



• Ministries to Muslims •

# My answer to Eurabia

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Fear of Islam and Muslims is a topic that is close to my heart, because I believe it is one of the main reasons why Christians do not share their lives (and in this context also the Gospel of Jesus Christ) with Muslims in Europe.

There is nothing wrong to fear Muslims who endorse violence and terrorism and whose sole purpose it is to destroy the freedoms we have in Europe. It was normal for Ananias to be afraid of Saul, the persecutor of Christians who had come to his city. On the other hand, the story shows that even violent, persecuting, religious fanatics can become church planters. Ananias overcame his normal fear and was a blessing to Saul (for the whole story: see Acts 9: 1-19).

Nevertheless, most Muslims in Europe are not terrorists or fundamentalists, who use violence to obtain their goal: domination of Islam in Europe. Unfortunately, many Christians think they are. Although, they may not know the term, nor subscribe to all its features, I meet many Christians throughout Europe who are sympathetic towards or even adherents of the so-called Eurabia theory.

Eurabia is a conspiracy theory that was popularized by Bat Ye'or (Gisele Littman) in her book *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (2005). Other people have followed in her footsteps and several books, articles, films reflect the same sentiment. Bat Ye'or and others who adhere to this theory are convinced that European Muslims want to establish continent wide Islamic domination in the form of an Islamic state or caliphate, with Shari'a law as the constitution, using higher fertility rates and immigration as their main means of achieving this. They have proof of what they call the Islamisation of Europe, particularly referring to demographics. They consider Islam a threat to European civilization. They are very suspicious of Muslims, pointing out that Muslims in Europe conceal their real intentions to establish Islamic dominance over non-Muslim peoples.

What concerns me is that I regularly read articles, books and blogs written by Bible believing Christians, who agree with this Eurabia theory. That the unbelieving world comes up with all kinds of conspiracy thinking is something to be expected, but how about Christians?

Are we not supposed to be different? Thinking differently, behaving differently? Are we not called to love our neighbors, the foreigners and even our enemies?

How can we deal with this conspiracy theory of Eurabia? A major problem with conspiracy theories is that it is very difficult, if not impossible to disprove. Fighting wrong or half-wrong facts with other facts seems to be a waste of time.

Accepting that we, Christians, can be tempted to a wrong thinking, including conspiracy thinking as Eurabia, what tools does the Bible offer us to resist this temptation?

Of all books in the Bible, I particularly find the book of Isaiah helpful in helping us formulate a defense against the Eurabia theory. Of course, in Isaiah's time Islam was not a concern. Nevertheless, they had plenty of other

world powers that sought to wipe them of the map. The people of God were concerned, fearful, frightened, they were afraid to lose everything they considered valuable. The world around them seemed out of control. In such a time conspiracy thinking can develop and this is what seems to have happened. God warns Isaiah:

*“The Lord spoke to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people. He said: Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. The Lord Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread, and he will be a sanctuary..” (Isaiah 8:12, 13)*

These verses shows an important aspect of a conspiracy theory: fear of men. These verses also point to a cure against this kind of thinking, namely fear of God. The more we fear God, understanding that history is His story and that He is Lord of past, present and future, the better we can resist the temptation of the Eurabia theory. We do not need to give in to man made theories, growing out of fear and prejudice. We can trust ourselves, our Church and our continent into the Everlasting Arms of the Living God, who has shown His love for us and for Muslims by sending His Son to die for our sins.

One might think that a theory such as Eurabia is innocent, because it has no impact on daily life and how our societies are developing. Unfortunately, this is not true. Extreme right wing political parties feed on Eurabia’s thinking. While many seek to stop Eurabia from growing further by their use of words, others go a step further. Andres Behring Breivik, the perpetrator of the terrorist attacks in Norway in July 2011, was profoundly inspired by Eurabia, as becomes clear from his tract: *A European Declaration of Independence*.

I hope that my speech in Norway next month will prevent others to follow in his footsteps.