"The Pope's Inflammatory Remarks about Islam"

How would you access Pope Benedict XVI remarks in his lecture on Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections? and Islamic reaction? What was the essence of his lecture that infuriated the Islamic World?

Thank you for your question regarding the Pope's comments on Islam and the resulting violent response from the Muslim world.

Not being a Roman Catholic, I do not usually read the Pope's speeches. However, given the worldwide outrage by Muslims, I thought it important to understand what has caused such an intense reaction to his lecture at the University of Regensburg.

The speech was rather academic and mostly focused on the relationship between faith and reason in the Christian tradition. In it, the Pope gave quotes from the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II to a Persian Muslim during the siege of Constantinople in the late 14th century. The exact quote of the Emperor is "Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached." The Emperor went on to argue that spreading any religion by the sword is by nature unreasonable.

The irony of the situation we find ourselves in today is amazing. We now have Muslims burning churches, threatening to kill the Pope, and destroy the west, because he implied that Mohammed advocated the use of the sword to spread and protect the Muslim faith. It is equivalent to punching someone in the face because they called you pugilistic.

Muslims certainly cannot deny that Mohammed admonished Muslims

to pick up their swords for Allah's cause (see my essay [Islam and the Sword](#) at Probe.org). They also cannot ignore the fact that Islam conquered both the Persian and Byzantine Empires via warfare. Had it not been for the victory at Tours by Charles Martel, all of Europe would have fallen to the Islamic invaders.

When anyone in the west speaks against violence done in the name of Allah, Muslims are quick to equate the written word with "aggression" against Islam which then justifies all sorts of violent acts in defense of Islam and its Prophet. I can only hope that the media and our politicians will wake up to the double standard that occurs when words or ideas are equated with violent acts.

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