

Islam et judéo-christianisme
by Jacques Ellul.

Paris: Presses universitaires de France (6, avenue Reille, 75014 Paris), 2004. 108 pages

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Thanks to the tireless efforts of Dominique Ellul, a new book by her late father has recently appeared in France. *Islam et judéo-christianisme [Islam and Judeo-Christianity]* contains a 20-page Preface by Alain Besançon, an 8-page Foreword by Dominique Ellul, a previously unpublished 50-page essay on Islam by Jacques Ellul, "The Three Pillars of Conformism," and a 15-page reprint of Ellul's introduction to a 1985 book on the Dhimmi (non-Muslims living in Muslim countries). In discussions of a possible publication of an English translation (no contract just yet!), some of us have urged that Ellul's 20-page chapter on "The Influence of Islam" in *The Subversion of Christianity* be reprinted as part of any English-language edition. We'll see.

During the 1980s Ellul often spoke of a book he was preparing on Islam but found publishers reluctant to publish the sort of critical perspective he felt essential. Events also moved rapidly and his manuscript needed substantial updating after these publishers' delays. In the end the chapter in *Subversion* (and the rather obscure introduction to the book on the Dhimmi) was all we had on Islam from Ellul. The new book is therefore a great help in more fully understanding Ellul's take on Islam.

Ellul's essay addresses three common assertions about Islam and its relations with Christianity and Judaism. First, Ellul disputes the value of the assertion that "we are all the children of Abraham." The three "Abrahamic religions" are often claimed to share an affinity. Ellul insists that Isaac alone of Abraham's children received the divine and paternal blessing---not Ishmael or the other children. Moreover, according to Jesus, it is not blood lineage but living faith that renders one a true child of Abraham.

Second, Ellul disagrees that avowing "monotheism" brings Christianity, Judaism, and Islam into a close and positive relationship. To begin with, Muslims and Jews often dispute that trinitarian Christians are monotheists. More importantly, it is not the fact of having one god that unites people (other religions and even secular "religions" sometimes have one sacred center, one object of worship and center of meaning). No, it is the *identity* of that God that decides everything. Ellul shows how the Muslim Allah is dissimilar to the God known in Jesus Christ and the Bible.

Third, Ellul rejects the idea that Islam, Judaism, and Christianity are united in being "religions of the book." It is partly about the nature of the holy writing and how it is viewed that establishes big differences; it is supremely about the content of the books---including the ways the Koran contradicts the teaching of the Bible.

Ellul's Introduction to Bat Ye'or's *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam* (1985) reviews and defends the author's research which carefully examined a long history and found that Jews and Christians had a varied experience under Islam, some good, some bad situations. It is not correct to say that they were always protected and flourishing under Islam (today's politically-correct viewpoint), nor were they always persecuted.

Ellul's writings on Islam display his usual passion and intensity. He is taking an unpopular position in a French intellectual milieu that, partly out of guilt over a colonial past and the presence of large numbers of impoverished Muslim immigrants, tended to go to extremes to glorify Islam in an uncritical way. Ellul, on the other hand, fought to protect Jews during the Nazi occupation and for biblical and theological reasons saw a special place for Israel in history. This is a context in which straight talk and candid opinions can be difficult. To have Ellul's views on Islam in this new book is a welcome addition.

What new readers of Ellul need to be aware of is that he was by nature and choice very dialectical in thought and expression. He felt free to express in extreme form either pole in a given controversy. Thus, his criticism of Islam is harsh. But remember that Ellul wrote ten times as much in harsh criticism of the subversion of Christianity, of its mediocrity, conformism, and guilt. And his critique of the religion of Technique is even stronger. In any case, Ellul had no use for violence or nationalism (common reactions to fears of Islam or Christianity in today's world).

Islam et judeo-christianisme is a challenge to re-think Islam (and Judaism and Christianity), to cast off political correctness and comforting myths we may hold, to face the truth with courage, to speak with candor, and then to move forward toward a genuine peace and understanding.

Islam, Judeo Christianity and Byzantine Iconoclasm. Item Preview. remove-circle. Share or Embed This Item. EMBED.Â texts. Islam, Judeo Christianity and Byzantine Iconoclasm. by. Smirna Si. Topics. islam. Collection. opensource. Language. English. by Patricia Crone. Identifier. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. As societies become larger and more complex, its people become more likely to join monotheistic religions. The three most influential monotheistic religions in world history are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all of which began in the Middle East. Judaism. Judaism dates from about 1200 B.C. The first Hebrews were nomads who settled in the land of Canaan near Egypt.Â The Bible's (the 66 books of the Judeoâ€Christian Scriptures) â€œNew Testamentâ€ (new covenant) is a collection of 26 books and letters interpreting portions of the Tenakh from a Christian point of view. The New Testament also presents a range of unique teachings, such as the writings of St. Paul, which early Christians sent to newly established churches.