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Dear Sir,

Melanie Phillips argues that ‘...the undermining of Christianity from within is being exploited by militant Islamist fanatics who want to turn Britain into an Islamic state’, (‘We must not let the weakness of our bishops destroy this nation’s soul’, Daily Mail, 22 December 2008).

She goes on: ‘It is no surprise that the call for disestablishment is not coming from non-Christian faiths. I am a Jew; yet I believe that without Protestantism holding the ring, British culture will descend into a fight for supremacy between faith groups in which the strongest and most violent will win.’

It is of course no surprise that Ms Phillips should engage in scaremongering and tell her readers that Islam would gain most from disestablishment of the Anglican Church. Such an argument is perfectly in keeping with her rarely concealed prejudice against Islam. It is however fundamentally flawed. Muslims have never supported calls for disestablishment and have always maintained that the Church of England plays an important role in keeping faith in the public sphere. It is a role which has over the years been considerably supported by Muslims through various interfaith initiatives.

Perhaps Ms Phillips might heed her own conviction and avail herself of the wisdom on the Archbishop of Canterbury who in an interview last week said, ‘It’s a worrying thing [the furore over his comments on Shari’a law in Britain] because it depends on keeping crisis at the forefront of everybody’s mind. ...it blocks out the ordinary, prosaic continuities [between faith communities].’

No doubt such common sense remarks would ill suit Ms Phillips’ penchant for the dramatic.

Yours sincerely,

Inayat Bunglawala
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