**Conference on Religious Freedom and Islamophobia**

Co-sponsored by **The International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, Peace Catalyst International, The Temple University Dialogue Institute**

**Panel:** How Are Evangelicals and Other Religious Groups Responding to Muslims?

David L. Johnston October 7, 2015

“American Evangelical Islamophobia: A History of Continuity with a Hope for Change”

There is no doubt that the attacks of September 2001 brought Islam into sharp focus for many Americans for the first time, and Protestant evangelicals in particular. But just as Muslim-Christian relations have a long history, from peaceful interactions to violent confrontations, so American Protestants were writing about and discussing Muslims and Islam even before the nation was founded. Historical perspective is crucial in understanding today’s dynamics between these two groups today, even if, as I argue here, very little has changed in over three centuries.

I have taken my lead on this subject from the work of Baylor University’s Thomas S. Kidd, a prolific historian who specializes in American religious history. I found his 2009 book, *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism*,[[1]](#footnote-1) an essential companion for this task. In the course of my reading, I isolated three matrices, which shed complimentary light on evangelical attitudes to Islam: political events and constraints, the prophetic/eschatological biblical interpretations, and concerns related to Christian mission in relation to Muslims.

# The Political Matrix

Colonial Americans had no idea that many of the slaves on their shores were actually Muslims. The famous Boston pastor Cotton Mather once quipped, “we are afar off, in a Land, which never had (that ever heard of) one Mahometan breathing in it.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Yet they felt themselves to be knowledgeable about Islam through the proliferation of sermons and books on that topic. The other source was the reality of Americans, along with Europeans, who were enslaved by the “Barbary Pirates” of North Africa.[[3]](#footnote-3) Already in the 1670s, several stories of North American captives caught the attention of the colonists, but especially that of the appointed royal governor of Carolina, who was abducted in 1679 and later freed by ransom. His narrative has only survived in fragments, but what stands out is “the cruelties of the Muslims” and the power of his prayers, which also influenced his captors.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Captivity stories from North Africa were so common that many beggars on the streets of colonial America claimed to have been captured by the Barbary pirates, hoping to elicit more sympathy. Yet these stories also fueled a longstanding industry within Christendom – polemical writings about Muslims and Islam. One particularly influential book, Humphrey Prideaux’s *The True Nature of Imposture Fully Displayed in the Life of Mahomet*, was published in London in 1697, with seven subsequent editions. Years later, American editions appeared in Philadelphia (1796) and Fairhaven, Vermont (1798), no doubt connected to the nascent US government’s troubles with the Barbary powers at that time.[[5]](#footnote-5)

We know that Prideaux’s book was widely read in the American colonies, because from the early 18th century on, and for the first time, Muhammad’s name in print rarely appeared without the epithet “impostor.” Prideaux’s message was hardly new, but this Anglican theologian’s main target was the Deists, whose central critique of Christianity was that it was fraudulent. By holding up Islam as a plain case of religious forgery, he hoped to defend Christianity’s integrity. From the start he anticipates accusations of demonizing Islam, but he promises to “approach Islam judiciously.”[[6]](#footnote-6) That said, he had little first hand knowledge, and what he did think he knew was often wrong – but wrote he did, and people on both sides of the Atlantic absorbed it as truth.

Muhammad’s religion, he argued, was a fig leaf over his ambition to control the Arabian Peninsula and vast territories beyond. This new religion was a “Medley made up of Judaism, the several Heresies of the Christians and then in the East, and the old Pagan Rites of the Arabs, with an indulgence to all Sensual Delights.” Not by coincidence, he noted, Muhammad claimed divine revelation through the angel Gabriel at the time when the Bishop of Rome claimed supremacy over the whole church. This was a common association in colonial America and into the nineteenth century – the Roman Church and Islam as the dual Antichrist. As for the specifically Islamic forgery, Prideaux set out its characteristics as illustrative of any other false religion in another book of the same period, *A Discourse for the Vindicating of Christianity*:[[7]](#footnote-7)

An impostor religion would always (1) serve some “carnal interests,” (2) be led by wicked men, (3) have “Falsities” at the very heart of the religion, (4) use “craft and fraud” to accomplish its ends, (5) be backed by conspirators who would eventually be revealed, and (6) be spread by force. Eighteenth-century Anglo-Americans widely attributed all these characteristics to Islam.[[8]](#footnote-8)

In fact, these are all old Christian polemical tropes on Islam, but they were made more attractive and spread more willingly because of contemporary stories of American and European enslavement by the North African corsairs. Still, this polemic wasn’t all about religion. The colonists who promoted the ideals of revolution against Britain often used Islamic states as a foil for mounting their attacks. Benjamin Franklin’s character *Poor Richard*, for instance, asks at one point, “is it worse to follow Mahomet than the devil?” His readers automatically assumed that both were just as bad. During this period, as Kidd notes, “Anglo-Americans typically used categories from Islam as rhetorical tools to discredit opponents, or as players in eschatological speculation.” Additionally, within the social ferment of pre-revolutionary America, “polemicists often used Islam and its states as the world’s worst examples of tyranny and oppression, the very traits that the revolutionaries meant to fight.”[[9]](#footnote-9) For example, John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon immensely popular *Cato’s Letters* (1723) highlighted the curbing of the press and muzzling of public speech as routinely practiced by Islamic states.

Naturally, feelings only intensified when the new American republic’s ships faced attacks in the Mediterranean, making it feel both vulnerable and rather impotent militarily. Algerian ships commandeered two ships in 1785 and eleven more in 1793. American diplomats, meanwhile, were showing their inexperience, and an agreement signed in 1796 to free eighty-eight American sailors cost the new government one million dollars, over fifteen percent of its annual budget. The ruler of Tripoli declared war on the US in 1801 and President Thomas Jefferson announced a blockade against it. But as fate would have it, the US frigate Philadelphia was captured two years later by the Tripolitans, who thus enslaved three hundred more Americans. The Americans managed to free them a couple of years later at minimal cost, but then in 1815 a new war broke out with the State of Algiers. President James Madison, this time in command of a more formidable navy, managed to force all of the North African states to give up all piracy against American ships. American military power had now come of age, but only after several decades of anxiety about the Muslim corsairs of the Mediterranean.

Two centuries later, Americans were attacked, not by pirates who also happened to be Muslims, but by Muslims who believed that running planes into buildings was their God-given mandate. Islamic terrorism, which had so far killed mostly Muslims, now had killed Americans on their own soil. With all the backlog of anti-Islamic rhetoric swirling around in American discourse, it’s not difficult to guess that the new political reality was only going to make it more intense and more strident. On the one side, a president who personally identified with conservative Protestants but who also took his leadership role seriously, George W. Bush, repeated over and over that the “War on Terror” was a war against Muslim extremists who choose to use violence to further their agenda, and not against Islam or Muslims. Mainline Protestants and some evangelicals, along with the US Conference of Catholic Bishops – all these praised the president’s approach, though not his 2003 war on Iraq.

On the other side, evangelical leaders like Pat Robertson opined that these people are worse than the Nazis: “Adolf Hitler was bad, but what the Muslims want to do to the Jews is worse.” Evangelist Billy Graham’s son Franklin Graham, quipped that Islam is a “very evil and wicked religion.”[[10]](#footnote-10) Conservative Catholic writer Robert Spencer, who had already written about the “Islamic threat” in the 1990s, called himself vindicated after 2001, asserting that “violence and terror are fundamentals of Islam.”[[11]](#footnote-11) Though drawing from a vast reservoir of virulent anti-Muslim literature and sentiment, these people were no doubt also influenced by the political matrix of this period.

# The Prophetic / Eschatological Matrix

The wealth of material Kidd produces here is as overwhelming as it is fascinating. I can only allude to it in a very general way and offer three examples. But first, we must roll out the main platform on which various views of the Last Days (eschatology) played out. This has to do with the thousand year reign of Christ mentioned in Revelation 20:1-6. In colonial America, some Protestants tended to interpret it as symbolic (the “amillennial” view), but the majority saw it as something future, which God would usher in partly through the church’s efforts (the “postmillennial” view). Only in the second half of the nineteenth century did the “premillennial” view come to the fore and become the dominant view of evangelicals in the twentieth century.

This view sees all of the prophecies in the book of Revelation as “sealed” and only to be revealed in the Last Days. Though premillennialism comes in several varieties, the dominant view sees the “Rapture” of the church precede a time of tribulation for all of the earth’s inhabitants – a period during which the Antichrist gathers his strength and authority. The great battle of Armageddon follows. Then Christ with his heavenly and earthly agents destroys his enemies and rules in Jerusalem for a thousand years. Finally, one last battle breaks out, in which Satan is defeated for good and thrown into the Lake of Fire. Then comes the last judgment.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Until the mid-nineteenth century English Puritans generally expected the destruction of the Ottoman Empire would happen at the time when all the Jews would convert to Christianity and the Roman Church would fall apart. Cotton Mather at the time of the “Glorious Revolution” of 1690 saw the ascendancy of English Protestantism as the signal that the Roman and Turkish powers would soon collapse.[[13]](#footnote-13) By the early eighteenth century prophetic fever reached a high pitch in the United States with dozens of best-selling books and popular preachers making the rounds. Speculation was rife about Daniel’s visions (especially in chapter 8), about Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 37-38, and about the smoke darkening the sun in Revelation 9:2. This type of prophetic interpretation is called “historicist,” meaning that these eschatological signs in the prophetic books can be observed in our day. For instance, the drying up of the Euphrates River in Revelation 16:12 was seen by most as announcing the ruin of the Ottoman Empire.

The high watermark of this historicist hermeneutic came with the work of a man whose very boldness and popularity caused his own downfall, and that of this kind of eschatology. The farmer and Baptist layman William Miller famously predicted Christ’s return in 1843 and 1844, but his copious comments on the place of Islam in eschatology followed a very familiar pattern. This was aided, no doubt, by the Greek war of independence (1821), the Russo-Turkish War (1828-29). The “false prophet” of Revelation 16:13 was Muhammad:

The false prophet would “fill his party with notions of infidelity, lust, and conquest,” and would make war against the people of God in concert with the Papacy (the beast) and the “kings of the earth” (the dragon). But all these powers would ultimately be vanquished at the battle of Armageddon.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Understandably, the Millerites were embarrassed and shamed when their predictions proved false. “The Millerite trouble damaged historicism’s reputation and helped open the door for a new mode of conservative Protestant eschatology – the futurist schemes of premillennial dispensationalism.”[[15]](#footnote-15) This was launched by British theologian John Nelson Darby, whose views literally took the American conservative Protestant establishment by storm through the publication of the C. I. Scofield’s Reference Bible in 1909. From then on, the “smoke locusts” of Revelation 9[[16]](#footnote-16) no longer represented the rise of Islam; rather, they signaled “unprecedented activity of demons” accompanying the rise of the Antichrist.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Still, in the second half of the twentieth century, starting with the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and especially Hal Lindsey’s bestselling *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970) that drew inspiration from the “miraculous” Six-Day War, the political and eschatological matrices merge. The futurist eschatology of premillennialism was now pointing to the present. These writers were asserting that the End Times countdown had now begun, with Israel at the center of God’s attention. Support Israel, or be counted among God’s enemies. Of course, not all evangelicals embraced the staunch pro-Zionist eschatology of Texas mega-church pastor John Hagee.[[18]](#footnote-18) Kidd highlights a number of individuals and one organization in particular (Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding), which advocate for a peaceful, two-state resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Certainly former President Jimmy Carter is an articulate spokesman for that cause.[[19]](#footnote-19) Still, the vast majority of American evangelicals naturally fall into the pro-Zionist camp, and hence the Christian Right’s alliance with the purveyors of vitriolic and rigid anti-Islamic discourse like Pamela Geller, David Horowitz, Daniel Pipes, Steve Emerson, Glenn Beck and others.[[20]](#footnote-20)

# The Mission Matrix

The theme of Protestant missions is the last of the three that run through Kidd’s historical survey of American Protestants and Islam. Surprisingly perhaps, the first missionary initiative to specifically focus on Muslims only began in the early nineteenth century. Born of the enthusiasm of the Second Great Awakening, the “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions” (ABCFM) was established in 1810, thus launching the modern Protestant missionary movement in America.[[21]](#footnote-21) Their pioneer missionary to the Middle East, Pliny Fisk, intoned in a sermon in 1819 that the Jews, Muslims and nominal Christians of the Middle East were “in a state of deplorable ignorance and degradation,” and “destitute of the means of divine knowledge, and bewildered with vain imaginations and strong delusions.”[[22]](#footnote-22) At this stage, says Kidd, “[w]idely held eschatological views fueled the missionary impulse, as organizers believed that missions could hasten the destruction of the Roman Catholic church and Islam, the conversion of the Jews, and the beginning of the millennium.”[[23]](#footnote-23)

Two facts stand out in this narrative over the last few chapters of Kidd’s book. The first is reality of meager results. Despite the vitality and enthusiasm of the great 1910 Edinburgh missionary conference, the missionaries who fanned out into Islamic lands saw very few conversions to Christianity, unlike the spectacular results witnessed on the African continent, for example. And, as a result, proportionally fewer Christian missionaries have gone to Muslim countries. In 1906 twenty-nine Protestant missionary agencies sent delegates to a conference in Cairo in order “to formulate a coordinated plan to reach the world’s Muslims for Christ.”[[24]](#footnote-24) By far the most influential person there was Samuel Zwemer (d. 1952), who helped to found mission stations in Iraq, Bahrain and other parts of the Arabian Peninsula, and then spent sixteen years in Egypt. He was also an academic who founded and edited the journal *The Moslem World* for twenty-seven years and finished his career by teaching for eight years as Professor of Missions and of the History of Religion at Princeton Theological Seminary.[[25]](#footnote-25) By the end of his life he had written forty-nine books.

At a time when the Protestant world was splitting between the conservatives who focused mostly on proclaiming the gospel message and the liberals who focused mostly on social activism (“the social gospel”), Zwemer advocated both approaches as complimentary and necessary for Christian mission. He was much more positive about Muslim cultures and their contributions to humanity than his predecessors. Further, his postmillennial views tended to make him optimistic about the prospects of Muslims turning to Christianity.[[26]](#footnote-26) Nevertheless, he was a man of his time and the Western colonial mentality colored statements like these: “Islam as a religion is doomed to fade away in time before the advance of humanity, civilization and enlightenment.”[[27]](#footnote-27)

The second point worth emphasizing in Kidd’s discussion of Christian mission to Muslims is that, just as some evangelicals have resisted the Christian Zionist trap, in the same way they and others have reevaluated their approach to Muslims. In the 2000s, as mentioned above, much inflammatory discourse against Muslims and Islam was spewing out from many evangelical leaders. Richard Land, a respected leader of the Southern Baptist denomination, blasted President Bush for calling Islam “a peaceful religion” and saying that Muslims served the same God as Jews and Christians. He called him “simply mistaken.” Ted Haggard, at the time head of the powerful National Association of Evangelicals, opined that “the Christian God encourages freedom, love, forgiveness, prosperity and health. The Muslim God appears to value the opposite.”[[28]](#footnote-28)

Dudley Woodberry, by contrast, who himself had served as missionary in Lebanon, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and whose obtained his PhD in Islamics from Harvard University in 1968, wrote that “Christians, Muslims, and Jews did ‘refer to the same Being when they refer to God – the Creator of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob,’” but he also cautioned that “the religions disagree profoundly about the attributes of God and Jesus.”[[29]](#footnote-29) Kidd also mentions Timothy George’s 2002 book, *Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad*?[[30]](#footnote-30) George, the Dean of the Beeson Divinity School, which is part of Samford University, a Baptist school in Alabama, shares the kind of irenic approach that Woodberry follows. Despite some irreconcilable doctrinal differences, the adherents of both faiths share many common ideals, which are necessary for their constructive input in a democratic, pluralist society.[[31]](#footnote-31)

This might leave the impression that the latter dominate the literature. Unfortunately, the opposite is true. Kidd rightly devotes much more space to the hardline critics of Islam, including those who turn to dispensationalist prophecy to demonize Muslims. The one post-9/11 trend is frightening: “Perhaps the most distinctive change in Christian eschatology since 2001 has been the rise of speculation in some circles that the Antichrist would come from Islam, and particularly that he would be (mis-)identified by Muslims as the messianic Mahdi” (ibid., 159). A professor at Nyack College, Washington, DC branch, Ralph W. Stice, wrote *From 9/11 to 666.[[32]](#footnote-32)* He has been a missionary to Muslims in several locations, yet has no sympathy for the irenic approach of a Woodberry or George.

# Concluding Remarks

I now leave the descriptive and analytical portion of this paper to end with three prescriptive remarks.

First, though some Christian and Muslim scholars believe that a position of theological pluralism (all religious paths lead to God, so give up mission and *da’wa*) is a prerequisite for meaningful dialog, I agree with Kidd that this is not a realistic option for traditionalist monotheistic believers. Both Muslims and Christians believe that they have received God’s final revelation. And both believe God has called them to share their faith with others so that they too will come to the truth and enjoy its benefits in this life and the next.

Second, the common ground between these two faith traditions is much wider than most think, as the monumental work of the Anglican bishop Kenneth Cragg (d. 2012) attests,[[33]](#footnote-33) and as the 2007 Common Word Letter amply testifies.[[34]](#footnote-34) Moreover, the former Archbishop Canterbury, Rowan Williams, convened five Muslim-Christian “Building the Bridges” conferences, with the last one meeting at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, the papers of which were gathered in a book edited by Michael Ipgrave, *Justice & Rights: Christian and Muslim Perspectives*.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Finally, building on that common ground there are ample resources for improving the often dismal record of past relationships between the two communities and for working together for peace in places of conflict, fighting injustice at all levels of society, and alleviating together the plight of the poor and disenfranchised. These goals are clearly incumbent upon us all as followers of the God of Abraham, Jesus and Muhammad.

1. Thomas S. Kidd, *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cotton Mather, *American Tears upon the Ruines of the Greek Churches* (Boston, 1701), 38; quoted in Kidd, *American Christians and Islam*, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The term “Barbary,” of course, is pejorative, as it implies that these North African states theoretically under Ottoman tutelage were inferior, or at least rogue states, which refused to cooperate with European powers. For more information on this dynamic, see my essay, “Barbary Pirates and a US Treaty: Religions in Dialog?” Available online, <http://www.humantrustees.org/blogs/muslim-christian-dialog/item/17-barbary-pirates-and-a-us-treaty-religions-in-dialog>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid., 3. It should be noted too that discourse about Muslims became useful fodder for the anti-slavery movement: “That anger [over the Barbary Wars] also made Christian slavery under Islamic power a useful trope in the growing antislavery debates” (ibid., 36). In fact, the last public act of Benjamin Franklin was a parody of a proslavery speech in Congress put in the mouth of a North African Muslim pirate by the name of Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim, who “could not accept the end of Christian slavery because it would hurt the interests of the Algerian state, unfairly deprive Muslim slave masters of property, and release dangerous slaves into a vulnerable society” (ibid., 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid., 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid., 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 3rd ed. (London, 1698). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Kidd, *American Christians and Islam*, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ibid.. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid., 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Robert Spencer, *Islam Unveiled: Disturbing Questions about the World’s Fastest-Growing Faith* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002), 22; quoted in Kidd, *American Christians and Islam*, 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. This is the view portrayed in the wildly popular fiction series “Left Behind”: Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, a series of sixteen books (Carol Springs, IL: Tyndale, 1995-2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Kidd, *American Christians and Islam*, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ibid., 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ibid., 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. “And in my vision, I saw the horses and the riders siting on them. The riders wore armor that was fiery red and dark blue and yellow. The horses had heads like lions, and fire and smoke and burning sulfur billowed from their mouths. One-third of all the people on earth were killed by these three plagues – by the fire and smoke and burning sulfur that came from the mouths of the horses. Their power was in their mouths and in their tails. For their tails had heads like snakes, with the power to injure people” (Rev. 9:17-19, NLT). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid., 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. He is president and CEO of Hagee Ministries, which broadcasts his television programs on networks around the world, and he is the founder and national chairman of the most influential Christian-Zionist organization, Christians United for Israel. In a 2006 interview on NPR’s Fresh Air, Hagee stated that “those who live by the Qur’an have a scriptural mandate to kill Christians and Jews … it teaches it very clearly.” Available online at http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6097362. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See his book, *Palestine: Peace, Not Apartheid* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See the 2008 document published by FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting): “Smearcasting: How Islamophobes spread fear, bigotry and misinformation,” available online at <http://fair.org/article/smearcasting/>. Though at times “Smearcasting” can fall into the same kind of hard-hitting, confrontational rhetoric as the people they criticize, it remains a very useful tool. See also Glenn Beck’s recent book, *It IS about Islam: Exposing the Truth about ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Iran and the Caliphate* (New York: Threshold Editions/Radio Arts, 2015). See my own response to Beck’s book, “Glenn Beck, Can We Talk?” available on my website, <http://www.humantrustees.org/blogs/religion-and-human-rights/item/146-glen-beck>. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Kidd notes that “British evangelicals associated with the Church Missionary Society had already begun to go on mission to the ‘heathens’” (Kidd, *American Christians and Islam*, 37). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Rufus Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Oriental Churches* (Boston, 1972), vol. 1, ix-x; quoted in Kidd, *American Christians and Islam*, 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid. He then quotes a ABCFM fund raising appeal: “Prophesy, history, and the present state of the world seem to unite in declaring that the great pillars of the Papal and Mahometan impostures are now tottering to their fall…. Now is the time for the followers of Christ to come forward boldly and engage earnestly in the great work of enlightening and reforming mankind” (ibid., 37-38). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ibid., 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Founded in 1911, *The Moslem World* in 1937 was taken over by the Hartford Seminary in Connecticut and its name soon changed to *The Muslim World*. It is still a flagship journal for Islamic Studies today. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid., 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Samuel Zwemer, *Islam, A Challenge to Faith* (New York, 1907), 210-3, 225; quoted in Kidd, *American Christians and Islam*, 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Ibid., 146. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. J. Dudley Woodberry, “Do Christians and Muslims Worship the Same God?” *Christian Century* 121, no. 10 (May 18, 2004): 37; quoted in Kidd, *American Christians and Islam*, 146. Woodberry also spent a couple of decades teaching at Fuller Theological Seminary. He was my PhD mentor from 1997 to 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. *Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad: Understanding the Differences between Christianity and Islam* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Kidd, *American Christians and Islam*, 152-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. *From 9/11 to 666: The Convergence of Current Events, Biblical Prophecy and the Vision of Islam* (Ozark, AL: ACW Press, 2005). For him, Islam can only be understood through the lens of its malevolent use in the hands of Satan. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Cragg penned close to one hundred books, from his *Call of the Minaret* (Oxford University Press, 1956) to *The Qur’an and the West* (Georgetown University Press, 2006), and *The Iron in the Soul: Joseph and the Undoing of Violence* (London: Melisende, 2009). Cragg was the main inspiration for my own dissertation, which later became *Earth, Empire and Sacred Text: Muslims and Christians as Trustees of Creation* (London: Equinox, 2010, pbk 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. This was a letter originally sparked by a response to Pope Benedict’s unfortunate 2006 lecture at the University of Regensburg. Penned by Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan, it was signed by 138 world scholars and leaders of Islam and addressed to the pope and all Christian leaders. It asserted that what the two faiths had in common was at the very heart of both traditions – love of God and love of neighbor. Available online at <http://www.acommonword.com/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009. See also my forthcoming book, *Justice and Love: A Muslim-Christian Conversation* (London: Equinox, 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)