

# MUSLIMS NOT LIKE THE REST OF US

One of the basic mantras of multiculturalism is that all peoples and all cultures are essentially the same. But if this were true, then how does one explain how the media portrayed Muslims during the week Pope Benedict XVI visited Turkey?

- NPR, 11-26: "Should the pope pray, make the sign of the cross or get down on his knees while there, he's likely to further anger Turkish Muslims...."
- *New York Times*, 11-28: "But on this trip, any mention too specific about religious freedom holds the danger of offending Turkey."
- AP, 11-28: "It [Haghia Sophia] is now a museum, and Turks would take offense at any religious gesture by the pontiff...."
- AP, 11-28: "Benedict also said guarantees of religious freedom are essential for a just society, comments that risked bringing the Vatican into conflict with some Islamic nations that allow only Muslims to worship or impose restrictions on religious minorities."
- *Daily News* (NY), 11-29: "Pope Benedict began a sensitive trip to Turkey yesterday seeking to ease Muslim concerns, but risked stoking more anger by urging religious leaders to 'utterly refuse' to back violence in the name of faith."

The subtext of these statements is that Muslims are not like the rest of us. After all, can anyone imagine Jews getting angry at the pope for making the sign of the cross while in Israel? Moreover, why is it that the mere mention of religious liberty is likely to offend? What kind of people are they, anyway? And who, other than Muslims, would actually get angry if the leader of some other religion were to say that killing

in the name of God is wrong? What does this say about their religion?

If this is all it takes to anger Muslims—in addition to cartoons they don't like—then we're all in big trouble. It's time we started asking the tough questions.