle down in a café to warm up. While waiting for the waiter, I open the 24H newspaper left on the table. A headline calls out to me: "Winterthur. The Ethiopian who incited to kill Muslims who do not pray in community has been sentenced to eighteen months of suspended prison". The subject interests me and I read the whole article. The story takes place at the An'Nur mosque in Winterthur. During a preaching held on 21 October 2016 before about 60 Muslims, a 25-year-old Ethiopian imam said that those who did not come to pray in the community should be "banished, rejected, shunned and slandered until they return" and that if they persisted, they should be killed, even if they prayed at home. A participant was able to film the preacher and share his video with the Public Prosecutor's Office, which immediately opened an investigation. A trial took place. The defence presented the imam as an ignorant young man who did not know Arabic well. But the judges rejected these arguments and sentenced the imam to 18 months suspended imprisonment and a 10-year expulsion. One of the grounds for the sentence was incitement to crime or violence.

What is to be thought of all this? It is really curious to see such violence from this imam towards moderate Muslims. At first glance, I have the feeling that justice has done its job...

No sooner had I started thinking than I saw my friend Rachid go into the café. What a happy coincidence! He's going to be able to tell me what he thinks of this article.

Rachid spent his youth in Egypt. Coming from a very religious Muslim family, he studied for a long time to become an imam. Then one day he discovered the Christian faith. Persecuted by his family and his entourage, he had to flee his country and finally landed in Switzerland where he studied further. His knowledge of Islam is impressive. He knows the Koran by heart, the Hadiths and a lot about Islamic history.

Rachid has already read the article. He calls out to me with a little smile:

R – So... what do you think of the court's ruling?

E – The sentence seems correct to me! Justice applied the law! You can't let a preacher incite his followers to violence against other Muslims in this way because they are less assiduous at the mosque.

R – You are right! But there is a problem that few people know about. The imam defended himself by saying that he had only

quoted religious texts without himself calling for violence. He did indeed quote a Hadith in which Mohammed says that Muslims who stay away from mosques should be burned in their homes¹.

E – Sorry to interrupt. What exactly do you mean by "Hadith"?

R – Hadiths are the words and deeds of the Prophet Mohammed, which have been transmitted to us in collections. There are many such collections, but some are considered more authentic than others. This is the case of the collections of Bukhari (810-870) and Muslim (821-875) for the Sunnis, who represent the great majority of Muslims. For the Shiites, present especially in Iran, it is those of Kulayni (864-941). These collections are truly authoritative and cannot be questioned.

E – So you are telling me that the Imam only did his duty by quoting sacred texts of Islam and that justice should not have condemned him?

R – No, that's not it! I simply want to show you that on this point, and many others, there is an opposition between Swiss law and Muslim law, and that in this case the fundamental problem has not been dealt with.

E – If I understand correctly, the real question would rather be this: who was guilty? The imam who recited the Koran and the Hadiths? Or certain "sacred" texts that incite violence and murder?

R – Yes, exactly. Justice chose to convict the imam by applying Swiss law. It was perfectly normal! It did its job. But the problem remains, because one does not question the founding texts of Islam which incite hatred and discrimination. And these texts continue to be read to the faithful and, above all, to be taught to children. You think that this necessarily leaves traces in the hearts of these young people, even if they do not later commit themselves fully to the path of Islam.

E – Is the case of the An'Nur mosque isolated, or are there other mosques that deliver a radical message?

R – S. Keller-Messahli has carried out an extensive study of mosques in Switzerland. She published the results of her survey in a book entitled: *La Suisse, plaque tournante de l'islamisme. Un coup d'oeil dans les coulisses des mosquées*² (Switzerland, hub of Islamism. A look behind the scenes of the mosques).

She reminds us that the mosque plays above all a political role, which is consistent with Islam. This is where political, cultural and

¹ "Muhammad said: (I swear) by (Allah), he who holds my soul in his hand, I was about to order to bring me some chopped wood, then order someone to say the call to prayer and another to preside over the prayer. Then I will go to those men who did not show up (at the mosque) for the collective (and obligatory Friday) prayer, and I will burn their houses on them". Book of Bukhari, Book of the Call to Prayer, Hadith 29 (on the obligation of collective prayer).

² Neuchâtel, Éditions Livreo-Alphil, 2018.

even judicial action is organized¹. She noted that imams are often trained in Islamic countries and thus bring to Switzerland the religious and political teachings developed in these foreign countries. For example, Saudi Arabia trains many imams in Medina and gives them fundamentalist teaching. Turkey employs imams who officiate in Turkish mosques in Switzerland. These imams cannot do what they want: every Friday they have to read the preaching sent to them from Ankara in the mosque.

E – Can we estimate the number of "radicalised" mosques in Switzerland?

R – It is difficult to say, because the discourse which mosques give to the media is not the same as the discourse which they address to the faithful in Arabic, Albanian or Turkish.

An example: the Albanians have grouped together in the Union of Albanian Imams of Switzerland, founded in Bern in 2012. This organisation claims to be liberal, but continues to invite radical preachers. Imams from the Albanian diaspora in Kosovo, Bosnia and Macedonia often trained in Saudi Arabia. They have come to Switzerland with the mission of preaching authentic 7th century Islam, that of the time of the prophet and his companions, and of urging believers to live scrupulously according to Sharia law, which is nothing other than the legal application of the precepts of the Koran.

We know that Turkey also has a strong presence in Switzerland through its department of religious affairs, known as Diyanet². The Diyanet department supports Milli Görüs, an Islamic nationalist group which itself supports around 900 mosques in Germany and almost 60 in Switzerland. This group is therefore very influential! Milli Görüs is the Turkish version of the Muslim Brotherhood.

E – Aren't we witnessing a radicalization of mosques in Switzerland?

R – Yes indeed! The moderate discourse is gradually being replaced by a more rigorous discourse more in line with the content of the Koran and the Sunna of Mohammed³. It is not for nothing that S. Keller-Messahli describes the Swiss mosques as "hubs of Islamism".

¹ The Prophet Muhammad was the first person to choose the mosque for justice.

² The Diyanet Department employs about 100'000 civil servants worldwide with an annual budget of 2 billion Euros. It is very active in the media and runs its own radio and television stations.

³ The term "sunna" means tradition, path or law. According to the Koran, the sunna encompasses the rules or laws of Allah that would have been prescribed to all Prophets, including Muhammad. According to the Hadiths, the sunna enlightens the teachings of Muhammad, especially his words, deeds, approvals or disapprovals, and moral qualities. The Sunna is a legislative source of Sunni and Shiah Islam associated with the legislative rules of the Koran.

E – I have the feeling that there is a great deal of confusion among the public between Wahhabism, Salafism, Islamism, authentic Islam and Islam in general. If I have understood correctly, Wahhabism, Salafism and Islam are equivalent in terms of the content of the texts and prescriptions of the sharia?

R – Yes, Wahhabism does not differ from Sunnism as far as doctrine is concerned¹. Its author, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) called for a return to the authentic Islam of the origins. He allied himself with the Saud family, which still rules Saudi Arabia today. The country is based on Wahhabism.

Salafism corresponds to Sunni Islam doctrinally. It advocates a return to the teachings of the pious "ancestors" (salaf in Arabic), and to the practice that was practised by the first three generations of Islam. The Salafists seek to live like the Prophet Muhammad: beard, similar clothes, etc. They are distinguished by their way of life.

E – When one speaks of Islamism in the West, it is presented as a disease of Islam, a sort of deviation or perversion of authentic Islam. Is it therefore false?

R – Absolutely! In Muslim countries, there is no difference between Islamism and the authentic Islam of the origins. For them, Islamism is the application of the precepts of religious, political and legislative Islam².

E – So why is it so important to make this difference in the West?

R – An artificial difference is indeed being made between Islam, which is presented as solely peaceful, and Islamism, which can be violent and would thus be a perversion of Islam. The authorities representing Islam in the West have every interest, for the time being, in presenting Islam as modern, peaceful and adapted to Western democratic laws. This is an effective strategy for gaining acceptance.

E – When we speak of Muslims, we often use very different adjectives: radicals, fundamentalists, jihadists, revolutionaries, secularists, liberals? It's a bit difficult to find one's way around!

R – Yes! You're right, it's not simple! We have a whole range of different sensibilities. Very schematically, we could say that on the one hand, there are secular, secularised, liberal, even agnostic Muslims, and on the other hand, radical, revolutionary Muslims

¹ The only difference is in the deeds: Abd al-Wahhab had the mausoleums around the saints' tombs destroyed and condemned the cult of the saints.

² In his book *Islamic Fascism*, 2016, H. Abdel-Samad considers that Islamism is in fact the complete implementation of the precepts of Islam. H. Zanas describes Islamism as the "legitimate son of the Sharia" (*L'islamisme vrai visage de l'islam*, Paris, Éditions de Paris, 2012, p. 14).

who are faithful to the Koran. In between, there is a whole range of intermediaries. I will try to clarify these different sensitivities:

- Secular and liberal Muslims make a clear separation between temporal and spiritual power. They are ready to abrogate in the Koran those verses that are angry and contrary to their conception of life in the West. They agree to recognize the authority of the state and to submit to its laws. Later I will call them secular Muslims.

These Muslims are disavowed by radical Muslims who see them as apostates. On the other hand, they are perfectly suited to our society and do not pose a problem.

- Muslims who are fully faithful to the founding texts of Islam are called radicals. They oppose western values that contaminate their religion. They can become revolutionaries and use violence if necessary to subjugate people to Islam.

Between these two extremes, there is a whole range of intermediaries: for example, some favour spirituality (mystical Islam, which values the inner life), others local customs and traditions (popular and cultural Islam, which takes many forms ranging from the most "pagan" to the most "pure").

E – So we cannot put all Muslims in the same basket!

R – No! But between them, there is always a common thread: the Koran and the Hadiths.

E – I come back to our initial topic of discussion. Why is it that the State does not want to question the founding texts of Islam that call for violence and hatred and that are quoted in sermons?

R – For several reasons. I see two in particular: the first is respect for the principle of freedom of religion. This is a fundamental principle, set out in the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights, which the European states signed. I would remind you that Switzerland has also signed it. Article 9 states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion..."¹ The Swiss State therefore considers that it has no need to intervene in the practice of Islam, whether in private or in mosques. For the State, it is a private matter.

¹ ECHR, article 9: 1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance. 2. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

The other reason is more delicate. European states have a vested interest in maintaining good relations with the Muslim world, and particularly with the Gulf countries, for commercial reasons. They sell us the oil we absolutely need, and we sell them our luxury goods and weapons. That says it all.

E – You have just confirmed that the discourse is becoming more radical in Swiss mosques... Is it a will of the imams in Switzerland or does it come from higher up? From Muslim countries?

R – Yes, you are right to ask that question! The return to our roots and the Islamisation of Switzerland are part of a global strategy which concerns the whole of Europe and the West, indeed the whole world. Since the birth of Islam, Islamisation has been part of Muslim dogma. This is a fundamental point. In order to accomplish this mission, several strategies have been developed, but the doctrine remains the same.

E – I know that in 1982 the Muslim Brotherhood elaborated a strategy of world conquest¹. But it is not only the Muslim Brothers in the Muslim world! Even if they are very active and listened to in Europe.

R – Indeed! The OIC (Organisation for Islamic Cooperation), which has fifty-seven member states, has developed a strategy concerning, among other things, countries outside the Muslim world. It is described in a document entitled: "Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic World". I will send you the reference: this document can be found on the OIC website. It is really worth studying it carefully. You will have a better understanding of what is going on behind the scenes.

My dear, I am very sorry to interrupt this conversation, but I have to leave you, because I have an important appointment. I'll be sure to give you all this information. And we'll talk about it later.

My friend goes away and leaves me to my meditation. I didn't think when I walked into that café that I would ever again be interested in Islam in our country. Our discussion intrigues me and asks me more questions than it solves. Indeed, the image I have of Muslims in Switzerland is rather good. I have always had excellent relations with my Muslim colleagues, both in Switzerland and abroad. I am thinking in particular of a friend in Lausanne, who is a believing and committed Muslim. I have been with him for many

¹ M. Louizi worked for fifteen years with the Muslim Brotherhood. In his book *Pourquoi j'ai quitté les Frères musulmans, retour éclairé vers un islam apolitique*, 2016, he deciphers Tamkine, the undeclared global Islamisation strategy of the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe. See also the book by S. Besson: *La Conquête de l'Occident, le projet secret des islamistes*, Paris, Seuil, 2005. (*The Conquest of the West, the secret project of the Islamists*).

years and have found no fault with him. He is a model of kindness, devotion to others, courtesy, uprightness and honesty. A true gentleman.

It is likely that many Swiss people think the same as I do. They also go with pleasure to Muslim countries. They are sensitive to the cordial and generous welcome of the people. They taste a different but tasty cuisine. They discover another culture that arouses curiosity: the mosques are beautiful with their subtly mixed colours and pure architecture; the faithful follow their rites seriously and rigorously. All this forces respect. What is different attracts, and this exotic charm is part of their holiday. But perhaps they see only a part of things, and all that is hidden would give them another, darker idea of reality?

I can't wait to find out more. Rachid's put his finger on problems I didn't know about. And I guess I must not be the only Swiss person who doesn't know about them!

The Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action

At home

As agreed, Rachid sent me the reference of the document he told me about. He also attached a list of books on the subject. I've got a lot of work to do!

My first astonishment was to see that this document is available to the public. You can easily find it on the internet¹. It is entitled: "Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action Outside the Islamic World". For the sake of simplicity, I will call it the "Strategy".

This document is of the utmost importance, because it is not issued by a particular group within the Muslim world, but by representative bodies from the entire Muslim world. It was drawn up by the highest official bodies in Muslim countries. It is therefore worth studying it.

It is 110 pages long. It is published in Arabic, French and English. You can see that the Muslim world does not hide its strategy at all! However, some points have been toned down or deleted in the French and English versions.

It's an easy document to read, but you have to study it carefully to understand all its subtleties.

J-F. Poisson made a very fine and detailed analysis of it in his book *"L'islam à la conquête de l'Occident. La stratégie dévoilée"* ².

I will resume the main lines.

The Strategy of Islamic Cultural Action Outside the Islamic World

On 21 August 1969, on the Temple Esplanade in Jerusalem, fire was set at Al-Aqsa Mosque, an important Islamic holy place after the Kaaba in Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah. This attack caused a huge shock in the Muslim community and only exacerbated the age-old war between Jews and Muslims in the heart of Jerusalem. A month later, the Muslim states created their own international organization: the OIC, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation³. The founding charter was adopted three years later, in 1972. The purpose of this organization was to make the voice of Muslims better heard in the concert of nations, and to defend their interests and independence. Their action was "guided and inspired by the noble teachings and values of Islam" (art. 2).

¹ www.isesco.org or www.icesco.org

² Monaco, Édition du Rocher, 2018.

³ www.oic-oci.org (History)

Fifty-seven States joined this organization. This shows its importance!

The OIC drafted and adopted the "Islamic Declaration of Human Rights" in 1990. It thus shows that it is concerned with human rights, but with a different vision from that of the West. The Declaration makes constant reference to the sharia, the Islamic law derived from the Koran and the life of Mohammed. That is why it is opposed in many respects to the European Declaration of Human Rights. Moreover, on 31 July 2001, the European Court of Human Rights declared the sharia incompatible with democratic principles.

In 1979-1980, the OIC, the true "UN" of Muslim countries, set up an organization somewhat similar to UNESCO: ICESCO, the Islamic for Education, Science and Culture Organisation¹.

ICESCO is responsible for drawing up, among other things, the "Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action Outside the Islamic World".

According to J-F. Poisson, ICESCO's action for the West can be described in three stages:

1. Firstly, to strengthen Muslim communities in the West,
2. Gradually establish a parallel Islamic society, based on sharia law,
3. Replacing Western civilization with Islamic civilization.

Clearly, the objective goes far beyond simply defending the interests of Muslim communities. It involves a politico-religious issue that is rooted in the texts of the Koran itself. The Koran, in fact, declares that Islam is superior to all other religions and that it must dominate the whole world². This is a primordial mission. Everything else flows from it. This effort to make Islam triumph throughout the world is called jihad. We'll talk more about that later.

Let us take up again, to simplify, the three phases that J-F. Poisson identified in cultural action. Let us recall that these phases may overlap and thus coexist. Their progress may vary between European countries and also within the same country. In some regions or cities, the presence of Islam is very strong, and in others it is almost absent.

1. Strengthening Islamic communities in the West

The authors of the Strategy note that Muslim communities grew very rapidly in Europe after the last world war. Europe was in need of manpower and brought in workers from the Maghreb countries,

¹ Nammed ISESCO until the end of 2019

² Koran 9.33: "It is He who sent His Prophet, with the right guidance and the religion of Truth, to make it prevail over any other religion, no matter how much the idolaters may dislike it."

from the colonies, mostly Muslim, and also from Turkey. These workers first came alone to work; then, because of new laws favouring family reunification, they arrived with their families, which turned labour immigration into settlement immigration. The growth of the Muslim population in the West has also surprised Muslim countries, which saw it as a boon to the spread of Islam¹.

This increase has caught the West by surprise, which is accused by the Strategy of having done nothing to truly welcome Muslim families. They found themselves torn between two poles: on the one hand, a strong attraction for the West and the desire to integrate in order to be able to work there better, and on the other hand, the will to honour their belonging to another civilization, the Islamic civilization from which they came. These conflicts of loyalty are still causing painful rifts among Muslims themselves and within families where two opposing world visions exist. Often the children of emigrants are more inclined to adopt the Western way of life and abandon their culture of origin. However, the opposite can also be seen: children born in Europe want to return to their roots and become more radical than their immigrant parents.

One of the objectives of the Strategy is "the affirmation of attachment to the Islamic identity" (p. 24). Above all, families of all generations must be helped to strengthen their Islamic identity and to recognize themselves in Islamic culture. Culture and identity are closely linked: culture is essential to protect the personality and ensure a strong identity, capable of resisting external assaults.

It is therefore necessary to work intensively in the families: teaching them the Islamic faith, passing on the Islamic cultural heritage and finally teaching them the Arab language. The latter is particularly important, as it is inseparable from the spread of Islam and sharia law. It is the vehicle of Islamic culture. The Strategy states: "The Arab language is an extension of the Ummah² and the medium for expressing its culture, civilization and place it occupies in the world. It is the true vector of the cultural identity of Muslims" (p. 73).

Several actors are entrusted with this mission: mosques and cultural centres, families themselves, and Islamic schools, since Western schools are unable to take on such tasks.

¹ Here are some figures given by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life of the Pew Research Center in 2011: Germany: 4'119'000 (5% of the German population); Switzerland: 433'000 (5.7%); France: 4'710'000 (7.5%). The Muslim population was very low in these countries at the end of the last war.

² The Ummah is the great family of Muslims in the world. It does not depend on their nationality, their blood ties and the political powers that govern them.

The Strategy actively works to make Muslims aware that they are members of the Ummah. If they want to be protected by the Ummah, they too must take care of and defend it.

Even if they are in a minority and may be discriminated against, Muslims should be proud of their community and dare to assert themselves (p. 81). The Koran also says that the Muslim community is the best and that it surpasses all others (Koran 3,110). Although there are divisions within the Ummah, Muslims must do their utmost to promote its unity. For the authors of the Strategy, the transmission of the Islamic faith and the Arabic language is a very strong and indispensable means of ensuring the cohesion of the Ummah.

The Strategy is very critical of the West, which seeks to assimilate Muslims and instil perverse values in them: selfishness, individualism, rejection of the family, disregard for parental authority, attraction to a consumer society, eroticization of relationships, etc. Above all, however, Western society, especially schools, is accused of wanting to cut young people off from their Islamic roots. The school is thus seen as a place of cultural struggle waged by a dominant power over dominated children and families (p. 72).

To assimilate into Western culture is to risk gradually losing one's Islamic faith, and this is unacceptable to the authors of the Strategy. Islamic communities cannot afford to lose their members. Assimilation must therefore be fought at all costs.

The Strategy (p. 90) describes several "Implementation and Follow-up Mechanisms". These various actors provide a framework for the implementation of the Strategy and its funding. Muslim countries are devoting colossal sums of money to the development of Islam in the West. This amounts to billions of dollars¹.

2. Gradually establish a parallel Islamic society, based on Shariah law.

The Strategy speaks of negative integration and positive integration. Negative integration is the participation of Muslims in Western life by adopting its culture and mores. This is what we have defined above with the term "assimilation". Muslims put their own identity in the background in order to embrace the social life of the host country. In this way, they can hope to gain the consideration of Westerners and make a more comfortable place for themselves in the host society. But this integration is described

¹ Pierre Conesa writes that Saudi Arabia spends an average of \$5-7 billion a year to support the development of Islam in the world. *Dr. Saoud et Mr Djihad, la diplomatie religieuse de l'Arabie saoudite*, Paris, Éditions Laffont, 2016, p. 122. Qatar is also very active financially, particularly in Switzerland.

as "alienating" because it uproots them from their culture and religion. It must be rejected!

It is therefore necessary at all costs to create a separation between Muslim and Western society. The Koran, moreover, recommends that Muslims should separate from non-Muslims¹.

There are several ways to achieve this. I will quote some of them:

- The development of associative life within Muslim communities. This is the objective of mosques and religious centres: to enable Muslims to understand and live all aspects of Islam outside Western society. This means developing an Islamic cultural life that is self-sufficient in itself.

- Religious signs. One immediately thinks of the Islamic headscarf and other signs of clothing. From the fall of the Ottoman Empire until the 1980s, the headscarf was hardly ever worn, let alone the niqab², in most Muslim countries. It was Ayatollah Khomeini and the Muslim Brotherhood who imposed the headscarf for a "political" purpose, in order to make this separation clearly understood in the eyes of Muslims and also of Westerners³.

- Refusal of co-education, especially when teaching sport at school. This is problematic and often leads school officials to grant exemptions, which is contrary to Swiss law.

- Maintenance orders. The demand for halal food is also recent and is intended to lead to the same result. Y. Mamou explained that when Khomeini came to power in Iran, he had declared all meat imported from the West illegal. In view of the risk of shortages on the shelves, he had changed his mind and imposed a "halal control". The mullahs then implemented an Islamic protocol on the industrial chains of New Zealand and Australia. The Sunni world has also imposed Islamic control on food so as not to be left behind⁴. Muslim political actors understood that halal represented an opportunity for community control. They are therefore trying to exacerbate the halal obligation. Demands are becoming stronger and stronger: they demand halal food in canteens, both in schools and in companies; they even want separate canteens.

The halal label goes far beyond the consumption of meat and ready-made meals and also applies to other products such as cosmetics (without additives of pig origin), medicines, vaccines, etc. It has become an effective means of separating Muslims from non-

¹ Koran 3.28 ; 3.118-120 ; 5.51 ; 9.23 ; 58.22 ; 60.1 and 4.

² The niqab is a full veil, also covering the face except for the eyes. The burqa covers the whole body, including the face. A cloth screen in front of the eyes allows the woman to see (it is worn mainly in Afghanistan).

³ Keller-Messahli Saïda, *ibid*, p. 68.

⁴ Mamou Yves, *Le grand abandon. Les élites françaises et l'islamisme*, Paris, L'Artilleur, 2018, p. 524-

Muslims. One does not invite someone who does not eat halal into one's home. "Western" food is rejected. Communitarianism is on the rise!¹

- Muslim feasts. They are becoming more and more common in Western societies and are in competition with recognized traditional feasts. The "enemies of Allah" must be avoided². Absenteeism for Muslim religious feasts is increasing and can be a problem.

- Prayer during working hours. For Muhammad, the five daily prayer times did not necessarily have to be at fixed times and could very well be staggered as needed. The desire to impose fixed hours is clearly political, with the aim of strengthening the separation between Islamic and Western civilizations³.

- The demand to bury their dead in a Muslim square, away from Western graves. According to Muhammad, it is already in the grave that the dead receive punishment or enjoy bliss. Therefore, the grave of a Muslim believer should not be placed next to that of a non-believer. Indeed, the latter, crying out in the pangs of hell, could thus disturb his neighbours⁴.

- The demand for Islamic justice. The Strategy calls for Muslim scholars to develop *Fiqh*-inspired laws for Muslim communities and minorities in the West (p. 80). It should be recalled that *fiqh* is the body of Islamic substantive law and jurisprudence. The message of the Strategy is as follows: faithful Muslims recognize as valid only the rules of the sharia, which is regarded as the emanation of the will of Allah. Western rules have no value since they are made by men, who are fallible. Muslim communities must therefore assert their right to live according to the rules of the sharia. That is how parallel justice is gradually being established in Europe. In the United Kingdom, there were already more than 85 sharia courts. In recent years, several German courts have used sharia law to try family cases involving Muslims⁵.

¹ Let us note in passing that the halal market weighs more and more heavily; Western agri-food actors see it as an unavoidable market and have no objection to favouring it!

² Koran 3.28; 3.118-120; 5.51; 60.1 and 4. These guidelines are not followed everywhere!

³ Vallette Mireille, *Le radicalisme dans les mosquées suisses, islamisation, djihad culturel et concessions sans fin*, Sion, Éditions Xenia, 2017, p. 137.

⁴ Aldeeb Sami, *Comparaison entre les normes suisses et les normes musulmanes*, St-Sulpice (CH), Centre de droit arabe et musulman, 2018, p. 57.

⁵ www.gatestoneinstitute.org/13444/germany-child-marriage-law

In Switzerland, it is estimated that there is on average one "forced" marriage every two days¹. For example, Muslim families, even though they are well established in Switzerland, take their children to their countries of origin and marry them against their will. This type of marriage is forbidden in Switzerland, but what can be done when a young underage woman returns to Switzerland with her new husband and a baby? This is a legal puzzle that radical Muslims are exploiting very subtly to force through sharia law.

All these measures develop what is known as "communitarianism", i.e. the formation of independent and autarkic communities within the host society. These enclaves are not healthy for the functioning of a country.

3. Replacing Western civilization with Islamic civilization

Positive integration is one of the objectives of the Strategy: it is no longer for Muslims to adapt to the host society, but for the latter to adapt to the specific requirements of Muslims who want to live their lives according to authentic Islam.

By asserting the right to be different and the right of minorities to be recognized, the Strategy claims the right to impose its Islamic standards on Western society. It is a clash of cultures, a clash of two different civilizations!

The founding texts describe Islam as superior to all other religions. The Strategy seeks to remind Muslims who doubt it. It reminds them that the Islamic civilization is brilliant and that its greatness cannot be questioned. It has "great human and civilizational weight". It has made a rich contribution to the building of Western civilization. The West is therefore indebted to it! Unfortunately, it has not been able to recognize the true value of Islamic civilization. The Cultural Strategy therefore intends to promote and propagate this great Islamic civilization in the West. The Strategy is very critical of the West, which has deteriorated in an unworthy manner. Globalization, which appeared shortly after the end of the Cold War, has favoured the emergence of large multinationals that have enslaved international relations in the fields of trade, economy, science and technology. This new world order is not satisfied with economic and political sectors, and wants to "dominate the world cultural order". Hence, there appeared some attempts to impose a world cultural order, ignoring the cultural specificities of peoples, minorities and immigrant communities" (p. 17).

¹ A. Neubauer and J. Dahinden, *Mariages forcés en Suisse : causes, formes et ampleur*. For the years 2009 and 2010, the number of forced marriages was estimated at between 348 and 481. More than a quarter of them involve minors.

The West advocates moral values that it does not put into practice. It thus shows clear signs of moral weakness. The Strategy calls for "the ratification of the civilizational project as an alternative that relies on true Islam and the positive acquisition de human civilization" (p. 67). The message is clear. It wants to bring about a profound change in Western civilization. It is actively preparing for it.

Islam is a conqueror by nature. All its strategies are very well revealed by S. Keshavjee in his book *L'islam conquérant, Textes-Histoire-Stratégies*¹ (*Conqueror Islam, Texts-History-Strategies*). It is a reference book. The author clearly shows how proselytism and the will to conquer, in all its forms, are part of the DNA of Islam.

We have examined above the three identified phases of ICESCO's strategy. We find the same process in the life of Muhammad, under the pen of Jean Flori². Three successive phases are described: weakness, domination and conquest. It should be noted that these three phases are not very different from those described above in the Strategy.

1. "In the beginning, when the Prophet is isolated and there are few Muslims, Allah advises him to avoid confrontation. This is the reason for the peaceful verses".

2. "After 622, when the community settles in Madinah, Allah urges Muslims to practice defensive warfare. Then, as the community grows in number and strength, the revelations broaden and generalize these incentives for war, and instead reduce the restrictions on violent action".

3. "Finally, when the Muslim cause prevails in Arabia over that of the adversaries, the revelation lays down the principle that war against non-Muslims can be waged practically anytime and anywhere, without the need for a pretext. Revelations that go in this direction are considered to "abrogate" previous ones, which refer to an outdated state of the community".

Thus, in less than a hundred years, Mohammed, his companions and their descendants have conquered a vast territory, from Morocco to Afghanistan. This was not done by persuasion, but by sword, raids and enslavement!

¹ Genève, Éditions IQRI, 2019.

² Quoted by S. Keshavjee, *ibid*, p. 115 (Jean Flori, *Guerre sainte, jihad, croisade. Violence et religion dans le christianisme et l'islam*, Paris, Seuil, 2002, p. 84). I have replaced the word God with Allah.

What should we think of the Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action?

At Rachid's, with John.

I was eager to discuss my text with my specialist friends. I sent it to them so that they could read it beforehand.

Rachid found a beautiful apartment in a building in the upper part of the Ouchy district of Lausanne. He lives on the fourth floor and has a unrestricted view of Lake Geneva and the French Alps. The view is breathtaking.

I meet our friend John, who is a remarkable theologian. He is also a history buff and his skills will be very useful to me.

The sharing promises to be fascinating.

E – While studying the document on the Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action, I have often asked myself this question: among the three phases of action mentioned, where are we in Switzerland?

R – It is difficult to answer your question because there is great diversity among Muslim communities. Most of them do not pose any problems and are normally integrated into society. In a few schools, incidents are reported, but they are very marginal. On the other hand, some mosques have been closed by court order because of hate speech by imams.

E – I conclude that Swiss readers of my book will find it very hard to believe me when they read the chapter on the Strategy. What needs to be done to convince them?

R – It's worth going to see what's happening elsewhere, in countries where Islamization is much more advanced. In Germany, England or France, for example. A very interesting book has recently come out: a small team of journalists spent eight months investigating in the Seine-Saint-Denis department, which is north and east of Paris¹. They did almost 200 interviews with people from all walks of life and selected 21 for their book. This department has about 50% Muslims, the highest rate in France. It is the poorest department in France, the one with the most immigrants, among whom a large proportion are Muslims.

E – What motivated these journalists to carry out such an investigation?

R – They wanted to find out whether there was really a rise in the power of a claiming Islam, an Islam which seeks to extend its territory and win over whole sections of society.

E – And what was their conclusion?

¹ Under the supervision of G. Davet et F. Lhomme, *Inch'Allah, l'islamisation à visage découvert, une enquête spotlight en Seine-Saint-Denis*, Fayard, 2018.

R – They did indeed find that Islamization is at work in Seine-Saint-Denis, in all areas. So much so that even moderate Muslims are alarmed by this fundamentalist upsurge.

E – Looking back at the three phases of the Strategy, where are they in this department?

R – Apparently, they have already reached the third phase.

What is very instructive is to see that the evolution has taken place very quickly, in less than thirty years. This can be explained by the increase in the number of Muslims in the department, but also, and above all, by the very well organised action of radical Muslims who have infiltrated the various Muslim associations. They impose a rigid Islam on Muslim society and people are forced to follow it. There is, moreover, a bidding war between the various radical Islamic groups: a radical group that is little known and less represented has every interest in imposing an even more rigorous Islam than the one advocated by the other groups, in order to put itself forward and take authority.

E – As I understand it, this development has not been the choice of the whole Muslim society.

R – No! Muslims themselves are worried about this evolution. Women have come to wear the veil, not out of conviction, but only to avoid the reproaches and vexations coming from radical Muslims. The pressure is increasing all the time! At school, girls have been pressured to wear headscarves and then the niqab. Islam has become a social norm that has taken over the school.

Some workers say that they did not practice Ramadan, but they began to observe it so as not to be rejected by other Muslims.

Some say that this new Islam has nothing to do with the one they experienced in their youth.

E – What is their relationship with local elected officials and politics?

R – Certain Muslim leaders are seeking to group together Muslim associations in order to have ever greater political weight. Moreover, Muslims are well aware of this: by uniting their voices, they can make and defeat a mayor. Whether he or she is from the right or the left, a candidate for mayor must make promises to Muslim associations if he or she wants a chance of being elected: grant positions in the mayor's office, provide decent places of worship, allow the construction of a mosque. Muslim electoral votes count.

E – What about schools? I was struck by how much importance the Strategy gives to schools (the term "school" is used 64 times).

R – Initially, the State turned a blind eye. Either because it didn't understand or because it didn't want to see. In 2004, J-P. Obin, then Inspector of National Education, made a report on signs

and manifestations of religious affiliation in schools¹. His team interviewed primary school officials and visited 61 French collèges and lycées, considered more likely than others to be affected by manifestations of religion. The author points out that this panel of schools is not a representative sample of French schools. The report clearly shows the rise of the religious phenomenon in these schools. This development is the consequence of a much deeper and wider change in society. Yes, Islamization is progressing in all areas.

This report has been forwarded to the Ministry of National Education. It was not taken seriously. It will take more than ten years and the bloody attacks of 2015 for this report to come out of the shadows. At the moment, J-P. Obin is convinced that no concessions should be made to the entry of the Muslim religion into schools. We must not accept distortions or transactions with secularism. J-P. Obin makes this interesting observation: the schools that have best managed the pressure of Islam are those that have established a charter of secularism and have enforced it without concession, while taking the time to explain it and to dialogue with students and parents. On the other hand, schools that have embarked on compromises have been led to make more and more concessions and have been invaded by Islam.

E – What has become of the non-Muslims in this department of Seine-Saint-Denis?

R – Several people have confirmed the fact that the Jews feel increasingly threatened². Some have moved to another place or department, others have left France. One Jewish woman regretted the time in her youth when her parents, who had come from Tunisia, fraternized with her Muslim neighbours. They lived in the same buildings, shared cakes and invited each other for weddings. But times have unfortunately changed under pressure from radical Muslims.

In some neighbourhoods, ethnic French people have left, no longer feeling at home. This only increases communitarianism.

E – You were saying that poverty and the unemployment rate were important there?

R – It's a sad vicious circle. Poverty pushes young people into the arms of a rigid Islam. For them, the choice is simple: it's the street or religion. But the more their religious identity demands increase, the less chance they have of finding work. A 2015 report

¹ *Les signes et manifestations d'appartenance religieuse dans les établissements scolaires*. Available at: <http://media.education.gouv.fr/file/02/6/6026.pdf>

² A survey published in January 2016 by the Ipsos Institute revealed that three-quarters of French Jews considered it "difficult to be Jewish in France", to the point that more than one Jew in three (40%) planned to leave the country.

by the Montaigne Institute shows that, with equal skills, a candidate perceived as a practising Muslim is half as likely to be called for a job interview as a practising Catholic.

It is also a vicious circle because the break is wanted on both sides. On the one hand, there is a xenophobic discourse from a society that is afraid of this fundamentalist rise, and on the other hand, there is a radical Islamist discourse that encourages Muslims, especially young people, to cut themselves off from society in order to become more radical¹.

E – If there were no poverty, unemployment, drugs, would the situation be different?

R – Yes, probably. Radical Muslims would find it more difficult to convince the moderates to join their ranks. But they would continue to do so.

E – If I understand correctly, this department is in a way an open book of what could happen in Switzerland?

R – And this is not a unique example. There are others in France, as the Obin report shows, and also elsewhere in Europe.

J – And it all happened so quickly. It's worrying. Since the Islamic Cultural Strategy concerns the whole of Europe, there is no reason why its action should stop at the borders of one country or another.

R – I can, moreover, give you other examples in Europe. Let us take the case of Norway². This country of around five million inhabitants, with a demographic deficit, has taken in many Muslim refugees in recent decades and allowed itself to be overwhelmed by the ensuing upsurge of Islam. Muslims have taken their demands very far, showing their contempt for Norwegian society and their rejection of the laws in force. They even claimed Grönland (the Muslim ghetto of Oslo) as a caliphate, threatening the authorities with reprisals if they refused.

The same phenomenon of radicalisation can be observed in Sweden. In a recent article, J. Bergman, writer and political analyst, shares the findings of a study conducted by the Swedish Defence University on Salafism³. The study paints a dark picture of the ongoing radicalization of Muslims in Sweden over the past decade: Threats by Muslim children against non-Muslims, denial of everything considered impure in school, gender segregation,

¹ Let us recall that a *radical* Muslim is entirely faithful to the founding texts of Islam. He is opposed to the Western values that contaminate his religion. He can become *revolutionary* and use violence if necessary to subject non-Muslims to Islam.

² "Norway: this country is overwhelmed by Islam... and tomorrow France?" May 29, 2013. Blog "Puteaux-Libre".

³ Judith Bergman, *The Relentless Radicalization of Sweden*. 2018.

<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/12693/sweden-radicalization-muslims>

limitation of the role of Muslim women in the public sphere, strict control of Muslim women in everyday life, to the point that many of them consider that their life was better in their country of origin, refusal of music and sports activities, refusal of any friendship with a non-Muslim, harassment of those who prefer a moderate or secular Islam. And the list goes on and on...¹

E – What is the proportion of Muslims in the Swedish or Norwegian population?

R – In 2010, it did not exceed 5%². Radical Muslims are undoubtedly a minority in this collective.

E – There is therefore a striking discrepancy between the strong influence of radical Muslims and their small proportion in these two countries. This is worrying!

R – This shows us that a very small percentage of determined radical Muslims can shake a whole society, insofar as it is not prepared to face up to it.

It's also important to note that the same cause (Islam) produces the same effects in Sweden, Norway, and just about everywhere in Europe! In his voluminous bestseller published in 2017, D. Murray describes the same phenomena in Great Britain³.

E - Thus, one can logically think that the Strategy is also interested in promoting Islam in Switzerland and seeks to influence the various Muslim communities to become more radical.

R – Indeed, we must remain very vigilant.

E - Is our political class aware of this risk?

R – Some politicians are well aware of the situation, but others prefer to stick to what they observe in reality and see that for the moment they have little reason to panic. So they're keeping the ominous birds at bay. This is very worrying, because the decisions that politicians make today have consequences for the decades to come, so it is necessary to think in the long term. And this is especially true with regard to the rise of Islam.

The examples of countries that were already well Islamized show this: politicians are now being blamed for failing to discern in time the first signs of change in society and for not heeding the warnings given by those who understood the situation.

¹ In his book *L'Europe face à l'islamisation*, 2019, H. Zanaz writes that, according to the security services, the number of militants did not exceed 200 in 2010 and was several thousand in 2017. 300 Islamists joined Daech in Syria and Iraq in 2012. 140 of them returned to the country, which created a lot of concern among citizens. Several were involved in the attacks in Paris in November 2015 and in Brussels in March 2016.

² In a study published on 27 January 2011, it was estimated at 3% for Norway and 4.9% for Sweden (Pew Research Center). It has certainly increased since then.

³ Murray Douglas, *The Strange Death of Europe*, 2017.

E – What advice would you give to the politicians here?

R – First of all, I would invite them to admit that Islam is not confined to the private religious sphere, but that it aspires to manage all areas of society. This may not be the immediate wish of many communities, but it will inevitably come one day.

If Muslims only claimed the right to practise their religion privately and within their community, there would be no problem. Western society accepts this, as it does for so many other religions. Moreover, many Westerners believe that Islam is similar to Christianity and is limited to the private sphere. They therefore do not see why there should be any mistrust of Muslims.

But since Islam has mainly a political dimension, it is necessary for politicians and citizens to take an interest in its content. To do so, they will have to listen to many opinions, because radical Muslims have every interest in hiding the disturbing truths of the Koran.

E – Muslims claim the right to promote political Islam. What does this mean in practice?

R – Do you know that Muslims divide the world into two zones: the land of Islam (dar al-Islam) and the land of war (dar el-Harb)? Literally, the word Dar means house, dwelling.

E – The good on one side and the bad on the other?

R – No! It's more complex.

The land of Islam is a territory where Islam dominates and in which the inhabitants submit to Allah. This means that in this territory, the state religion is Islam, the government is run by Muslims and the laws of the state are based on sharia law. This does not mean that all citizens are Muslims and scrupulously apply sharia law. There may even be a majority of non-Muslims, but they are subject to a special status, that of dhimmi. They are not required to practice Islam, but they are required to pay a special tax in exchange for the peace and protection they are given. However, dhimmis are second-class citizens who do not enjoy all the rights accorded to Muslims. They are placed in a state of inferiority and humiliation¹.

Making the world a land of Islam is the final goal of Islam, in accordance with the texts of the Koran and the Hadiths².

¹ The status of dhimmi is very well described by Bat Ye'Or, *Eurabia, the Euro-Arab Axis*, NJ, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006.

² Koran 9.32-33; 3.12. Let us quote two important words of Muhammad:

- "I (Allah) have been granted victory by the terror I inspire at a distance of one month's march. He (Allah) has given me the keys to the treasures of the earth and has placed them in my hands" (Collection of Sahihe Al Bukhari: Book of Jihad, Hadith number 122).

- "I have been commanded to fight people until they declare that there are no deities other than Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, that they

E – And the land of war? Why such a name?

R – The land of war (dar el-Harb) is the territory where Islam does not rule. Even if Muslims are in the majority, the land is a land of war if the government is not Islamic, as described above. It is unacceptable for a radical Muslim to be ruled by a non-Islamic authority. Radical Muslims will do everything possible to put an Islamic government at the head of the country in which they live. They will therefore inevitably come into conflict with the authorities of the host country. That is why this land is called the "land of war" or the "land of conflict". The Koran asks Muslims to fight until the "land of war" becomes a "land of Islam". This fight is called "jihad"¹.

E – So, if I understand correctly, what differentiates these two territories is mainly the nature of the government that rules ... and the religion that dominates.

R – Yes! This is an extremely important point. When Muslim communities say they want to submit fully to Western laws and governments, you have to understand their thinking. In fact, for some of them, this does not correspond at all to their final objectives, they accept it out of necessity, while waiting. Unfortunately, Westerners do not understand this language. Accustomed to saying yes when they think yes, and saying no when they think no², they lend Muslims the same ethics. This is a mistake. Let us note that the Koran recommends to Muslims the art of concealment (the famous *taqiya*) in order to advance Islam in society³. The important thing for radical Muslims is to reassure: "Islam is peaceful and does not seek in any way to take power. There is therefore no reason to fear it and to reject it". This is not true!

J – Do all Muslims adopt this classification into two territories?

R – No! Many of them, few or not practising, agree to live in the West and to submit to the laws of the country. And they are sincere. Others are moderate Muslims who retain only the religious aspect of Islam and reject the political and military aspects. They have no difficulty in accepting the laws of the country and complying with

perform prayer and pay Zakat (obligatory almsgiving). If they do so, they shall preserve their lives and property from me, except in the case of an offence punishable by Islam. It is then for Allah to judge them." (Collection of Sahih Al Bukhari: Book of Faith, Hadith number 17).

¹ Koran 9.5,14,29,123; 47.35. Jihad is multifaceted and concerns all aspects of life. It can use force if necessary and lead to terrorism.

² This is a teaching of Jesus (Matthew 5:37).

³ The principle of *taqiya* is based on the following verses of the Koran: 3.28; 16.106; 3.54. It aims first of all to protect the Muslim who is attacked and is in a weak position. It also allows the Muslim to conceal or even distort the truth in order to advance the cause of Islam.

them. But those who want to live according to the "authentic Islam" described by the Strategy, that is to say an Islam that takes into account all the texts of the Koran as well as the Hadiths recognized as authentic, these Muslims whom I call "radicals" will never want and will never be able to stop their fight to bring about the land of Islam.

E – Where does this irresistible need to establish Islam on the entire surface of the Earth come from?

R – The answer is simple: this order is stated in the Koran and in the Hadiths:

Koran 9.33: It is He who sent His Prophet, with the right direction and the religion of Truth, to make it prevail over any other religion, no matter what the idolaters say! ¹

E – Rachid, I come back to our discussion in the café a year ago. We were wondering about the relationship between mosques and the "silent" Muslim majority in our country. The study of the Strategy of Islamic Cultural Action seems to confirm that there is a gap between the goals of Islamic action and the reality that the majority of Muslims in the West want to live. However, I note that lay Muslims and radical Muslims have in common founding texts that they respect, which creates a certain bond. So there is an obvious paradox! What do you think about it?

R – You're absolutely right! This is, moreover, one of the reasons why a moderate Muslim can become radicalised. Let's take the example of a secular Muslim who learned the Koran as a child but distanced himself from it for a long time for various reasons. He is no longer familiar with it and does not take it into account. Then one day, because of important changes in his life, he asks himself some fundamental questions and seeks meaning in his life. Why not return to the spirituality of his family? If he meets a radical Muslim, he will be encouraged to return to the founding texts of Islam, texts he learned as a child. It's an open door to radicalization. In this process, the Koran plays the role of a guiding thread or link.

E – I understand better the Strategy's insistence on having Muslim children learn the Koran.

R – It is a basis which is established, on which it will be easy to build later.

E – I was reading that even though many Muslims prefer to live European-style, they have deep down inside themselves a certain admiration for radicals and revolutionaries.

R – That's actually fair. Polls¹ have been conducted among a sample of the Muslim population in France and Belgium on various

¹ See as well: Koran 3.110 ; 5.17 ; 100.1-3.

subjects such as respect for sharia law, the desire to establish an Islamic state, etc. It is very surprising to see that the positive responses are far more numerous than one might think. This reflects the conflict of loyalties you mentioned in your text on the Strategy. Many Muslims who are considered secular see the radicals as models of what they should live by themselves: a complete dedication to obeying Allah's commandments, even if it means giving their own lives.

E – That is why the Strategy makes a lot of effort to motivate them! By bringing moderate Muslims back to the founding texts, it pushes them to renounce the spirit of Western society in order to fully adopt authentic Islam.

R – That's it!

E - I would like to come back to a question that has been on my mind for a long time: what is the position of the Church with regard to Islam?

J - This is a very delicate question, for several reasons. First of all, we cannot talk about Islam without mentioning the Muslims. And vice versa. Moreover, as you rightly pointed out, the Strategy categorically rejects such a dissociation. If Europe welcomes Muslims, it must also welcome their religion, Islam.

On the other hand, the different branches of the Church do not all have the same vision on these matters, and even within each community there may be significant differences. So we cannot speak of *the* position of the Church! There are many positions, sometimes even contradictory. This explains why it is difficult to talk about them. But I'm going to answer your question all the same! I have at home a file already prepared on this subject. I will bring it to our next meeting and we can discuss it.

Since you want to talk about the role of the Church, it is absolutely necessary that you discover how this problem of welcoming foreigners was dealt with in the Old and New Testaments and to what extent this teaching can be useful to us today.

I therefore propose that, while waiting for our next meeting, you research and analyze in the Bible all the texts that speak of the stranger. You will see... you will have surprises!

¹ "JDD poll on Islam in France." By Frédéric Saint Clair, published on 19.9.2016 (Le Figaro).

Study of the "Berlin Social Science Center" published on 11.2.2015 in Le Soir (Belgium).

<https://www.lesoir.be/art/790921/article/actualite/belgique/2015-02-11/moitie-des-musulmans-belges-fondamentalistes-infographie>

The Foreigner in the Bible

At home

Thanks to a computer program, I can easily find the many Bible verses that speak about foreigner.

The term "foreigner" is mentioned 223 times in the Old Testament and 31 times in the New Testament. For didactic reasons, we will deal first with the Old Testament and then the New Testament, because the approach to this topic differs in some points. Indeed, in the Old Testament, the commandments are essentially given to a people, a nation which must organize itself as such. Whereas in the New Testament they are given to individuals. One could speak of a personal ethic, while specifying that it cannot be transcribed into political law.

It is therefore necessary to listen to and meditate on these two Testaments.

The Foreigner in the Old Testament

It is a recurring theme that concerns many actors in the biblical story at one time or another in their lives. It cannot be said, therefore, that the Bible ignores this problem, quite the contrary!

Here are a few examples: Abraham responds favourably to God's call to leave his place (Ur in Mesopotamia) to come and settle in the land of Canaan. By moving away in this way, he takes a great step of faith and learns what it means to be a foreigner in a country that is not his own. Later, because of the famine, he has to go down to Egypt in search of food. He thus becomes an economic migrant.

His grandson Jacob sends his own sons to buy wheat in Egypt because of the famine in the land of Canaan. Pharaoh invites Jacob and his family to settle in the best part of the country. They would stay there for four hundred years, the biblical text tells us. In the beginning, their relations with the Egyptians are good thanks to the benevolent Pharaoh who welcomes them, but after his death, they deteriorate very seriously: they are considered like slaves, usable at will.

Much later, in the Sinai Desert, when God seeks to organize the social life of his people, who have just come out of the throes of slavery in Egypt, he reminds them that *they themselves have been foreigners in Egypt* and that they must therefore welcome the foreigner with humanity.

Thereafter, on several occasions the people of Israel has to face famine as a result of wars and raids by foreign looters. These are other causes of economic migration.

The Bible also tells us many stories of political refugees. Among these, the most famous is Moses who must suddenly leave Egypt, fearing for his life. He gives his first son the name Gershom, which means: "Emigrated there", for, he said, *I have become an emigrant in a foreign land!*¹ Before becoming king, David was for a time a fugitive in his own country to escape from King Saul, who was jealous of his success. He protects his parents by entrusting them to the king of Moab, a foreigner. In the history of Israel, many political opponents have had to flee the country to preserve their lives. Rejection, fear, insecurity, hunger, uprooting, all of this is very well described, and looking at our situation in the 21st century, we can say, like the Wise Man, that *there is nothing new under the sun*. History repeats itself! I note, however, that these examples of migration only concern individuals or small groups of people. It is therefore not mass migration.

We have spoken of economic and political migrants, but we can also speak of migrants of a completely different order: the believers of the Old Testament *recognized that they were strangers and exiles on earth* and that their true *homeland* was not earthly, but *heavenly*². Much later, the Apostle Peter would follow the same line and remind his Christian listeners that they are *sojourners and exiles on earth*³.

The subject is therefore vast and complex! It does not concern only those who are called migrants or strangers; it concerns us all. We should constantly remind ourselves that we are strangers on this earth and that the goods we enjoy and believe we possess do not really belong to us: we will inevitably have to leave them one day. This should make us think about our relationship to property and our place in our country, and lead us to a certain salutary detachment. And, at the same time, we must assume our responsibility as managers of the property that God entrusts to us, and we should take very seriously the recommendations he makes to us through the teachings of the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. It is in this perspective that I would like to approach the rest of this chapter.

Let us return to the verses that contain the word "foreigner" as a noun or adjective, in the singular or plural.

¹ Exodus 2.22. Y. Saoût, *Ce que dit la Bible sur l'étranger*, Bruyères-le Châtel, Nouvelle Cité, 2013.

² Hebrews 11:13-16.

³ 1 Peter 2.11.

There are mainly four Hebrew terms for the foreigner, which I classify here in ascending order of frequency:

Towshab is often associated with this formula: *who stays with you*. It has no positive or negative connotations. It is a person who is not Jewish, and who lives in Israel.

Nekar is often used to describe the foreigner to be beware of: he is a threat, mainly because he worships false foreign gods and could bring their worship to Israel.

Nokriy refers mainly to the person who is not of the people of Israel. It is often attributed to the foreign woman who could be a threat to the Israelite by turning him away from his God.

Ger or *Geyr* is by far the most commonly used term. It describes both the temporary foreign inhabitant and the person who wishes to settle in Israel by taking part in the social life of the country. This is certainly the most interesting category for our study. It deserves special attention.

I find in this category verses that speak of welcoming the foreigner, verses that are willingly quoted in preaching in the church or in books that deal with this subject. I call them here "duties towards the foreigner" and have classified them in a first group.

It strikes me that I also read texts that I did not know about, which speak of the "duties of a foreigner" towards the Jewish society. They form the second group.

Let us begin with the first group.

Duties towards foreigners

These verses are very demanding¹. They ask the Israelites to welcome the foreigner and treat him like a brother.

The foreigner must be judged in the same way as the Israelite, that is, according to the same law. His rights must be respected: *Cursed be he who violates the law of the foreigner*. He must not be mistreated, oppressed or exploited. He must be supported financially in times of need and must be able to count on the regular generosity of the Israelites. All this can be summed up in this commandment: *You shall love the stranger as yourself*². This is a great demand!

The duties of the foreigner

I would like to highlight here this principle that I consider to be of the utmost importance: one law for all. These two verses bear witness to this:

¹ Deuteronomy 1:16; Exodus 22:20; 23:9; Deuteronomy 24:14-15, 17; 27:19; Jeremiah 22:3; Zechariah 7:10; Malachi 3:5; Leviticus 19:9-10; Deuteronomy 24:19-22; Leviticus 25:35; Deuteronomy 14:28-29; 16:9-14; 26:10-13.

² Leviticus 19:33-34; Deuteronomy 10:19.

You shall have the same rule for the stranger as for the Israelite; for I am the Lord your God.¹

There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.²

This means very clearly that the foreigner must submit to the laws and ordinances given to the people of Israel. For example, he has to observe the sabbath just like the Israelite³, and observe the religious feasts and local customs⁴.

As I read all these texts, I notice that the duties and rights of the foreigner are intimately linked. A foreigner cannot claim rights if he does not fulfil his duties to the host society. But the more he integrates and fulfils his duties in the Israelite society, the more he will be able to benefit from the rights granted to Israelites.

The stranger will dominate you

One chapter has caught my full attention; I want to tell you about it. Chapter 28 of the book of Deuteronomy is very interesting⁵. First of all, it describes the blessings that God promises to the Israelites if they remain faithful to the covenant He made with them. Among these blessings, I would like to mention the one concerning the people's relationship with the stranger:

You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow (v. 12).

From this I conclude that Israel will walk in abundance to the point of depending on no one. It will be fulfilled and rich enough to be self-sufficient. He will therefore be in a position to lend to foreigners and will not depend on them.

But if the people of Israel were to break their covenant with their God, then they would have to face all kinds of misfortunes. I note this one in particular:

The stranger who stays with you will rise higher and higher above you, and you will sink lower and lower. He shall lend to you and you shall not lend to him. He shall be the head and you shall be the tail. (v. 43-44).

¹ Leviticus 18:26 ; 24:22.

² Exodus 12:49; Numbers 9:14, 15:15-16 and 29.

³ Exodus 20:10, Deuteronomy 5:14. Leviticus 16:29.

⁴ Deuteronomy 31:10-12 ;

⁵ We find the same theme in Leviticus 26.

This text is impressively lucid and sharp! It is a complete reversal of the relationship between the Israelite and the foreigner! By moving away from his God, the Israelite loses his footing and finds himself on the ground before the stranger. He becomes dependent on him. The image of the head and tail indicates who dominates the relationship. Here the balance of power is reversed. The people of Israel lose their position of head and find themselves at the tail. Conversely, the stranger gains ascendancy and becomes the head. He dominates the native, because the native has become weak and unable to take care of himself properly.

The people experienced this in the extreme when he was deported to Babylon, *a foreign nation*¹. The prophet Jeremiah had warned the people before:

*As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your own land, so you shall serve foreigners in a land that is not yours.*²

The Old Testament is fascinating because it describes with lucidity and without any complacency the ups and downs of the people of Israel, their moments of glory and failure, their good and bad resolutions. By rereading its history in the various historical and prophetic books, one understands how the people went from blessing to curse on many occasions. We always find the same characteristic trait: the people turn away from their God in order to be interested in other gods, which are in reality false gods. Such an attitude has incalculable repercussions on the organization of society and respect for social justice. Everything crumbles and is consumed. The prophet Hosea said:

*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*³

We will talk about it again.

The Foreigner in the New Testament

Although the theme of the foreigner is much less frequently treated in the New Testament than in the Old Testament (31 occurrences instead of 223), it remains no less important by the simple fact that Jesus, according to the most recent interpretation, seems to identify himself, among other things, with the foreigner to be welcomed: he who has received the foreigner will have received

¹ Deuteronomy 28:36; Jeremiah 5:19. Note that the ten tribes of northern Israel had already been deported by Assyria 130 years earlier.

² Jeremiah 5:19.

³ Hosea 4.6.

Jesus himself and will be received by him in the heavenly Kingdom¹. The requirement is therefore a great one! This is what Jesus says:

I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me... as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.

Conversely, Jesus says this:

... as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.

Here, in the text, the term "*one of the least*" includes the hungry and thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the wretched, the sick, the prisoner. So the range is very wide!

To whom is Jesus referring when he speaks of his *brothers*? Is he thinking of those who share his faith in God, or of all human beings? So I look in the Gospels for texts where Jesus speaks of his brothers. I am surprised to see that this term is reserved only for his disciples, those who *do the will of his Father in heaven*².

This new element seriously changes the understanding that one can have of this text. It is absolutely necessary that I discuss it with John.

I am surprised that Jesus does not remind us of the duties of foreigners in Israel. This is probably because all this is well known. For J. Chauvin³, the Jews, after the return from exile to Babylon, became obsessed with the notion of purity and tended to reject the foreigner, suspected of bringing spiritual impurity to Israel, especially by worshipping foreign gods. Jesus must show his fellow citizens that they are going too far in their rejection of foreigners. But there is no question of abolishing the Law. It is just a question of finding a good balance between the rights and duties of foreigners.

The Gospels like to tell the story of Jesus' encounters with strangers. After healing ten lepers, Jesus points out to his disciples that the only one of the ten who came back to thank him was a stranger, a Samaritan⁴. This Samaritan was going to experience a spiritual healing in addition to his physical healing. Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at a well in spiritual search⁵, and a beautiful

¹ Matthew 25. 31-46.

² Matthew 12:47-50; 28:9-10; John 20:16-17. See also Romans 8.29.

³ *Etrangers et voyageurs sur la terre, compagnons d'un Dieu en marche*, Aubonne, Éditions du Moulin, 1991.

⁴ The Samaritans were considered heretics in the eyes of the Jews.

⁵ John 4

discussion ensues which leads to the conversion of this woman and many people in her village. A Roman centurion does not hesitate to ask Jesus for the healing of his servant; Jesus cites his faith as an example¹. A Syro-Phoenician woman fights for the health of her daughter and begs Jesus to intervene on her behalf². He responds to her request.

These texts tell of the spiritual thirst and faith of these people considered as foreigners. Jesus does not reject them, and by acceding to their request, He shows that they also have a right to the salvation He came to proclaim.

In the Acts of the Apostles, several texts testify to the openness of the Gospel to nations other than Israel³. It is an immense turning point: salvation is henceforth offered to the whole world.

The apostle Paul is the champion of this opening to the world outside Israel. He says it well: his primary mission is to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles, that is to say to those who are not part of the Jewish people. His concern then is to make these new believers live together within the Church. This is not easy at all! And he must often remind them that they are on an equal footing before God :

*So it no longer matters whether one is non-Jew or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, uncivilised, primitive, slave or free; what counts is Christ who is all and in all.*⁴

This new unity is now possible thanks to Christ⁵. But it is a supernatural unity which is not the result of human will.

It is necessary to remember that Paul is speaking here specifically of the Church. Therefore, his words cannot be turned into a political program designed to erase all the differences and separations between the countries of this earth. We will speak about this in the next chapter.

¹ Matthew 8.5-13

² Luke 17.15-19 ; John 4 ; Matthew 8.

³ Acts 8.26-39 ; Acts 10.

⁴ Colossians 3.11. Translation of Segond 21

⁵ Ephesians 2:11-22; Ephesians 2:18-19; Colossians 1:20-22; Romans 1:16. See Romans 2.9 and 3.29; Colossians 3.11.

The Church and Islam

At Rachid's, with John

I am meeting with my two friends to continue our discussion on the Church and its relationship with Muslims and Islam.

Giving us a little mischievous glance, Jean pulls out of his briefcase a small red binder containing about thirty handwritten pages. He made me a photocopy of it, which allows me to give you the presentation he gives us.

Welcoming the foreigner, a divine order

J – What struck you in your study of the place of the foreigner in the Bible?

E – Several things. First of all, I was surprised by the requirement of welcome, as much in the Old Testament as in the New. When the law says: *You shall love the foreigner as yourself*, that's no small thing! Nowhere have I seen such an important requirement.

J – It's true! And the Church, it seems to me, has been able to honour these commandments.

E – My second surprise was to discover in the Old Testament an element which is completely obscured today: the foreigner has duties towards the host society and must in particular submit to the laws of the country which receives him. It is excluded that he does not respect these laws or seeks to impose his own.

R – This notion is essential and should make us reflect on the current situation of our countries in Europe. As you made clear when you spoke of the Strategy, radical Muslims refuse to submit to the laws of non-Muslim countries and seek to impose their laws, the sharia. We must not forget that.

J – I find that there is a lot of wisdom in the Old Testament: if the Israelite knows that the foreigner is obliged to submit to the laws of the country that welcomes him, then he can receive him with open arms, without fearing that the latter will turn everything upside down at home. So there is a fine balance between the duties towards the foreigner and the foreigner's duties towards the host country. This balance must absolutely be maintained in order to guarantee social peace.

E – This seems to me to be elementary indeed! And yet, I have found on the Internet several preachings or lectures on the

subject and also read some books, but few of these writings mention the duties of the foreigner. I don't understand why.

J – I have noticed that many Christians leave out the Old Testament teaching because they consider it obsolete. This is unreasonable. Jesus didn't do it. Remember His comment on this: *Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill*¹. So Jesus did not break with the past of His people. He placed His action in the continuity of the law while going even further: He truly *fulfilled* it.

On the other hand, if Jesus did not recall the laws on the duties of the foreigner towards the host country, it is because they were certainly well known to his contemporaries.

E – I would like to discuss this famous text from Matthew 25:31-46, where Jesus seems to identify himself with the foreigner. Until I studied this text more closely, I understood that Jesus identified with all the wretched people of the world, whatever their beliefs. It means that every person, by giving food to the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, taking in the stranger, visiting the sick or in prison, finally welcomes Jesus himself. The consequences are very important, since they will then be rewarded by receiving the right to enter the eternal Kingdom.

J – Indeed, such an understanding of this text is very widespread². Some have even made it a key argument to impose an unconditional welcome of the foreigner. I develop their argument: if Jesus identifies himself with the stranger, whoever he is, then we must accept him in his entirety and renounce imposing anything on him (Indeed, can restrictions be imposed on Jesus himself?) Continuing along this line, we can therefore find it perfectly legitimate for the foreigner to live according to his own laws and not those of the host country.

E – If we consider that Jesus, in speaking of his brothers, is in fact speaking only of those who are his disciples and do the will of his heavenly Father, this considerably changes the scope of this text. Is this fair?

J – Yes! You are perfectly right! The meaning is very different³. Another word of Jesus to his disciples gives, in my opinion, the right light: If anyone welcomes you, he welcomes

¹ Matthew 5.17

² Mainly since the end of the 20th century.

³ Jean-Claude Ingelaere defends this thesis in an article published in 1970 and which can be found at: www.persee.fr.

La "Parabole" du jugement dernier (Matthieu 25.31-46), *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1970, 50-1, pp. 23-60.

me, and he who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me¹. Why? Because the disciple comes "in the name of Jesus", he is the messenger of Christ. To welcome or refuse this messenger is to welcome or refuse Christ. This therefore has consequences right up to eternal life.

In this text from Matthew 25, Jesus also wants to show that all his disciples are important messengers, even if they are apparently miserable, stripped of everything, strangers, sick, etc.

E – Therefore, from this point of view, it cannot be said that Jesus identifies with every foreigner.

J - Indeed! And one cannot take this text to justify a policy of unconditional welcome for foreigners. Nor can it be made a political law. That would be tantamount to imposing an insurmountable reception burden on many countries. Jesus is not saying to a nation: "You must welcome all foreigners who want to come into your homes, whatever their motivations".

Nevertheless, we must not forget that the whole Bible teaches us to *love our neighbour as ourselves*². The neighbour is the one who is close to us, the one we meet in our surroundings...

E – I come back to this text from Matthew 25 where Jesus encourages his disciples who could feel very useless seeing themselves as miserable, strangers, sick, etc. and believe themselves to be insignificant in the mission he entrusts to them. Is this not also an invitation from Jesus to the whole Church to take special care of all those brothers and sisters in the faith who experience these difficulties?

J - Yes! I agree with you. Since we are talking about foreigners, we should think more about our brothers and sisters who are persecuted because of their faith in Christ elsewhere than at home. I am thinking in particular of Christians in the East and Christians in Muslim countries. If they are fleeing persecution, why can't we welcome them in Europe as a priority since we share the same faith?

I return to your study of the place of the foreigner in the Bible. What else have you learned?

E – My last surprise was to discover what chapter 28 of Deuteronomy says about the foreigner. It is interesting to note that the relationship between the Israelite and the foreigner depends first and foremost on the Israelite's obedience to God's

¹ Matthew 10.41-42: *The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.*

² Luke 10.27

commandments. When this obedience is total, the Israelite is blessed and can lend to the foreigner; the relationship is healthy and positive. But when this obedience is lacking, the relationship is reversed and the Israelite becomes dependent on the foreigner and places himself in a position of inferiority. This is impressive!

Reading these texts, I have often asked myself this question: isn't there some analogy with the situation in Europe?

J – You're right. Since the last world war, Europe's position towards foreign countries has changed a lot, and I'm talking mainly about Arab-Muslim countries. We have seen them gaining ever greater influence over Europeans, who have made endless concessions to protect their economic interests. The relationship has been reversed.

R – It's not for nothing that Islamists call Europe the "soft underbelly" or the "weak link" of the West¹. They take maximum advantage of it.

E – The Old Testament also deals with the problem of other religions brought in by foreigners. What do you think about this?

J – It was essential for the people of Israel to preserve their faith in God, clearly defined as the only true God. Cults addressed to pseudo-divinities or idols were not compatible with the covenant the Israelites had made with their God, and they had to be rejected.

We are now in a different situation. Europe was not built on such a covenant and favoured freedom of belief. But this has not always been the case: over the last two millennia there have been attempts by the Church to take power in order to impose Christianity as the state religion. These have been disasters. In spite of this, we must not forget that Christianity has made a major contribution to shaping the construction of Europe in a positive way.

E – Europe is therefore made up of multi-denominational States, where Christianity plays a more or less important role depending on the State and the region.

J – Yes, for example, the Protestant and Catholic churches in the canton of Vaud are subsidized by the State, but this is not the case in other cantons. Christianity does indeed have a predominant position, but that doesn't prevent other denominations from enjoying true freedom of worship.

R – In this context, the practice of Islam as a private religion is legitimate. On the other hand, it seems right to us to oppose political Islam, which would like to get its hands on the structures of the State and society.

¹ De Villiers Philippe, *Les cloches sonneront-elles encore demain ?* Paris, Albin Michel, 2016, p. 47.

A false sense of guilt

E – By reading A. Del Valle's book, *Le complexe occidental. Petit traité de déculpabilisation*¹ (*The Western Complex. A short treatise on guilt*), I was struck by the fact that guilt plays a significant role in Europe. It pushes Europeans to denigrate themselves and their heritage. The author sees guilt as "a formidable weapon of manipulation". He notes that this weapon of guilt "is particularly effective in Judeo-Christian societies, which are more capable of self-criticism than other civilizations..." and that the "feeling of guilt has not disappeared with dechristianization...".

What do you think of that? What is the role of the Church in this process?

J - Guilt is indeed a formidable weapon. Moreover, as you have already shown, the Strategy of Islamic Cultural Action does everything to exacerbate it. The Strategy affirms that Europeans behaved like colonizers, humiliated and exploited many Muslim countries and that it is legitimate for them to bear the long-term consequences. Muslims recall that they were shamefully pushed back in their campaigns of European conquest (at Poitiers in 732, at Lepanto in 1571), and that they were attacked by the Crusades.

Many Christians hear this guilt-ridden rhetoric and actually feel indebted to Muslims. The idea is: "We shamefully exploited Muslims in the colonies and imposed our culture on them. To redeem ourselves, we must welcome them with their culture and religion".

The Old Testament gives a very relevant teaching on this issue of "intergenerational" guilt. But, unfortunately, this teaching is not taken seriously. Is it even known? Here it is:

When God leads the rebellious people of Israel in exile to Babylon, the Jews express their sense of injustice: "It's not right! We are paying for the sins committed by our parents"². The idea is not completely unfounded, for a text of law transmitted by Moses in the desert said this:

*I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. I punish the iniquity of the fathers on the children until the third and fourth generation of those who hate me ...*³

¹ Del Valle Alexandre, *Le complexe occidental. Petit traité de déculpabilisation*, Paris, Éditions du Toucan, 2014.

² Jeremiah 31:29-30.

³ Exodus 20.5; see also Exodus 34.7; Numbers 14.18; Deuteronomy 5.9.

So the deported Jews think they are paying for the faults committed by the previous three to four generations. They forget, however, that this principle applies only to those who hate God, to those who persevere in the path of revolt opened by their parents. It is a very special retribution that could be defined as a transgenerational retribution.

The prophet Ezekiel, who was one of the deportees, knows very well how his fellow countrymen feel. He responds¹ to them by emphasizing individual retribution, as it was defined at Sinai. So the message is clear: "It is not because of the faults that only your fathers would have committed that exile was decided, it is also and above all because of your own faults". And the rest can be implied: "Repent of your own faults..."

And yet, in this harsh measure of exile, there is not only the individual aspect at stake, but also an undeniable collective dimension. Let us take an example: among the deportees are Daniel and his friends Hanania, Mishael and Azariah, men whom the book of the prophet Daniel describes as blameless. So nothing justifies their exile. And yet, they suffer from the deportation like the rest of the people. These men are therefore included in a sanction that could be called collective. Are they rebelling against God because of this measure? No. On the contrary, Daniel repents for his own sins and those of his people, imploring God's mercy and the restoration of his people in Israel². This prayer says a lot about the way Daniel looks at himself and his countrymen.

E – If I understand correctly, we don't have to blame ourselves for the faults committed by the generations that preceded us?

J – That's right! It is clear that in a certain way we bear the consequences of the acts of our predecessors, but we don't have to bear the guilt. It's very different!

E – So we don't have to bear the guilt for the misdeeds that our fathers might have committed against Muslims!

J – That's right! However, nothing prevents us from wanting to make up for some mistakes. But we have to do it in an intelligent way.

¹ Ezekiel 18.

² Daniel 9.1-19. Daniel understands that sin has grown worse over many generations, so he asks God's forgiveness for his fathers as well (see Leviticus 26:40). However, this request for God's forgiveness can in no way justify the blackmail of the West by the Islamic world in the name of its alleged guilt.

R – I would like to add here a point which seems important to me: many Muslims feel no guilt about the atrocities committed by their ancestors during the wars of conquest! On the contrary, they are very proud of the Muslim settlements in North Africa, Palestine, Syria, Spain, Sicily or the Balkans, and this for centuries. A. del Valle recalls that the Crusades were intended to protect Christian pilgrims threatened by the Turkish occupation of Jerusalem. They were spread over less than 200 years (1095-1291) and were concentrated mainly around Jerusalem¹. On the other hand, the Arab-Islamic wars against Eastern and Western Christianity lasted more than 1200 years (630-1820)². In addition, between the 8th and 20th centuries, Arab-Muslims practiced acts of piracy and barbarism all around the Mediterranean.

A. del Valle points out, in great detail, that Arab-Islamic slavery was crueler, claimed more victims and lasted much longer than European slavery. I would like to point out that the practice of slavery is perfectly legitimised by the Koran; slaves are part of the spoils of war³.

According to O. Pétré-Grenouilleau, a professor at Sciences-po in Paris, the Arab and European slave trade totalled 28 million black slaves. 11 million were made slaves by European slave traders and 17 million by Arab slave traders (without taking into account the white people kidnapped by Muslims...)⁴.

J – Thank you Rachid! Unfortunately, these truths are cleverly hidden, because they push us to look at history in a different way.

R – A view which Islam categorically rejects! Moreover, many Muslims assert loud and clear that the Arab conquerors did nothing but liberate the nations which were under the domination of the Christian colonisers! It is therefore a service that they did them a favour!

A lack of knowledge of Islam

J – I will continue my presentation. The Church can also favour Islam when it does not know it, or very little. Many say: "Islam is a monotheistic religion, like Judaism and Christianity, so we have the same God". In addition, the Koran speaks of several biblical characters: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Job, Moses, John the Baptist, Jesus, Mary his mother, etc. So they are the same characters! Sharia law also has much in common with the

¹ Some consider that the Crusades lasted until the battle of Lepanto in 1571.

² Ibid, p. 167.

³ Koran 33.50 ; 4.3 et 23-24 ; 23.6.

⁴ Ibid, p. 203.

law formulated in the book of Leviticus and Deuteronomy in the Old Testament. The Koran speaks highly of Jesus and describes him as the Word of Allah, destined for an exceptional mission, a man without sin, capable of performing miracles. The Koran also announces the return of Christ. Muslims speak of Islam as a religion of peace and love... All these elements make many Christians see Islam as a "sister religion", which must be given space.

Some might think that Islam and Christianity are two different ways of seeking the same truth or two sensibilities of the same faith. But, in reality, we do not see that they have antagonistic visions of the world, of society and of God. Rachid will be able to tell us much more about this!

A curious admiration for Islam

J – It's worth reading L. Dandrieu's book¹. The latter is rightly astonished by the attitude of the popes towards Islam², especially since the second half of the 20th century. He quotes in particular a declaration of Paul VI in 1965 (Nostra Aetate): "The Church also looks with esteem on Muslims, who worship the one God, living and subsisting, merciful and almighty, creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men. They seek to submit with all their souls to God's decrees, even if they are hidden, as Abraham submitted to God, to whom the Islamic faith willingly refers. Although they do not recognize Jesus as God, they venerate him as a prophet; they honor his virginal Mother, Mary, and sometimes even invoke him with piety. Moreover, they await the day of judgment, when God will reward all men after resurrecting them. For this reason, they value the moral life and worship God, especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting".

"Even though, in the course of the centuries, many divisions and enmities have arisen between Christians and Muslims, the Holy Council exhorts them all to forget the past and to strive sincerely for mutual understanding, and to protect and promote together for all men social justice, moral values, peace and freedom".

John Paul II continued in the same vein and praised the religious values of Islam in Ankara in November 1979: "It is therefore with your fellow citizens, but also with the vast Islamic world in mind, that I express once again today the esteem of the Catholic Church for these religious values. My brothers and

¹ *Église et migration, le grand malaise (le pape et le suicide de la civilisation européenne)*, Paris, Presses de la Renaissance, 2017.

² It should be noted, however, that Benedict XVI made different and lucid remarks about Islam, which earned him much criticism in the Church and in the Muslim world.

sisters, when I think of this spiritual patrimony and the value it has for man and for society, of its capacity to offer, especially to young people, a direction for life, to fill the void left by materialism, to give a sure foundation to social and juridical organization, I wonder if it is not urgent, precisely today, when Christians and Muslims have entered a new period of history, to recognize and develop the spiritual bonds that unite us, in order to protect and promote together, for all people - as the Council invites us to do - social justice, moral values, peace and freedom".

Islam is thus seen, in the above speeches, as a robust and dynamic religion that can give new life to a Christianity that is running out of steam! John Paul II continued: "The encounter with Islam can foster a more intimate interiorization of the faith. In May 1980 he said: "Our God and yours is one and the same, and we are brothers and sisters in the faith of Abraham". "We believe in the same God, the only God, the living God, the God who creates the worlds and brings his creatures to their perfection".

E – It is very astonishing to hear the Pope speak of "brothers and sisters in the faith of Abraham"! Do Jews, Christians and Muslims really share Abraham's faith?

J - You are right to ask this important question. It doesn't make sense for several reasons. According to the Bible, Abraham was characterized primarily by his faith in God. In fact, he is called the Father of believers. Why is he called the Father of believers? When God revealed Himself to him and asked him to leave everything and go to the land of Canaan¹, the Promised Land, Abraham believed this promise: he left his country to enter the land of Canaan and settle there. God and Abraham then made a covenant. Their relationship became so intimate that God called Abraham his friend². Abraham was therefore honored for his faith and not for his obedience to a law, which had not yet been given (it would later be given by Moses).

On the other hand, this promise made to Abraham was passed on to his son Isaac and then to his grandson Jacob, later called Israel, and to his descendants. It was not passed on to Ishmael, the first son Abraham had with Hagar, handmaid of Sarah, his wife.

R – We may add that for Muslims, Abraham does not represent the same thing at all! Here is why: Islam is the religion which the Creator has conceived for humans; a religion which is best adapted to their nature and condition. The existence of other religions has therefore become an aberration since they

¹ Later called Palestine.

² James 2.23.

are so many diversions from the divine plan¹. The Koran, although transmitted to Muhammad in the 7th century, well after the Old and then the New Testament, is in fact the exact copy of an original, the "Mother of the Book", preserved with Allah from all eternity². It is an eternal text, therefore necessarily pre-existing to human history.

E – What do you mean by that?

R – It means that, for Muslim theologians, Islam was there long before human history. Adam was a Muslim³, Abraham was a Muslim, Moses and the other prophets were Muslims, Jesus was a Muslim. So Abraham did not illustrate himself by his faith, as the Bible describes it to us, but by his submission to the law of Allah. Like all other Muslims.

E – So, if I understand correctly, Muslims do not consider Jews and Christians as brothers and sisters in Abraham's faith!

R – No! Indeed, for them, the only true religion is Islam. Humans are born Muslims, it is their nature. They make a mistake when they adhere to another religion, such as Judaism or Christianity. That is why the mission of Muslims is to bring them back to Islam⁴. Moreover, the Koran reminds us that Abraham disowned those who did not believe in Allah alone; he disowned them and showed enmity and hatred towards them until they converted to Islam.

J - It is clear that this attempt to find in Abraham a subject of agreement in interreligious dialogue leads to nothing. The differences are major and irreducible.

E - I would like to come back to a statement made by John Paul II in Ankara. He praised the value of the Islamic spiritual heritage and its "capacity ... to give a sure foundation to the social and juridical organization" of society. If I understand this speech correctly, he considered that in order to organize society the sharia is as valuable as the principles of life that have been drawn from the Old and New Testament. What do you think of this?

J – The organization of our European societies owes much to Christianity. But more and more people come to deny this beneficial influence and to think that Islam would have a much better one. Some would be tempted to see Islam as a well-

¹ Laurent Annie, *L'islam pour tous ceux qui veulent en parler (mais ne le connaissent pas encore)*, Paris, Éditions Artège, 2017, p. 23.

² Koran 13.39.

³ Koran 3.67.

⁴ Koran 60.4. Article 10 of the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (1990) states: "Islam is the natural religion of man. It is not permissible to subject him to any form of pressure or to take advantage of his poverty or ignorance to convert him to another religion or to atheism".

structured religion, which provides a rigid, solid and very reassuring framework, especially for young people. The Muslim must obey, without arguing, without questioning. His only responsibility is to obey Muslim laws. For many, this can be reassuring!

E – What you are saying makes me think of an astonishing statement by J. Ellul¹: "Freedom is hard to live! »

J – Yes, the Bible gives man an incredible freedom and thus puts him in front of his responsibilities. In particular, that of drawing from the Scriptures the principles of life necessary for our society, without making it a legalistic and stifling system. To carry out his mission properly, he can and must rely on divine wisdom.

It is true that this freedom is difficult to assume, because nothing is fixed or fixed in advance, everything is to be discovered and this unknown is very disconcerting!

E – So, from a human point of view, it is much easier and above all more reassuring to create a rigid and restricted framework.

J – Unfortunately yes! Moreover, in the course of its history, the Church has often transformed the Christian faith into a rigid and stifling morality that it has sought to impose on the whole of society. This is unhealthy! It is not her role to organize society. On the contrary, she must be an active, invigorating, critical, disturbing factor in it if necessary. The biblical principles of life are useful to our society. They bring life, peace and freedom to it... when they are well understood.

R – Islam has a completely different will: that of organising society on its own. This is why Islam seems at first sight to give a better guarantee of security.

E – It's astonishing to note that man finally prefers security to freedom!

R – Our society must understand that by rejecting the Christian faith and choosing Islam, it will indeed lose a large part of its freedom. It will bitterly regret it. One need only look at societies where Islam is strictly applied. Let me give you a very concrete example: can you imagine that in Afghanistan music is forbidden? Possession of music CDs is punishable! This is one example among many others. Sharia law has imposed on society a straitjacket of strict and immutable laws that stifle life².

¹ Ellul Jacques, *La subversion du christianisme*, Paris, Seuil, 1984.

² Moreover, many Muslims do in private what the sharia condemns! It's a way to breathe a little ...

When it comes to deprivation of liberty, women are clearly the most affected.

Islam wants to do in the West what it does elsewhere. It rejects existing laws because they were created by human beings and therefore have no value; and instead, it wants to introduce sharia law, which is the legal application of the precepts of the Koran.

E - So, when sharia law is imposed, citizens no longer have anything to say or vote in the various parliaments! They are thus dispossessed of their responsibilities!

R - Indeed, the organisation of society is no longer a matter for the citizens, but for the religious leaders who apply sharia law.

E - We have compared the influence of the Christian faith on society with that of Islam. We have said why we choose the former and reject the latter. Some may well find it illogical that Christians continue to support the principle of democracy since the laws passed are increasingly centred on man and are no longer referenced to God. What do you say to this?

J - If we take the dictionary definition, democracy is a political doctrine according to which sovereignty must belong to all citizens. They make choices by voting: the majority wins out over the minority. The principle, in itself, is neither good nor bad! It all depends on the choice made by the citizens. If a majority of people vote for good laws, the country prospers; if a majority votes for bad laws, the country suffers. So the problem is not the principle of democracy itself, but the people who vote!

The Bible shows us that God has delegated many responsibilities to all humans. The principle of democracy simply shows that humans take charge and assume their responsibilities. But, unfortunately, their choices are not always the best ones!

E - Therefore, the role of the Church is to help citizens make good decisions, and to remind them that it is far better for the well-being of our society that those who make laws are inspired by divine law.

J - Exactly! And when bad decisions are made, the Church must assume its subversive role! But, let's remember, she must not take power!

R - I know that democracy is not a perfect system, simply because the result depends on the wisdom of the voters, but wanting to do away with democracy in order to establish an Islamic legalistic system in its place is not a good solution. It is contrary to everything that the Gospel has brought about in terms of freedom. It is to accept a system that is binding and deadly.

J – We must react to refuse it, because we are all concerned, believers and non-believers alike!

Fascination with Multiculturalism and Happy Globalization

J – I will continue my presentation. For Dandrieu, "the Catholic Church felt that immigration is the vanguard of a new humanity, of a city without borders that prefigures the heavenly Jerusalem". Multiculturalism is presented as a kind of humanitarian design. Some take up these words of the Apostle Paul:

There is no longer Jew or non-Jew, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ.¹

They see this as a divine invitation to create a great, united, multicultural family. But in reality, for Paul, it is by no means a family made up of the many peoples of the earth, but the great family of Christians! It is not at all the same thing! Moreover, in his mind, the term "there is no longer male or female" in no way seeks to erase the differences between man and woman, but only to explain that both have the same value in the eyes of God.

Arab-Muslim propaganda

J – Within the Euro-Arab Dialogue, the Muslim countries have done a great deal of propaganda work to get the Churches, or at least some of them, to side with the Palestinians against Israel. This action has proved to be very effective. A special bond has thus been created between a fringe² of the Church and the Arab-Muslim countries, at the expense of Israel.

I often think back to the text of the Prophet Zechariah:

On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all peoples. All who lift it will surely hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth will gather against it.³

It is possible to disagree with some orientations of Israel's current policy without being against this people and denying its legitimacy to live in the land of its ancestors.

Uniting against Israel can only leave wounds and scars within the Church. The apostle Paul said of Christians that they are branches cut from a wild olive tree and then grafted onto the

¹ Galatians 3.28. This idea is repeated in Colossians 3.11.

² Entire communities have decided to boycott Israel. In other churches, the fracture has been within the community itself.

³ Zechariah 12.3.

cultivated olive tree (the Jewish olive tree)¹. How could these branches deny the trunk that now bears them without suffering seriously?

Two antagonistic understandings of God

E – John, you said earlier that Islam and Christianity had antagonistic understandings of God. Could you clarify your thought?

J – The problem is the true nature of Jesus. But I think it's more up to Rachid to tell us about it.

R – Yes, it is indeed the big stumbling block between Christians and Muslims, but this subject is carefully concealed. It can be subdivided into three parts: 1) the filial nature of Jesus, 2) his death and resurrection, and 3) his divinity.

E – It is true that most of the time we talk about terrorism, violence, the veil...

R – And we leave aside these three points which are nevertheless fundamental and which should be known to all Christians. They are at the origin of the fracture between Islam and Christianity.

E – So, what can you tell us about them?

Jesus, Son of God

R – Excuse me for quoting several verses, which may be a little off-putting, but they are important for understanding our subject².

I begin with the first part: Jesus, Son of God.

This term is mentioned about 50 times in the New Testament. It does not describe a biological filiation, as Muslims think, but a spiritual filiation through the Holy Spirit.

God attested this filiation at the baptism of Jesus³. The disciples saw and testified to this filiation. The apostle John writes it like this: *I have seen and have borne witness that he is the Son of God*⁴.

Jesus himself acknowledged to be the Son of God before the Sanhedrin (the Jewish court) shortly before his death⁵.

But let us return to the Koran. The Koran considers it very serious to think and affirm that Allah has a son. It is a heresy.

¹ Romans 11.15-24.

² This subject is dealt with exhaustively in the book by Amin Abdelmajid and Christian Bibollet: *Jésus, "Parole de Dieu" dans le Coran, un musulman s'interroge*, Genève, Éditions IQRI, 2020.

³ Matthew 3.17: *This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased*.

⁴ John 1.34

⁵ Matthew 26.64 ; Luke 22.70.

Here are a few verses from the Koran that bear witness to this:

Koran 9:30: ... The Christians said: "The Messiah is the son of God! " These are their statements, out of their mouths. They emulate the statements of those who blasphemed before. May Allah assail them! How deceived they are!

Koran 6.101: Originator of the heavens and the earth - how can He have a son when He never had a companion? He created all things, and He has knowledge of all things.

Koran 72.3: And Exalted is the Grandeur of our Lord - He never had a mate, nor a child.

E – So, for Muslims, Jesus is not the Son of God!

R – No, you see that the Koran destroys something essential in Jesus' relationship with his heavenly Father and also in the personal relationship of Christians with God their father. You remember what the first chapter of the Gospel according to John says:

This light... came to his own, and his own people did not receive it. But to all who received it, who believe in his name, it gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.¹

The coming of Jesus into the world is crucial because it allows those who welcome Him to become children of God.

Elsewhere, Jesus calls his disciples "his brothers" and acknowledges that they have the same heavenly Father². Paul writes that Christians have been called *to become conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn of many brothers and sisters*³. If Jesus is not the Son of God, Christians are not children of God either... and these New Testament texts are lies!

Death and Resurrection of Jesus

R – The second part is more delicate. It concerns the death and resurrection of Jesus.

¹ John 1.11-13

² John 20.17

³ Romans 8.29

The Koran denies Jesus' death on the cross. For Islam, the crucifixion was only a staging orchestrated by Allah, in order to let the Jews believe that they had crucified Jesus. Two verses of the Koran affirm this:

Koran 3:53-54: "Our Lord, we have believed in what You have revealed, and we have followed the Messenger, so count us among the witnesses." They planned, and Allah planned; but Allah is the Best of planners.

Koran 4. 156-159: And for their faithlessness, and their saying against Mary a monstrous slander. And for their saying, "We have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the Messenger of God." In fact, they (*the Jews*) did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them as if they did. Indeed, those who differ about him are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it, except the following of assumptions. Certainly, they did not kill him. Rather, Allah raised him up to Himself. Allah is Mighty and Wise. There is none from the People of the Scripture but will believe in him before his death, and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them.

So Allah allowed someone else to be crucified in place of Jesus, someone who resembled him (an "illusion" according to the Koran). Mary was deceived, the disciples were deceived, and the accounts of the crucifixion in the Gospels are false. For Islam, Jesus was not crucified, He did not die, and therefore He did not rise again!

According to the Koran, Jesus did not die, but was raised up to Allah :

Koran 3.55: Allah said, "O Jesus, I am terminating your life, and raising you to Me, and clearing you of those who disbelieve. And I will make those who follow you superior to those who disbelieve, until the Day of Resurrection.

This "elevation" poses great problems for Muslim scholars: Was Jesus raised alive? Or was only his body raised? Or his spirit? No one is able to explain this verse clearly!

J – One thing is certain, it is that by denying the death and resurrection of Jesus, Islam denies the foundation of Christian life. Indeed, the work of forgiveness and salvation accomplished by Jesus no longer makes any sense, and neither does the Christian life. You remember what Paul said to the Corinthians:

If Christ has not risen, our preaching is empty and so is your faith... your faith is useless and you are still in your sins.¹

The divine nature of Jesus

R – The third part is even more important. It concerns the divine nature of Jesus.

The New Testament tells us that after his resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of his Father. He received all power in heaven and on earth and the Father entrusted Him with the direction of His Kingdom².

For Islam, this is an error and infamy. Jesus is not God; He is only a man. This is what the Koran says:

Koran 5.116: And Allah will say, "O Jesus son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as gods rather than God?'" He will say, "Glory be to You! It is not for me to say what I have no right to. Had I said it, You would have known it. You know what is in my soul, and I do not know what is in your soul. You are the Knower of the hidden.

Koran 4.171 : ... (O Christians!) believe in Allah and His messengers, and do not say, "Three." Refrain-it is better for you. Allah is only one God. Glory be to Him - that He should have a son.

Koran 5.73: They disbelieve those who say, "God is the third of three." But there is no deity except the One God. If they do not refrain from what they say, a painful torment will befall those among them who disbelieve.

The concept of Trinity is a heresy. Islam regards Christians as polytheists or associators, since they associate other deities (Jesus and his mother Mary)³ with Allah, which for Allah makes them "the worst of creatures" and "impurities":

¹ 1 Corinthians 15.14 and 17. See also Romans 5.8-10.

² Revelation 5.9-12; See also: 1.6; 7.9-12; 21.22-23. Revelation 22.13. See also: Hebrew 1.1-3; Mark 14.61-62. Colossians 1.15-16.

³ Muhammad believed that, for Christians, the dogma of the Trinity brought together God, Jesus and Mary, the mother of Jesus. Which is obviously false! According to the Bible, the third person of the Trinity is not Mary but the Holy Spirit. At present, Muslims continue to consider Christians as associators and persecute them for this reason.

Koran 98.6: Those who disbelieve among the People of the Scripture, and the Polytheists, will be in the Fire of Hell, where they will abide forever. These are the worst of creatures.

Koran 9.28: O you who believe (*the Muslims*)! The polytheists (*the Christians*) are polluted, so let them not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year of theirs.

The Koran goes even further and orders the fight against Christians on the sole grounds of their faith:

Koran 9.5: When the Sacred Months have passed, kill the polytheists wherever you find them. And capture them, and besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every ambush. But if they repent, and perform the prayers, and pay the alms, then let them go their way. God is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.

So the message is clear: Christians are polytheists and therefore considered as defilements. They deserve to be killed because of their faith.

For Christians, the only alternative to death is to convert to Islam or else to pay a special tax (capitation) and humiliate themselves by pledging allegiance to Islam. In this way they become dhimmis.

Koran 9.29: Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, nor abide by the religion of truth-from among those who received the Scripture (*Christians and Jews*)- until they pay the due tax, willingly or unwillingly.

E – The violence of these verses is astounding!

R – I would point out that Sura 9, quoted above, is the last Sura, in chronological order, which lays down the commandments¹. It has therefore not been abrogated by later verses and can no longer be! Its orders continue to be valid today.

J – I have often heard Muslims say that this sura was "transmitted" to Mohammed in a warlike context. He had to

¹ In the Koran ordered chronologically, there is just after Sura 9 a small sura (110), the last one consisting of 3 verses that glorify the victory of Islam.

defend himself against external aggression and therefore had the right to use violence.

R – That's not true! At that time, Mohammed had already conquered a large part of the Arabian Peninsula. He was in no way in a defensive position. Sura 9 in fact justified his wars of conquest far beyond. That is what he did. Then he died shortly afterwards, in 632. His companions and successors continued the conquest and 25 years later the Islamic empire extended from present-day Libya to half of Afghanistan. Another 30 years later, it extended from the Atlantic (Morocco, Spain) to the Indus River. This empire was larger than the Roman Empire, and it was conquered in less than a century!

E – And they want us to believe that Islam is not a conqueror!

R – We must also understand this point, which is very important: the fact that Christians "associate Jesus and the Holy Spirit with God" constitutes for Muslims an aggression against Allah and his Prophet, and against Islam. Since there is aggression, defence becomes necessary. It is simply self-defence! This explains why jihad is presented as defensive.

In Islamic countries, these verses of Sura 9 are considered prescriptive and justify enmity or even hatred towards Christians¹.

E – It's chilling! I am surprised that many Christians consider Islam as a sister religion and call to walk with it hand in hand!

J - The apostle John does not mince his words. In his first letter, he says this:

Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.²

This is exactly what Islam does: it denies God as Father and Jesus as Son of God.

E – So, if I understand correctly, Allah, the God of the Muslims, as revealed in the Koran, cannot be compared to the God of the Christians! It is not the same!

R – You're right! That should make the Church think.

But let us never forget that if we are to clearly identify Islam as a negator of the Christian faith, we must love Muslims. Even if the Koran asks Muslims to hate Christians, to destroy or subdue

¹ In Europe, some academics tend to say that Sura 9 was passed on to an earlier period when Mohammed was under attack. As a result, it can be repealed by later verses. This opinion is still very much a minority view and carries little weight in Islamic countries. On the other hand, it is not understandable why this opinion was not taken seriously after Mohammed's death.

² 1 John 2.22

them, Christians cannot return the favour: Christ asks his disciples to love their neighbour, even if he is an adversary or an enemy¹. This is a totally different logic!

E - There is one problem, however: if I say that I reject Islam, the Muslim who listens to me will feel rejected too and will cry out for Islamophobia, defamation of religions and discrimination. Perhaps he will even take the matter to court?

R - That is true, but we cannot give up a dialogue of truth, even if this truth hurts the believing and sincere Muslim. He needs to have the courage to look his founding texts in the face and accept them. We must absolutely stand firm on this point and refuse to capitulate. Of course, without renouncing the maintenance of our bonds of friendship.

Time is passing and we decide to end this conversation. I thank my friends for their precious help and go home with my head full of all that I have just learned.

Thanks to my readings and my friends, I understand that the Islamisation of my country and Europe is much more advanced than people think. Some people see it as a myth², but you only have to read the newspapers and look at the news to be convinced. Everywhere, there are definite signs of progress. It is the result of a very well thought-out and orderly strategy.

I also understand that a large section of the Church bears responsibility for the opening up of Europe to Islam. It is showing, in this respect, several signs of weakness that we must have the courage to recognise.

The investigation is progressing, but there are still a number of points that need to be clarified:

- What is the relationship of the State with the Church or with Muslim communities? This is the whole question of secularism.

- Who are the other actors in the opening up of Europe to Islam? The role of politicians and judges? The role of the Declaration of Human Rights and multiculturalism?

¹ Matthew 5.44 ; Luke 6.26, 35.

² Liogier Lionel, *Le mythe de l'islamisation*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2012.

Secularism

At Rachid's, with John, three months later...

E – There is one subject I would like to discuss with you, and that is the question of secularism. From what I have read, secularism is the *bête noire* of radical Muslims, who see it as a serious obstacle to their occupation of the public space. The Catholic Church disapproves of it either, and Protestants are mixed. What do you think about this?

J – The subject is very delicate. In order to understand what is happening, you have to study a little bit of history. Since Greek antiquity, two currents of thought have been opposed: one is based on metaphysical or religious certainties and the other on the autonomy of individual thought (this is the path followed by philosophers such as Socrates, Aristotle...). The search for autonomy aims at freeing man from obedience to a divine authority. We can find these two currents of thought in Genesis chapters 2 and 3: man has the choice to depend on God or to be autonomous, to think with God or without God. Two very different ways of conceiving life.

The advent of Christianity leaves no one indifferent and this opposition between these two currents is reinforced: the first Christians are accused of turning the world upside down! ¹

However, this nascent Church does not seek to impose its faith as an absolute truth on society.

Unfortunately, by the 4th century A.D., something was to change completely. J. Ellul discusses this in great detail in his book *The Subversion of Christianity*²: under the impulse of Constantine and then Theodosius, a marriage of reason is made between Church and State. Emperor Constantine took advantage of the Church to establish his authority and unify his empire, and the Church took advantage of the State to gain power, which, among other things, enabled Christians to stop being persecuted. The Church began to believe that the kingdom of God must be established by a political power, installed by a military victory³. She spreads the Gospel with power, a power other than that of God!

Christianity becomes the state religion; the Church is invested with political power and the emperor with religious

¹ Acts 17.6

² Ellul Jacques, *La subversion du christianisme*, Paris, Seuil, 1984.

³ Ibid, p. 145

power. She gains temporal power, but loses spiritual authority. The Church allows herself to be corrupted by power; this is a disaster from a spiritual point of view. And this will continue for centuries, until today¹.

The Church did not understand that she absolutely had to stay out of political power. Her goal was simply to bring people into the Kingdom of God², which has nothing to do with the human kingdoms we know. She did not have to impose her metaphysical and religious certainties on society!

E – I had previously pointed out that in the Israelite model there was a separation between political and religious power³. It was a wise decision. The tribe of priests did not really possess territories like the other tribes, except for a certain number of cities spread throughout the country. The priests were not supposed to be involved in politics and they were restricted to their religious ministry. Their work was passed on within the family. Therefore, they were not appointed by the king or any authority, nor were they paid by these authorities. Likewise, political power was not to interfere in the work of the priests.

If the Catholic Church, in the fourth century, had not renounced her Jewish roots and if she had taken into account this Jewish model, she might not have made the mistake of taking power in society.

J – It's interesting to see what happened in France. The question of secularism has been and remains even more burning than elsewhere in Europe. Its study allows us to better understand its complexity.

The term "secularism" dates back to the 19th century⁴. It describes the state of the people outside of religious influence. In France, the process of secularisation began as early as the Revolution with the action of an often atheist and anticlerical left, which wanted to free the state and the school from any confessional influence. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) affirms in its article 3: "The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the Nation". The Nation is sovereign, not the Church. This article thus puts an end to the alliance between political and religious power that made the France of the Ancien Régime a confessional State.

¹ Not all Christians have done this! Some have remained faithful to the Lord and His Word, at the risk of persecution.

² One could say very simply that to enter the Kingdom of God is to enter into communion with Christ, to work for him and with him, doing his will. And this already begins on earth!

³ *Un Roi, des Sujets et une Terre*, Romanel-sur-Lausanne, Scripsi, 2017, p. 63-65.

⁴ Ducomte Jean-Michel, *La laïcité*, Toulouse, Les Essentiels Milan, 2003.

But this separation is difficult to achieve, with advances and setbacks depending on the successive governments put in place. Bonaparte goes backwards, making the Catholic Church one of the instruments of his authority, but without giving her back her former power. It is a new marriage of throne and altar, to be governed by a Concordat. The Concordat lasted until 1905¹. The Church is subject to the State. Bonaparte appoints the bishops. The property of the Church is nationalized and the State compensates the clergy with salaries. Catholicism is no longer the religion of the State, but that of "the great majority of citizens".

After the fall of Bonaparte and the restoration of the Bourbon kings in 1814, Catholicism once again became the state religion and regained power, particularly in the field of education.

In reaction, anticlerical secularism asserts itself; it becomes radicalized and clearly becomes atheist. This movement affects both academic and popular circles. Jules Ferry (1832-1893), a freemason and member of the Grand Orient de France, dreamed of a school "without a priest and catechism". He greatly influenced France in its search for secularism.

But the Church stood firm on his positions. Confrontation becomes inevitable and the separation of Church and State is consummated in the law of December 1905. Article 1 stipulates that "The Republic does not recognise, pay or subsidise any religion".

E – This seems clear on paper, but in reality apparently there are many ambiguities, aren't there?

J – Yes, indeed! The State must remain neutral, and at the same time it must ensure that the public space is not invaded by religions. And in addition, it must respect the private space in which everyone can live his faith. Its mission thus becomes very complex, because the boundary between public and private space is blurred.

E – Can you give us some examples?

J – Let's take the case of religious signs. In France, the presence of crucifixes in public places is no longer accepted under the law on secularism. But what about personal religious signs: the cross worn around the neck, the Islamic headscarf or the yarmulke? They can be interpreted in two different ways: those who defend a hard secularism will say that these religious signs are manifested in the public space; they must therefore be banned. Those who advocate a soft secularism will point out that these signs are the expression of a private personal conviction. Moreover, no one says anything when someone is wearing a

¹ It is still applied in Alsace, Moselle and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

sweater ostensibly displaying a major clothing brand or ideological logo! This shows that the line between public and private is blurred.

I'll give you another example, still in France. According to the 1905 law, the state is not allowed to finance the construction of religious buildings, but it can finance cultural buildings. Muslims have understood this very well and have separated their religious buildings into a religious part, the mosque, and a so-called cultural part, the library and the Koranic school. The mosque is often financed by foreign governments, but not by the State; the library and the Koranic school receive subsidies from the State¹. However, in this school the Koran is taught in addition to Islamic culture. It is clearly a religious education! Where is the limit?

E – At present, what is the position of the Churches in France on secularism?

J – The Catholic Church still regrets the advantageous position she had before 1905 and continues to militate in favour of a decrease in secularism. She considers that the more the republican State secularises the public space and culture, the more it contributes to cutting French society off from its Christian matrix. The more the public sphere is emptied of its religious dimension, the more powerful the appeal of Islam will be. In both cases, the Church is cheated².

Protestants today are hesitant and torn between two attitudes: on the one hand, they understand that the law on secularism of 1905 was favourable to them since it allowed them to be recognized and to assert themselves better, and on the other hand, they cannot accept that a society is completely secular since the Bible affirms from beginning to end that the whole earth belongs to God and that all earthly authority comes from him³.

On the other hand, the "soft secularism" which only wants the separation of Church and State corresponds to the separation you described in the Old Testament between priests and political power. It is salutary.

E – And what is the attitude of Muslim countries towards secularism?

R – For them, secularism is an abomination! It is a sign of the high level of corruption in the West. A State cannot be secular, it

¹ De Villiers Philippe, *Les cloches sonneront-elles encore demain ?* Paris, Albin Michel, 2016, p. 141.

² Mamou Yves, *ibid* p. 342.

³ Romans 13.1-2

must be Islamic, i.e. it must be run by Muslims and have only one State religion: Islam.

E – So radical Muslims will do everything to prevent the establishment of secularism in Europe?

R – Yes, it's one of their struggles.

E – So, what should we choose for our country, Switzerland? More and more, Muslim associations are asking to be recognized by the State as being of public utility. Should they be recognized? Or on the contrary, should we tend towards a soft or hard secularism?

J – This is a very complex question! The answers can be multiple and contradictory. If we look at the history of Switzerland, we can see that it was clearly established on a Christian basis. The famous pact of 1291 begins with these words: "In nomine domini, amen" (In the name of the Lord, amen) and ends with : "The above recorded decisions, made in the interest and for the benefit of all, shall, if God consents, last in perpetuity... »¹

Our Constitution clearly refers to the God of whom the Bible speaks. It does not speak of Allah. Christianity has shaped the construction of our country and our society, and we would be entitled to legitimately defend the Christian values on which we were founded. We do not have to deny them in favour of another religion that would destroy them. That is why we must dare to affirm the primacy of Christianity over all other religions. That is a first point of view.

E – In the present climate, this will be very badly perceived!

R – Let us not forget that Islamic countries do not hesitate to affirm Islam as the State religion. Some Islamic countries tolerate other religions by limiting them to the private sphere, and others reject them outright!

Even Muslim countries considered moderate discriminate against people on the basis of their religion. Take the example of Algeria: Christians are forbidden to testify to their faith to Muslims²; some Christians have been convicted simply because they were carrying Bibles in their cars! It is putting more and more pressure on existing churches, not hesitating to close them for unjustified security reasons.

¹ The Brunnen Pact, established in 1314, uses the same introductory formula: "In the name of God, Amen" and ends as follows: "...made at Brunnen, in the year 1315 after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

² Order No. 06-03 of 28.2.2006 (article 11, penalty of 2-5 years' imprisonment). Article 13 punishes anyone who preaches in a religious building without being approved by the religious authority of his denomination and by the competent Algerian authorities.

The list of discriminations and persecutions against Christians in the various Muslim countries is very long...¹.

J – Another point of view consists in thinking that it is necessary to take into account the present situation and to be pragmatic! It must be recognized that the Christian faith is no longer that of the majority of citizens, and that Jewish-Christian values are being left aside by an ever greater proportion of society. Moreover, society is concerned about conflicts between different religions and believes that it would be much better if the public arena remained neutral and did not become the focus of an unreasonable conflict.

E – If such a choice were to be adopted, Christianity and Islam would inevitably lose something!

R – Islam would lose a great deal since it is mainly a political ideology which concerns society as a whole. As already stated, the State must be Islamic and the public space must be Islamic.

J – Christians would be very sad if our society, because of the Muslim ambition to promote Islam in the public sphere, took the decision to remove God from its public life and relegate the Christian faith to the private sphere.

E – This would be contrary to their vision of the world!

J – And yet we should not be pessimistic. As Christians, we must understand that what is really at stake is not the State or the public space, but the heart of man. Jesus never asked us to make the State "Christian"; we do not have to take power in society, but we must witness to our fellow citizens and encourage them to become disciples of Jesus themselves. For them, this means entering into direct relationship with him, listening to him, meditating on his teaching, allowing themselves to be transformed, learning to imitate him and doing his will. It is a personal relationship over which the State has no power!

These new disciples will pass on their change of thinking in society. As citizens, they will invest themselves differently in their work and bring new wisdom from God. If they go into politics, and I encourage them to do so, they will come up with new ideas that can benefit society as a whole. But, again, they will do so as citizens. It is not the Church that seeks to take power through them!

So, even if the hard secularism were chosen, we would still be able to continue the mission that the Lord has entrusted to us.

E – This is very encouraging!

¹ The Open Doors organisation publishes an annual index of persecution of Christians (<https://www.portesouvertes.ch/index>). It can be noted that in 2019, 33 of the 57 countries belonging to the OIC (Organization for Islamic Cooperation) are among the 50 most persecuting countries!

R – We can see that the mission of Islam and that of Christianity are very different in terms of the means used. Islam commands to take power and subjugate humans, by force if necessary. Christianity seeks to convince humans to enter into a direct and personal relationship with Christ; this proselytism is carried out through preaching and witnessing, not by force! Since the Lord respects the freedom of choice of each person and does not force anyone, it so happens that many people remain outside the faith. It is their decision and we must respect it.

E – We have spoken about the reaction of Catholics, Protestants and Muslims to secularism; what about the State?

R – Secularism also poses a problem for the State. The State believes it can manage Muslim communities as it manages the various Churches. But, as we have already seen, Islam is not only religious, it is also, and above all, political. The State does not understand this, especially since radical Muslims constantly tell it that they have no political ambitions, which is not true! The State does not understand that Muslim communities cannot behave in the same way as the various Churches that have submitted to the laws of the State. Unfortunately, it will be too late when it realizes this!

J – We can quote here the famous words of the Muslim Brother Yusuf al-Qaradawi, one of the most influential Muslim theologians in Europe: "With your democratic laws, we will colonize you. With our Koranic laws, we will dominate you". These words were pronounced in Rome in 2012¹.

R – That's exactly it! As we have already seen, not all Muslims think that way. But radical Muslims do! Initially, they will try to adapt to our democratic system and, when the time comes, they will show their true intentions. This word of Qaradawi must be taken very seriously. This is demonstrated by looking at the evolution of some countries that were moderate and are now becoming radical. I am thinking in particular of Turkey, Lebanon and the Maghreb countries.

E – A friend who lives in Lebanon² recently told me that many of the Christians she met were surprised that Europeans do not understand the real aims of Islam. In Lebanon, the number of Muslims is increasing, especially with the influx of refugees, and the balance of power is changing between Muslims

¹ Harouel Jean-Louis, *Les droits de l'homme contre le peuple*, Paris, Éditions Desclée de Brouwer, 2016, p. 15.

² A multi-faith country but not Muslim. Lebanon's situation is different from that of the rest of the Arab world. Indeed, it is the only one of the 22 Arab countries that is not "Muslim" since it is based on a "bi-religious" (Christian and Muslim) reality. It is nevertheless part of the OIC (Organization for Islamic Cooperation).

and Christians. The latter feel more threatened. The State recognizes 18 religious denominations, mainly Muslim and Christian. They are represented in the National Assembly. However, this balance is very fragile and seems to be holding only because of the continuing discord between Sunni Muslims and Shia Muslims. Without it, the country would fall into Islam.

J - The situation of Christians has deteriorated very sharply in recent decades in Iraq and Syria after the Islamic upsurge. Many have had to flee. It is estimated that in the Middle East there were about 20% Christians at the beginning of the 20th century and that today there would be only 2%.

The Chaldean Archbishop of Mosul, Archbishop Amel Shimoun Nona, said this in 2014: "Our sufferings today are a prelude to those that you, Europeans and Western Christians, will also suffer in the near future.... You too are in danger. You must make firm and courageous decisions, even at the price of contradicting your principles. You think that all men are equal... Islam does not say that all men are equal. Your values are not theirs. If you do not understand this in time, you will become victims of the enemy you have welcomed into your home"¹.

R – That's true! We would do well to listen to the Christians of the East. They have a lot to teach us on this subject.

¹ Quoted by Laurent Dandrieu : *Église et migration, le grand malaise (le pape et le suicide de la civilisation européenne)*, Paris, Presses de la Renaissance, 2017, p. 144.

Multiculturalism and Human Rights

E – There are still other actors in this process of Islamisation of Europe! I wondered what the role of the intellectual elites and political leaders was.

J – I recently had the opportunity to read a book by M. Bock-Côté, *Le multiculturalisme comme religion politique*¹. This author gives an interesting analysis of the root causes of the civilizational upheaval that we are experiencing and from which Islam is benefiting. I'll give you the most interesting elements for your investigation.

The author shows well how the Marxist revolution has influenced certain European intellectual and political elites. But from the middle of the 1950s, these elites distanced themselves somewhat from Marxism after the discovery of the gulags and the tens of millions of deaths due to Stalinist repression. They became aware of the problem, but they did not reject communism, which they considered a beautiful theory that was badly applied.

From the second half of the sixties, we are witnessing, especially in France, a mutation of the left. It has to reinvent itself and fight differently. Indeed, since injustices and social inequalities persist, since society continues to be seen as a factor of corruption, domination and alienation, it is therefore essential to continue this revolutionary struggle. Human beings must be freed from all relationships of authority that prevent them from flourishing; we must fight against power of any kind and deconstruct all forms of domination by considering them henceforth illegitimate.

E – What you say makes me think of the events of May 68, in France and elsewhere. What role did this crisis play in this process?

J – It was a pivotal moment between two revolutionary eras: we will no longer emancipate ourselves in the same way, we will no longer fight against the same dominations. The revolutionary focus is shifting, the social conflict is transforming...

E – But what really changes?

J – We could summarize it in this way: the class struggle has been transformed into a struggle for values. New values have to be established to combat inequalities and social injustice. Let me explain: equality, non-discrimination, the fight against racism,

¹ Bock-Côté Mathieu, *Le multiculturalisme comme religion politique*, Paris, Cerf, 2016.

the search for diversity... are now put forward and established as new laws that should govern nations.

E – This is in a way an extreme application of certain articles of the Declaration of Human Rights?

J – Yes. And we've turned it into a very powerful legal system.

What is interesting is to see that this transformation of mentalities has taken place in politics not only in left-wing circles, but also in some right-wing circles. Here too, the right/left divide has changed.

E – Can you tell us more about these values? You talk about equality, but this term is not at all new!

J – You're right, but the search for equality has spread to all areas. It implies first of all the recognition of all minorities and putting them on the same level as the dominant groups. This is a great thing when it comes to people, but this search for equality wants to go much further. For example, the cultures and religions of minorities must be placed on the same level as the dominant culture and religion.

E – So this has enormous consequences!

J – Yes, the dominant culture and religion must be erased in front of the minorities so as not to crush them. Christianity has been dominant for a long time; now it must fade in front of other religions. Christian symbols must be suppressed since they are associated with the national majority.

R – That is how Christianity is being asked to make room for Islam!

E – I can easily imagine that when a non-believer reads these lines, he will find this evolution perfectly normal. For him, "religion" is an activity in society, in the same way as sports, music, cinema, theatre, etc.

J – He will no doubt even be happy that Christianity will lose some of its influence, and unfortunately he will forget all the major contributions it has made to our civilization.

The Christian will obviously not think in the same way.

E – What about non-discrimination?

J – It is the corollary of the search for equality at all costs. No one can be rejected for one reason or another, since everyone is put on an equal footing. Here too, we can make the same observation: this principle is perfectly justified when it applies to people themselves. But it is problematic when it goes beyond the individual and also concerns his or her ideology and religion, especially when these tend to impose their values on the host society and refuse to submit to the laws in force. It is therefore no longer a religious problem, but a purely social and political problem.

E – Non-discrimination leads to a multiculturalism that levels out beliefs and ideologies: does this also pose a spiritual problem?

J – Yes, indeed! In this new perspective, in the eyes of the State and society, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shamanism, etc., are considered religions of equal importance. One cannot be promoted at the expense of the others. This is, of course, an attitude that I deplore as a Christian, because it amounts to saying that the work of Christ is no more valuable than that of Mohammed, Buddha or the Hindu deities, etc.

E – It is therefore a very effective means of belittling, even destroying Christianity in Europe!

R – It seems important to me here to point out the huge asymmetry between Europe and the Muslim countries as regards non-discrimination between religions. As you have just said, Europe welcomes the various religions in the name of the sacrosanct principle of non-discrimination, taken from the Declaration of Human Rights. And Muslim countries are calling loud and clear for this non-discrimination to be strictly applied in Europe in favour of Muslims: it allows them to be recognised as minorities, to obtain the same advantages as Europeans and to develop their culture and religion without having to integrate¹. At home, however, they act very differently: they regard their land as a "land of Islam" and Islam as the state religion. And they discriminate against other religions.

E – So, in Europe, their acceptance of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is purely tactical!

R – Absolutely! And as we have seen, where they are numerous and influential, they reject the Convention in order to impose their own Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, which is based on sharia law. And that's it! Then the principle of non-discrimination is swept away, since Islam orders discrimination against, among others, non-Muslims and women.

E – That's impressive! And what about the fight against racism?

J – Racism postulates that not only are there various races within the human species, but that these races are unequal among themselves. Genetics invalidates this postulate². Racism therefore has no *raison d'être* and the fight against the notion of racism is perfectly justified. The problem is that the term has

¹ This is called for in the Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action, signed by 57 Muslim countries.

² Geneticists, anthropologists and ethnologists agree, with different arguments, that the definition of races within the human species is arbitrary. This problem is complex and cannot be dealt with here.

been distorted. First of all, it has been used to refer to discrimination against people of other colours. Laws were rightly enacted to combat this type of rejection. And then, at present, the term "racism" wrongly covers all the discrimination encountered in society. And the laws that originally condemned the rejection of people of other colours are now required to apply to all other forms of discrimination as well. Radical Muslims are therefore working very hard to ensure that criticism of Islam is regarded as racism - and is therefore condemned.

E – I understand better why Islamophobia and racism are so often associated in the media.

R – And so we come to condemn any criticism of Islam. This is a mistake! Not criticising Islam as a religion may be understandable, although it is still very debatable, since the Koran does not hesitate to undermine the foundations of the Christian faith and to despise or even condemn Christians. We have already talked about this. To ban criticism of Islam as a political ideology is an aberration, because it is no longer a matter of private religious life, but of the public thing that concerns every citizen. Such an ideology must therefore be debated in the public arena, just like any other political ideology¹.

E – You were also talking about diversity... isn't it a good thing for our society? An enrichment in all respects? It seems to me that diversity is one of the characteristics of divine creation; you only have to look at nature to be convinced of this. No ?

J – You're right, diversity is a real enrichment for any society. But the problem arises when the search for diversity is imposed on a country, with the aim of diminishing its dominant culture, or even destroying it. Microcosms and communitarianisms develop little by little; indigenous people feel less and less at home and no longer find themselves in this new multifaceted culture. They end up moving elsewhere. Several French authors describe this phenomenon in France: islands of "land of Islam" are being

¹ Elisabeth Sabaditsch-Wolff gave several lectures on the dangers of fundamentalist Islam, and in particular blamed Muhammad for marrying Aicha when she was only 6 years old. She was sentenced in 2011 in Austria and then in 2018 by the ECHR. The ECHR has accepted the wishes of the OIC, which puts pressure on Western democracies to implement Resolution 16/18 of the UN Human Rights Council (March 2011), which calls on all countries to fight against "intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of religion and belief". The ruling sets a precedent: any criticism of Islam should be censored and condemned.

S. Kern, *The European Court of Human Rights adopts sharia definition of blasphemy*, 1.11.2018. <https://en.gatestoneinstitute.org/13218>

created almost everywhere. Such a strategy is orchestrated by the OIC, as you have clearly shown in the chapter devoted to the Strategy of Islamic Cultural Action.

E – It could be said that diversity has its full meaning insofar as it is subordinated to respect for the country's traditions, culture and history.

J – Yes, and it must be made clear that this respect is essential for the smooth running of a country. It fosters citizens' attachment to their country, helps them to become involved in society and enables them to find a meaningful place.

There is another problem: if we recognize all differences and put them on an equal footing, we end up systematically rejecting any standard whatsoever. And you end up with this new situation where each individual becomes his or her own norm. This is not insignificant! We thus arrive at a materialistic vision of the world, which is the opposite of the biblical vision. I recall that the biblical vision believes in a Creator who has set standards¹ for his Creation, not to imprison or destroy human beings, but on the contrary to help them live full and happy lives.

Moreover, in the search for diversity, the aim is to establish a new society without authority, institutions or verticality, an autonomous society, free from the human contradictions and tensions that have always existed in the history of civilizations. The result is a society made up of communitarianisms on an equal footing.

E – Which is not healthy at all!

There's one thing I don't quite understand. How is the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) enforced in Europe? What are its means?

J – That's a good question! A whole anti-discriminatory, anti-racist and egalitarian bureaucracy has been formed, which is what the European states want. It is now the one that has the power. It is also interesting to note that, in this area, power has been transferred from politicians, elected by the people, to an administration not elected by the people! G. Puppink, already mentioned, has shown how, at European level, power has shifted from politics to judicial administration. There is talk of the judicialisation of power. This evolution only dispossesses the people of their prerogatives. Democracy is thus weakened. Some would like to abolish it.

This explains why nationalisms are developing. Some high-ranking personalities in France, and elsewhere as well, are demanding that their country withdraw from their commitment to the UDHR.

¹ We could also talk about laws or rules.

E - This is curious! And yet these governments have accepted and signed the UDHR?

J - G. Puppink explains that when the UDHR was created in 1948, the authors came from different backgrounds: on the one hand, some sought to promote a biblical vision of man. They were convinced that man was created in the image of God and that even though he was appointed manager of the earth, he is accountable to the Creator¹. On the other hand, atheists, who came from the USSR and China in particular, put forward their materialistic vision of man. For them, man is not accountable to anyone, and he is capable of improving himself. So at the beginning, UDHR was a kind of compromise between these two so different visions.

In 1950, Europe adopted the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), a Convention that goes further than the Universal Declaration of 1948 because it provides for the existence of a European Court with jurisdiction to judge and condemn states.

As time went by, the materialist vision took over, so that the current interpretations of the articles of the UDHR can be found in direct opposition to those of 1948. It is therefore understandable that some current politicians are worried: "Our governments signed the 1948 UDHR and then the 1950 Convention, but not the one presented to us today! »

That is a problem.

E - Do you have examples that show this shift in the interpretation of the UDHR?

J - The UDHR is based, among other things, on the notion of "human dignity".

In the Christian vision, dignity is given to man by God: man is created in the image of God, he is heir, he is son. This dignity is not deserved, it is given to him. A child developing in the womb has as much dignity as an adult. The disabled person has as much dignity as a person without a disability. The old man who is limited in his abilities has as much dignity as when he was previously in full possession of his means. That life must be protected because it comes from God. This is why the designers of the UDHR in 1948 favoured Article 2 which prohibited "the

¹ A. del Valle recalls in his book, *The Western Complex*, that the first European community, in the aftermath of the Second World War, was formed by predominantly Christian statesmen such as Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schumann, Alcide de Gasperi and Don Sturzo. These practising Christians pleaded for the construction of a humanist and Judeo-Christian Europe, which would learn the lessons of the drama of the Second World War.

intentional infliction of death on anyone", even with his or her consent.

In the materialist vision, the spirit is human, the body is animal. It is a dualistic thought. Thus, the spirit has value while the body has less value or no value at all. To evolve, the mind must dominate the body, tame it and subdue it. Since God is supposed not to exist, man must derive his own dignity from himself. This dignity will depend on several criteria: intellectual capacities, will, the possibility of mastering the body, the degree of freedom, the capacity to free himself from all external authority, etc.

This materialistic thinking has considerable repercussions on man's view of himself. Let me come to concrete examples: the fetus has little dignity since it is reduced to an "animal" life. The old man gradually loses his dignity as his mind is weakened, limited and no longer able to dominate the body. Some people make the same reasoning for the handicapped and the sick. If human dignity is thus linked to the quality of life, there is no longer any reason to protect those who manifest only an "animal" life. Little by little, the notions of eugenics¹ and euthanasia are making their way in the legal field and among the population. This leads to a very different conception of the Christian view of the human being.

This change in thinking affects other areas such as the family, sexuality, procreation, morality, social relations, etc. If the individual is considered to be the sole master of morality in his private life, an act that may seem immoral is declared good if it is freely willed. Only the individual can determine himself. This could go extremely far and we have certainly not seen everything yet!

E – These examples are chilling! I understand better why the UDHR is questioned by some people. I imagine that even without being Christians, many people can understand that these shifts are unnatural.

J – The ECHR would not consider this as "shift", but only as an adaptation to the spirit of the times. Indeed, it also takes into account the opinions in progress in society in order to adapt its interpretation of the UDHR and the laws. Society as a whole is therefore involved in this evolution to some extent.

E – I would like to come back to the relations that Switzerland and other European States have with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). We have seen that certain laws

¹ Eugenics can be referred to as the set of methods and practices for improving the genetic heritage of the human species.

established by states can be at odds with the decisions of the ECHR. How is it that states so easily submit to this Court?

J – This is indeed an important question! One might think that the last two World Wars caused such a trauma in the consciences that current leaders prefer to give up national prerogatives in order to favour the emergence of a "great global village". They hope that in such a structure people will have lost any sense of belonging to a nation, thanks to the intermingling of populations and civilizations. As a result, a nation will no longer be in danger of rising up against another nation, as has been the case in recent wars. The great intermingling will eliminate any desire to discriminate against the other and will promote mutual tolerance.

E – This is the philosophy of the political and intellectual elites! But, apparently, it is not the conception of all common people!

J – Yes, indeed! There is a growing gap between the elites and the people¹. There is a malaise, very ill-defined, which leads to a certain form of diffuse revolt. An entire civilization is withering away, but no one seems to really understand what's going on. It's disturbing! Y. Mamou shows how in France the common people have less and less of a feeling of belonging to a nation. They feel abandoned by the elites. This is how they come to lose the desire to fight for their country, they are demotivated and crystallize around the demand for their rights.

E – We see this much more pronounced in France than in Switzerland. Is there a reason for this?

J – It's probably just a question of time. In general, we experience in Switzerland ten to twenty years later the difficulties that the French are going through. But already now we are seeing the first signs of it.

E – Let's come back to Europe. It wanted to avoid new large-scale wars by creating the UDHR and powerful bodies to enforce it, such as the ECHR. But it has opened the way to another conflict, caused by a profound upheaval in European civilisation.

J – This is exactly what is happening. European civilization is multifaceted, it's true. But it has roots in Greek wisdom, in Roman organization and law, and it has been greatly influenced by Judeo-Christianity. This is no small thing! Well, this civilization is about to be considered obsolete. Some even accuse it of having been the cause of the wars of the last few centuries. So we must reject it and create something else, they say. This willingness to reject it is found mainly in left-wing political parties.

¹ Mamou Yves, Ibid.

R – And Islam is on the lookout, ready to rush into the breach which is thus created. It is asserting itself as a solid religion, capable of restoring a backbone to Europe and providing it with secure values. It is asserting itself as a well-structured political system that will meet all the expectations of a Europe in perdition! Muslims really think they are doing Europe a great service by introducing sharia law.

E – If I understand correctly, Europe seems to be willing to give up its civilization! With its eyes closed! Isn't that self-destruction?

J – D. Murray certainly understood it in this sense, since the title of his latest book is as follows: *The Strange Suicide of Europe*.

E – Suicide is a conscious act. Have the choices made by leaders always been conscious? Or rather, were the consequences of their choices really weighed properly?

J – D. Murray explains how European political leaders took decisions concerning the reception and integration of foreigners without foreseeing what was going to happen. Some of them regretted it later, but they could not go back.

In Potsdam in 2010, German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke about immigrants: "We thought they would not stay, that they would leave soon, but that is not what happened.... The desire to build a multicultural society, to live together and enrich each other failed, radically failed. That is why the emphasis must be on integration. Those who want to be part of German society must respect its laws and constitution, and must also learn to speak German¹.

In 2011, British Prime Minister David Cameron made a similar observation: "Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separately, apart from each other, separate from the dominant culture. We have failed to offer them a motivating conception of society. We have even tolerated segregated communities behaving in total opposition to our values"².

E – As I understand it, some European leaders understand the importance of integration, but find it impossible to implement it.

J – Yes, quite simply because Europe has equipped itself with a legal arsenal which prevents States from imposing it.

E – So, it's a dead end! The wise biblical balance I mentioned between the duties to welcome the foreigner and the duties of

¹ Murray Douglas, *ibid*, p. 178. This admission is surprising when one considers that five years later, Germany was hosting one million refugees. Was integration going to improve by increasing the number of immigrants?

² Murray Douglas, *ibid*, p. 179.

foreigners to submit to the laws of the native society would be highly desirable, but it cannot be respected through our own fault: we have enacted laws that paralyse us.

J – Indeed! That is why the term self-destruction or suicide is not unfounded!

E – By rejecting God and cutting itself off from what remains of its Judeo-Christian roots, is Europe not playing a bit like a sorcerer's apprentice?

J – You showed it well in your chapter on the foreigner in the Bible. Man can only truly define himself in reference to his Creator¹. If he rejects him, he loses his true references and goes off the rails. This applies not only to the individual, but also to society as a whole. His decisions may seem good at first glance, but then turn out to be catastrophic in the medium and long term.

E – What is worrying is to see that all this transformation has been gradual and insidious over the last few decades. Discreetly, but quickly. As a result, few people really understand what's going on.

J – Hence our responsibility to inform...

¹ This Creator is not an impersonal Being, who would have withdrawn from the history of the world after having, like the watchmaker, set the "great clock" in motion, but, on the contrary, he is a God who has never ceased to love his creation and to do everything to ensure that humans take care of it and live happily in it. He gave them laws to guide them in this undertaking, and then He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to earth to show, among other things, how to live truly according to divine standards. During his earthly ministry, Jesus was our model par excellence. After His death and resurrection, He ascended to heaven and now, through the Holy Spirit, He helps all those who receive Him to be like Him.

Pressure tactics of Muslim countries

E – So far we have seen how Europe has opened up to Islam. My question is: has this opening been only the result of a voluntary decision by Europe? Or have there been constraints on the part of Muslim countries?

R – In fact, it's a bit of both! Europe chose to open up to Islam, and it was also forced to do so.

E – Can you give us some examples?

R – Muslim countries have in their arsenal several effective tools for exerting pressure on the West. Two of the most important are the weapon of oil and terrorism. These two means were used jointly after the Yom Kippur War in the Middle East in 1973¹. The military destruction of Israel having failed, other strategies had to be found. The Arabs then resorted to the weapon of oil to force the West to enlist in their war against Israel. They decided to quadruple the price of black gold and to reduce their crude oil production by 5% each month until Israel withdrew from the territories lost by Syria, Egypt and Jordan during the 1967 war unleashed by these countries. Subsequent events confirmed the success of this tactic. France and Germany opted for concessions and brought the European Economic Community into the process. The United States refused to be blackmailed and warned the Europeans, but the game had already been played.

The Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD) has been strengthened. The Euro-Arab alliance was based on a bargain: Europeans concluded fruitful economic agreements with Arab countries, but in exchange, they had to take a political stand for the Palestinians against Israel, co-finance the creation of a Palestinian state and accept in Europe the establishment of a Muslim population enjoying all the political, cultural, social and religious rights of the host countries, while keeping its Islamic culture.

The EAD has enabled the Muslim Brotherhood to establish branches throughout Western Europe.

E – I imagine that the European countries hardly had the opportunity to oppose it!

R – No, indeed! For example, the Netherlands refused to contribute to the promotion of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which it regarded as a terrorist organization. The response was not long in coming: in March 1971, oil tanks exploded in Rotterdam and other cities. And in 1973, the

¹ Bat Ye'Or, *ibid*, p. 51.

delivery of oil to the country was stopped. The Netherlands could not resist any longer.

E – It is logical to assume that this weapon is still valid today. Hence the usefulness for Europeans to look for other ways to produce energy!

R – The second weapon is terrorism. It has its roots in the Koran and the Hadiths. You already mentioned it at the end of your chapter on Islamic Cultural Strategy ¹. The ultimate objective of Islam is to make the world a land of Islam and jihad is one of the means of achieving this. Terrorism is part of jihad.

De Villiers reports that in 2014, the spokesman for Daech (the Islamic State) urged Muslims in France as follows: "The Islamic faith is based on the principle of al-wala wal-bara, that is, loyalty to Muslims and hostility to infidels. Whether the infidels are combatants or civilians is irrelevant. The sentence is the same: they are both infidels, both enemies. The blood of both is permitted... we promise the Christian strongholds that they will continue to live in a state of alert, fear and insecurity. You haven't seen anything yet"².

E – I find it hard to get used to the idea that Jews, Christians and unbelievers are considered enemies simply because they do not accept Islam. And since they are enemies, they must be fought! It is thus easier to understand why the threat can only remain!

R – Are you aware that Switzerland has not escaped this terrorist pressure? In February 1969, activists of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) fired on an El-Al plane in Kloten. A year later, in February 1970, a bomb exploded in the hold of a Swissair plane. The plane crashed in Würenlingen, killing 47 people. In September 1970, the PFLP hijacked Swissair planes and American TWA and British BOAC planes in Zarka, Jordan. More than 400 people were held hostage. The United States, Great Britain, Germany and

¹ Koran 9.32-33; 3.12. Let us quote two important words of Muhammad:

- "I (Allah) have been granted victory by the terror I inspire at a distance of one month's march. He (Allah) has given me the keys to the treasures of the earth and has placed them in my hands" (Collection of Sahihe Al Bukhari: Book of Jihad, Hadith number 122).

- "I have been commanded to fight people until they declare that there are no deities other than Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, that they perform prayer and pay Zakat (obligatory almsgiving). If they do so, they shall preserve their lives and property from me, except in the case of an offence punishable by Islam. It is then for Allah to judge them." (Collection of Sahihe Al Bukhari: Book of Faith, Hadith number 17).

² Ph. de Villiers, *Les cloches sonneront-elles encore demain ?* Paris, Albin Michel, 2016, p. 206.

Switzerland negotiated with the hostage-takers. According to Winkler¹, who cites investigations by journalist Marcel Gyr, Switzerland withdrew from the common front to conduct secret negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). "Farouk Kaddoumi, the PLO's foreign affairs officer, guaranteed on behalf of the PLO that there would be no more attacks on Swiss targets. In return, Switzerland offered to grant the necessary permits for the establishment of a PLO office at the UN in Geneva. In addition, Switzerland would continue to turn a blind eye to the arrival of Palestinian diplomats".

E – I have indeed heard about this story. Apparently, no written record of this agreement has been found, so this claim cannot be proven.

R – Indeed! However, several clues lead us to consider this agreement: we only need to look at the aftermath. Switzerland allowed the PLO to set up "a point of contact with diplomatic immunity, under cover of a journalists' bureau". It was very much in favour of the PLO and, unlike the United States and the European Union, refused to recognise the PLO as a terrorist organisation. Furthermore, it has supported and continues to support UNRWA, which has a clearly pro-Palestinian and anti-Zionist policy².

J – The Department of Foreign Affairs has certainly acted in its soul and conscience to preserve the Swiss population as best it can, but it has put Switzerland in an unhealthy position of dependence³.

E – Besides the weapon of oil and terrorism, are there other means of pressure?

R – Oh yes! There is also the threat of a migratory invasion. At the request of Europe, and in particular Germany, which had just received a million immigrants, Turkish President Erdogan agreed to keep refugees from the Middle East on his soil, but on three conditions: payment of EUR 6 billion, visa exemption to

¹ Matthias Winkler, *Suisse-Israël, un passé chargé, un avenir plein d'espérance ?* Montbéliard, Éditions Asaph, 2018, p. 156

² UNRWA is a United Nations organization, founded in 1948 to assist refugees after the Arab States' attack on Israel. According to Winkler, Switzerland contributes CHF 24 million a year to UNRWA. Ismail Radwan, the religious minister of Hamas, says: "There is a direct link between UNRWA and Hamas".

³ Winkler writes: "When it came to taking a stand on issues related to Palestine, Swiss diplomacy lost its autonomy. Threats of retaliation from the Palestinians were constantly present. They increasingly openly threatened to withdraw their protection from Switzerland if their demands were not met: "We cannot guarantee that Switzerland will remain unaffected by Palestinian terrorism". Ibid., p. 159.

Europe for all Turkish nationals and the relaunch of the process of Turkey's accession to the European Union. The agreement was signed in March 2016. Erdogan holds the knife by the handle and can threaten at any time to open the borders for refugees!

E – This is a form of blackmail!

R – It must be understood that the migration issue is much broader. Because of Europe's low birth rate, the UN has drawn up a "Migration Plan 2030" to organise the transfer of populations towards Europe. Invoking "Human Rights", the UN is trying to change international law and, by extension, the law of states. Migration from the south to the north is becoming a right, whether or not one is a refugee. As the populations coming from the south include many Muslims, Islamic countries have every interest in pushing the UN and the European Union in this direction.

E – As we have already seen, this migration provides a useful labour force for certain sectors of the European economy, but the Islamic countries take advantage of it to impose their demands.

R – Another pressure is that exerted by Muslims during the votes. You already mentioned this in your chapter on Strategy. The more they are numerous, the more their voices count. So much so that unscrupulous politicians are ready to make all sorts of concessions to obtain the support of the Muslim vote. Again, this is a dangerous path, because once you get into the gears, it becomes very difficult to turn back.

We must not forget, as you rightly said in your chapter on the Strategy, that action to advance the cause of Islam in Europe is only possible thanks to multiple and diverse efforts on the part of many players: Muslim countries (financial support in particular), those in charge of mosques and cultural centres, and Muslims themselves. All these combined efforts exert an obvious pressure.

E – We could no doubt talk about other means of pressure for a long time to come. I propose that we end this meeting. You have indeed met my expectations. Thank you both for having enriched me with your knowledge and thus helped me to make progress in my research! All that remains for me to do is to make a synthesis of all this. I'll be sure to keep you informed.

After leaving my friends, I walked up the Avenue d'Ouchy to look for my car. Passing people on the sidewalk, I find myself philosophizing! What can this old lady who walks her dog and talks to him like a child be thinking? Doesn't she have other concerns than the Islamisation of Europe? What about that couple hugging each other, leaning against a tree? If I were to

talk to them about my current situation, would they take me seriously? That is probably the least of their worries. They would tell me that there is no reason to worry about it, but that there are much more real dangers in the world: poverty, injustice, climate change, economic wars between great nations, the North-South conflict, the return to the Cold War between the United States and Russia, the ever-growing grip of China...

And then that young florist who is busy bringing her flower pots and shrubs into her shop before closing? And what about that sportsman who goes jogging? And what about those doctors who leave the clinic after a busy day? What does that have to do with them? Every day brings them a lot of problems to solve. They've had enough.

And what about me? Don't I have better things to do than stirring up problems no one wants to hear about? Couldn't I spend my time on something else instead of worrying about future generations and looking paranoid on top of that?

There is much to think about, and yet I have this deep conviction that we must assume our responsibility towards our children, grandchildren and further generations, even if they are not yet aware of the real issues at stake. Under no circumstances would I want them to blame me one day for not having said anything!

Epilogue

At the beginning of this book, I asked the following questions: why has the Islamisation of Europe taken place, and is still taking place so quickly? Why has Europe opened up and continues to open up to Islam? Who have been the various actors involved in this process, which has been fairly rapid, after all, since it has only really developed over the last 70 years or so?

We discovered the role of the Islamic countries (the OIC) and their willingness to promote "authentic Islam" in Europe; we spoke at length about the Church and the responsibility of part of it in opening up to Islam; we looked at some response of various European actors, and in particular the political and judicial authorities, in a very particular context following two very deadly world wars, a nightmare that nobody wanted to relive; and finally, we discussed the main means of pressure on Europe by Muslim countries.

You will have noticed that I did not address the issue of violence and terrorism; others did it very well. I focused more on certain religious aspects, which are ignored by the public, and on the changes in society demanded by radical Muslims.

Of course, I don't claim to have gone through the whole problem, but I have accumulated enough information to have an idea of what is going on and make useful practical decisions.

At the moment, the influence of Islam in Switzerland does not seem to be a cause for concern overall. And yet some people are already sounding the alarm! Why is this? Because, on the one hand, they know what is happening in other countries where Islamisation is advanced, and on the other hand, they are familiar with the Koran and the Hadiths, on which the various strategies of Islamisation in Europe and the world are based. Moreover, Islam is advancing inexorably, all the more so as Europe has voluntarily lowered its own immune defences and is opening its arms without batting an eyelid. It is therefore worth listening to these whistle-blowers!

It is indeed not trivial to note that a politico-religious movement, Islam, has the ultimate goal of transforming a democratic country into a "land of Islam", i.e. a country where the government is held by Muslims and where the state religion is Islam. This means that in the longer or shorter term, in their minds, democracy will have disappeared and Sharia law will have replaced the laws established by the people. Will this happen? And if so, when? No one can say. But we have a role to play in preventing such an upheaval!

According to reports from neighbouring countries, radical Muslims are not planning a coup d'état to overthrow democracy. Their action is much more subtle, made of repeated pressure in various areas of society, in order to gradually introduce the rules of Sharia: the wearing of the veil, even the burqa, halal food in canteens, separate classes for girls and boys in schools, the refusal of certain school teachings, the organisation of fixed prayer times in companies, "religious" holidays, the development of Muslim neighbourhoods ruled with Sharia, the pressure on secular Muslims to radicalise them, Sharia courts. All this leads to a communitarianism (some speak of separatism) harmful to the life of society and the will to "live together".

In France, authors, both from the left and the right, do not hesitate to speak of the "Emirates of the Republic"¹ and the "Conquered Territories of Islamism"² to designate those places where the Sharia has taken over the laws of the Republic. They are perfectly aware of this slow and inexorable progression of Islam in certain regions of France and are rightly worried about it.

Many Muslims say that they have no intention of coming into conflict with the democratic laws of the host country and that they submit to them without difficulty. This is true for secular or moderate Muslims living in our country. It may also be true for radical Muslims... but *only for now*. When the situation is better for them, they will change their discourse. You have to know that!

We cannot remain impassive in the face of such a challenge to our democratic constitution. As citizens, we have a duty to preserve what has been painstakingly acquired over the centuries. Are we going to ignore the efforts of so many people who have established a relatively well-functioning political system in this country? Isn't Switzerland often cited around the world as an effective model of democracy?

We all need lucidity and courage. Clear-sightedness, to understand the real challenges posed by Islam. And to do this, we need to study the texts that form the basis of Islamisation strategies. Courage, to dare to defend our society, sometimes against the hostile attitude of those who do not know enough about Islam.

As citizens, we must remain inflexible about respecting established laws and prevent radical Islam from taking over the

¹ Pupponi François, *Les Emirats de la République, comment les islamistes prennent possession de la banlieue*, Paris, Cerf, 2020.

² Rougier Bernard et al, *Les territoires conquis de l'islamisme*, Paris, PUF, 2020.

public domain. This is a service to our society, not forgetting the majority of Muslims, whether secular or moderate, who may not necessarily welcome the rise of a rigid Islam which, let's not forget, threatens them directly. The firmness that we will show towards radical Muslims will be a bulwark of protection for all moderate Muslims who live peacefully in our country and submit without difficulty to the established laws.

I would like to end this book by addressing the Christians. As we have seen, as Christians, we have a share of responsibility in all these developments. We have not seen or even wanted to see the dangers of Islam and have shown a naivety that is not compatible with the duty of truth that the Gospel asks of us. We have closed in on ourselves, favouring an individual spirituality. As a result, we no longer had much to say to our society and thus left a great spiritual void which other religions, and Islam in particular, have taken advantage of.

It makes us question ourselves terribly! We are saddened to see some of our churches in Europe slowly emptying and Islam progressing methodically and effectively. Many would even be tempted to admire the Islamic dynamism at a time when Christianity seems to be running out of steam. Perhaps they might even be inclined to imitate its methods in order to regain lost ground. The search for power is not far away! This is a serious mistake!

Others, on the contrary, would tend to lose courage and capitulate by turning in on themselves even more. That is no better!

I often think of Martin Luther who, at the beginning of the 16th century, stood alone against the deviations of his Church, the Roman Church. Humanly speaking, his action was doomed in advance to failure. And yet he initiated a Reformation which subsequently had enormous consequences for the whole of society¹. He did not invent anything new, but simply returned to the sources of the Christian faith, which has its roots both in the Jewish heritage of the Old Testament and in the heritage of the apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ, transmitted by the New Testament. This return to the simplicity and strength of the Gospel found an immense echo among those who aspired to a new life, both personal and communal.

While Luther struggled to shed light on the conditions of individual salvation, his successors, especially Calvin, were able to highlight the repercussions that these discoveries were bound

¹ A. Biéler showed very well the influence of the Reformation in the West in his book « the hidden strength of the Protestants, chance or threat to society », Ed. Ouverture and Labor et Fides, 1995.

to have on the life of society. Thus social Christianity was rediscovered, combining many values that stimulated the economic and cultural life of society while at the same time putting safeguards and brakes on human selfishness. Indeed, the Gospel leads each person to serve his neighbour, and not to use others to satisfy his personal interest. The rediscovery of several fundamental values such as individual freedom and responsibility, the equality of human beings before God, the dignity of human beings created in the image of God has helped many people to free themselves from hierarchical and tyrannical powers and to move towards democracy.

The rest of the story is very instructive: although the ideas of the Reformation contributed greatly to the establishment of democracy in the United States and Europe, society in the following centuries replaced the Christian faith with all kinds of ideologies. It believed that it was possible to continue to live by the benefits of Jewish-Christian values while at the same time cutting themselves off from their spiritual roots. These alternative ideologies were the cause of many misfortunes and created a great spiritual void.

The West needs a new Reform. The Church therefore has a crucial role to play: it should go back to the sources of the Christian faith and rethink the practical consequences that this must have in all aspects of present-day social life. It has a mission to share these insights even though it knows that its message will be received in many different ways: some will reject it outright, and others will accept it with joy. As history has confirmed, announcing the truth of the Gospel can provoke vigorous, even violent opposition from those who do not want to be questioned.

Calvin invited Christians to engage in social and political action at any level, but he refused to allow the Church to engage in politics as such. For this reason he insisted on the necessary separation of church and state. This principle of separation is an old principle already found in the Old Testament¹. The same is true today. If Christians are encouraged to become involved in the political life of their country, the Church as such must remain in its place and maintain its primary mission, which is to live the divine life and proclaim the Gospel. She has something to say to society as a whole, but must not under any circumstances use any power to do so.

¹ The Levites, who were responsible for the cult, were not to take part in the political life of the country, but instead were to teach the people. They were not appointed by the state. There was a separation between religious and political powers.

The spiritual void cannot be filled by the Sharia, which is a legalistic system pushed to the extreme. Promoting Judeo-Christian values is a good thing, but it is not enough. If they are to persist and have a beneficial effect, they must be carried by men and women who personally live the divine life and feel responsible before God for their works.

Who else will be able to bear witness to this life, if not those who live it?

This is why the Church must assume her missionary role and proclaim this abundant life that the Lord promised to his listeners more than two thousand years ago¹, and that he still promises today to all those who receive it.

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¹ John 10.

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