

Schooled by Islam – by Mike Lloyd

The Loss of Europe I recently viewed the *You Tube* video: [Growth of the Muslim Population](#). The case is made for the rapid and irreversible loss of native European peoples through appallingly low population growth (averaging 1.3 babies per couple). This video also overviews the astonishing growth of the Muslim population through immigration and large resident families – presumably assuring that European nations will be Muslim nations within one generation. North America is not far behind.

Hurrah for the Muslims! While the Christian faith differs critically, we do share the same Old Testament and they at least *believe* its pivotal passage – the Shema (pronounced *Sh'ma*):

Hear, Oh Israel, the Lord is one, the Lord is God. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

This passage from Deuteronomy forms the heart of the Hebrew Shema. It is a confession of faith and a summary of the creed of Judaism. It is recited each evening and morning, in every feast, in every problem and at the point of death; it is the beginning of most major prayers. For the Church the Shema also presents the historic mission of the Christian home. In the life of the Church, it is the primary means of transferring the love of God from one generation to the next. I would like to recommend three particular lessons from the Shema that Islam *is* practicing and that few Christians are practicing.

1. **We Must Have Children** One assumption of the Shema is children, and more children are better. Being fruitful and multiplying continues to be the unaltered decree of our Creator. Today the fertility rate among the natives of Greece is 1.1. This means that every two adults are replaced by only 1.1 people. This is considered a rate that can not be reversed. On the other hand, the fertility rate among Muslims living in Greece is 8.1. We may be wide-eyed at these large Muslim families, but the truly astonishing question is why everyone else no longer believes in children! After viewing this video with my senior high school students, I asked them why families had so few children. Two responses came quickly: “selfishness” and “they just want to get things.” I think that says it pretty well.
2. **The Home Must Have a Purpose** What is the purpose of your home - or the home you hope to have? How would you answer and do we think a Muslim family might answer in quite a different way? Although many Christian parents are busy dreaming about careers and a bountiful standard of living, the Christian home is designed to be a place for *growth*, growth in our love for God and man. The Christian home is a place where parents and children should grow in gracious manners, in knowledge, in strength, in wisdom, in patience, and kindness. This home you may be privileged to create is about the only place where there is the real hope of raising

noble men and women. The Shema calls for a home ordered for the definite purpose of training, building up and sending out human lives filled with lofty impulses and aspirations, governed by the eternal truths of the Christian faith – so that the love of the triune God is carried into the future and into all the earth. In his exceptional work, *Home-Making* (1882), J.R. Miller noted: “Parents should awake to the fact that they have something to do in accomplishing this mission besides providing food and clothing, paying taxes and bills. They owe their homes the influence of their lives. Instead of being a boarding house where people eat and sleep, it must be the place where the heart is anchored, where hopes gather, to which thoughts turn a thousand times a day, for which parents toil and struggle and into which they bring always the riches and best things of their lives.” [my emphasis]

3. **Families Must Have Time** The Shema not only calls for children and purpose, it calls for time together; time, time and more time. Time to lie down together, to rise up together, to travel together and sit together. This time of waking, laboring, traveling, breaking bread and closing our days is the medium where the hearts of one generation are impressed upon the hearts of the next. This is where the Law of Christ, line upon line, is taught by word and enlivened by example. Quality of time is a flimsy and misguided substitute for sheer quantity of time. It takes so much time together because we cannot plan the wonderful and the mystical moments. It requires so much time because Christ is teaching us how to love through life’s awful hours. Limited statistics indicate that more than 80% of Muslim children remain in the faith of their parents, while 70-75% of Christian young people are leaving theirs after high school. So, what are we doing with our time?

We are being schooled by Islam in a way that may soon dwarf every other historic engagement between our faiths. We must pray, *Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*, and no one can imagine how the success of Islam will play out in human history. I may not have the courage to say this as directly as it should be said, so I will call upon Thomas Hopko: “The conscious choice by a married couple not to have children for reasons of personal comfort and accommodation, the desire for luxury and freedom, the fear of responsibility, the refusal of sharing material possessions, the hatred of children, etc., is not Christian, and can in no way be considered consonant with the biblical, moral and sacramental teaching and experience [of the Church]...” Now that we have put at risk the Christian culture of the western world, we must learn our lesson quickly. It is time to connect the dots; our low view of children (along with our obsessive view of personal freedom) is in reality a very low view of God. The conscious and the very intentional choice must be for lasting marriage and for lasting marriages that produce children as a *heritage of the Lord*.