

THE HOLY PEN

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“THE WORK OF THE
SWORD WE HAVE
PERFORMED WITH
OUR PEN.”
HADHRAT MIRZA
GHULAM AHMAD OF
QADIAN^{AS}

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FIRST READ — FRANKLIN GRAHAM SAYS ISLAM IS EVIL

HARRIS ZAFAR - PORTLAND, OR

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This past Thursday, CNN anchorwoman Campbell Brown sat down with Franklin Graham, son of famous evangelist Billy Graham and also a Christian evangelist and missionary of his own. The troubling moment of this interview began when Brown asked Graham about his controversial post-9/11 comments in which he called Islam an evil and wicked religion. Instead of realizing that such divisive comments do not serve any purpose of building bridges and establishing tolerance and understand between people, Franklin Graham defiantly defended his statements and further elaborated on his hatred for the religion of Islam.

Graham openly declared that “true Islam cannot be practiced in this country. You can’t beat your wife. You cannot murder your children if you think they’ve committed adultery or something like that, which they do practice in these other countries.” How sad it is for a perceived leader within the Christian faith to have such a poor understanding of Islam that he expresses such incorrect and hateful comments about it. His belief that Islam promotes the beating of wives or the murder of children is disgraceful (see “[Honor Killings in Islam?](#)”), and expressing such erroneous accusations is deplorable.

In his condescending manner, Graham stated that favorable statements about the Islamic faith made by President Obama were merely political expressions of “what he had to say.” He then continues his patronizing words by describing Saudi Arabia as the perfect model of Islam and telling Campbell Brown “trust me girl, you don’t want to live there.”

When Brown respectfully challenged this assertion of Islam as an evil religion by bringing up the fact that there are so many Muslims who do not prescribe to any extremist views but are, rather, peaceful people, Graham responded with a fabricated elucidation that such people “would like to get out of Islam...but you cannot change from Islam. If you’re a Muslim and you change your religion, you can be killed. Your

family can kill you. They can warn you but if you don’t come back, they can take your life. And that is the threat that many of these people live under Islam.”



So apparently, Franklin Graham would have you think that I would like to “get out of Islam” since I am a peaceful, tolerant person, but the only reason I cannot do so is fear for my life. Really? That is his conclusion? Bad people want to be Muslim and good people want to get out of Islam? How can someone with such a rudimentary understanding of religion be seen as a leader of any group?

Sadly, this is not the first occasion in which Graham has openly expressed his blatant ignorance of Islam. After the tragic events of 9/11, he declared “The god of Islam is not the same God of the Christian or the Judeo-Christian faith. It is a different god, and I believe Islam is a very evil and a very wicked religion.” Graham’s attempt to smear the name of Islam through fear tactics and false, divisive accusations is appalling.

It becomes apparent that Graham’s crusade against Islam will only end with the complete destruction of Islam and its followers. But I do not blame all Christians – or even Christianity – for his ignorance and intolerance. Such gross generalizations do no good. Too much harm has been done by people throwing mud on others’ faiths. When will we learn from history about the outcomes of such hatred? When will we rise from the ashes and learn to respect beliefs and ideals that may be different from our own?

Franklin Graham is not alone in this hate-mongering tactic, and it is regrettable that his belief in God has not yet matured to the point where he can rely on facts to evangelize his faith rather than rely on falsehood to tarnish another faith.

Read original article [here](#).

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MARY'S PIETY A POTENT FORCE FOR UNITING PEOPLE SARDAR ANEES AHMAD

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December marks a traditional rise in dialogue between Muslims and Christians regarding their understanding of the office of Jesus Christ. The discussions are enjoyable, often fruitful, but I am surprised that these discussions afford far less attention to Mary, mother of Jesus.

Readers may be surprised to learn that Islam presents a most virtuous picture of Mary. Of the twenty-eight times the Qur'an mentions Jesus, more than half describe him as "Jesus, Son of Mary" – in effect identifying Jesus with the individual who had the most impact on his life. The Qur'an (4:157) records God's unique and jealous attachment to Mary, noting that Mary's enemies were cursed for uttering a calumny against her. The Qur'an (19:20-23) also confirms the miracle of the Immaculate Conception. Mary is mentioned more times in the Qur'an than in the Bible, a chapter of which bears her name (Chapter 19). The Islamic view of Mary can be summed up in one Qur'anic verse: "And remember when the angels said, 'O Mary, Allah has chosen thee and purified thee and chosen thee above all women of all peoples'" (3:43).



But why is Mary treated with reverence, and what relevance does she hold for today? The Qur'an (66:13) presents Mary as a model to emulate. In doing so, the Qur'an places her amongst elite company – the prophets of God, the wives of Prophet Muhammad, and Aasiya, wife of Pharaoh. Furthermore, Mary's birth holds great import in regards to gender equality issues. The Qur'an (3:36-37) notes that Mary's mother wished for a child to devote to God's service but became dismayed when she learned she was bestowed with a daughter. Mary's mother was told, "The male she desired to have was not like the female she was delivered" (3:37). Mary's birth, therefore, is a sweeping confirmation of Islam's belief in the equality of sexes. Righteousness, not gender, dictates superiority.

Mary was also privy to Jesus' company more so than any other individual, serving as an advisor and friend. Furthermore, Mary was the most devoted believer in Christ's prophethood, more so than even Christ's disciples. Indeed, it was Mary who remained steadfast at the time of crucifixion. In this manner, Mary exemplifies the role a devoted and talented mother can play in the life of her child. Noting the important position a mother occupies, Prophet Muhammad remarked, "Paradise lies at the feet of the mother" (Ibn Majah).

A Jewish woman who Christian's and Muslim's revere and adore, Mary is also an embodiment of the potential for interreligious harmony. Perhaps only the great patriarch Abraham enjoys a similar position.



Both her demeanor and clothing demonstrate that beauty is found in chastity and modesty. In emulating her example, Muslim women view Mary as a role model, adorn a dress very similar to Mary's, and are often given the name 'Maryam' as well. Muslims are also reminded of Mary's intelligence which, born out of her pious nature, allowed her to overcome tremendous hardships.

We see Mary, then, as occupying a unique position in all of human history. Faced with derision from her countrymen and unimaginable hardships due to the office her beloved son occupied, she never folded. Mary remains a potent force for the materialization of brotherhood amongst one-half of the entire world population. Because of her undying attachment to a truly transcendent quality – piety – the example Mary set forth nearly 2,000 years ago remains just as relevant today.