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Hallowed Secularism

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5-2-2008

### May 2, 2008: The Hatred of Islam

Bruce Ledewitz

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Title: The Hatred of Islam

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5/2/2008--We are seeing a growing demonization of Islam that even religious people of good will—Christians and Jews—are participating in. Three recent examples: In a recent issue of World Magazine, which purports to speak as a Christian News Magazine, Mindy Belz positively profiles Robert Spencer, the author of Islam Unveiled. Spencer has been blogging on the Qur'an line by line, to help us understand "our enemy" (I am not kidding). The point being that Christians and Muslims do not worship the same God. This conclusion is particularly striking given the recent decision by the Malaysian Government that no one but Muslims may use the word "Allah" to refer to God, even though this is the word that Arabic speaking Jews and Christians have always used for the God of the Bible. Christians have opposed this ruling, but apparently Belz now agrees with it. Second, the same issue of the magazine reports without comment about an investigation by the ACLU of a charter elementary school in Minneapolis that teaches Arabic culture while receiving public money. Among its sins, the school offers carpeted areas for daily prayer, a halal menu in the cafeteria and after-school classes on the Qur'an. As World magazine must surely know, and as the magazine would be the first to point out were this a charter school run by Christians, all of these accommodations to the religious practices of the students are probably constitutional on current interpretations of Establishment Clause cases. This appears to be mere prejudice by the magazine against Muslims. Finally, and by far the worst example, the New York Times reported on April 28, 2008 how Debbie Almontaser has been removed and mistreated in her efforts to create an Arabic culture public school in New York City, even though Ms. Almontaser is by all accounts a peace-loving Arab-American faithful both to Islam and to her American heritage. It turned out that to some people, that was actually why she was a threat. Critics like Daniel Pipes accuse law-abiding Muslim-Americans of imposing their religious values in the public domain—as if Pipes owned the public domain. They are outraged that Harvard University now has a gym with female-only hours to accommodate Muslim women. [The Jewish Center in Pittsburgh has had this for years to accommodate Orthodox Jewish women who want to swim.] It's as if the world has gone crazy. Not only do certain secularists hate Islam, which you might expect, but now it seems Conservative Christians are joining them.