

I found the article by Ulfat Samad to be rather disappointing as an exposition of Islam as a universal religion. It fails to convince that Muhammad was anything other than yet another local prophet. The problem in essence is that she appeals to the Qur'an as authority in an uncritical way and no-one who did not already believe that that it represented the message of God would be converted. Her use of Biblical texts is simplistic at best and willfully selective at worst and fails to acknowledge the work of lived tradition in the Christian Churches over the centuries up to the work of Muhammad.

In other words she is unable to see beyond her own cultural prejudices and is closed to pluralism. Islam is the ultimate in inclusive religion, in that it accepts Jesus as a prophet and then tells Christians that they are wrong about him. It must feel just as galling for a Muslim to be told that they are really saved through Jesus and the Church of Rome without their knowledge.

That said, the glory of tolerant Islam and its role (along with the Irish!) in saving Western civilization is worth recapitulating.

She says that Islam gives complete guidance in all things and Christianity does not – I'd say that is no bad thing but I'm sure the writers of the catechism would be interested to know that Christianity fails to give all the answers. I didn't think that they missed anything.

The status of women was certainly raised by Muhammad and then trashed by his religious descendants and the claims to religious freedom in Islamic republics are a mirage.

Islam remains premodern and has great difficulty responding to individual autonomy. It is not a universal anything for all its achievements.