

Islam Correcting Reformed Christians

No, this is not a supercilious slam of Islam versus a superior Reformed. Merely a few comments—not critique—on van Staalduinen’s article on Kuwaiti Islam (May/2011, p. 40). He very calmly observes that we Reformed have absorbed the secular separation of life from religion! That is a severe indictment. It means that we have lost a central tenet of our worldview. It means we have drifted away from our basics. I wonder how many readers just calmly glanced over this assertion and how many were shocked by the bland nature of the observation. Almost like, “We had nice weather today.”

Then Van Staalduinen contrasts that separation with Islam that does not even have the language to describe such a separation. True, when I wrote about these issues in the (Islamized) Hausa language during my Nigeria days, I had to *invent* new Hausa vocabulary to describe it! The one or two words that did exist, were adopted from English.

In my Dutch birth village, conversations were laced with the local equivalent of the Arabic “*insha’Allah*,” (if God wills). It was “D.V.” or “Deo Volente.” That terminology was dropped after we immigrated. When in Nigeria I once told a Muslim about my plans for the next day, he waited... and then asked, “*Allah fa?*” or “Where does God fit in all of this?” I was deeply humbled by his reminder of a deep truth that my partially secularized self had marginalized in my language. Indeed, as Van Staalduinen asserts, Islam can correct or remind us of what we at least partially lost: the wholistic component of our heritage. And it can correct or remind us of a whole lot more.

I am not sure about the title of this letter. Perhaps it should have been “Islam Correcting Secularized *D*eformed Christians.”