* Response to the Muslim Response

Paul Turner

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To: letters@thetimes.co.uk

Sir,

Dr Hargey of the Oxford Muslim Congregation (Letters, May 25) states that immoral sexuality and terrorism are fuelled by Muslims not having a genuine stake in British society. This is a contemptible apologia which attempts to excuse base activity and intimates that any group or individual with perceived societal problems reverts to perverted, degenerate or murderous behaviour.  The crimes in Oxford, for example, took place over a period of eight years and presumably would have gone on for much longer had the negligent authorities not been stung into action. This long-term abuse does not indicate attempts to integrate but characterises criminal perversion.

 With regard to Dr Hargey’s “the broader incapacity of the Muslim community to fully integrate with the mainstream”, surely the ideal of a multicultural society is that minority communities continue to follow their own cultural practices (within the law); this occurs with Jewish and Chinese communities for example. The Muslim community itself fails to integrate women into its own ‘mainstream’ but if indeed, integration with the mainstream is an aspiration then all is available through the education system, the jobs market, volunteering, sport and so on. With regard to the last-mentioned, how much more mainstream can you get than following your cricket team at Lords? If menial work is a current lot, then welcome to the real world but don’t go around with a chip on your shoulder thinking that Muslims in particular are hard done by.

 Invoking “Tony Blair’s illegal invasion of Iraq” and requiring that “the UK should address the roots of terrorism” is preaching to the converted.  Millions marched in western democracies protesting against the Second Gulf War. All troops are now withdrawn from Iraq (but the country is riven with Muslim sectarian conflict), combat operations have ceased in Afghanistan and all NATO operations are due to end there by end-2014. So why would two Muslim men, on a quiet afternoon in Woolwich, set out on a murderous mission invoking “war” and “as long as British troops are in Muslim countries”.  No reasonable explanation is offered by Dr Hargey. There is no reasonable explanation.

Sincerely

Paul Turner