

WHY CYPRUS?

Strategically placed in the Eastern Mediterranean, the beautiful, tropical island of Cyprus has been a stopping point for Christian pilgrims, military conquerors and various civilizations throughout history. Among those who have left their mark on Cyprus are the ancient and modern Greeks, the Phoenicians, the Romans, the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Persians, the European Crusaders,

Mediterranean, Cyprus has become a second home to the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). While its main office remains in Beirut, Cyprus and the Orthodox Church have provided wonderful support and operating facilities for MECC's many ministries. At the same time, over 30 western evangelical mission and development agencies have found new homes in Cyprus.

Called the "Island of the Sun" (promotional brochures advertise 340 days of sunshine per

Brahmo Samaj that for the 'purposes of self-vindication as well as of conviction' their controversy with the Christians would have to continue.¹¹ At the same time the Christians were equally convinced that with the appearance of Banerjea's *Dialogues on the Hindu Philosophy* in 1861, and Goreh's *A Rational Refutation of the Hindu Philosophical Systems* a year later, an era of Indian Christian apologetics had dawned.

In the sixties a charismatic figure began to emerge in the Brahmo movement in the person of Keshub Chunder Sen. But very soon tensions between this progressive young leader and the more conservative 'old Brahmo' Debendranath Tagore began to show itself, and in 1865 came the great split within the Brahmo movement. A large number of the young Brahmos gave their allegiance to Keshub Chunder Sen while the majority of the older and more conservative members remained with Debendranath Tagore's old party, now called the 'Adi Brahmo Samaj', or 'the original Samaj'. And Keshub Chunder Sen's group claimed the title the 'Brahmo Samaj of India'.

From the sixties onwards the Adi Brahmo Samaj began to claim openly that 'Brahmoism is both Universal Religion and a form of Hindooism', which sought to 'preach the catholic sentiments of *Brahma*

Dharma in a national form'.¹² However, the balance between 'catholicism' and 'nationalism' was difficult to maintain. In the end the stress was on the national, or Hindu side; and a strong affinity was maintained between the new creed and traditional Hinduism. On the other hand, Keshub Chunder Sen appeared to be more and more 'pro-Christian'. In some of his public pronouncements about Jesus Christ. At the same time the former *bhakta* became very much preoccupied with the idea of the 'direct perception' of the Deity and considered his Brahmoism as a 'living religion'. Sen's thought found its ultimate expression in his 'New Dispensation' in 1880.

THE APOLOGETICS OF BANERJEA AND GOREH

The apologetic works of Banerjea and Goreh from the early sixties till the eighties are the main concern of the third part of the study: Banerjea in search of a meaningful dialogue with the Aryan religious tradition; while Goreh was mainly concerned with his critique of natural religion, or Theism, and sought to present Christianity as the revealed religion.

Some of the major issues in the debate are recapitulated in the last part of the study with special reference to St. Paul's teaching on the religions of the nations based on the exegesis of Acts 14, 17, Romans 1 and 2. The concluding chapter attempts to give a summary of the salient points of the study.

11. Raj Narain Bose, *Hints Showing the Feasibility of Constructing a Science of Religion* (Bengal, 1878), p. 25.

12. *Brahmic Questions of the Day*, by An Old Brahmo (Calcutta, 1869), pp. 4, 8.

Sungarist

Christian Missions and the Western Guilt Complex

Lamin Sanneh

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When at the age of 18 I approached a Methodist church in the Gambia with a request for baptism, thus signalling my conversion to Christianity from Islam, the resident senior minister, an English missionary, responded by inviting me to reconsider my decision. And, while I was at it, he said, I should also consider joining the Catholic Church. My conversion obviously caused him acute embarrassment, and I was mortified on account of it.

However, his imaginative solution of my linking up with the Catholic Church did not work out; after a year of vain attempts I returned to the English missionary. After assuring me that the baptism of the Methodists was recognized by the Catholics, he agreed in principle to receive me into the church.

At that stage of my life I would have joined the church on almost any condition, for I had this absurd idea that the gospel had marked me out for something, whether for reward, rebuke or ridicule I did not

know; whatever it was, I felt inexorably driven toward it. On the night of my baptism I was overcome with emotion, finding it hard to believe that my wish was being fulfilled. Not even the thousand tongues of Methodist hymnody could have given utterance to the avalanche of thoughts and feelings that erupted in me.

I make this extended autobiographical introduction to indicate how in the liberal Methodist tradition I first encountered the guilt complex about missions which I have since come to know so well after living more than two decades in the West. I have found Western Christians to be very embarrassed about meeting converts from Asia or Africa, but when I have repeated for them my personal obstacles in joining the church, making it clear that I was in no way pressured into doing so, they have seemed gratefully unburdened of a sense of guilt. Furthermore, when I have pointed out that missionaries actually made comparatively few converts, my Western listeners have reacted with obvious relief, though with another part of their

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minds, they insist that missionaries have regularly used their superior cultural advantage to instil a sense of inferiority in natives.

It seems that for my Western Christian friends, if missionaries did not justify by their field labours the guilt the West carries about the mischief of the white race in the rest of the world, then other missionaries would have to be invented to justify that guilt.

It should provide food for thought that the church has succeeded in importing this guilt complex into Africa. I found the church there to be self-conscious about matters religious—especially matters involving God, death, judgement, the virgin birth and miracles—which presumably the Enlightenment banished from rational debate. Consequently, the church was wary of embracing members tainted with the brush of conversion, for such new members would not have acquired the reservation deemed appropriate to religious subjects.

The church took further precautions against religious enthusiasm: for my catechism I was introduced to New Testament form criticism and to Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, John Macmurray, John A. T. Robinson, Vincent Taylor, Oliver Chase Quick and other 'sensible' writers. On my own initiative I discovered the works of C. S. Lewis, whose brand of commonsense Christianity encouraged me no end. Nevertheless, the liberal strand was the dominant theme in my formation, hallowed with the refined ministrations of writers like Bertrand Russell and Harold Nicolson.

The church's hesitant attitude about religious conversation in turn

surprised, frustrated, dismayed, saddened and confused me. Also, given the prominent place religion occupies in Africa, I was baffled by the apparent determination of my church superiors to keep religious subjects from all 'decent' and 'culture' conversation. I realize now that this attitude is deep-rooted in Western liberal culture. However, before I left Africa for Europe I had no way of understanding it, for it had no analogue in my society, and, more important for me, it appeared to skirt the declared aims of a missionary church.

My business in this article is not to linger on Memory Lane but to confront directly the guilt complex about missions that so often prevails in liberal counsels. I believe that the liberal claim to openmindedness about missions would be strengthened by a closer examination of what actually happened—and may still be happening—in the encounter between Western missionaries and non-Christian peoples.

Much of the standard Western scholarship on Christian missions proceeds by looking at the motives of individual missionaries and concludes by faulting the entire missionary enterprise as being part of the machinery of Western cultural imperialism. But missions in the modern era has been far more, and far less, than the argument about motives customarily portrays.

Missionaries of course went out with all sorts of motives, and some of them were clearly unwholesome. Yet if we were to try to separate good from bad motives, I daresay we would not, after a mountain of labour, advance the subject much

beyond the molehill of stalemate. We might, for example, take a little out of the cultural imperialism bag and put it into the social-service category, and ascribe both phenomena to Western cultural conditioning. But that exercise would do little to further our understanding of the nature and consequences of cross-cultural missions.

Instead of examining motives, I propose that we focus on the field setting of missions, where local feedback exerted an influence all its own. And what stands out in particular about the field setting is the emphasis missionaries gave to translating Scripture into vernacular languages. Most Protestant missionary agencies embarked on the immense enterprise of vernacular translation with the enthusiasm, urgency and commitment of first-timers, and they expended uncommon resources to make the vernacular dream come true. Today more than 1,800 languages have been involved in the worldwide translation movement. In Africa alone, the Bible has been translated into 522 vernacular languages, with texts in over 200 additional languages now under development. Catholic missions have been similarly committed to the transposition of the catechism into vernacular terms, with language study a crucial part of the enterprise. The importance of vernacular translation was that it brought the missionary into contact with the most intimate and intricate aspects of culture, yielding wide-ranging consequences for both missionary and native alike.

The translation enterprise had two major steps. One was the creation of

a vernacular alphabet for societies that lacked a literary tradition. The other step was to shake the existing literary tradition free of its esoteric, elitist predilection by recasting it as a popular medium. Both steps simulated an indigenous response and encouraged the discovery of local resources for the appropriation of Christianity. Local believers acquired a new interest not only in the vernacular but also in recording their history and collecting accounts of indigenous wisdom. One missionary whose work sparked such response was J. G. Christaller, who came from Basel to the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Between 1871 and 1881 he produced a Bible translation, a dictionary and a grammar of the Twi language, crowning his labours with a compilation of 3,600 Twi proverbs and axioms. He also helped found the *Christian Messenger* in 1883, a paper devoted to the promotion of Akan life and culture. His *Twi Dictionary* has been acclaimed as an 'encyclopaedia of Akan civilization' by the modern generation of Ghanaian scholars.

Often the outcome of vernacular translation was that the missionary lost the position of being the expert. But the significance of translation went beyond that. Aimed with a written vernacular Scripture, converts to Christianity invariably called into question the legitimacy of all schemes of foreign domination—cultural, political and religious. Here was an acute paradox: the vernacular Scriptures and the wider cultural and linguistic enterprise on which translation rested provided the means and occasion for arousing a sense of national pride, yet it was

the missionaries—foreign agents—who were the creators of that entire process. I am convinced that this paradox decisively undercuts the alleged connection often drawn between missions and colonialism. Colonial rule was irreparably damaged by the consequences of vernacular translation—and often by other activities of missionaries.

Because of its concern for translations that employ the speech of the common workaday world, Christian proclamation has had a populist element. In many traditional societies, religious language has tended to be confined to a small elite of professionals. In extreme cases, this language is shrouded under the forbidding sanctions of secret societies and shrines, access to which is through induced trances or a magical formula. The Christian approach to translatability strikes at the heart of such gnostic tendencies, first by contending that the greatest and most profound religious truths are compatible with everyday language, and second, by targeting ordinary men and women as worthy bearers of the religious message. This approach introduced a true democratic spirit into hitherto closed and elitist societies, with women in particular discovering an expanded role.

For example, after George Pilkington, the English lay missionary, translated the Bible in Uganda, some 2,000 men and 400 women acted as colporteurs operating as far as the forests of the Congo. Pilkington's translated Bible sold 1,100 copies in the first year of publication, with an additional 4,000 New Testaments, 13,500 single Gospels and 40,000 readers. Theodore Roosevelt, who

visited Uganda in 1910, witnessed the scene and said it was nothing short of astounding.

The project of translation contains implications about the nature of culture itself. Translation destigmatizes culture—it denies that culture is 'profane'—and asserts that the sacred message may legitimately be entrusted to the forms of everyday life. Translation also relativizes culture by denying that there is only one normative expression of the gospel: it results in a pluralism in which God is the relativizing centre. The Christian insight into this phenomenon carries with it a profound ethical notion, for it opens culture up to the demand and need for change. A divinized, absolutized culture precludes the possibility of change.

The impact of the translation process is, indeed, incalculable. Suddenly hitherto illiterate populations were equipped with a written Scripture for the first time, and from the wonder and pride of possessing something new that is also strangely familiar, they burst upon the scene with confidence in the whos and whys of their existence. For example, the Luo tribesman Matthew Ajuoga was helping missionaries translate the Bible into his native language. He discovered that the missionaries translated the Greek word *philadelphia*, 'brotherly love', into Luo as *hera*, and this experience caused him to protest, saying that 'love' as the Bible explained it was absent from the missionaries' treatment of Africans. He subsequently founded an independent church, the Church of Christ in Africa, in 1957, which gained a considerable following across tribal divisions. Another

example is the Zulu Bible, which enabled Zulu converts to respond to missionary criticism of the Zulu way of dressing. The Zulus said that they found in Genesis 27:16 sanction for their custom of dressing in skins, a practice the missionaries had attacked. In the eyes of the Zulus, it was the missionaries who were flouting the dress code. Thus it was that, confronted with the bewildering fact of Western intrusion, local populations used the vernacular to avert ultimate disenchantment, in this way utilizing the gains of mission to offset the losses to colonialism.

The evidence of the importance of translation in Christian missions is remarkably consistent. From the 16th century when Francis Xavier decided to cast his lot with the East against his own Western culture, to the 19th century when Cristaller singlehandedly promoted Akan culture, to the 20th when Frank Laubach inveighed against the encroachments of American power in the Philippines, missionaries in the field have helped to promote indigenous self-awareness as a counterforce to Western cultural importation. Obviously missionaries wanted to proclaim the gospel because they believed it to be superior to any message others might offer. But it is really not consistent to blame missionaries for believing in what they preach. And we must note this salient, consistent feature of their work—namely, that they confidently adopted the language and culture of others as the irreplaceable vehicle for the transmission of the message. Whatever judgement missionaries brought with them, it certainly was not about the fitness of the vernacu-

lar to be the hallowed channel for communicating with God.

Besides the paradox of foreign missionaries establishing the indigenous process by which foreign domination was questioned, there is a theological paradox to this story: missionaries entered the missionary field to convert others, yet in the translation process it was they who first made the move to 'convert' to a new language, with all its presuppositions and ramifications. Thus we have the example of Robert de Nobili (1577–1656), an Italian nobleman who went to India as a Jesuit missionary, arriving there in 1605. He passed for a *guru*, an Indian saintly figure, and even for a *sannyasi*, a wild, holy man, adopting Hindu customs and religious terminology to define his own personal piety. Two other examples were Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), who adopted the opposite path to de Nobili by assimilating into upper-class Chinese society during the Ming dynasty, coming to China in 1580, eventually undergoing a profound cultural transformation as a Confucian scholar; and Charles de Foucauld, who served in the French army in the Algerian war where he witnessed moving scenes of Muslims' personal piety, leading him to regain his own Christian faith, and becoming in everything a Tuareg Bedouin nomad. Whether missionaries converted anybody else, there is no doubt that they were their own first converts.

It is also apparent that at least in Africa, Christian missions expanded and deepened pluralism—in language, social encounter and ethnic participation in the Christian move-

ment. Missions helped to preserve languages that were threatened by a rising *lingua franca*, extended the influence of the vernacular through careful methodical and systematic investigations in the field, and helped to establish connections within the wider family of languages. In their grammars, dictionaries, primers, readers and systematic compilations of proverbs, axioms, customs and other ethnographic materials, missionaries furnished the scientific documentation by means of which the modern study of cultures could begin. Whether missionaries translated well or badly—and there are masterpieces as well as outrageous parodies—they made field criteria rather than the values of empire-building their operative standard.

Indeed, if there is any aspect of missionaries' motives I would want to pursue, it would be their desire to excel in whatever they undertook. They scrutinized their work in the hard and sombre light of giving an account before God. Thus we find in their meticulous record-keeping, in the minutiae of account ledgers, in faithful official and family correspondence and in the assembling of petitions, an extraordinary concern for accuracy.

In examining missionary archives I am struck constantly by the missionaries' painstaking attention to detail. Inventiveness was a rather rare vice in that stem, austere world of missionary self-accounting. Thus, unwittingly, was laid the firm foundation of modern historiography in Africa and elsewhere. Even the nationalist point of view that came to dominate much historical writing about the new Africa was to a large

extent moulded by the missionary exploration of indigenous societies.

When they succeeded in translation, missionaries inadvertently vindicated indigenous claims, and when they failed they called forth the criticism of local people. Furthermore, their success in translation merely hastened the day of their departure, while failure called into question their continuing presence. Words have impact, especially in the abundant surplus of their unintended consequences. Translation is no respecter of motives—which is why it should be detached from the question of motives and examined in its own right.

Missionary statesmen in the 19th century saw quite clearly where the vernacular principle was leading, and they welcomed it as the supreme reward of Christian discipleship. For example, Henry Venn of the Anglican Church Missionary Society said that 'the marked national characteristics' that the vernacular principle fosters in the expression of the gospel, 'in the overruling grace of God, will tend to its perfection and glory'. He spoke vividly of 'a euthanasia of mission' once the vernacular principle exerted its full force. He said the business of mission was 'not to supply an European pastorate, but to prepare native pastors . . . and to fix the spiritual standard in such churches by securing for them a supply of Vernacular Scriptures' (*To Apply the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Henry Venn* [Eerdmans, 1971]). Such an aim, he counselled, differed sharply from the goals of colonialism in perpetuating overseas dependencies.

The modern religious map of

Africa reveals in a striking way the close connection between the growth of Christianity and the widespread employment of the vernacular. The converse also seems to hold: Christian growth has been slightest in areas where vernacular languages are weak—that is, where a *lingua franca* such as English, French, Portuguese, Arabic or Swahili has succeeded in suppressing mother tongues.

To make the contrast even starker, we can point out that the reverse phenomenon appears in Islam, also a missionary religion, but one that does not translate its Scriptures for its canonical rites. Islam is strongest in societies where a *lingua franca* exists, and weakest in places of vernacular preponderance. For example, Islamic gains in north Nigeria occurred at the hands of the Fulani reformers in the 19th century. In the process, the Fulani assimilated to the Islamized Hausa culture and lost their own Fulfulde language.

Islamic reform has nowhere to my knowledge made the perpetuation of the vernacular a concomitant of orthodox rectitude, and I know of no Muslim language institutes dedicated to the systematic study of the vernacular. Islam has succeeded brilliantly in its missionary enterprise, promoting at the same time a universal devotion to the sacred Arabic. In Africa, we see evidence of its considerable gains in spite of what we might regard as insuperable odds against a nontranslatable Scripture. For this reason the implications of Muslim success for pluralism are quite serious.

I will conclude, as I began, with a

personal story, this one about the unexpected dynamics of translation. After completing my Islamic studies in the Middle East in 1969 I went to Yorubaland in Nigeria as a lay worker with the Methodist Church. I was immediately taken to the local market to purchase some bare essentials for my flat. My companion was a senior English missionary who had spent many years in Ibadan and knew his way around. He translated for me as we did the round of market stalls, with the stallkeepers' curiosity naturally aroused by the missionary, in their eyes a stranger from beyond the stars.

Before we had picked our way through the market, a small crowd had gathered to marvel at the sight of a white man translating for an African in an African language. It was as if we had got our arrangement wrong and put the Western cart before the African horse. The image of 'total stranger' the stallkeepers had of the Western missionary was completely belied by this exposure.

Of the several lessons one can draw from this incident, one is particularly relevant to the Western guilt complex about missions. There is a widespread tendency in the West to see missions as destroyers of indigenous cultures or else as alien cultural agents from the West. Yet in the incident at the local market, my missionary companion came to be acknowledged by the stallkeepers as an accomplished 'native', one of themselves, on the basis of the vernacular rule that they normally used to determine the boundary between insiders and outsiders. In

the act of translating, my missionary friend demonstrated that he had as much claim to being in Africa as he had to identifying with the West. His own Western cultural differences were no longer a barrier, nor even a useful evaluative standard, but an opportunity for cross-cultural interchange. This example suggests that

Christian missions are better seen as a translation movement, with consequences for vernacular revitalization, religious change and social transformation, than as a vehicle for Western cultural domination. Such an assurance should help alleviate some of the Western guilt complex about missions.

Book Reviews

The Unique Christ In our Pluralist World

edited by Bruce J. Nicholls
(Published 1994 on behalf of the
World Evangelical Fellowship by
The Potemoster Press, Carlisle UK
and Baker Book House, Grand
Rapids, Michigan, USA
Paperback, 288 pp.
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0 8010 2013 1)

(Reviewed by David Parker)

The WEF Theological Commission conducted a Consultation in Manila June 16-22, 1992 on the topic of this volume. More than eighty theologians from all parts of the world participated. The papers are here published under the editorship of Bruce Nicholls, a former director of the Commission and currently editor of its journal, *Evangelical Review of Theology*. In addition to his introduction, there may be found the fourteen page official statement for the Consultation, 'The WEF Manila Declaration', a foreword by the Commission director, Dr Bong Rin Ro and twenty papers grouped under the following areas: The Unique Christ in relation to the

plurality of religions, the challenge of modernity, political ideologies, the church's diversity and unity, peace and justice and hope and judgement of the world. Writers include Kwame Bedtako, Rene Padilla, Valdir Steuemagel, John Vissers, Christopher Sugden and Isaac Zokoue. Notes and a subject index are appended, increasing the value of this compendium on a subject which is 'arguably the most important and urgent task facing the church worldwide today'.

An Evangelical Response to Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry

edited by D. A. Carson
(Prepared by the Study Unit on
Ecumenical Issues of the WEF
Theological Commission.
Published on behalf of the WEF by
the Potemoster Press, Carlisle, 1992
Paperback 60 pages,
ISBN 0 85364 513 2)

(Reviewed by David Parker)

When the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council Churches met in 1982 and produced the document, *Baptist, Eucharist*

WORK IN PROGRESS
 Kamweng Ng
 1 Oct 2000

DIALOG AND DEMOCRATIC DELIBERATION UNDER ISLAMIC HEGEMONY

Everything is politics but politics is not everything (H. M. Kuitert)

Seek ye first the political kingdom and all these things will be added unto you (Kwame Nkrumah)

[This paper explores how the Malaysian Church that has been intimidated under the hegemony of Islamic political power may identify breaches in social institutions that offer opportunities for dialog and democratic deliberation in a controlled society.]

I. ISLAMIC HEGEMONY

A bright lawyer threw me a challenge after I had spoken at a public forum on who Christians may vote for in the coming national elections. He said, "Your argument on the need for the Church to be non-partisan in politics may be logically impeccable. I grant that you have maintained a fine balance between the need to criticize the abuse of power by the present government and to be realistic about political changes. Nevertheless, how can you answer the political activists who are making history through the anti-government demonstrations in the streets?"

The frustrations of the lawyer arose because of his valid perception that while many Christian leaders in the forum claimed to be politically neutral, they were in actual fact supporting the status quo in order to safeguard their comfortable upper middle class existence. The Malaysian Church was evading its responsibility to move with concerned citizens fighting for justice in a historic moment in the life of our nation.

I can understand the frustrations of the lawyer. Yet, I couldn't help but recall a similar challenge issued by the theological genius, Emmanuel Hirsch, when he called the German Church to rally behind the Nazis on account that it was a Kairos moment, the hour of the German *Volk*. It would be most inappropriate to associate the Malaysian street demonstrators with the Nazis. I was merely reminding myself that even the most informed certainties could not guard the theological genius from committing a political blunder.

Another rejoinder came to my mind. "What makes you so sure that the activists are making history? Would history and our society become better in the unlikely event that the Muslim-led demonstrators succeed in overthrowing the government? Even if they do, I suspect it will be business as usual for them. I believe that the young idealists on the streets are merely pawns manipulated by shrewd politicians who have their own agendas rather than one of setting up a just social order." I was well aware of warnings from the well-known scholar on Islamic Fundamentalism, Hassan Tibi', that Islamic

fundamentalists are only too willing to exploit cynically the process of democracy in order to gain power and use it to undermine and abolish the institutions of democracy.

The newfound enthusiasm for political action among Christians is understandable since they have long been marginalized and intimidated by dominant Islamic powers in the past. The ferment of political conflict was perceived as creating new opportunities for Christians to participate in an anticipated transition of power. Such hopes generate a well nigh irresistible pressure on Christians to join the political fracas. But it is a thin line between being relevant for a social cause and being exploited by self-serving politicians.

Some young activists urge their churches to take sides in political debates and even endorse the opposition parties. Awareness of what has happened in similar situations in Eastern Europe should provide a cautionary note to Malaysian churches. Many Eastern European churches provided a platform for protest against the communists.

Unfortunately, the political activists conveniently abandoned the Church after the revolutions in 1990. I grant that a more positive scenario has emerged in countries such as Poland, Rumania and perhaps South Africa, but I am not convinced that the Church in Malaysia, given its meager resources and shallow cultural roots, can profit from political turmoil.

More importantly is the question, "Why should the Church allow its options to be set by aggressive social activists in the streets?" One wonders if the Church that plunges into political action because of the excitement of 'making history' is naïve about its political effectiveness. It has forgotten that its mission lies in being a faithful witness, a following after the opportunities wrought by a sovereign God as he works in HIS history. It would be better for the Church to set modest and long term goals, beginning by identifying breaches in social institutions that offer opportunities for dialog and democratic deliberation in a controlled society.

Let's begin with a description of Islamic hegemony in Malaysian society. Several factors have contributed to the strong emergence and dominance of Islam in recent Malaysian politics.

1) Islamic resurgence arose as a response to Western dominance over Islamic nations in the fields of knowledge, economic and cultural production. Islamic nations, despite their oil wealth, have remained economically backward and are ravaged by domestic violence, strife and civil wars. The perception of weakness was compounded by the defeats of the Arabs in their wars with Israel, leading to soul searching and Islamic reassertion. The 'success' of the Iranian Revolution provided a powerful albeit temporary impetus to Muslim political activists to return to classical Islam for inspiration in their social struggles.

2) Islam became a potent tool of political mobilization to ensure ethnic unity in the Muslim/Malay struggle to maintain dominance in local politics, especially after the race riots in 1969. One should appreciate the psychological sense of insecurity of the Muslims in Malaysia since the Muslims constitute only a slim majority. The spectre of a divided

how slim

community leading to the loss of political power and economic marginalization was acutely felt. Divisions among the Muslims would result in subjugation to new forms of colonialism whether these came from the local Chinese economic community or the globalized multi-nationals. Not surprisingly, the concern for the Islamic community has always been community unity rather than religious freedom.

3) Muslims perceive their cultural identity as threatened by the all encroaching influence of Western culture spread through the mass media, recommending a way of life that undermines the traditional values of the Islamic world. This is especially felt by the rural Muslims who were uprooted from their traditions as they migrated into the city and reemerged as a new class of educated professionals. The initial concern of the Muslim activists was with external dressings and rituals and cultural identity, but they have moved on to larger social issues, demanding that public policies be made consistent with Islamic principles. Undoubtedly, *dakwah* (the call to reorient society according to Islamic principles) challenged Muslims to retrieve from glorious Islamic civilizations of the past those pristine values that are necessary to fortify and develop a community strong enough to protect Islamic authenticity. The consequence is a reassertion of Islam through new activist movements and a reenergized *Ulama* pushing an agenda of Islamization of society. Muslims may have benefited from technological Modernity, but the rejection by the *Ulama* of cultural modernity is unequivocal and decisive.

One detects an attitude of triumphalism that strongly underlies current Islamic reforms. In the first phase, Islam rejects the idea of sin as manifestation of a deviant will arising from corrupt human nature. In Islam, human beings are born *fitrah* (sinless nature). Sin as such is forgetfulness rather than rebellion. What is needed is religious education and structuring of the *Ummah* (Islamic community) according to the law of God to attain a perfect society, one which reflects the unity of God (*tauhid*). In turn, the worldly success of the *Ummah* becomes the criteria for determining the veracity of Islam. Not surprisingly then, we read of Syed H. Nasr (the only non-Western thinker to deliver the Gifford Lectures) who, for all his familiarity with Western democracy, argues that there is no case of adjusting Islamic law to suit changing society. On the contrary, society should be oriented and organized around the unchanging law of God.

In the same spirit, Syed Naquib al-Attas proposes a program of 'de-westernization', followed by infusion of Islamic values to promote greater receptivity (increasing reception) of Shariah laws as the fundamental framework for Malaysian society. His confidence is augmented by a perception that Islamization succeeds not only because it is projected from fortification of political power, more importantly, from fortification of a world-view founded on truth.

The supremacy of Islamic hegemony may suggest that the minority Church must passively capitulate to the inevitable outcome of a degraded community, the *dhimmi*, and suffer the paralysis of the *dhimmi* syndrome so succinctly captured by Bath Yeor,

Twelve centuries of humiliation impressed upon the individual and collective psychologies of the oppressed groups a common form of alienation -- the *dhimmi* syndrome. On the individual level it was characterized by a profound dehumanization.

The individual, resigned to a passive existence, developed a feeling of helplessness and vulnerability, the consequence of a permanent insecurity, servility, and ignorance. Humiliated and discriminated against, he projected onto his group a scornful, accusatory, self-destructive hatred whose intensity varied in accordance with the extent of his desire to assimilate into the majority.¹

How should the Church respond to this hegemony founded on political power and 'truth'? Some Christians understandably call for a strategic withdrawal of the Church in order to maintain the identity of the Church. Such Christians find the theology exemplified by Stanley Hauerwas attractive with his challenge to the Church to guard its distinctive social agenda. Unfortunately, the call may be only a cover-up for a loss of nerves arising from a sense of impotence against a hostile and aggressive majority. In any case, the Church in Malaysia is already marginalized. There is no need to accentuate separateness between the City of God and the City of man.

Hostile authorities have found it easy to stigmatize the Church as a legacy of colonialism to justify its legal restrictions on Christianity. It is with this concern in mind that the Church demands recognition as a legitimate participant in nation-building. Nevertheless, its primary sense of legitimacy and identity is not derived from a grudging dominant power but from the experience of divine grace that has transformed the broken lives of its members. Its confidence lies not in possessing direct control of political institutions so much as in its ability to shape the moral sensibilities of its members and to strengthen the moral bonds of concerned citizens.²

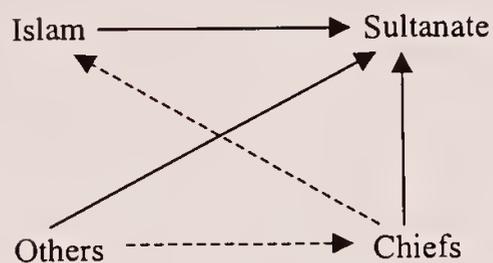
Social engagement issues from an experiential faith adequate to break the paralyzing power of the *dhimmi* syndrome. For Abraham Kuyper, only he who "enjoys uninterrupted communion with God, can properly display the glorious wing of liberty."³ Jacques Ellul expects this liberating grace to flow from the Christian community to civil society since Christian freedom goes beyond individual significance and the Christian through grace lives out his new vocation within his social cultural context. Even the moral theologians who deliberately position the Christian community as a contrast to wider society concede that they cannot narrate their moral experience in isolation from wider society.⁴ It is therefore unnecessary for the Church to surrender to the charge of being socially irrelevant.

Flux and Reflux of Power

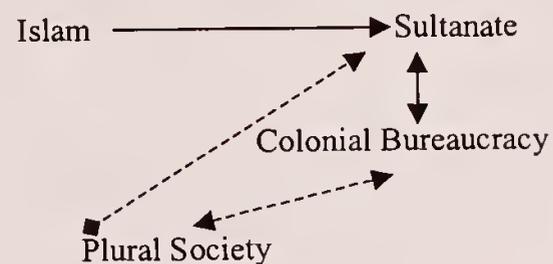
There is no fixed formula on how to move from Christian freedom to social engagement although the following dynamics should be kept in mind. First, social analysis brings out cracks and openings in a social order that appears to be so uniform that it is immune from disruption. Second, historical analysis challenges the legitimacy of the hegemonic order which presents itself as the order which best preserves the essential qualities and integrity of a unique society and should therefore be accepted as it is. Both of these approaches help in the formulation of a social agenda that takes into account the continuities and changes specific to Malaysian society. Naturally, such an agenda will address concrete social issues related to local society. That is to say, proposals become effective when they move beyond social ethics which deals with criteria of right and wrong, to political ethics which focuses on specific institutional policies.

A closer look suggests that the social fabric of an Islamic regulated society is not a seamless whole. Two characteristics are particularly relevant. First, Islamic society itself comprises diverse social groupings with varying degrees of commitment to its religion. A well-known example popularized by Clifford Geertz is found in Java where believers are divided into the categories of *priyayi* (nobility), *santri* (scripturalist), and *abangan* (folk religionist). The lack of homogeneity in Islamic society arose because of its historic *modus operandi* of adherence and conversion in the propagation of religion. Hence, the continual tension between folk Islam and Scripturalist Islam. Wang GangWu has helpfully outlined how competing power groups have dynamically evolved in the Malaysian context.⁵

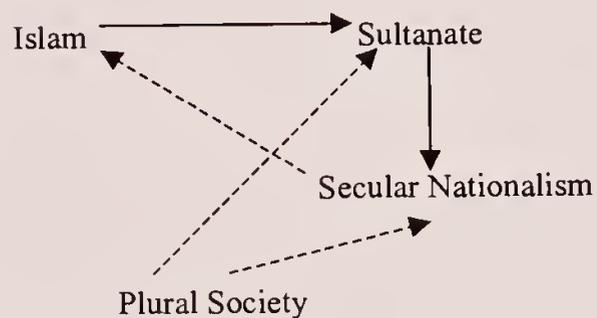
1) *Kerajaan* (Pre-colonial government)



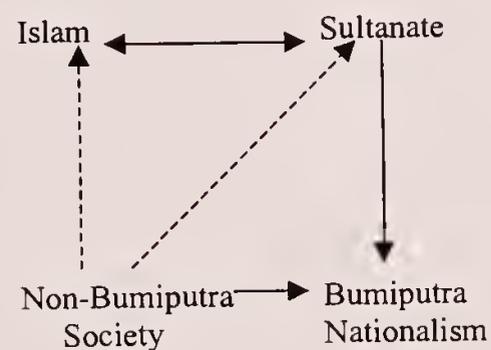
2) Before Independence



3) Sixties



4) Eighties



-----> Weakened/flawed respect for authority

The dynamic situation should not lead the analyst to overlook the foundation of Malay/Muslim society which has remained unchanged through history. The identity of this society is essentially grounded on the politics of ethnic-nationalism. In particular, Malay identity is founded on a political memory of the Malacca Sultanate in the 15th century. The State was founded on an ideology where the citizens submit to the Sultan as

the 'Protector', without concern for the morality or immorality of his exercise of power so long as he successfully provides for the well being of his subjects.

The legitimacy of the Sultanate is expressed through a theatre of rituals and symbols of power. Historians have noted how the 'invention of traditions' seek to "inculcate values and norms of behavior through repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. . . with a suitable historic past." These traditions confer legitimacy to the social order as "rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities so "natural" as to require no definition other than self-assertion."⁶ The power of the Sultan was further reinforced when he came to be regarded as the shadow of Allah with the advent of Islam.

Under these new circumstances the power of the Sultan may well acquire the trappings of absoluteness. But Anthony Milner in his book, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya*, pointed out that in the absence of a state bureaucracy, his power was limited. The Sultan depended on the cooperation of feudal chiefs to implement his rule. More significantly, with the advent of colonialism and new educational institutions a new class of elite exploited the media and was able to mobilize itself to formulate new social ideologies. They were even able to disseminate in the media views that were contrary to reigning court ideology.⁷

Following the historical analysis just outlined above, Christian social activists today should analyze how current forces of globalization shaking social institutions and current political ferment generate opportunities for social engagement. A case may be found among younger intellectuals who are currently prepared to enter into public debate without demanding immediate Islamic validation for their discourse. This new development arose after the power struggle between the Prime Minister and his Deputy. It has suddenly become evident to many Muslims that the religious piety of the antagonists is not sufficient to prevent a violent struggle for power between them. Indeed, Islam could not forestall the violent struggle because it only offers suggestions on what virtues a good ruler should embody without addressing the problem of political succession. This was already evident in the schisms that followed the death of prophet Muhammad. Confidence in the political institutions, the police and the judiciary and even the *Ulama* deteriorated and worsened when these institutions executed brute force or deception to gain political victory in the name of religion.

Intellectuals who have become disillusioned with political abuse of religion now address issues of social justice in terms of common morality, rights and responsibility of citizenship, good governance and ways to strengthen constitutional democracy in a plural society without restricting their discourse on terms set within Islam. This is evident among participants in the debates sponsored by the most established internet news site on Malaysia, MALAYSIAKINI. This development is unprecedented in Malaysian history and challenges Christians to join the debates and shape public discourse where all citizens can receive a fair hearing and not be brushed aside merely because of their religious background. Whether this will succeed in bringing about a citizenry that transcends racial and religious barriers remains to be seen.

On the other hand, the onslaught of Modernity and globalization may also create a backlash if a sense of anxiety descends upon the Malay/Muslim society. This is well captured by Marshall Berman.

To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are. . . . modernity can be said to unite all mankind. But it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity; it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish. To be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx said, 'all that is solid melts into air.'⁸

A sobering caution should here be stressed since global forces that bring about instability can also generate fascistic reactions. Roger Griffin, drawing from the insights of Eric Fromm on the fear of freedom of the masses, suggests that Fascism is more likely to emerge when the project of Modernity generates an unmanageable future and brings with it a heightened sense of insecurity. This danger is particular acute in Malaysia because of the official ideology of hegemonic ethnic-nationalism or Malay supremacy (*Ketuanan Melayu*) and Islamic political monism which insists on integrating the state and religion. The historical consciousness of a community which relies on "The Protector" serves as a potent force to drive the community to place itself under an authoritarian leadership, whether that is embodied in a political party (UMNO) or a 'benevolent dictator'.

It is not surprising that the Malay/Muslim community views any criticism of its policies as a direct challenge to the security and stability of its social order. Any social group that shows the potential to challenge the hegemony of the community is swiftly decimated whether through new oppressive legislation, police intimidation or even the 'brown shirts' in the street.

It would be foolhardy for Christians to mount a direct challenge to this political hegemony. But is it not the case that when everything becomes political, the very act of declaring oneself non-political is a most political act? I have in mind the shrewd decision Abdul Rahman Wahid (Gus Dur) made when he declared his organization, the *Nhadathul Ulama* (NU) as a non-political organization. It was an declaration of freedom in a context in which President Suharto wanted all organizations to become political so that they would have to follow the rules of the game set up by him. It must be stressed however that NU redirected its energy to grass-root welfare work and cultural development. A similar strategy was adopted by the present Pope in his struggle against a totalitarian communist government in Poland. It is by no accident that Gus Dur is now the President of Indonesia while the Catholic church has displaced the communist government in Poland.

These considerations suggest that the Church should give priority to developing cultural bases for social influence. A long term strategy, however, demands the patience of discipleship as a social ethic after the manner expounded by John Yoder in his last book, *For the Nations.* Christians in Malaysia do not have to look far to find an instructive

example. The Buddhists in Malaysia are supposed to be other-worldly. Yet they are remarkably successful in penetrating the Chinese community through a strategic welfare program of welfare and participation in voluntary associations. They have gained acceptance and respectability after having served faithfully in the Chinese NGOs for 30 years and they increasingly provide leadership in many social organizations. A recent off-the-cuff decision by a minister to introduce moral education to the Chinese schools based on materials prepared by the Buddhists is indicative of the moral and cultural influence of Buddhism within in the Chinese community.

Resisting Islamic Monism

Griffin's study demands a theological response that will expose the psychological defect of depending on strong 'kings' to protect the welfare of the community, precisely because faith in the king (or the political party) is often a substitute for faith in God. One wonders if this has become the case for the Malay/Muslim community.⁹ Monistic governments are allowed to usurp power because citizens are lulled into complacency by the high ideals of political propaganda. Who can question the ideals and good intentions behind many public slogans declaring the goal of the government to create a just society? However, slogans have often served as rhetoric to hide and excuse political abuse of power. We do well to remember Blaise Pascal's ironic words, "Man is neither angel nor beast. When he tries to live like an angel, he acts like a beast."

The ability of the state to encroach into all facets of social life with minimum protest from society is testimony to a moral vacuum in the public sphere in modern times. It also raises questions regarding the ability of Islam to forestall the emergence of authoritarian governments which operate with a veneer of democratic legitimacy (since the ruling elite is Muslim, may it be concluded that such authoritarian developments themselves are symptomatic of increasing Islamic values in the political processes?).

A sense of moral realism is necessary to forestall attempts by ruling authorities to gain unchecked power. This is expressed in the classical words of Reinhold Niebuhr, "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary." That is to say, because human beings are created in the image of God, he possesses the capacity to practice democracy. Conversely, because of his fallenness and capacity to do evil, democracy becomes a necessity.

Richard Neuhaus echoes similar Christian concerns in his argument for a limited government.

Democratic government is limited government. It is limited in the claims it makes and in the power it seeks to exercise. Democratic government understands itself to be accountable to values and truth which transcend any regime or party. . . . In addition, limited government means a clear distinction between the state and society. The state is not the whole of society, but is one important actor of society. Other institutions--notably the family, the Church, educational, economic and cultural enterprises -- are at least equally important actors in the society. They do not exist or act by sufferance of the state.

Rather, these spheres have their own peculiar sovereignty which must be respected by the state.¹⁰

What has Christianity to offer in the quest for a just democratic order? In this regard, I find recent discussion on subsidiarity among the Catholics and the theology of sphere sovereignty in Dutch Calvinism helpful. Theologians of sphere sovereignty begin with the idea that God has built into each sphere of society its own integral laws of operation. The corollary is the distribution of authority over various centres of life. The outcome is a safeguard against any one sphere usurping control over other spheres of operations. It is important though to stress that a theistic view of life is necessary to avoid the elevation of any one sphere into idolatrous significance, the fragmentation of life and polarization of society. The unity of social life and the diversity of community is ensured.

Structural pluralism (sphere sovereignty/sphere stewardship) for society highlights the Christian's concern that the state should not be seen as an autonomous entity but as a sphere of human activity that is accountable to the Creator. It insists that the state is not a human creation after the manner described by the European thinkers of the Enlightenment such as Locke or Rousseau. It provides the rationale for the rejection of the dominance of a totalitarian state, be it Marxist or Fascist. It demands that power, authority and accountability be rightfully distributed in various authority-centres of social life. Contrary to the pretensions of any totalitarian regime which regards itself as absolute and as a law unto itself, the Calvinist doctrine of sphere stewardship reminds the state to be judged according to the divine principle of justice and peace. Finally, the concept of sphere-sovereignty emphasizes that Christian redemption is not the abstract salvation of individual souls. It is, instead, a re-creation of society and the cosmos. It promotes concern for social renewal and responsible living in society.

The case for structural pluralism has so far been argued on theological grounds. But support for this view may be found in a recent sociological work written by Richard Neuhaus and Peter Berger, *To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policies*. The authors argue that the key to overcoming the deterioration of communal relationships lies in the recognition and restoration of "mediating structures" such as the family, neighborhood, church and voluntary associations that promote a sense of purpose and meaning in society. Unfortunately, these islands of personal warmth and meaning are being swamped by bureaucratic mega structures and corporations of modern society. People find themselves unable to identify with such impersonal structures. Hence, the increasing sense of alienation and apathy. However, the restoration of the "mediation structures" will promote meaningful and personal participation in the public order.

Such suggestions highlight the need for Christians to be informed by a social theology as well as a comprehensive understanding of politics (not social ethics). Without a well-thought out framework, Christian activists will remain unable to prioritize their goals for social engagement. Indeed, they will end up always reacting to an agenda set by the dominant Muslim groups.

II. Dialog and Democratic Deliberation

The atmosphere at the meeting during our visit to the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (arguably the top Islamic intellectual think tank in the world with its team of 20 post-doctoral fellows) was one of apprehension mixed with expectations. The speaker, Prof. Syed Naquib Al-Attas, the renowned Islamic philosopher, was addressing an audience of Christian bishops and their advisers. He is known to be a forthright man who does not mince his words. At least those of us there could count on a frank and genuine inter-religious dialog.

Naquib intoned, "We know that each religion has its own distinctive doctrines. We can dispute with one another over doctrines for all eternity. But we should focus our dialog on ethical issues." His words were reassuring at one level. He was prepared to acknowledge that Christians and Muslims had in common enough that was necessary to begin a fruitful dialog. Yet I could not help but feel a sense of disappointment as the meeting progressed. There was, effectively only one speaker who relished the opportunity to address or advise the national Christian elite. He spent most of his time dwelling on the need to resist the pernicious influence of secularism. It was obviously an important issue, but it did not occur to him that the Christians may also want to discuss other issues. Obviously dialog means different things to different people.

The Christian leaders could only raise questions to express their concerns about new Islamic social policies which restricted religious freedom. No one tried to challenge answers that were unsatisfactory, perhaps because this was just the Asian way of being a polite guest. It was likely that the ambience, seating arrangement and pre-arranged program effectively convinced any potential questioner that it would be futile to attempt a more interrogative dialog. Something was amiss even though we had the right group of people with theoretical sophistication and practical competence in religious matters. In the absence of a common purpose and therefore a commonly agreed upon agenda, the dialog that we hoped would produce mutual understanding was not to be.

Would bringing in speakers from different religions help? In another meeting in a local university, we had speakers representing Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism. Each speaker gave a 15 min presentation related to the theme of religion and morality. The speakers then answered questions fielded by the audience. But given the time constraint and the obvious need to simplify their presentations to an audience of lay people, the speakers ended up posturing rather than grappling seriously with substantive issues. The latter would require participants to present their convictions without glossing over conflicting truth claims so that their validity can be debated in a climate of civility and mutual respect.

Interestingly, religious dialog takes on a different hue when local Ulamas meet with foreign experts. I have in mind the seminars on religion and society that were jointly sponsored by IKIM (Institute of Islamic Understanding) and Goethe Institute or the MACEE (Malaysian and American Council for Educational Exchange) where experts representing Malaysian Islam and German Christians or American Universities were

given ample time to present their views. However the sponsors made it a point to invite only those western scholars who out of goodwill, will basically affirm Islam rather than engage in critical dialog.

Why was there a difference in the way the local *Ulamas* treated the foreign Christian experts and the local Christian experts? Dialog was not so much an occasion to work out differences as a ritual extend mutual recognition. As such, Muslims refuse to dialog with local Christians since this would confer recognition to them. Meetings with local Christians must be structured in such a way as to ensure that Muslims enjoy greater opportunities to express their views. In contrast, the meetings are structured to ensure equal opportunities when local Muslims dialog with Westerners. In this way recognition for our local Muslims is secured.

✓
need for
Westerners.

Sometimes a meeting merely becomes an occasion of disingenuous condescension. For example, the *Mentri Besar* (Chief Minister) of Kelantan once facetiously told a group of Christian leaders that since Christians support morality they could not object to the implementation of the *Shariah* law that includes stoning for adultery and cutting off hands of thieves. He quipped, "all we are doing is to concretize it into legal policies which the non-Islamic religions lack anyway." He was obviously operating on the assumption that Christianity, being a religion of grace, has no resources to legislate morality or regulate society.

This incident highlights how vital it is for participants to acquire the ability to transcend their religious and ethical framework and adopt what Hannah Arendt calls 'enlarged mentality' or 'representative thinking'. Seyla Benhabib describes this as "the capacity to represent to oneself the multiplicity of viewpoints, the variety of perspectives, the layers of meaning which constitute a situation." In other words, good and acceptable moral judgments arise from an exercise of reversibility of perspective either by actually listening to all involved or by representing to ourselves imaginatively the many perspectives of those involved.¹¹

The formality that accompanied the meeting concealed the fact that the participants operated with different conceptions as to what constitutes a sufficient context for dialog. Indeed, it is harder for *Ulamas* – who recognize no independent dialogic space situated between the state and the family – to conceive of a public meeting that transcends the official purposes of the State. Benhabib offers some valuable insights on different conceptions of dialog situations (or public space). She begins with Hannah Arendt who notes that the public space becomes agonistic when participants in a morally homogeneous and politically egalitarian society compete for recognition, precedence and acclaim. In contrast, an associational public space emerges whenever "men act together in concert" whether as pressure groups in a democracy or as dissidents under a tyranny. Constructive collective action arises when men of good will converse together in the associational public space. However, Arendt has been criticized by Liberals like Bruce Ackerman and John Rawls for failing to be attentive to the institutional preconditions that must be fulfilled for genuine dialog to take place. Such a recognition will make evident

and address the connection between power and legitimacy by proposing a procedural solution.

Rawls argues,

Just as a political conception of justice needs certain principles of justice for the basic structure to specify its content, it also needs certain guidelines of enquiry and publicly recognized rules of assessing evidence to govern its application. Otherwise there is no agreed way of determining whether these principles are satisfied, and for settling what they require of particular institutions, or in particular situations. . . And given the fact of pluralism, there is, I think, no better methods of, and the public knowledge available to common sense, and the procedures and conclusions of science when these are not controversial.¹²

One recourse is to work towards thin and overlapping consensus. This is typified in many communiqués and media statements which follow conferences that have attracted media attention. Thin consensus is not without value, insofar as it encourages further dialog and possibly calls for more inclusive social policies.

It is unfortunate that the Liberal procedural solution envisages a posture of 'conversational restraint' where participants, in the interest of neutrality, avoid raising concrete differences. They should each seek to identify normative premises that all political participants find reasonable. But does this requirement not amount to an amputation of political deliberation from the other dimensions of social life from which political action draws its significance, such as life in voluntary associations? Benjamin Barber remarked that the move appears to be "an antipathy to democracy and its sustaining institutional structures (participation, civic education, political activism) and a 'thin' rather than strong version of political life in which citizens are spectators and clients while politicians are professionals who do the actual governing."

Seyla Benhabib argues that the liberal principle of dialogic neutrality "is too restrictive and frozen in application to the dynamics of power struggles in actual political processes. A public life, conducted according to the principle of liberal dialogic neutrality, would not only lack agonistic dimensions of politics, in Arendtian terms, but more severely, it would restrict the scope of public conversation in ways that would be inimical to the interests of oppressed groups. . . liberalism ignores the "agonistic" dimension of public-political life."¹³ As such, dialog must highlight the inherent difference that we must accept and incorporate into social policies.

A more critical and inclusive model of public space and dialog is found in Jurgen Habermas' proposal of ideal speech situation and discourse ethics. Habermas suggests, "The goal of coming to an understanding is to bring about an agreement that terminates in the intersubjective mutuality of reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another. Agreement is based on recognition of the corresponding validity claims of comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness and rightness."¹⁴

Habermas' ideals demand that participants come in good faith and lay out clearly the grounds of their assertions, backed with rational argumentation with the expectation that

the validity of these claims will be tested critically. Habermas insists that views which prevail under such conditions are those that are more rational – arguing, persuading and winning consent without coercion. By the same token, views that prevail exemplify and promote positive social conditions such as genuineness, integrity, fairness, equality and democratic consensus. These outcomes are more than pragmatic expedience since they flow from rational consensus with its immanent normativity. Habermas, however, rejects any suggestion that these norms become normative because they spring from an overarching metaphysical framework. Instead, they prevail if they create free space that resists instrumental and system rationality that “colonize life-worlds” while promoting good life of individuals through democratic means.

Habermas adopts a cognitive approach, confident that moral problems can be solved through rational and cognitive means. He is confident that norms derived from his discourse ethics will be accepted since the discourse merely universalizes moral principles embedded in dialog situation, and is impartial in its implementation. In other words, a norm is valid only if “all affected can accept the consequences and the side effects its general observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction for everyone’s interests (and these consequences are preferred to those of known alternative possibilities).”¹⁵

Notwithstanding the rigor of Habermas’ analysis, I cannot help but feel that his confident expectation of moral agreement through a universalized rationality and his ideal speech situation have an unreality about them if we bear in mind the interminable disagreements among the best minds in the academia. Further weaknesses become clear. First, focusing on universal rationality leads to insufficient attention given to the role power plays in dialog especially in dialogic situations which bring together partners with unequal resources. It is only too easy for the assertive participants to overwhelm the weaker ones under the guise of more winsome articulation, or for the majority to impose their views on others.

Nevertheless, Habermas’ requirements serves as an effective regulative ideal which effectively unmasks majoritarians who are more interested in manipulation rather than dialog. Benhabib builds on these Habermasian ideals by formalizing a procedure of “historically self-conscious universalism” which includes a set of rules that reflect the moral ideal that “we ought to respect each other as beings whose standpoint is worthy of equal consideration (the principle of universal moral respect)” and that “we ought to treat each other as concrete beings whose capacity to express this standpoint we ought to enhance by creating, wherever possible, social practices embodying the discursive ideal (the principle of egalitarian reciprocity).”¹⁶

Second, the dialogic self envisaged by Habermas lose their moral concreteness given his focus on abstract criteria and rarefied universal rationality leading to a neglect of the positive resources embodied in the moral traditions of participants. In fact, we doubt if there are unencumbered self with universal rationality. As Mary Midgley once quipped, no one speaks universal languages. In contrast, dialog promises depth and fruitfulness only if participants are able to bring maximum input in the first place. Therein lies the

dilemma: inclusion of moral diversity enriches the dialog. But this also increases the likelihood of irresolvable conflict. Perhaps proponents of Habermasian dialog ignore the reality of such conflicts as it only serves to confirm the essentially contestable nature of concepts like good life, justice and diverse primary goods of democracy.¹⁷

✓ On the other hand, acknowledgement of the essentially contestable nature of dialogic issues will encourage a more tempered acceptance of pluralism which need not be subsumed under some universal criteria or rationality. Still, dialog must address the issue of pluralism without succumbing to relativism. After all, is it not the presupposition of relativism that encourages some participants to resort to power manipulation? The insights of Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor on evaluating traditional bound rationality offer some promising alternatives to coercive universal rationality on the one hand and sentimental and subversive relativism on the other.

MacIntyre agrees that we cannot appeal to 'neutral' criteria to adjudicate between competing traditions. Nor should we compare rival positions against independent facts so much as to lay out how the new conclusion must be accepted on premises which both sides accept. Taylor explains further MacIntyre's position: "What may convince us that a given transition from X to Y is a gain is not only or even so much how X and Y deal with the facts, but how they deal with one another. . . In adopting Y, we make better sense not just of the world, but of our history of trying to explain the world, part of which has been played out in terms of X."¹⁸

Taylor modestly suggests that the claim is not that Y is absolutely true, but that whatever is 'ultimately true,' "Y is better than X. It is, one might say, less false. . . : whatever else turns out to be true, you can improve your epistemic position by moving from X to Y; this is a gain."¹⁹ Taylor emphasizes that such a move does not amount to a claim to have arrived at the final rational explanation. It is, rather, a choice for the best explanation so far. More important than merely being more rational is a concomitant requirement to be morally responsible for our epistemological choices.

Being tradition bound, we acknowledge then that moral discernment and responsibility never occur *ex nihilo*. Our choices and ethical justification are inherently the outcome of the moral resources that we draw from our religious and cultural tradition. We must therefore address the reality that there are different ethical tradition in our pluralistic society. That being the case, the challenge then for each religion in a pluralistic society is to demonstrate that it has the resources necessary to build an inclusive society that is just and moral.

Covenant Politics in Society

✓ The Christian tradition has historically favored the following criteria for ethical valuation of competing moral choices. Any ethics will have to display: 1) power to release us from destructive alternatives; 2) ways of seeing through current distortions; 3) room to keep us from having to resort to violence; 4) a sense for the tragic – how meaning transcends power.²⁰ It should be noted that the criteria recognize the dark side of human moral existence which is not addressed by proponents for universal rationality. The criteria are

not meant to be applied mechanically for the sole purpose of rational valuation. Instead the very adoption of these criteria must be seen as a commitment to a way of life, a determined effort to embody the moral vision in a community.

Such an outlook suggests that bringing one's religion into the project of building a shared society does not necessarily result in dominance and coercion. It is granted that some people hesitate to bring in religion because religion has been exploited to legitimize unjust social orders. However, religion per se is neither intrinsically conservative or revolutionary. Religion is only part of a complex of social factors, which usually includes race and economics, leading to any exploitation and conflict. On the other hand it can be argued that a healthy polity is dependent on values sustained by religion. The challenge is to find an appropriate placing of religion in society in a social covenant, a democratic constitution. The following proposals should be worthy of consideration:

1. Religions must renounce abuse of power

I think the appropriate response from all religions is to reject publicly any abuse of religion for political gains and to avail their ethical resources for the building of a consensus that makes common life possible in a multi-religious society. We welcome the humility of religious leaders reported in an article in the *New Straits Times* 2 Sept. 1993) on the "Declaration of a Global Ethic" from the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago. The Declaration says, "Time and again we see leaders and members of religions incite aggression, fanaticism, hate and xenophobia -- even inspire and legitimize violent and bloody conflicts. . . . We are filled with disgust." The Parliament further recommended four ethical imperatives: 1) a culture of non-violence and reverence for all life, 2) a culture of social solidarity with a just economic system, 3) a culture of tolerance and honesty and 4) a culture of equal treatment for, and partnership between, men and women.

2. Religions must offer their ethical resources vital for building consensus and harmony in society.

The studies of Robert Bellah and his team of researchers highlight that the problem of contemporary society is not merely the precariousness of the bonds of citizenship but a more fundamental problem of people's inability to bond and build relationships.²¹ Obviously such bonding needs to be stimulated by primal patterns of association exemplified by religion. Religious social functions need to go beyond individual therapy (self-actualization, fulfillment) and contribute directly to the common life of society.

It is precisely when individual needs are adequately met that religion is put forward as a foundational tool for social projects. That is to say, religion contributes its best in the nurture of robust moral individuals. These individuals will in turn bring morality into the public square and the market place without harboring an illusion of religious aggrandizement by religious clerics who see themselves as harbingers of social progress. The apt phrase coined by Reinhold Niebuhr, "Moral Men in Immoral Society", succinctly captures the positive function of religion. Religion then promotes healthy national life by ensuring that it is underpinned by "communities of character".

Democracy has emerged as the unchallenged political ideal in the third world. But democracy requires disciplined citizens in order to function properly. John Wogaman explains,

A democratic society is well served by a citizenry not fanatically attached to single issues or causes but capable of rounded judgment and a careful weighing of ambiguous alternatives. That maturity is grounded, first, in a secure sense of personal worth. And it is at this point that the personal faith of Christians is a distinct contribution to democratic disciplines.²²

It is vital that each religion spells out how its beliefs specifically contribute to the building of a common society where human dignity is respected and where the only force accepted is the force of truth in a fair and equal dialogue. The purpose is to set up a social and political mechanism that promotes virtue and compromise. Public democracy is sustained by private virtues that enable individuals to set aside personal interests. A sense of transcendent authority typified by the Christian God of grace will encourage politics to be conducted by rules of courtesy, mutual respect, fair dealings and personal integrity that cross communal lines. With such democratic disciplines potential conflicts are more likely to be resolved and demagogues will find it more difficult to exploit 'primordial sentiments' for their personal gain.

3. We need a public philosophy that allows for diversity in unity

Social conflicts arise when different communities fail to practice tolerance and mutual acceptance that recognizes differences. All too often national integration is implemented on terms set by the dominant community because it is assumed that unity requires homogeneity. Should we not instead accept plurality within unity as a given reality in the contemporary world even though we want to place plurality within a wider framework of transcendent values? Speaking on behalf of Christianity (and I shall assume that such a defence is also a possibility for other religions) I want to suggest that democratic pluralism is a practical consequence of the Christian doctrine of Trinity. Max Stackhouse offers a pertinent Trinitarian grounding for democratic pluralism.

For those of us who believe that the Trinitarian God is the true God, pluralism is a normative theological belief as well as an ethical or social belief. The metaphysical-moral grounds for dealing with pluralism are at hand. Pluralism within a dynamic unity, understood in terms of persons in community and the community of persons, . . . it gives metaphysical-moral articulation to the proper foundations and limits of pluralism. Christians oppose monolithic definition of ultimate reality, but their pluralistic beliefs are governed by a broader belief in unity. The triune God is integrated. Thus polytheism, the theological form of pluralism without unity, is condemned as strongly as is imperious singleness without differentiation. In using these terms, we see that both pluralism and unity can become blessings or curses, depending on whether our view of pluralism has an ultimate coherence, or whether our view of unity has a place for diversity.²³

We must accept ^{that} diversity will go a long way to encourage genuine debate and exploration of new perspectives. This ensures a people remain capable of adaptation and

development. Rather than relativizing the search for truth, the challenge of competing faiths promotes an understanding of the complexity of truth in personal beliefs and social life.

In conclusion we should recognize that each one of us enters the public sphere as people shaped by our prior commitments that are pre-political. The public sphere is a place for dialogue, bargaining and compromises. Compromise as such should not be seen as a dirty word, or a reflection of moral timidity. It is a responsible act necessary for fallen men to live peacefully with one another, without which democracy will be replaced by the law of the jungle.

ENDNOTES

¹ Bath Yeor, *The Dhimmis* (Associated UP 1985), p.143.

Notes on hegemony

Gramsci – Hegemony occurs “when the intellectual, moral and philosophical leadership provided by the class or alliance of class fractions which is ruling, successfully achieves its objective of providing the fundamental outlook for the whole society.”

Steve Luke explains how those in power attempt to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial. To assume that the absence of grievances equals genuine consensus is simply to rule out the possibility of manipulated consensus by definitional fiat. *Power: A Radical View* (MacMillan, 1974) p.24.

When a powerful government controls all mediums of information and utilizes them to legitimize even its arbitrary demands of power the character of legality is no guarantee for justice. Havel observes how the legal system is exploited to put authorities in good light; after all, the authorities provide the rules and procedure for the whole game. In effect the legal code provides a facade of legitimacy. “It wraps the base exercise of power in the noble apparel of the letter of the law; it creates the pleasing allusion that justice is done, society protected and the exercise of power objectively regulated.” Vaclav Havel, *Living the Truth* (Faber, 1986), p.95.

Notes on Dhimmi

Islam has traditionally relied on a long term strategy of isolating any minority group under its control. It subjects the besieged community to continual harassment and humiliation so as to render the group vulnerable to assimilation. This is reinforced by a set of restrictions that emphasize the inferior status of minority groups, which includes the following:

Imposing on *dhimmis* a heavy burden of taxation, *jizyah* and *kharaj* in the name of protection; excluding *dhimmis* from major government positions and vital economic activities; exclusion from the making, interpretation and application of law in the shariah courts; allowing token presence in any representative body, including the Parliament, merely to legitimize Islamic rule; restricting public expression of non-Islamic religions and imposing compulsory Islamic education in public schools.

² James B. Nelson, *Moral Nexus: Ethics of Christian Identity and Community* (Philadelphia, Westminster, 1971), pp. 94-99 and Bruce C. Birch & Larry L. Rasmussen, *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life*, 2nd. ed., (Minneapolis: Augsburg 1989), p. 132. Also helpful is the view of the church as a *habitus* for moral action. Cf. Pierre Boudieu, *Logic of Practice* (Stanford U. Press, 1980) p. 52.

³ Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, p. 49; Richard Mouw, *God Who Commands* (Cornell UP, 1990) pp. 69-70.

⁴ Jacques Ellul, *The Ethics of Freedom* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 119, 141-142; Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Duckworth, 1984), p. 204.

⁵ Wang Gangwu, *Community and Nation* (Heinemann, 1981).

⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, and T. O. Rangers, ed., *The Invention of Tradition* (CUP 1983), p.14. See also B. R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso 1983).

⁷ Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya* (CUP 1995).

⁸ Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air* (Penguin 1988). Quoted in David Harvey, *The Condition of PostModernity* (Blackwell 1990), p. 11

⁹ For example, Paul pointed out in the book of Romans how some Jews relied on the Law as a shield against the need to be confronted by God, only to deny themselves of the assurance of justification. Is it not precisely the lack of assurance that renders a community vulnerable to dependence on authoritarian leaders?

¹⁰ John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square* (Eerdmans, 1984), p. 90.

¹¹ Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self* (RKP 1992), pp. 53 – 54.

¹² Quoted in Benhabib, p. 101.

¹³ Quoted in Benhabib, p. 100.

¹⁴ Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?" in Jurgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Heinemann, 1975).

¹⁵ Jurgen Habermas, *Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification* (MIT Press 1990), p. 65.

¹⁶ Benhabib, *Situating the Self*, p. 31.

¹⁷ For an approach that acknowledges the irreducible diversity of social goods, see Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice* (Basic Books 1983).

¹⁸ Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (Harvard UP, 1995), p. 43.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

²⁰ Stanley Hauerwas, "From System to Story: An Alternative Pattern for Rationality in Ethics" co-written with David B. Burrell in Stanley Hauerwas, *Truthfulness and Tragedy* (Notre Dame: Uni. Notre Dame, 1977), p.35.

²¹ Robert Bellah et. al., *Habits of the Heart* (Harper & Row, 1985), p.137.

²² John P. Wogaman, *Christian Perspectives on Politics* (SCM, 1988), p.175.

²³ Max Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy* (Eerdmans, 1987) p. 163.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

Politics of Recognition

Society is not static. On the contrary its institutions are maintained or undergo a process of continual construction and reconstruction following cues from dominant patterns of imagined community (Anderson and Castoriadis)

Rhetoric and practical reason and normative criticism of society (Farrell)

Agreement on social goods and spheres of justice (Walzer)

Church as Polis

Church as contrast community – prophetic witness

Church as bridging community – priestly witness

Christian identity through discourse and practices

Renewal, Reconciliation and Inclusive community

Empowerment for Democratic life and Collective Action

Framing collective action.

Evaluation of my own involvement in:

Education strategies – nurturing moral skills in politics of relationality

Law – Awareness of and defence of constitutional rights

Media and information service – communities of print in the imagined community

(Anderson)

Christian Federation of Malaysia — RC, mainline + Evangelical —
represents 85% of the Malay people.

Intra-^{church} ~~church~~ — from the fellowships + structures.
Para-cultural —
Counter-cultural —

1. Preserve the identity — martyrs
2. Achieve a mass — growth
3. Avoid coercion.

Not tolerance — but mutual respect.

Abraham Heschel writes in *The Sabbath*. “[I]t is not a thing that lends significance to a moment; it is a moment that lends significance to things.”

Often, suffering forces the significance. A friend’s 40-year-old brother collapsed in a Foot Locker retail store, the news gutting her life. She lived the dream: three beautiful, well-adjusted kids, the sprawling house in a new subdivision, her husband on the corporate dole. After the funeral, weeks later, one of her friends brought over some photos of a beautiful, early winter afternoon. The photos showed her children, happy, bundled, joyful. She looked at the date on the photos. The time was the exact moment her brother had died—only she didn’t know it at the time, of course, while the photos were being snapped. The phone call came several hours after.

Later she said, “While my life was merrily happening, it was also changing, in ways I could never imagine.”

That is the true nature of life; we try to control it and in the process it controls us, picking us up randomly, like a tornado, and dropping us into a foreign place. So much of suburban life seems to be about preventing the tornado, an act as ridiculous as controlling an incoming storm. Isn’t feeling safe in case of accident or storm the reason most folks buy SUVs? But no SUV can prevent the call from the police in the middle of the night. Or the news from an unfaithful spouse. Or the sudden heart attack. Or depression. Or kids who have it.

My point is not about what one drives. Others can moralize about the economics and politics of SUVs. I’m trying to identify a much larger, unchallenged assumption about life that seems to prevail in, though it’s not limited to, the suburbs—that with more effort and organization, life can become sure. I’ve often wondered if that’s why poverty and suffering hide more easily in the neat-looking suburbs. To admit to a less than perfect life is to betray the tacit code of honor that we all agree to when we buy that first house in the Pine Hills subdivision.

Other than my frequent business commutes into downtown Chicago, the only time I brush up against poverty is when I patronize the local Starbucks coffee shop in its western suburb of Glen Ellyn. On a park bench just down the sidewalk from the shop, I often encounter a street person—often the same person—staring blankly at Lands’ End couples with babies heading for a latte and biscotti. I’ve even bought this senior citizen a cup of decaf, the house blend (when she wasn’t already holding one donated from another guilt-ridden local).

In the rural environments in which I grew up, poverty didn’t hide as well, and opulence was less conspicuous. Or was it more conspicuous? Perhaps we didn’t feel as if the life of the wealthy were just beyond our grasp. In the countryside, as in many urban environments, much of life stands in stark relief to itself, and the nature of life and death is more accepted. Perhaps rural inhabitants have a more intrinsic knowledge about the ritual of

death—the slaughter of chickens and cattle—a deeper understanding of the bloody cycle of life. Many farmers weather years short on cash and long on debt, subsisting on borrowed money, even for groceries. In many smaller rural communities, even as large as Bozeman, Montana (a community of about 30,000), landing a job at Wal-Mart may mean a buck or so above minimum wage and health insurance.

But suffering is no respecter of environments. It’s not that suburbanites don’t suffer as much as rural or city folks, but that perhaps we struggle more to deny suffering’s reality. But no matter how we hedge against the future, the transitory nature of life gets revealed.

And sometimes we have to go out of our way to have it revealed. One way to confront this denial is as old as the Christian faith: voluntarily entering into the suffering of others. For some it’s a weekly or monthly visit to a nursing home. For others it’s taking into their homes foster children or pregnant teenagers for short stints. For one friend, it has been volunteering at the

local homeless shelter.

My friend says this has not been a radically transforming spiritual experience. For a few years, he carped about how the interchurch homeless ministry relegates evangelism to the periphery, how it has aggravated homelessness by treating the homeless as guests, and so on. But in the course of working breakfast, dinner, and midnight shifts, he’s learned to let go of his preconceptions of “successful homeless ministry” and begin to simply learn to *be with* the homeless. His most rewarding moments come after breakfast is served and he stands with the smokers outdoors in the patio, talking with them, mostly just listening to their stories—often narcissistic and far-fetched tales of injustices visited upon them, but sometimes poignant narratives of lives gone terribly awry. “I’m still not very good at entering into their suffering,” he says, “but my life is so sheltered with material blessings and psychologically healthy friends, it’s better than nothing. At least once a month, I’m forced to think about those who genuinely suffer.”

And as Scripture and church history teach, wherever there is suffering, there is God, and by not avoiding or ignoring it, we embrace it—and live life in full color.

Haddon Robinson, professor of preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, once said that change often comes about like this: pain + time + insight = change. Life practices like these, and others, may return to me, a middle-aged suburban male, the gift of God himself. Poking fun at Mayberry is a cliché, but it turns out that the trimmed and bucolic cul de sac is no better or worse a place to work out one’s salvation with fear and trembling. 

David Goetz is founder and president of CZ Marketing, a marketing management firm. He has been an editor at LEADERSHIP, CT’s sister publication for pastors.

**No SUV can prevent
the call from the
police in the middle
of the night. Or
the news from an
unfaithful spouse.
Or the sudden heart
attack. Or depression.
Or kids who have it.**

Damping the Fuse in

A veteran peacemaker discusses how religion can help stave off religious conflict after Saddam. An interview with Canon Andrew White

THE REV. CANON ANDREW WHITE has taken the cross of reconciliation into the harshest conflicts of the Middle East, talking regularly with leaders like Yasser Arafat and Ariel Sharon, as well as all religious leaders in Iraq. He is director of Coventry Cathedral's International Center for Reconciliation in England's West Midlands, which includes an international ministry known as the Community of the Cross of Nails. After the German Luftwaffe bombed the 14th-century Cathedral Church of St. Michael in a 1940 air raid, Anglicans made a cross from medieval nails found amid the rubble of the still-standing ruins. This cross has become the symbol of reconciliation that has driven the ministry since.

White also serves as the Archbishop of Canterbury's Special Representative to the Middle East. Based in Jerusalem, he spoke with CT's Jeff M. Sellers by telephone during a stopover in England about the religious future of post-Saddam Iraq.

What are the religious challenges in Iraq?

We're really in a very, very dangerous situation. The whole religious

future of Iraq is at a crossroads. One, we need to ensure that we can support the Christian minority, but in a way that does not segregate them from the Muslim majority. Two, we've got to be careful of the extremist influences from outside—not least the Iranian Shi'ah influences. And then we've also got to be careful of some of the Sunni Wahhabi influences and the way that they will try to pour money into institutions and things and get people on their side.

Conversations

How can the rights of Christians be protected?

We're not going to be able to do it any other way than by maintaining the positive relationships that we've created over the years—there's no way that we can put a wall around them and ghettoize them. We need to ensure that the churches in the West are engaging with the Christians in Iraq. We need to ensure that there is an open dialogue between the Shi'ah majority and the Christians.

What about protecting against the Iranian Shi'ah influence?

This is more complex. But I think the only way we can prevent that is by strengthening the moderate Shi'ah influence in Iraq. Historically, most Shi'ah are not moderates. Most of the Shi'ah

Sunni vs. Shi'ah

IRAQ'S MAJOR RELIGIOUS RIFT IS DEEP AND LONG.

Sunni and Shi'ah Muslims both believe in Islam's five pillars (faith, prayer, alms, fasting, pilgrimage), but their differences are as profound as those between Orthodox, Catholics, and Protestants.

The division originated with a dispute after Muhammad's death in A.D. 632. The Sunni (*sunna* means "custom") followed the Arabian practice of allowing a committee of elders to choose a leader, electing Abu Bakr as caliph (leader).

A second group believed the rightful heir was Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. They believe that a "divine light" passes through Muhammad's line to rightly guided Imams, who are appointed by God through the previous Imam. Ali's supporters became known as Shi'ah ("the faction").

During the decades-long power struggle that followed, an enormous segment of the Shi'ah community left Mecca and went with Ali to what is now Iraq and Iran, where Shi'ah continue to constitute the majority of Muslims. But worldwide, they remain a distinct minority: Shi'ah number 170 million while the Sunnis have more than 1 billion adherents.

These power struggles broadened into theology. The Shi'ah, for example, believe that imams are divinely inspired and should be obeyed in all matters and under all circumstances. They constitute an

independent source of authority, and wield it in both religious and political spheres. The Sunni school denies the authority of the Imams, instead believing that Muhammad and the Qur'an are the only sources of Islam. "The Sunnis have a more literal interpretation of the Qur'an," says Don Wagner, executive director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at North Park University. Consequently, the Sunnis think the Shi'ah doctrine of imams is heretical.

In addition, Shi'ahs tend to highlight injustices and are more mystical than the Sunnis, who are more pragmatic. The Shi'ah emphasis on martyrdom and suffering has attracted many dissenting groups into their fold (though the Wahhabi movement, represented today by Osama Bin Laden, arose out of a Sunni tradition). "Shi'ites always have had a sense of persecution and of being wronged," says Wagner.

The Shi'ah also wait for the return of an Imam missing since A.D. 873, which they believe will usher in a new era. The Sunni find this belief heretical as well.

—The editors

"What's the Difference Between Shi'ah and Sunni?" by Todd Hertz—a longer version of this article—is available on the web at www.christianitytoday.com/go/shiah.

ISLAM

Iraq

around the world are actually quite militant. But that has not been the case in Iraq, because there's never really been the opportunity for dissent. In the 1991 uprising, it was the Shi'ah who rose up against Saddam, and it was the Shi'ah who suffered the most. So the really difficult thing is that these people have suffered so much, and there is now a real sense of jubilation—but also a very real danger because of that.

How much of a link is there between the Iraqi Shi'ah and the Iranian Shi'ah?

All of the Iranian Shi'ah community looks to Iraq spiritually—Iraq is the historical base of the development and growth of the Shi'ah movement. Many of the great historical shrines of the Shi'ah movement are in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities. So, many, many Shi'ah from around the world want to come to Iraq, not least from Iran. Over the last three years, the Iraqis started allowing Iranians to come on pilgrimage to Iraq.

What threat do the Sunni Wahhabi pose?

There is really potential for some kind of Sunni backlash, partly because they have had all the power and now they will lose it. Saddam Hussein didn't like the Shi'ah, but he didn't like the Wahhabi either. I remember a recent meeting with Naji Saberi Ahmed, the former Iraqi foreign minister, and him saying to me, "Don't forget, Andrew, we started the war on terrorism. We find a terrorist, whether they be a Wahhabi or a Shi'ah, and we kill them." And that was true in a way. Iraq being a very secularist state would not actually entertain opposition of any sort.

Whether through funding from Qatar or Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates, some of those

Denied: An Israeli soldier stopped White from entering the besieged Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in April 2002.

radical groups will try to get some influence. They will do it by offering money—and Saddam Hussein has large unfinished projects, like the biggest mosque in the world. And it was going to be a Sunni mosque.

How much willingness is there among the Shi'ah to work with the Sunnis and the others?

It's difficult to say, but certainly our relationship with key Shi'ah leaders like Ayatollah Al Sider is extremely good. One of the most important things we did was bring these key Shi'ah leaders to both Britain and America [in 1999]. In America he was hosted by Billy Graham, and in England by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Where we really were able to engage with these people was when we were outside of Iraq.

Our approach is cross-centered, because the cross is the ultimate image of reconciliation—God's reconciling himself to the world. Even though we might not be trying to convert them, the inspiration for what we are doing is Jesus.

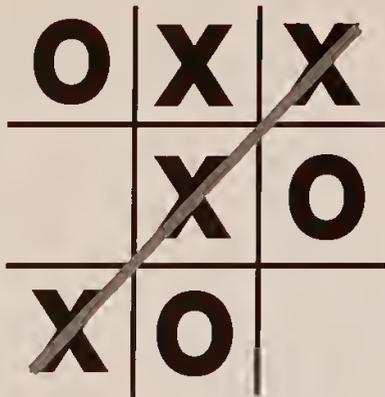
'We're really in a very dangerous situation. The whole religious future of Iraq is at a crossroads.'

—Canon Andrew White

How do the Muslims understand your Christian inspiration?
We talk a lot about Jesus, because Muslims do very much understand Jesus



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as a prophet. Those who have been to Coventry really do understand, because so much of what we do is based around the story of how our cathedral was destroyed, and how immediately we committed ourselves to the work of reconciliation and to forgiving our enemies. Even in a completely non-Christian context, there is still a great need for truth and forgiveness.

How do the Shi'ah and the Sunnis respond to talk about forgiveness?

They will say that within the Qur'an there is a call to forgive your neighbors, your enemies. But there isn't really a concept of loving your enemies. This is a radical concept.

How do they respond to the image of the cross of nails from the destroyed cathedral that symbolizes your organization?

When we presented the cross of nails to the people of Iraq, it was received by the [Shi'ah] Ayatollah, the Sunni Sheik, and the Christian patriarch. So it was quite interesting that they were all prepared to receive this symbol of the cross. They say it's been a powerful symbol. I wouldn't naturally go around displaying a cross in an Islamic setting, because that wouldn't be very wise. But certainly I have never had any problems with walking down the streets in Baghdad with my cross.

And now, with the fall of Saddam?

It's going to be a lot more difficult, because before if Saddam had accepted that you as a Christian must be there, they accepted that you must be there. So everybody was nice to us. I don't know what it's going to be like when we return in a few days. We're not going to go into Iraq and say that we want to create our reconciliation work around the image of the cross or the cross of nails, because we know that would be disastrous.

Do you have any advice on how Christian relief organizations should work in Iraq now?

The most important thing is that they are not seen in any way as pushing the gospel for food. That's absolutely key—they must ensure that anything they do or say is done in a way that will not be taken negatively, with no ulterior motive. If they're not sensitive, it could result in a major backlash against the Christians of Iraq.

OUTLOOK

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ABOUT PEOPLE

Despite War in Iraq, Muslims and Christians see 'a realizable vision of a world at peace'

By KENNETH E. BAILEY

Can Muslims and Christians seriously engage with each other in these troubled times in creative, nonviolent ways? I am a witness to a community of 30 Christian and Muslim scholars who in early April, just beyond the sound of rockets and big guns, gave a resounding "yes" in answer to that question. We met and talked about our sacred Scriptures and how we view and interpret them. This was the second occasion for such an international gathering.

Shortly after the tragedy of 9/11 George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, joined with Prince Hassan Bin Talal of the Jordanian royal family to sponsor a "bridge-building conference" of Muslim and Christian scholars. Such an effort was judged to be critical in light of heightened Muslim-Christian tensions around the world. Subsequently, 40 scholars met at Lambeth Palace, London, in January 2002.

Ten papers along with 10 responses were presented, discussed and in time published as *The Road Ahead: A Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, edited by Michael Ipgrave (London, 2002). At that time, it was deemed critical that the conversation should continue, no matter what, and that the focus of a second meeting should be "Sacred Scriptures."

A slightly different group of 30 participants met April 7-9 in Doha, Qatar, as the war raged some 400 miles to the north in Iraq. I was priv-

ileged to be a part of that gathering. Four of us were Americans: two Muslim professors, a Catholic Islamic scholar and myself. N.T. Wright of England was the only other New Testament specialist among the attendees. The Muslim contingent was entirely composed of Quranic scholars and some of the Christian participants were also Islamicists. This second conference not only met in Doha but was hosted

(and paid for) by the *amir* (ruler) of Qatar. That a conference of this nature was held in such a time and place is amazing.

In the late summer of 2002 I was told by a highly placed insider in Middle Eastern religious affairs that if war broke out in Iraq, Muslim-Christian relations all across the region would be so strained that the conference would most likely be canceled. It wasn't, and credit is primarily due to Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, the ruler of

Qatar, who bravely opted to proceed and did so with maximum national and international media coverage. On arrival at Doha airport each participant was met at the plane by a VIP car and driven to the VIP lounge. The conference opened with a formal reception and dinner hosted by the *amir* and attended by his entourage, along with some 500 leading citizens of the nation. As participants we were told, "Please wear your robes." The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, was resplendent in full-length purple robe and cross. A Roman Catholic archbishop was equally distinguished

continued on p. 4



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THE READERS' OUTLOOK

CHEERS FOR G. THOMPSON BROWN

Three cheers for G. Thompson Brown's guest viewpoint (April 7). I am sick and tired of all the moaning and groaning about the state of the church. The denomination and individual congregations are still unchristian attitudes and actions toward fellow ministers and church members with whom their views differ.

I have served more than 50 years in five presbyteries and have found earnest, powerful, faith-filled preaching and action from all points of the theological spectrum. I can find nothing in Jesus' teaching that would justify the fine-tuning of Scripture that some promote. May God bless the PC(USA) for many years to come.

ROBERT J. CRAWFORD
Southampton, Pa.

THE CHURCH MUST CHANGE

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is rapidly becoming completely irrelevant. Membership is declining as it has for decades. As a percentage of the U.S. population, we are a fraction of the percentage Presbyterians were 50 years ago.

The various factions or viewpoints within the membership continue to increase divisiveness on what are peripheral issues.

The General Assembly, moderator and Washington Office continue to focus almost exclusively on issues and positions which are not reflective of the

majority of the members of the Presbyterian Church. The church's leadership is as far out of line as the Presbyterian minister that Martin Luther King Jr. so adroitly addressed in his "Letter from the Birmingham Jail."

For the church to become relevant, the focus, particularly of the leadership, must change. The number one challenge must be not only to stop the shrinkage of membership, but to increase membership. This will happen when and if the church meets the needs of individuals by bringing Christ into their lives. Instead of trying to squeeze larger contributions from fewer members, each individual church should heed the call to increase membership and, in that way, increase the funds for God's work. At every General Assembly, let each presbytery report on changes of membership and contributions. Have churches that are growing lead discussions with those that are not. The Mormon Church and the Baptist churches are growing. So can we.

As a Reformed church we must be tolerant of members whose interpretations are different from our own and keep them as members of our church.

The second challenge of the Presbyterian Church leadership is to educate the lay members on their responsibilities as Christians, so that the members — not the professionals — take responsible positions and provide leadership on the issues of the day.

Are these changes important? Yes, if we want the Presbyterian Church to survive.

FRED MEYER
Dallas

MISUSE OF ORDERS, CONFESSIONS

That the GAPJC has upheld Redwoods Presbytery in the Katie Morrison case (March 31) is certainly welcome news. Less welcome, however, is the continuing selective application of G-6.0106b — particularly in regard to "conformity to the historic confessional standards

of the church" and "practice which the confessions call sin."

Our confessions, of course, deal with far more than sexual matters: recreation on the Sabbath is a sin (Westminster, Larger Catechism); the Roman Catholic mass is "idolatry" (Heidelberg) and "blasphemous" (Scots Confession); "the making of any representations of God," which includes pictures of Jesus, is forbidden (Second Helvetic, Larger Catechism); and loaning money at interest and market speculations is theft — "engrossing commodities to enhance the price" (Larger Catechism).

As a Presbyterian minister for more than 30 years, I will self-admit to occasionally teeing up a golf ball on Sunday, taking the Lord's Supper with my papist sister and brothers at a Roman altar, keeping a Rouault print of the crucifixion on the wall of my study and sharing the benefits of the pension plan gained through the engrossing of commodities. Never in my experience have I witnessed a candidate for the office of deacon, elder or minister of Word and Sacrament questioned on these practices "which the confessions call sin."

The very fact that there are those in the church who continue to use the *Book of Order* and the *Book of Confessions* as sticks with which to beat our gay brothers and lesbian sisters demonstrates our lack of maturity as a Christian community.

DEANE A. KEMPER
Bedford, N.H.

CORRECTION — In response to figures cited in the April 28 article (p. 4) on the PLSE Program, Jack Marcum of PC(USA) Research Services points out that surveys show that, as of 2002, 16 percent of all PC(USA) pastors were age 40 or younger and 8 percent were age 35 and younger.

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IN THIS CORNER
by Marj

Recently seen bumper sticker:
"Enjoy life. This is not a rehearsal."

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NEWS BRIEFS

End of War 'No Time for Euphoria'

By BOB SMETANA
° Religion News Service

CHICAGO — At the end of the 1991 Persian Gulf War and the post-Sept. 11 war in Afghanistan, many Americans turned their attention to other issues once fighting stopped. But with President Bush announcing an end to the war in Iraq, some interfaith leaders are trying to keep focus on the rebuilding of that country and its humanitarian crisis.

"This is not a time for euphoria," said Bob Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches. "It is a time to recognize that keeping and maintaining the peace may be more difficult than conducting this war."

The NCC, along with the Islamic Society of North America and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, sponsored a two-day domestic interfaith summit, which April 30 issued an "Urgent Call for Reflection, Hope and Action," following the Iraq war.

"We are at a moment of choice even more urgent than before the war in Iraq began," the statement reads. "We are faced with choices between hope and courage or fear and violence; between a future characterized by global solidarity, international cooperation and multilateral action or one characterized by unilateralism and wars by choice rather than necessity; continuing terrorism; unfettered efforts to extend U.S. power; and the exploitation of fear."

Sayyid Muhammad Syeed, secretary general of the Islamic Society of North America, said the Bush administration has to "be very careful" in how it

approaches rebuilding Iraq.

"We [in the United States] have been able to build a society where there is respect for diversity and there is pluralism," he said. "But these traditions cannot be imposed on other countries. Today the world is watching how we are going to deal with postwar Iraq."

The United States should learn from "mistakes in the past" in the Middle East, said Syeed. "Our greatest mistake was in 1952 when during the Cold War we imposed the shah of Iran on the people of Iran against their will."

While the shah "represented modernity" and a vision for Iran the United States supported, "unless that vision is seen as indigenous, belonging to the people, they will never accept it," Syeed said. "The result was that within one generation, whatever we had invested in Iran was lost. We do not want to have similar experiences repeated [in Iraq]."

The interfaith statement, crafted by 75 mostly Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders, also calls for the United States to "draw back from the use and threat of first-strike war," and to "bring the U.S. occupation of Iraq to an end" by involving the United Nations as well as multilateral, non-governmental organizations in rebuilding Iraq.

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ACCESSIBLE — St. Andrews Presbyterian College (N.C.) will receive an award from Presbyterians for Disability Concerns for its ministry to those with disabilities during the 215th General Assembly in Denver. When a "new" college was created from the merger of two pre-existing schools in 1961, the Laurinburg campus included ramps and electric doors to make facilities accessible to all students.

THE READERS' OUTLOOK

CHEERS FOR G. THOMPSON BROWN

Three cheers for G. Thompson Brown's guest viewpoint (April 7). I am sick and tired of all the moaning and groaning about the state of the church. The denomination and individual congregations are still unchristian attitudes and actions toward fellow ministers and church members with whom their views differ.

I have served more than 50 years in five presbyteries and have found earnest, powerful, faith-filled preaching and action from all points of the theological spectrum. I can find nothing in Jesus' teaching that would justify the fine-tuning of Scripture that some promote. May God bless the PC(USA) for many years to come.

ROBERT J. CRAWFORD
Southampton, Pa.

THE CHURCH MUST CHANGE

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is rapidly becoming completely irrelevant. Membership is declining as it has for decades. As a percentage of the U.S. population, we are a fraction of the percentage Presbyterians were 50 years ago.

The various factions or viewpoints within the membership continue to increase divisiveness on what are peripheral issues.

The General Assembly, moderator and Washington Office continue to focus almost exclusively on issues and positions which are not reflective of the

majority of the members of the Presbyterian Church. The church's leadership is as far out of line as the Presbyterian minister that Martin Luther King Jr. so adroitly addressed in his "Letter from the Birmingham Jail."

For the church to become relevant, the focus, particularly of the leadership, must change. The number one challenge must be not only to stop the shrinkage of membership, but to increase membership. This will happen when and if the church meets the needs of individuals by bringing Christ into their lives. Instead of trying to squeeze larger contributions from fewer members, each individual church should heed the call to increase membership and, in that way, increase the funds for God's work. At every General Assembly, let each presbytery report on changes of membership and contributions. Have churches that are growing lead discussions with those that are not. The Mormon Church and the Baptist churches are growing. So can we.

As a Reformed church we must be tolerant of members whose interpretations are different from our own and keep them as members of our church.

The second challenge of the Presbyterian Church leadership is to educate the lay members on their responsibilities as Christians, so that the members — not the professionals — take responsible positions and provide leadership on the issues of the day.

Are these changes important? Yes, if we want the Presbyterian Church to survive.

FRED MEYER
Dallas

MISUSE OF ORDERS, CONFESSIONS

That the GAPJC has upheld Redwoods Presbytery in the Katie Morrison case (March 31) is certainly welcome news. Less welcome, however, is the continuing selective application of G-6.0106b — particularly in regard to "conformity to the historic confessional standards

of the church" and "practice which the confessions call sin."

Our confessions, of course, deal with far more than sexual matters: recreation on the Sabbath is a sin (Westminster, Larger Catechism); the Roman Catholic mass is "idolatry" (Heidelberg) and "blasphemous" (Scots Confession); "the making of any representations of God," which includes pictures of Jesus, is forbidden (Second Helvetic, Larger Catechism); and loaning money at interest and market speculations is theft — "engrossing commodities to enhance the price" (Larger Catechism).

As a Presbyterian minister for more than 30 years, I will self-admit to occasionally teeing up a golf ball on Sunday, taking the Lord's Supper with my papist sister and brothers at a Roman altar, keeping a Rouault print of the crucifixion on the wall of my study and sharing the benefits of the pension plan gained through the engrossing of commodities. Never in my experience have I witnessed a candidate for the office of deacon, elder or minister of Word and Sacrament questioned on these practices "which the confessions call sin."

The very fact that there are those in the church who continue to use the *Book of Order* and the *Book of Confessions* as sticks with which to beat our gay brothers and lesbian sisters demonstrates our lack of maturity as a Christian community.

DEANE A. KEMPER
Bedford, N.H.

CORRECTION — In response to figures cited in the April 28 article (p. 4) on the PLSE Program, Jack Marcum of PC(USA) Research Services points out that surveys show that, as of 2002, 16 percent of all PC(USA) pastors were age 40 or younger and 8 percent were age 35 and younger.

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IN THIS CORNER
by Marj

Recently seen bumper sticker:
"Enjoy life. This is not a rehearsal."

NOTICE: Letters to the editor ordinarily should not exceed 200 words. Unsolicited manuscripts should not exceed 1,000 words. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless a self-addressed envelope with proper postage is included. The editor reserves the right to condense copy. Please observe word limits. The *OUTLOOK* does not accept unsolicited materials that have been submitted to other publications. The opinions expressed by writers in *THE OUTLOOK* are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of *The Outlook*.

NEWS BRIEFS

End of War 'No Time for Euphoria'

By BOB SMIETANA
© Religion News Service

ACTIVE FAITHFUL HAPPIER — Americans' views about life satisfaction are shaped by their faith and religious practice, a poll shows. Pollsters questioned people with an active faith — those who attend church, read the Bible and pray during a typical week — and found that 73 percent strongly agreed that they were very happy with their lives, compared to 64 percent of those who are less active. The poll was released April 23 by Barna Research Group of Ventura, Calif. Eighty-three percent of those in the active-faith category said their faith is consistently growing deeper, compared to 38 percent of the less-active group. Seventy-two percent of those with an active faith said they felt connected to other people, compared to 63 percent of those who were not as active.

—RNS

EDWARD A. DOWEY JR., who chaired the committee that wrote the Confession of 1967, died May 5 in a Princeton, N.J., hospital from complications of Parkinson's disease. He was 85. He and other members of the UPCUSA Committee on a Brief Contemporary Statement of Faith devoted more than eight years to writing the confession and seeing it incorporated into the church's Constitution. A native of Philadelphia, Doweiy held a Th.D. from the University of Zurich, where he studied with renowned theologian Emil Brunner. Doweiy joined the faculty of Princeton Seminary in 1957 and when he retired in 1982, he was named professor emeritus of Christian doctrine. His book, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology*, is considered one of the best introductions to the study of Calvin. He is survived by his wife, Lois; a son, a daughter, three grandchildren and a brother.

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MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS

continued from cover

with appropriate formal ecclesiastical garb. The best this poor Presbyterian could manage was a clerical collar. Each conference participant was individually ushered in to meet and greet the ruler. But these formalities were not the high point of that memorable first morning.

There were speeches. There are *always* speeches (sigh)! In this case — lots of speeches. The sheik, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Roman Catholic archbishop, the rector of the university, a leading Muslim cleric from Cairo, were all given the floor and an opportunity to “have their say.” The ruler declared his eagerness for Qatar to become a permanent international center for an ongoing process of bridge-building between Christians and Muslims. The speeches were all well-prepared and to the point. They were climaxed by a speech from Qatar’s leading Muslim cleric.

Another sheik, Qaradawi, was not present. Due to ill health, he was a patient in a local hospital. But for him this conference was so important that he addressed us from a chair beside his hospital bed via television. A huge TV screen at the front of the auditorium made it possible for us to follow every word and every nuance of expression on his face (simultaneous translation was available for those who could not follow the classical Arabic). His remarks were stunning. Rising to the occasion he deliv-

ered a non-scripted passionate declaration of enthusiastic support for the conference. He spoke from his heart regarding all that it meant to him, to the nation of Qatar and to the wider Muslim and Christian worlds.

Muslims and Christians are united, he declared, in at least three critical areas of life. First, both faiths believe in peace and are against war. Christians all over the globe, he reminded us, have by the millions marched and demonstrated against the war in Iraq. Therefore, no one can say that this war is Christians against Muslims. The pope himself is against the war. This is not a new “crusade” attacking the Muslim nation! The Quran and the Bible are united in favor of peace against war, and in like manner Muslims and Christians worldwide stand together in their struggle for peace. Second, the two faith communities affirm and require high moral standards. Qaradawi mentioned the integrity of the family along with opposition to immorality, pornography and homosexuality. The Bible and the Quran agree on these matters, he told us. Finally, both religions believe in civil rights, and stand for justice, care for the poor, racial equality and economic opportunity for all. I was quite overwhelmed! Here was a sick man, passionately telling the world from his bedside that there are many vitally important areas of life where we are agreed and insisting that the current conflict is not a measure of the commitments of either Christians or Muslims.

It would have been very, very easy for Hamad to have quietly told the Archbishop that, due to the aroused passions of the critical days through which we were passing, the conference should be “postponed” or the venue returned to London. Not so — we proceeded, and did so under the bright glare of the media for the entire Muslim and Christian worlds to see. For the next three days our conference dominated the front pages of Qatar’s Arabic and English newspapers. The British Broadcasting Corporation reported our conference on its hourly news summary throughout most of the three days. (Were the Americans likewise watching or were they more interested in war? I don’t know. I was in Qatar.)

The academic work of the conference was strenuous but worthwhile. I will not try to review it here. The papers of the conference will be published. In passing I can note that there was no smooth, gentle attempt to eliminate age-old differences and only talk in the broad general-

ities where we know we are in agreement. Rather, specific texts from the Bible and from the Quran were presented and discussed together hour after hour in small groups composed of about seven people. How does each Scripture see itself? How do the Quran and the Bible deal with the modern world and how does each Scripture view “the other”? That is, what does the Quran have to say about the non-Muslim and how does the Bible view the one who does not believe? What about Jonah and the Ninevites and what is the significance of John 14:6 which reads, “No one comes to the Father but by me”? What of the Quran that declares “True religion before God is Islam”? The discussions were sometimes painful, but always honest and open. Misunderstandings were clarified and dismissed. New options for interpretation of these time-honored texts were explored and at the end of the day we became friends, in spite of deep differences. Flint-like commitments remained and were openly visible, but halfway through the conference I noticed that at meals the small tables in the dining room were filled with Muslims and Christians seated together. For the first time in my life a head-covered Muslim woman (with a Ph.D. in the interpretation of the Quran) asked me, “Dr. Bailey, would you please explain to me what you Christians really believe about the Trinity?” She graciously responded to my less-than-adequate answers with sincere thanks. We had become friends and she felt safe to ask and I felt free to reply — and that was what the conference was *really* all about.

Cruise missiles were being fired from ships just offshore but we did not hear them. The sound of gunfire and shouts of “crusader” and “terrorist” were mentally, for us, a million miles away. I was privileged to stand tall in our 155 years of Presbyterian ministry in the Middle East. There in Qatar, a few miles south of Iraq, we experienced a fresh potential for openness in the telling of *our* story even as we listened carefully *to the story of the “other.”* In the process we were witnesses to a realizable vision of a world at peace in the Philippines, Indonesia, Iran, the Sudan, Nigeria, Bosnia, Cyprus and beyond.

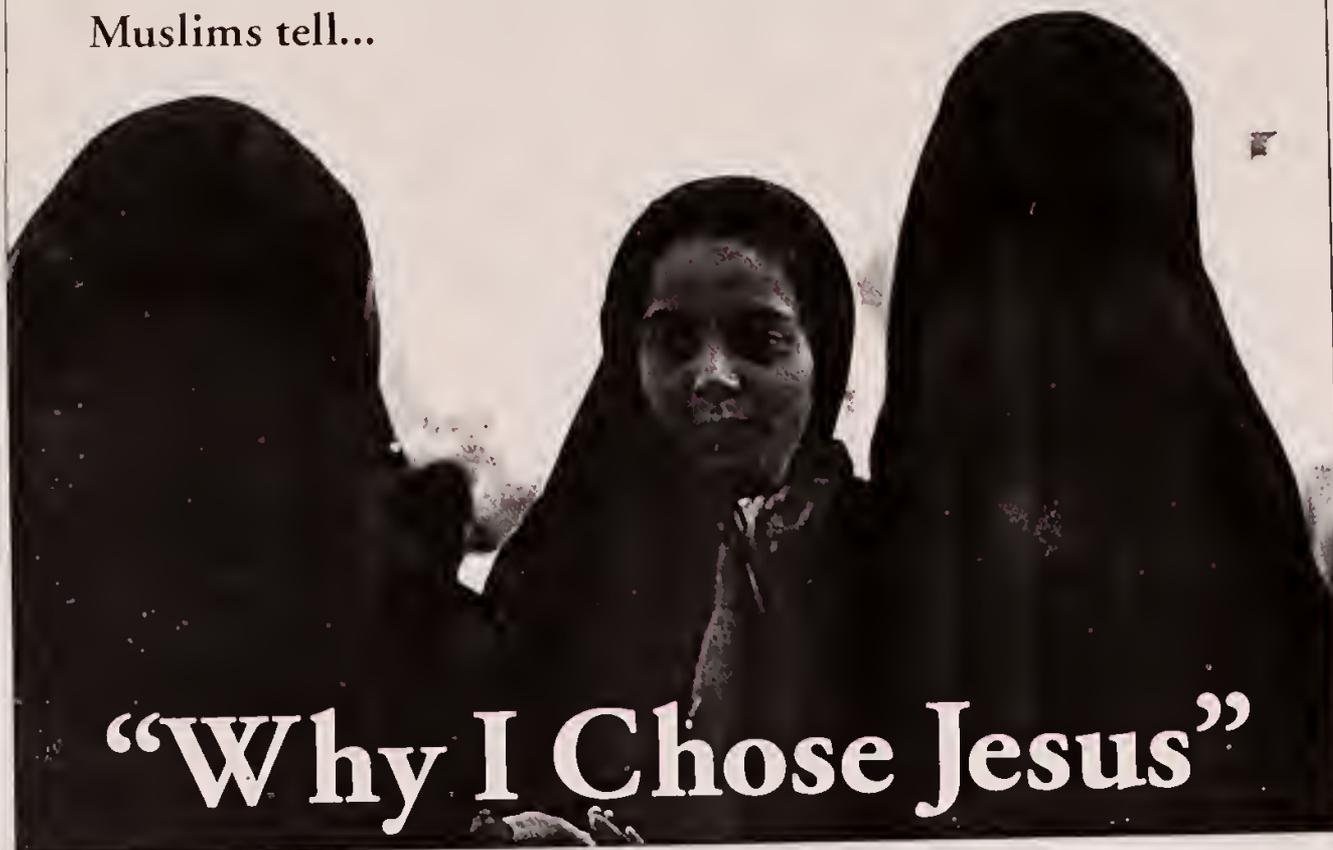
KENNETH E. BAILEY of New Wilmington, Pa., is an author and lecturer in Middle Eastern New Testament studies.

PRESBYTERIANS IN ACTION

If you think you had a busy Easter, consider minister Margaret Fox of Lincoln, Mich., who was sent by her presbytery to help out for three weeks in Savoonga, Alaska. During one worship service they baptized 18 children and youth, and served Communion to 160 persons. The following Sunday they baptized yet another group. And on Easter Sunday afternoon she and two elders rode a snowplow and carried the elements in a plastic shopping bag to bring Communion to six different shut-ins. In Savoonga they *celebrate* the resurrection.

Send your congregation’s “action” story to Marj Carpenter, 1425 E. 6th St., #105, Big Spring, TX 79720.

Muslims tell...



“Why I Chose Jesus”

A survey of Muslim-background believers gives the Christian community an opportunity to hear what fellow Christ-followers found attractive in Christ-centered faith.

J. Dudley Woodberry and Russell G. Shubin

THE SCOPE OF ISLAMIC INFLUENCE on the world seems to be growing. Images of Islam are increasingly prevalent. Nine states in Nigeria—Africa’s most populous state—have just adopted *Sharia*—or Islamic law. Public demonstrations of devotion in Islam can be seen throughout the world. Given the dedication evidenced by faithful public prayer, one may not be unwarranted in presuming that both satisfaction and allegiance run high.

Yet, in nearly every corner of the world, even in nations that have an overwhelming Muslim dominance, people from Muslim backgrounds are coming to faith in Christ. Exact figures are elusive. In some areas a shift of allegiance to Christ is happening on a fairly grand scale, with bold, public professions of faith. In many other places, believers in Christ live very low-key lives, using great discretion as to whom they disclose their faith commitment. Increasingly prevalent are the small, secret groups of a few faithful followers that meet on a regular basis, sometimes not disclosing their new-found faith—even to their family. Between these two extremes, followers of *Isa* (the Qur’anic name for Jesus) meet and worship in a variety of other contexts and worship in a number of different forms. These quiet practitioners, as well as the prevalence of governments predisposed against any shift in religious affiliation, make it difficult to state definitively how many have proclaimed new-found faith in Christ.

The centerpiece of their faith, however, is the same. They have—whether one by one or family by family—been drawn to the God-man Jesus Christ. And for their spiritual direction, they have found one book that stands out above all others: the Bible. And more than any other portion of scripture, these believers are attracted to the Sermon on the Mount. One Javanese man who read the whole Bible echoes the thoughts of many about the Sermon on the Mount, saying, “If the life of a Christian is like that, I wanted to become a Christian.”

The fastest growing religion

In a number of respects, Islam actually *is* growing faster than Christianity. Islam’s growth rate of 2.15 percent annually does exceed Christianity’s rate of 1.45 percent. It is worth pointing out, however, that 96 percent of the growth of Islam is attributable to biological growth—children born into Muslim families. Islam is flourishing in parts of the world where population growth is high. Christianity, increasingly decentralized, has its traditional base in parts of the world where population growth is quite slow or has come to a standstill. Thus, the overall trends do show Islam growing faster than Christianity.

Conversion growth is where you find quite a contrast. According to figures presented in the 2000 edition of the *World Christian*

Encyclopedia, each year some 950,000 people convert to Islam from some other persuasion. Christianity, by contrast, sees some 2.7 million each year shift their affiliation to Christianity—and presumably their allegiance to Christ from some other religion.

But a broad pattern is obvious: people that live in Muslim-dominated lands pay a heavy price for placing their faith in Christ. Family members, in particular, can exert tremendous pressure on a new believer. The place of persecution is considered at more length later. Suffice it to say that the believer from Jordan who was permanently cut off from his family is not really an extreme

Dudley Woodberry is professor of Islamic Studies and former dean of Fuller Theological Seminary’s School of World Mission. Russell Shubin is an assistant editor at Mission Frontiers.

example. His father had recently died. He was informed that he, too, was considered dead.

When we consider the price that is frequently paid by those who have come to faith in Christ, a natural question comes to mind: What was it about Jesus or the Christian faith that they found to be sufficiently compelling, making them willing to pay such a heavy price? What has God’s Spirit used to reveal to them that He is worthy of following, regardless of the price?

The question is really quite simple, but relevant for the missionary and the common devotee of Jesus alike.

During the past ten years, an extensive questionnaire compiled at Fuller Theological Seminary’s School of World Mission has been filled out by some 600 Muslim-background believers (or those who knew

them well). The results provided here are drawn from a representative sample of 120 of those surveys. The respondents are drawn from 39 countries and over 50 ethnic groups. They provide a broad window into the hearts and minds of those who have turned from Islam to Christ. In a number of cases, the responses surveys substantiate what missionaries have often thought. In other cases, what these new believers have found compelling is somewhat unexpected and eye-opening. Most frequently, there is a healthy sense of awe as one gains first-hand appreciation of the tools the Spirit has used to draw people to faith in the crucified and risen Savior.



What follows is essentially a summary report—an opportunity to let the heart of the convert be heard. An effort has been made for it *not* to be why they should or ought to have been drawn, but rather why *they* say they *were* drawn. Most of the prominent factors for conversion are interrelated. At times, people would express a great number of these subjects as factors in their conversion. In the end, they serve as complementary components that contribute to making a relationship with Christ irresistible.

A sure salvation

It is an issue that touches on a longing concern for much of humanity. The question of one’s eternal destiny haunts many who long for the hope of heaven and the sure knowledge that they have been saved from the penalty of their sins. The Qur’an states that

salvation belongs to "those that believe and do deeds of righteousness, those are the inhabitants of Paradise, there they shall dwell forever."¹ Yet it also states that God forgives whom He wills and chastises whom He wills.² In practice, then, the sure hope of salvation looms at least a bit elusive for many, even the most devoted Muslims.

One Indonesian woman was taught in her Islamic family that the bridge to heaven was as thin as a piece of hair. This tradition is found in the canonical collection of the activities and sayings of Muhammad (the *hadith*). Even good deeds, she was taught, would not assure her of crossing safely into Paradise. This hair-thin bridge was difficult and dangerous to cross. For her, a key factor in coming to faith in Christ was the realization that she could not save herself—only the blood of Christ could redeem her.

A West African woman wanted to know for certain at the point of her conversion that her sins had been forgiven and washed away. When a Persian émigré to the United States was asked if Christ had given him freedom from fear, he said, "Oh yes, I feel more forgiven, more assurance of forgiveness." For these and others, what they have found in Christ is an eternal, secure refuge. An Egyptian man stated more broadly and unequivocally that the *main* attraction of Christianity for a Muslim is the assurance of salvation. A Javanese man said simply, "After I received Jesus, I had confidence concerning the end of my life."

Jesus

While Christ is the clear centerpiece of the new-found faith of all Muslim converts, in some respects the person of Jesus can be recognized as the particular cause and most persuasive attraction. Simply put, Christ's character is frequently seen by the Muslim as overwhelmingly attractive.

A Pakistani immigrant to the United States was particularly attracted by Christ's refusal to retaliate when maltreated. This man notes that "he bore it, he never retaliated."

Even though almost all Muslims believe that Christ was not crucified,³ the Qur'an certainly accepts His opponents' intention to kill Him and His willingness to die thus.

So the report of a Persian who says he was attracted to Christ before he was attracted to Christianity is not an anomaly for Muslims. Christ is revered in Islam. There are a number of passages whose meaning is disputed, but Christ is, at minimum, seen as a prophet.⁴

A West African man was drawn by the humility of Christ and the revelation that Christ was not tainted by sin. Though it often goes unmentioned, Christ is portrayed in the Qur'an as being without fault.⁵ Muhammad, in contrast, is told to ask forgiveness for his sins.⁶ When asked what particular teachings of Christianity attracted him, an Egyptian man stated simply, "the crucified Messiah."



A holy book: the power of the Bible

The Torah, the Psalms (*Zabur*) and the Gospel (commonly understood as the New Testament) are all revered by Muslims as holy books. Though many are unfamiliar with the content of scripture, they find it quite compelling once they begin to read. For one Lebanese Muslim, Christ's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount was most instrumental at the point of his conversion.

A North African believer was touched by Christ's love for the poor, the downtrodden, the outcast. Another man was attracted by these qualities in Christ's followers. He saw Christians as the only people who care deeply about justice for the poor and oppressed.

Then you will know the truth.

Others have finally found in the Bible a truth that they found to be plausible. In searching the Bible, one Pakistani believer found answers to many questions that had concerned him. After his appreciation for the Bible grew, he felt he had been deceived

by those who taught him that the Bible had been corrupted.

A North African found in the Bible teaching that was plausibly the truth, and it satisfied him intellectually. An Egyptian who came to faith in Christ found that the Bible helped him see the true character of God. He had growing doubt about the Qur'an, but the Bible, he said, was "powerful and satisfying."

Similarly, an Iranian says, "The Bible makes sense, it is reasonable and logical; it is relevant and not culture-bound."

I have had a dream

For someone who has not had extended exposure to Muslim-background believers in Christ, probably the most striking surprise is the powerful role that dreams and visions have played in drawing people to Jesus. Though dreams may play an insignificant role in the conversion decisions of most Westerners, over one-fourth of those surveyed state quite emphatically that dreams and visions were key in drawing them to Christ and sustaining them through difficult times. Rick Love, International Director of Frontiers, has recognized the pattern as well. He writes that, "Just as God used a vision to convert Paul, in like manner He reveals Himself to Muslims through dreams and visions. Just as God prepared Cornelius to hear the Gospel through a vision, so God is preparing a multitude of Muslims to respond to His good news."⁷

One believer from Guinea recounts the dream of a figure whom he later believed to be Christ. The figure was in a white robe, calling the man to come to Him. In a related dream, he recalls that the same figure's arms were extended, beckoning him. Dreams of this type have become recognized as a pattern of work among Muslims. Though there are variations, Christ appearing in a white robe is a recurring image among those who have had dreams and visions. Similarly, a Muslim Malay woman was drawn by a vision she had of her Christian parents who had died. She saw them rejoicing with others in heaven. Jesus, appearing in a white robe, said, "If you want to come to me, just come." Feeling that she had tried her entire life to reach God without success, she now saw God initiating the effort to reach her through Jesus.

A convert from the Middle East who had been afflicted with severe headaches was lying on his bed after having prayed for his sick son. A man with a beautiful, peaceful face appeared. Dressed in white, the figure walked to the head of the man's bed and touched him three times on the head. The next morning his headaches were gone. His son, too, was fully healed. Understandably, he now recounts with confidence, "I believe in prayer in the name of the Christ."

The great majority of dreams seem to fall into one of two broad categories. The first could be considered the preparatory dream. Like Christ appearing in a white

robe, the vision confirms thoughts or conversations one has been having about Christ or the Christian faith. The second could be called the empowering dream. Here the dream or vision commonly gives the believer strength in the face of persecution. Short of persecution, it may embolden believers, strengthening the nature of their witness.

Preparatory. One Sunni woman from the Arabian Peninsula had a figure appear to her in a dream, telling her to visit a Christian woman she knew. The figure, who she was later convinced was Christ, told her this woman would teach her.

Prior to his conversion, a Persian man had a vision. In it, he was falling in darkness over a cliff and was saved by a light holding onto his back.

In a fascinating twist on God's use of dreams and sleep, one Algerian recounted how she heard her sleeping Muslim grandmother say, "Jesus is not dead. I want to tell you He is here."

A West African man recounts a succinct, yet powerful vision he had prior to conversion. He saw a devout Muslim in hell and a poor Christian—who couldn't afford to give alms—in heaven. A voice explained to him that the difference was belief in Jesus.

Empowering. A North African believer found the needed strength to face his imprisonment from a dream he had while imprisoned for his faith. In it, he saw thousands of believers pouring through the streets of his city, openly proclaiming their faith in his restricted country. While in prison, he was tortured, suspended upside-down naked for hours, beaten with electrified rods and repeatedly threatened with execution. His vision of a day when people of his country would openly proclaim their faith in

the streets gave him great strength to persevere through this most difficult time.

Encounter. Though not strictly a dream or a vision, a number of Muslim-background believers have had a significant supernatural encounter that was instrumental in drawing them to Jesus. One Egyptian Muslim was reading the *Injil* (Gospel), when he came to Luke 3, where the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove. God said, "This is my son, in whom I am well pleased." As he read those words, a stormy wind broke into his room. A voice spoke to him saying, "I am Jesus Christ, whom you hate. I am the Lord whom you are



looking for." He recalls that he "wept and wept, accepting Jesus from that time."

Whatever personal perspective one has on dreams and visions and the Christian walk of faith, it is difficult to consider engaging in ministry to Muslims without a recognition of and an openness for God to continue drawing people to Himself through what may be viewed as unconventional means.

The greatest of these is love

By far, the reason found most compelling for the greatest number of Muslims who have turned to Christ is the power of love. Like Paul, many a believer from a Muslim background has found that "the greatest of these is love." Nearly half of all Muslims who have made a shift of faith allegiance have affirmed that the love of God was a critical key in their decision.

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. Love's attraction could be simplified into two subcategories. The first is love by example. One Jordanian believer attributes his conversion to "the unconditional love and the aura of peace and contentment" that he saw in his Christian friend. An Arab émigré to France, describing the friendliness of her Christian acquaintances, says they "radiated the beauty of Christ." These friends, who had emigrated before her and given their lives to Christ prior to her arrival, prayed that God would answer her prayers for a job. She says she has been amazed at how "the Lord has continued to answer prayers."

This young Sunni Muslim woman saw a kindness and experienced an intimacy with her believing friends that made her believe that God, too, could be her friend—and give her eternal life. Admittedly, it is difficult to separate the example of love demonstrated by believers and the witness of scripture, testifying of a God of love.

God's love. A second category of love is that which is demonstrated directly by God and evidenced in scripture. One Bengali man says he was "subdued by the revelation of God's great love, his own sinfulness, and Christ's great sacrifice for him." A West African from Gambia explains simply that "God loves me just as I am." He described his experience in Islam as

"rigorous submission to God." He sensed an inability to please God. Though he was stoned for his faith in Christ, he remains faithful to his new life in Christ.

The love of God is particularly poignant for Muslims who may have been suppressed by other Muslims. One Shi'a man was attracted by the truth that "God loves all people"—and that he was personally loved and protected by God. Similarly, a West African was surprised by God's love "for all people of all races, including enemies." His experience in Islam convinced him that Arab Muslims are racist towards Black Africans. Sadly, he described Islam as a "tool used by Arabs to oppress non-Arabs."

I have called you friends: relationship with God

For some 10 percent of Muslim-background believers, the particular attraction of a relationship with God was the strongest apparent factor in their conversion. The Algerian émigré mentioned earlier was taken by the fact that God could be a friend and a father. Similarly, a North African convert was drawn by the opportunity to have a direct relationship with God. What he felt he lacked in Islam was any proximity or nearness to God—there was no possibility of walking together with God. In Christ, he stated that a very strong attraction was a direct relationship between the Lord and the people. In a sense, the veil of separation had been lifted.

An Egyptian believer stated two compelling reasons for his attraction to Christianity: being adopted as God's son and the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. This reflects positively what one Indonesian states negatively about Islam: "God is universal and has no family. There was no way of knowing what God was like."

North American evangelicalism has been criticized for its emphasis on the experiential, the personal. In light of the testimony of this cross-section of Muslim-background believers, the opportunity for access and relationship to God is not an appeal unique to North Americans. Instead, one lesson from this cross-section of fellow Christ-followers from a Muslim background may be the universal appeal of what has been called a Divine romance: Christ's love for His Church and His desire to commune with those whom He has called His own.



Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake

Some refer to it as the eighth beatitude. Others consider it more simply the by-product of living out the preceding beatitudes. However you view it exegetically, in practice it is clear that those who are coming to faith from within the Muslim sphere are much more likely to be intimately acquainted with persecution than those from the Western world.

A West African believer was burned and stabbed by his own family. Though he was not killed, his family now considers him to be dead. Though the physical suffering is great, the psychological wounds that are inflicted on those who have been counted as dead may be underestimated. A North African man found it difficult to overstate how traumatic it was for him as he was rejected and beaten and left homeless. Sadly, the national church did not accept him either.

After his conversion, one Lebanese Muslim lost all of his teaching and professional privileges—and eventually was murdered. Other professionals, who had grown accustomed to some degree of esteem, are set back by the disdain they experience as a result of choosing to follow Christ. “Traumatizing” was how an observer described one Arab North African’s experience of being arrested, interrogated and held by police for two days.

For those who have been subject to persecution on the basis of their ethnicity, the persecution for their new-found faith comes as less of a surprise and actually serves to confirm their decision to leave their former faith. The North African who found Christians to be the only non-racist people he knew was intimately acquainted with severe persecution. His brother and several close friends have been murdered.

A West African man had his house burned and he was chased by people who were attempting to kill him and his family.

A fisherman from the Philippines expressed an increase in persecution, with people stealing his boat, cutting his nets and tormenting his children. Yet, an observer notes, “he is not shaken.”

This steadfastness in the face of persecution illustrates, at least in part, the role that persecution has played. If it does not actually spur numerical growth, it certainly seems to spur the growth of the soul, creating, so to speak, bigger Christians as a result of

difficult, even horrendous treatment by the majority Muslim community. In the face of persecution, the comfort of scripture has provided profound help in time of need. One Javanese brother found courage to face persecution in Matthew 5:11: “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.” The teaching of Christ reoriented his perspective and he began instead to consider it a blessing. He noted that it was the exposition of Matthew 5:11 at a church service that was instrumental in his coming to Christ.

An Egyptian believer received similar comfort from scripture when he was being spit on and suffering death threats. The taunters told his younger brother he was an infidel. Yet, when he read the Gospels, he felt the love of God, sensing the presence of Jesus. A contrast to the Qur’an, he found the Gospels powerful and satisfying.



God is at work

In this relatively brief look at what God is doing in a very large cross-section of humanity, we see His heart being conveyed in dramatic ways. Christ’s hand is extended to Muslims—in a way no less sincere than His hand has been extended to you. We don’t appreciate being known for our worst manifestations. Muslims, too, ought to be given the benefit of the doubt. Many are seeking to follow God as best they understand Him. Sincerity may not be the measuring rod for truth, but sincerity of heart is a critical foundation for a life of saving faith in Christ.

Dreams and visions may have been used by God in part because there is a dearth of flesh-and-blood witnesses for Christ willing to articulate and demonstrate the power of the Gospel in person. If nothing

else, the preceding testimonies of these witnesses for Christ show that God is at work. Apparently, when Muslims do have an opportunity to see the love of Christ revealed in all its fullness, they are finding a life with Christ quite compelling. After all, grace does have an irresistible quality to it. ☉

1. Sura 2:75

2. 2:284

3. based on Qur’an 4:157-159 Egyptian ed./156-157 Fluegel ed.

4. 19:30/31

5. 19:19

6. 40:55/57; 47:19/21; 48:2

7. Rick Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God* (Pasadena, William Carey Library, 2000), 156.

Reaching New Heights and Hearts



Born as a follow-up to Urbana, the *Perspectives* course continues its world view transformation.

—Russell G. Shubin

With graduates from the *Perspectives* course fast approaching the 50,000 mark, the course is experiencing a new phase of growth and enthusiasm. A number of the spring classes have been surprised (but blessed) by attendance that was unexpectedly large. One class in Redlands, California was prepared for 30 students—but gladly went in search of a new facility when 75 showed up. Bethlehem Baptist Church in the Minneapolis area is pushing the limits on class size—with 225 students attending. Jonathan Dawn described “awe and God’s presence” after his first class. He’s coordinating a class held at Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C., Canada. With over 100 in attendance, the students responded with amazement, expressing how they weren’t expecting such a “phenomenal impact.”

“It looks like our enrollment will exceed 4,200 this semester—which would be a 30 percent increase over last spring’s numbers,” says Steve Halley, Director of *Perspectives*.

Origins at Urbana

The precursor to *Perspectives* originated in 1974 as Ralph Winter recognized the need to give Urbana-attending students more exhaustive information that would aid them in their decision making process. Co-editor of *Perspectives*, Steve Hawthorne recalls

one of Winter’s oft-repeated refrains: “God cannot lead you on the basis of facts you do not know.”

So, in an effort get the facts out, the Summer Institute of International Studies created what is now known as *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*.

Hawthorne’s personal involvement came as a result of his attendance of Urbana ’76. A fervent admirer of John Stott, Hawthorne actually snuck into the conference to hear some solid Bible exposition from Evangelicalism’s British statesman. “I had nothing against missions, but I sure knew that it wasn’t anything I would ever do,” Hawthorne recalls.

He has fixed in his memory the details that followed. It was 10:15 on the morning of December 28, 1976 when Stott took the stage. With his large, deep, British accent, Stott announced that “the living God is a missionary God.”

“I expected good exposition,” Hawthorne recalls, “but I did not

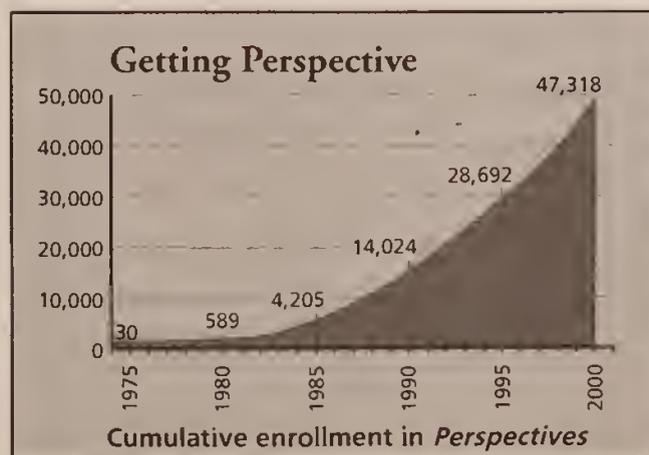
expect an integrated focal point. I found there was purpose—some singular focus of God’s purpose throughout all of Scripture.”

Though 25 years have passed, Chapter one of *Perspectives* bears witness to that day and theme: “The Living God is a Missionary God,” by John Stott.

Lee Purgason, Executive Director of the U.S. Center for World Mission saw the centrality of the mission theme come clear as a result of the tandem influences of Urbana and *Perspectives*. After attending Urbana ’79 Purgason recalls how he “sensed that mission was not just for a subset of those eager to follow God, but a core Biblical theme of God’s purpose for all His people.”

With 107 classes currently operating throughout the country, Hawthorne sees some similarities with the growth of the *Perspectives* movement and the worship he experienced at Urbana. At Urbana, he got a taste of praise with a diverse crowd of believers. “I said these are my people, I belong here, now I know what church I’m a part of.” In *Perspectives*, he notes that the classes that are growing are those classes that are similarly diverse. A class that he had just spoken at had people from over 15 different churches. The diversity brings energy and a recognition that “this is really a perspective on the world Christian movement. It’s not a personal, Christian, life significance seminar.”

One seasoned traveler and current student of a southern California class expressed great pleasure at how the course distilled the core message of truth. “Never in my days of existence have I heard such profundity concerning the true essence of the Gospel message,” he says. Having felt imprisoned to programs and problems, this student (who happens to be African American) says he’s “free at last, free at last, thank God almighty”



Christian Missions to Islam & Western Culture

As we approach the end of this century, we need a new vision of world missions based on a realistic description of our times. We are living in a new era of world history. In the early days of modern missions, between 1800 and 1950, the West was still more or less Christian, and its culture reflected the impact of the Christian tradition. "The mission fields" in Asia and Africa formed an integral part of the vast colonial empires of Britain, France, The Netherlands and Portugal. Not so today. Now the West is secularized, and those European empires are a thing of the past. Christian missions overseas can never be abstracted from what is going on in the homelands. Hence a need for the "support" group to be identifiably Christian and for the theology of missions to be firmly grounded in the basic tenets of the faith.

Furthermore, the post-world-war II period has ushered in a new Diaspora, which has brought millions of people from the former colonies to live in Western European countries. Due to the change in immigration laws in both Canada and the United States, the North American population is now more diversified than ever before. Such a mega shift in the global situation requires a thorough examination of our mission strategies.

For example, with regard to Christian missions among Muslims, it is tempting to dwell almost exclusively on the difficulties we encounter as we present them the claims of the Gospel. We tend to forget that whether working with Muslims or among the followers of other faiths, we are never on our own, but simply the messengers of Him who presides over the spread of His Good News and the building up of His universal church. We should never forget that the Bible teaches a theocentric view of missions. Our concern should be the faithful proclamation of the Word of God in the language of the people and in harmony with the historic Christian faith as we find it summarized and expounded in the ecumenical Creeds and the Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation.

Unfortunately, rather than basing their approaches on this solid heritage of the past, some missionary strategists have advocated the adoption of new policies which are supposed to make missions easier or more successful. Great stress has been placed on contextualizing the gospel in such a way that it becomes possible for a Muslim to convert to Christianity. Certain advocates of contextualization have espoused radical theories, which conflict with the teachings of the Bible. Their inspiration did not originate from within the Christian tradition but from their fascination with certain secular disciplines. Such approaches have alarmed those missiologists who have remained committed to the Biblical principles of missions. For example, in the fall 1993 issue of Trinity World Forum, Professor Edward Rommen drew attention to the divorce that has taken place between theology and the new discipline of missiology. In an article entitled the De-Theologizing of Missiology, Rommen wrote: "the elevation of pragmatism to the status of a missiological norm has led to an uncritical acceptance of applied social science." It is a very gratifying sign to notice that this professor of Missiology in the School of World Mission at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL is calling for "the re-theologization of North American Missiology."

Setting aside all theories, which advocate a radical discontinuity with the work of the pioneer missionaries, let us zero in on the Muslim world. Our approach should be marked by a macro or total vision of the real nature of Islam as a religion and a culture which encompass all areas of life. Even though today the majority of its adherents live in the impoverished third world, yet most Muslims are historically conscious and quite aware of their great past. Their faith in the rightness of their religion is unshaken. God has entrusted them with His final message to all mankind. They have taken it to distant lands and managed to found great empires. They consider their present predicament as transitory, an unfortunate phase which will soon give way to a revival of past glories.

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In order to understand what is going on inside the Muslim mind, let us put ourselves in the shoes of a Muslim. Why should he convert to Christianity? He has nothing to gain. If he lives within a Muslim country, his conversion will inevitably lead to death. If he has immigrated to a Western land, he sees no specific benefits that would accrue from his adoption of the Christian faith. According to his worldview which he has not left back home, there is no such thing as a separation between religion and politics, or "church" and state. His culture is deeply religious and his religion has produced an assertive and self-consciously Islamic culture. Based on his experiences, he identifies Christianity with Western culture. He regards it as decadent and hurtling towards disintegration. His faith and fervor are rekindled; in order to survive he must go on the offensive and engage in da'wah, i.e., in missions. He calls Westerners to convert to Islam. This involves both a religious and political change of mind on the part of the converts. I will enlarge on this point by referring to the work and research of two prominent Christian professors, one from the United States and the other from Germany. They both refer to Muslims living in the West, their struggle to survive within a secular culture and their attempt to engage in missions within the host countries.

In the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (October 1993), the noted West African scholar, Lamin Sanneh wrote a thought-provoking article, *Can a House Divided Stand? Reflections on Christian-Muslim Encounter in the West*. Dr. Sanneh, a convert from Islam and a Professor of Missions and World Christianity at Yale Divinity School, commented in this article on the inevitable confrontation between the "pluralistic tradition of the West" and the demands of Muslim immigrants for implementing practices which stem from their theocratic view of the state. Dr. Sanneh wrote:

"It would be wrong for Westerners to think that they can preserve religious toleration by conceding the extreme Muslim case for territoriality*, because a house constructed on that foundation would have no room in it for the very pluralistic principle that has made the West hospitable to Muslims and others in the first place. The fact that these religious groups have grown and thrived in the West at a time when religious minorities established in Islamic societies have continued to suffer civil disabilities shows how uneven are the two traditions.

"We risk perpetuating such a split-level structure in our relationship, including the risk to the survival of our great public institutions, unless we take moral responsibility for the heritage of the West, including tolerance for religion. Such tolerance for religion cannot rest on the arguments of public utility but rather on the firm religious rock of the absolute moral law with which our Creator and Judge has fashioned us.

"In view of growing signs of Muslim pressure for religious territoriality, often expressed in terms of shari'ah and political power, and in view of the utter inadequacy of the sterile utilitarian ethic of the secular national state, Westerners must recover responsibility for the Gospel as public truth and must reconstitute by it the original foundations on which the modern West has built its ample view of the world."

Coming from a tradition which considers religion as involving all areas of life, and having witnessed the moral collapse of Western societies, it is quite understandable that Muslims want to offer their faith as a remedy to the deplorable spiritual conditions within the host countries. Their boldness stems from their deep conviction that the West is rapidly entering the twilight of its civilization. Only Islam has the answer. As the theme of a Muslim convention which was held in Chicago in December, 1994, put it: *Al-Islam li sa'adat al-bashariyya: Islam is for the happiness of mankind!*

From across the Atlantic, a noted German theologian contributed an article in which he touched on the subject of Muslim minorities in the West and their zeal to engage in missionary activities. It appeared in

the December 1994, issue of FIRST THINGS under the title: Christianity and the West: Ambiguous Past, Uncertain Future. Wolfhart Pannenberg who is Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Munich, wrote:

"If Western freedom in fact means no more than individual license, others do well to try to defend their communities and spiritual values against the encroachment of Western secularism. Beyond the defensive mode, Islamic missions in Western societies express a strong sense of missionary vocation aimed at liberating Western nations from the materialism and immorality associated with secularism. These Muslims view Christians as having failed in the task of the moral transformation and reconstruction of society. Such criticism is a serious challenge to traditional Christianity and to Western culture. A culture devoid of spiritual and moral values is not equipped to meet that challenge, and is bound for disintegration and decay."

These are very serious words and all Christians should ponder this analysis of a leading European theologian. We are not living in the days of William Carey or Samuel Zwemer. Their work was supported by a home front, which exhibited a Christian culture. Before World War II, the average Muslim in the Middle East thought of Americans as being thoroughly honest. He could trust them more than his fellow Muslims. Why? Because all the Americans he knew were either missionaries or educators who exhibited in their life the higher ethic of an authentic Christian faith! Early United States diplomats in the area were often children or grandchildren of the pioneer missionaries.

As we have noticed above, even after living a long time outside the household of Islam, Muslims still carry with them their own habits of thought. They cannot comprehend the stark reality that Western culture has jettisoned its Christian heritage. They confuse Christianity with Western culture and regard it as exhibiting an inferior ethic. Thus, it is both their responsibility and opportunity to engage in missions among Westerners. It is also a very telling matter that such activity is not rooted in the idea of an organized and official "sending" by some agency. The Islamic view of missions is rooted in the concept of da'wah, i.e., calling people to Islamize. It is a spontaneous activity in which he engages as a Muslim, a person who has submitted to God's revelation in the Quran. His solemn duty is to share his faith by all means, peaceful at times, or through holy war --- jihad, at other times.

When we take these facts into account, we must conclude that it is the responsibility of all Christians to fight tenaciously the steady advance of secularism into the various spheres of their life and communities. The credibility of Christian missionary endeavors, at home within a pluralistic society, and overseas, depends on their distancing themselves from the norms and the lifestyles of the secular society, which surrounds them. They have so much to learn from the history of the first three hundred years of the Christian era when to be a Christian meant both a separation from the corrupt heathen environment and engaging that milieu with the bold Christian word-and-life testimony: Jesus is Lord.

Further pertinent quotes from Professor Pannenberg's article:

"And so, while we can envision a great resurgence of Christianity and Western culture in the third millennium, such a future is by no means certain. Western societies may ignore their need to recover the strength of their religious roots. They may continue headlong on a secularist course, unaware of its certain and dismal outcome. The end of Western culture, however, would not spell the end of Christianity. The Christian religion is not dependent upon the culture to which it gave birth. As it has in the past, the Church can survive and flourish in the context of other cultures.

"The further secularism advances the more urgent it is that Christian faith and Christian life

be seen in sharp contrast to the secularist culture. It is quite possible that in the early part of the third millennium only the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, on the one hand, and evangelical Protestantism, on the other, will survive as ecclesial communities. What used to be called the Protestant mainline churches are in acute danger of disappearing. I expect they will disappear if they continue neither to resist the spirit of a progressively secularist culture nor to try to transform it.

"There is no alternative to the Church. The further the secularist dominance of the general culture advances, the more clearly the Church, in clear distinction from that culture, emerges as the reference point of Christian existence."

Taking into account the insights of Lamin Sanneh and Wolfhart Pannenberg, we conclude that at this juncture in world history, global missions should be the concern of every member of the church. We must factor into our strategies the revival of Islam and of the other major world religions. The old distinction between domestic and foreign missions is outdated. All members of the Body of Christ must spontaneously engage in the spread of the message. The Good News of Jesus Christ was never meant to be kept for one group or nation or continent. None of us in the West should have the luxury of sitting back to "enjoy" the fruits of the faith while supporting missions merely in a purely financial way. The beautiful and ever relevant statement of Paul in Romans 10: 13-15 provides us with an agenda for a total involvement in missions.

For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" (NKJ)

It should be quite obvious that Christian missionaries overseas do not and should not operate on their own. We send them to work in lands where we cannot be physically present. At the home base we must be like the church in Antioch which sent Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13). While busy with missions within our own communities and country, we should ardently support those whom we have sent to distant lands, through our prayers and gifts as well as by a consistently Christian lifestyle. Let us not leave it just to the Muslims to be engaged in calling. We have a great message to share with all mankind: the Good News of Jesus Christ. Should we Western Christians shirk our missionary responsibility, Christians from Africa, Asia and Latin America will accomplish what God had ordained from all eternity, "That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth --- in Him." (Ephesians 1:10 NKJ)

Bassam M. Madany
Middle East Resources

*Territoriality, as used in the article of Lamin Sanneh, refers to the history and practice of Islam in enforcing the Muslim way of life within the boundaries of the conquered lands. According to this faith, the world is divided into two camps: Daru'l Islam and Daru'l Harb, (the household of Islam and the household of war.) Within Islamic countries, the Shari'a Law is supreme. Until very recently, the vast majority of Muslims lived almost exclusively within Daru'l Islam. Now that many have migrated to the West, a different form of conquest, it is very difficult for them to fully practice their faith. Radical Muslims, enjoying the freedoms of the pluralistic societies of the West, would like to create conditions which will allow them to live as if they were still residing within an Islamic territory. But such a quest can only be realized where the Shari'a Law is enforced by a theocratic state!

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'The Muslim world is hopelessly weak'

Mahathir bin Mohamad International Herald Tribune
Tuesday, July 30, 2002

A knowledge deficit

KUALA LUMPUR What is the state of the Muslim world today? I don't think it would be wrong to say that the Muslim world is at its lowest ebb, and is probably continuing to decline.

Since the Turkish Muslim empire that spanned much of the Middle East fell before the onslaught of the European nations, the Muslim world has broken up into small and ineffective nation-states. It has not been able to stage a recovery, much less re-establish itself on the world stage. Individually, Muslim states have been unable to make any progress or impact.

In fact, for many of the peoples of the Turkish empire, their cooperation with the Europeans to free themselves from Turkish rule only resulted in a change of colonial masters from Turkish to British or French. It was only after a long time and with great difficulty that they managed to extricate themselves from European colonial rule.

Independence has not enabled them to develop and regain the political clout of the old Muslim empires. Instead they have been faced with internal problems which prevent them from making progress. Even when they are richly endowed, they have not been able to make any real progress. Not a single Muslim country is to be found among the developed nations of the world.

When the Industrial Revolution took place in the 19th century, the Muslim World was still relatively undivided. But Muslims as a whole were either unaware of the revolution or rejected it. For a long time, much of the results of the Industrial Revolution, whether in terms of material gains or of systems, was rejected by Muslims as un-Islamic, including electricity and mechanized vehicles. So we lost valuable time as the advances passed by us.

Muslims are rightly concerned about what is forbidden by

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their religion. Unfortunately, we often go overboard. In Afghanistan, so powerful is the belief that no part of a woman may be seen by strangers that women refuse to take off the burqa even when they are allowed to. Yet in other parts of the Muslim world it is permissible to leave the face and the hands uncovered. Who decreed these dress codes? The injunctions of Islam on more important matters are ignored with impunity. The brotherhood of Muslims is openly disregarded. Muslims who declare themselves as brothers in Islam often make it their duty to fight and kill other Muslims. They would, in the name of Islam, condemn these Muslims as infidels to justify their enmity toward them. If we go by their criteria for being Muslim, then there are probably no Muslims in the world. In any case, Islam forbids the frivolous labeling of other Muslims as infidels.

Similarly we are enjoined by Islam to seek knowledge. But Muslims ignore this important injunction. At the beginning they did not do so. As a result there were great Muslim physicians, mathematicians, astronomers, geographers and other experts during the great days of Muslim civilization. But later, knowledge was interpreted as religious knowledge only. The study of other kinds was regarded as either sinful or lacking in merit and not contributing to the afterlife. So the pursuit of knowledge, other than the specifically religious, was neglected. To this day we neglect such knowledge. Muslim students studying nonreligious subjects feel guilty. They try to make up by devoting as much of their time as possible to various so-called Islamic activities to earn merit. The result is that Muslim students hardly ever achieve excellence in the sciences and other important subjects, including the research so necessary to compete with the non-Muslim world.

One of the fundamental teachings of Islam is the need to be equipped with the weapons and defense capability to instill fear in the enemy and to defend Muslims. This teaching is obviously neglected. The Jews, with just 13 million people in the whole world, can defeat the forces of 1.3 billion Muslims. In fact, just about anyone can oppress any Muslim country. There is nothing the Muslim states can do beyond crying and appealing for justice.

The Muslim world is hopelessly weak and backward. We must banish the idea that the only knowledge that we need is about Islam. Neglect of other knowledge has led to our lack of industrial capacity and our inability to invent and produce weapons to instill fear in the enemy and defend ourselves.

The writer is prime minister of Malaysia. This comment was adapted by the International Herald Tribune from a speech to

the International Forum on Islam in Kuala Lumpur on July 19.

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March 2, 2002

Radical New Views of Islam and the Origins of the Koran

By ALEXANDER STILLE

To Muslims the Koran is the very word of God, who spoke through the Angel Gabriel to Muhammad: "This book is not to be doubted," the Koran declares unequivocally at its beginning. Scholars and writers in Islamic countries who have ignored that warning have sometimes found themselves the target of death threats and violence, sending a chill through universities around the world.

Yet despite the fear, a handful of experts have been quietly investigating the origins of the Koran, offering radically new theories about the text's meaning and the rise of Islam.

Christoph Luxenberg, a scholar of ancient Semitic languages in Germany, argues that the Koran has been misread and mistranslated for centuries. His work, based on the earliest copies of the Koran, maintains that parts of Islam's holy book are derived from pre-existing Christian Aramaic texts that were misinterpreted by later Islamic scholars who prepared the editions of the Koran commonly read today.

So, for example, the virgins who are supposedly awaiting good Islamic martyrs as their reward in paradise are in reality "white raisins" of crystal clarity rather than fair maidens.

Christoph Luxenberg, however, is a pseudonym, and his scholarly tome ""The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran"" had trouble finding a publisher, although it is considered a major new work by several leading scholars in the field. Verlag Das Arabische Buch in Berlin ultimately published the book.

The caution is not surprising. Salman Rushdie's "Satanic Verses" received a fatwa because it appeared to mock Muhammad. The Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz was stabbed because one of his books was thought to be irreligious. And when the Arab scholar Suliman Bashear argued that Islam developed as a religion gradually rather than emerging fully formed from the mouth of the Prophet, he was injured after being thrown from a second-story window by his students at the University of Nablus in the West Bank. Even many broad-minded liberal Muslims

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become upset when the historical veracity and authenticity of the Koran is questioned.

The reverberations have affected non-Muslim scholars in Western countries. "Between fear and political correctness, it's not possible to say anything other than sugary nonsense about Islam," said one scholar at an American university who asked not to be named, referring to the threatened violence as well as the widespread reluctance on United States college campuses to criticize other cultures.

While scriptural interpretation may seem like a remote and innocuous activity, close textual study of Jewish and Christian scripture played no small role in loosening the Church's domination on the intellectual and cultural life of Europe, and paving the way for unfettered secular thought. "The Muslims have the benefit of hindsight of the European experience, and they know very well that once you start questioning the holy scriptures, you don't know where it will stop," the scholar explained.

The touchiness about questioning the Koran predates the latest rise of Islamic militancy. As long ago as 1977, John Wansbrough of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London wrote that subjecting the Koran to "analysis by the instruments and techniques of biblical criticism is virtually unknown."

Mr. Wansbrough insisted that the text of the Koran appeared to be a composite of different voices or texts compiled over dozens if not hundreds of years. After all, scholars agree that there is no evidence of the Koran until 691 — 59 years after Muhammad's death — when the Dome of the Rock mosque in Jerusalem was built, carrying several Koranic inscriptions.

These inscriptions differ to some degree from the version of the Koran that has been handed down through the centuries, suggesting, scholars say, that the Koran may have still been evolving in the last decade of the seventh century. Moreover, much of what we know as Islam — the lives and sayings of the Prophet — is based on texts from between 130 and 300 years after Muhammad's death.

In 1977 two other scholars from the School for Oriental and African Studies at London University — Patricia Crone (a professor of history at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton) and Michael Cook (a professor of Near Eastern history at Princeton University) — suggested a radically new approach in their book "Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World."

Since there are no Arabic chronicles from the first century of Islam, the two looked at several non-Muslim, seventh-century accounts that suggested Muhammad was perceived not as the founder of a new religion but as a preacher in the Old Testament tradition, hailing the coming

of a Messiah. Many of the early documents refer to the followers of Muhammad as "hagarenes," and the "tribe of Ishmael," in other words as descendants of Hagar, the servant girl that the Jewish patriarch Abraham used to father his son Ishmael.

In its earliest form, Ms. Crone and Mr. Cook argued, the followers of Muhammad may have seen themselves as retaking their place in the Holy Land alongside their Jewish cousins. (And many Jews appear to have welcomed the Arabs as liberators when they entered Jerusalem in 638.)

The idea that Jewish messianism animated the early followers of the Prophet is not widely accepted in the field, but "Hagarism" is credited with opening up the field. "Crone and Cook came up with some very interesting revisionist ideas," says Fred M. Donner of the University of Chicago and author of the recent book "Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing." "I think in trying to reconstruct what happened, they went off the deep end, but they were asking the right questions."

The revisionist school of early Islam has quietly picked up momentum in the last few years as historians began to apply rational standards of proof to this material.

Mr. Cook and Ms. Crone have revised some of their early hypotheses while sticking to others. "We were certainly wrong about quite a lot of things," Ms. Crone said. "But I stick to the basic point we made: that Islamic history did not arise as the classic tradition says it does."

Ms. Crone insists that the Koran and the Islamic tradition present a fundamental paradox. The Koran is a text soaked in monotheistic thinking, filled with stories and references to Abraham, Isaac, Joseph and Jesus, and yet the official history insists that Muhammad, an illiterate camel merchant, received the revelation in Mecca, a remote, sparsely populated part of Arabia, far from the centers of monotheistic thought, in an environment of idol-worshiping Arab Bedouins. Unless one accepts the idea of the angel Gabriel, Ms. Crone says, historians must somehow explain how all these monotheistic stories and ideas found their way into the Koran.

"There are only two possibilities," Ms. Crone said. "Either there had to be substantial numbers of Jews and Christians in Mecca or the Koran had to have been composed somewhere else."

Indeed, many scholars who are not revisionists agree that Islam must be placed back into the wider historical context of the religions of the Middle East rather than seeing it as the spontaneous product of the pristine Arabian desert. "I think there is increasing acceptance, even on the part of many Muslims, that Islam emerged out of the wider

monotheistic soup of the Middle East," says Roy Mottahedeh, a professor of Islamic history at Harvard University.

Scholars like Mr. Luxenberg and Gerd- R. Puin, who teaches at Saarland University in Germany, have returned to the earliest known copies of the Koran in order to grasp what it says about the document's origins and composition. Mr. Luxenberg explains these copies are written without vowels and diacritical dots that modern Arabic uses to make it clear what letter is intended. In the eighth and ninth centuries, more than a century after the death of Muhammad, Islamic commentators added diacritical marks to clear up the ambiguities of the text, giving precise meanings to passages based on what they considered to be their proper context. Mr. Luxenberg's radical theory is that many of the text's difficulties can be clarified when it is seen as closely related to Aramaic, the language group of most Middle Eastern Jews and Christians at the time.

For example, the famous passage about the virgins is based on the word hur, which is an adjective in the feminine plural meaning simply "white." Islamic tradition insists the term hur stands for "houri," which means virgin, but Mr. Luxenberg insists that this is a forced misreading of the text. In both ancient Aramaic and in at least one respected dictionary of early Arabic, hur means "white raisin."

Mr. Luxenberg has traced the passages dealing with paradise to a Christian text called Hymns of Paradise by a fourth-century author. Mr. Luxenberg said the word paradise was derived from the Aramaic word for garden and all the descriptions of paradise described it as a garden of flowing waters, abundant fruits and white raisins, a prized delicacy in the ancient Near East. In this context, white raisins, mentioned often as hur, Mr. Luxenberg said, makes more sense than a reward of sexual favors.

In many cases, the differences can be quite significant. Mr. Puin points out that in the early archaic copies of the Koran, it is impossible to distinguish between the words "to fight" and "to kill." In many cases, he said, Islamic exegetes added diacritical marks that yielded the harsher meaning, perhaps reflecting a period in which the Islamic Empire was often at war.

A return to the earliest Koran, Mr. Puin and others suggest, might lead to a more tolerant brand of Islam, as well as one that is more conscious of its close ties to both Judaism and Christianity.

"It is serious and exciting work," Ms. Crone said of Mr. Luxenberg's work. Jane McAuliffe, a professor of Islamic studies at Georgetown University, has asked Mr. Luxenberg to contribute an essay to the Encyclopedia of the Koran, which she is editing.

Mr. Puin would love to see a "critical edition" of the Koran produced, one based on recent philological work, but, he says, "the word critical is misunderstood in the Islamic world — it is seen as criticizing or attacking the text."

Some Muslim authors have begun to publish skeptical, revisionist work on the Koran as well. Several new volumes of revisionist scholarship, "The Origins of the Koran," and "The Quest for the Historical Muhammad," have been edited by a former Muslim who writes under the pen name Ibn Warraq. Mr. Warraq, who heads a group called the Institute for the Secularization of Islamic Society, makes no bones about having a political agenda. "Biblical scholarship has made people less dogmatic, more open," he said, "and I hope that happens to Muslim society as well."

But many Muslims find the tone and claims of revisionism offensive. "I think the broader implications of some of the revisionist scholarship is to say that the Koran is not an authentic book, that it was fabricated 150 years later," says Ebrahim Moosa, a professor of religious studies at Duke University, as well as a Muslim cleric whose liberal theological leanings earned him the animosity of fundamentalists in South Africa, which he left after his house was firebombed.

Andrew Rippin, an Islamicist at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada, says that freedom of speech in the Islamic world is more likely to evolve from within the Islamic interpretative tradition than from outside attacks on it. Approaches to the Koran that are now branded as heretical — interpreting the text metaphorically rather than literally — were widely practiced in mainstream Islam a thousand years ago.

"When I teach the history of the interpretation it is eye-opening to students the amount of independent thought and diversity of interpretation that existed in the early centuries of Islam," Mr. Rippin says. "It was only in more recent centuries that there was a need for limiting interpretation."

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Education, Magazine Editor. These people worked long hours and filled the role of staff in the other boards. They had two employees: a secretary and a book-keeper.

Society was changing. Many pastors' wives were working outside the home, and board members willing to accept such demanding assignments were not available. The Board finally elected one executive staff: Evlyn Fulton was elected as Executive Secretary-Treasurer.

The proposal was also advanced that the Foreign Mission work be merged with that of the Board of Foreign Missions. There was great appreciation for the work Mrs. McBride and her predecessors had done. However, in a changing world a tighter administration was needed.

For some reason lost in history they had not enrolled their appointees in the pension fund of the denomination. They were paying the pensions of their retired personnel out of their annual income. In 1955 that pension was \$50 a month. Congregations were protesting when they would see these former missionaries either destitute or dependent on relatives.

The boards were not able to reach agreement on a plan. The 1955 General Assembly was faced with the news that the Foreign Board had approved such a plan and the Women's Board had an evenly divided vote. An agreement was reached at the Assembly that the Board of Foreign Missions would be enlarged to twenty-seven members: Eighteen members would be elected by the usual nomination process of the Assembly, and nine would be nominated to the Assembly by the Women's Board. Evlyn Futon would have full rights as a staff member of our Board in meetings, etc. This proposal worked out very well for the final three years of our life as a board. It was helpful to have this arrangement as we worked toward union with the Presbyterians where the women's mission work was carried on by the boards. As the new board convened, Roy Grace was elected President and Mrs. McBride as Vice President.

One of our first acts was to register all missionaries supported by that board in the pension fund and assure them the minimum pension. It cost over three hundred thousand dollars to fund this move, and even then there was no adequate pension.

ISLAM & MISSION SCHOOLS

The other major development in our work involved a critical policy issue in Egypt. The Egyptian government passed a law concerning the teaching of religion in the schools. It assumed that such teaching was the responsibility of the government, and stated that each child should be taught the religion of its father

and no child should be taught a religion other than that held by its father. It also assumed that such teaching must be done by a person holding that religious faith, and they applied that rule to all schools. Therefore, Christian religion would be taught in government schools by a Christian, and Islam would be taught in Christian schools by a Muslim. A crisis was facing the mission schools.

The schools founded and run by the American Mission were quality schools. They attracted students from all walks of life, and Muslim parents enrolled their children with the full knowledge that they would be studying in a Christian atmosphere, attend chapel and study the Bible. Such parents wanted their children educated in a strong moral atmosphere.

According to the law, the government was responsible for the child's religious training, and the parents could not agree to have another religion taught. The government had been checking on the schools to see if there was any effort to evangelize Muslim students. In one case a Christian girl student had witnessed to her faith to another student, The latter reported this talk to her parents, who then went to the government, and the Christian student had to be expelled. Her education was finished. The school was reprimanded for letting this happen. The schools were not to be considered instruments of evangelism.

The crisis facing the mission schools was that of letting a Muslim Mullah come into the school and teach Islam to the Muslim students. There was real concern that such teaching would require Muslim worship and the building of Mosques on the school premises.

Several alternatives were explored:

1. Requiring parents of Muslim students to sign a paper excusing their children from this sort of teaching. Response: No parent has the right to disobey a law.
2. Admit only Christian students. Response: All schools must be open to any students, regardless of the student's religious faith.
3. Close the schools. Response: the government needs all schools and will take over any school that tries to avoid the law. A school operated by the London Mission to the Jews had been taken over by the government because it refused to enroll Muslims.
4. transfer the schools to the Synod, knowing that they would have to accept the law as citizens of Egypt. That seemed an obvious ploy to avoid the decision by the American Mission and would let us act as though we were more committed than our Christian brothers and sisters in Egypt: an unacceptable position for everybody.

We were faced with one decision: Obey the law and permit the teaching of Islam by a Muslim, or surrender the schools to the government, which would mean they would be government schools and Muslim in their orientation.

After much correspondence and discussion the Board met in June ¹⁹⁵⁶ ~~1996~~ with this question as the major item. Missionaries on furlough from Egypt were invited to the meeting and several attended. Four staff members from the Presbyterian Board were invited to attend. The floor was open to everyone for comment. Glenn Reed had come back from Asmara for this meeting. The staff had prepared a paper outlining the issues and proposing some steps toward solving the problem. They involved a series of consultations to make sure all information was available and to receive proposals. Included was the proposal that Glenn Reed and I go to Egypt to represent the Board in consultations with the mission, the Synod, and other interested parties and to reach any agreement with the government that might result from these discussions. The Board adopted the proposal. Glenn and I spoke for the Board in the ensuing process.

Glenn Reed was a power of strength in these negotiations. The mission leaders we met first were still hoping for some reprieve. The American Embassy asked to meet us and said they hoped we would keep the schools, which they considered one of our nation's best contributions and "show pieces" in a time of some difficult relations in regard to another issue: the United States' refusal to finance the Aswan High Dam.

We had an interesting experience with the embassy. They held a reception honoring Dr. Helen Martin who had was retiring as principal of the American College for Girls. She had given outstanding service for many years. The embassy people wanted to know if we had made a decision. We were still in process, so there was nothing to say. However, I noticed that one member of the staff was within earshot each time I had a conversation with anyone! I felt like a character in a spy novel.

The meeting with the church leaders had two interesting points: they gave illustrations of the problems some Christian children found when they attended government schools--harassment from other students, no respect from teachers. The advice given by the Synod leaders was that we should keep the schools at all costs and should ask for a statement from the Ministry about the implications: would mosques or worship centers for Muslims be required?

They also told us of a lay leader from one of the strong congregations that worked in the ministry of education and was alert to the problems over this issue. We were not sure that a written agreement would be given by the ministry, for they

were not negotiating the issue, they were enforcing it. What followed was enlightening about the way governments negotiate issues. This lay person became a conduit of information two ways. In a few days we heard that the Ministry would give us a written letter of agreement. They did understand that we had to report to a superior body in the United States. They did know that we were concerned about worship centers, and were not asking that these be built. In a sense the Ministry knew what we were going to ask, and we knew what they were going to answer; the final meetings were a public acting out of an agreement, the results of which were pretty well understood before we held the meeting!

We still had to meet the Mission, and many of them were at the mission's summer camp in Sidi Bishr, near Alexandria. The meeting began at 8 AM, and the subject was introduced by the mission president. Many missionaries voiced their position. They were sure this concession negated the reason for the Mission's presence in Egypt. If we agreed to accept the government's position, they would resign and go home. There were some who were willing to go along with the government's decree. Keeping the schools in Christian hands was more important than letting them go to the government.

Glenn Reed finally spoke, and his presentation set the direction. He said he was so thin because much of his diet through the years had been in "eating crow". He pointed out that he would also have refused to accept such an edict, but he had through the years come to believe that Islam only existed because Mohammed had at some point failed to comprehend the truth about Christ, and if we Christians could recognize that there was a point where we could meet the Muslim on common ground, we could then find ways to witness to the Gospel. If we accepted that teaching a child the faith of the parents was not an unreasonable request, we could take one more step in reaching them.

The question was asked on whether the Board would agree, and we explained the action. The Board knew of this possibility when they sent us. The question was asked on how we would explain this action to the church, and I replied that such responsibility belonged to the Board. We would need their help and prayers.

There was a break for lunch, further discussion, and the atmosphere became filled with emotion. We had to make a decision, for the meeting with the Ministry of Education was set for the next day. Finally a motion was made to accept the government's position and to appoint Walter Skellie and Ewing Bailey to join the discussions with the Ministry. After prayer the vote was by ballot. While they were counting the votes, I spoke for the Board and stated that we knew how deeply

many people felt about this issue, that several people had threatened to resign and leave. However, we had sought the leading of the Holy Spirit in our voting, we had felt the presence of God in our discussions, and the Board hoped that no one would feel that statements made in debate were binding. We hoped there would be no resignations over this issue.

The vote in favor of the motion was more than a two-thirds majority. Those of us who were going to Cairo for the meeting with the ministry had to make hasty good-byes, for the final train was leaving soon.

We met with the Undersecretary of Education, a civil servant who continues in office when the Minister, a political appointment, may be changed. However, before he initialed the final paper, he left the room to consult with the Minister.

He Quickly showed how aware he was of our concerns. He raised the question of mosques and assured us they had no intention of requiring such centers. They would make the appointment of the teachers and would pay them. He pointed out that they were teaching the Christian faith to Christians in their schools. When we asked about a written record of these discussions, he agreed and said we should prepare it.

We were working on all this effort around the Fourth of July, which the American Mission observed as a holiday. So we had no help in typing such an agreement. We went to the mission office to prepared the content of the agreement, Glenn and Walter Skellie worked on the Arabic copy, and I was left to type the English translation. All this work had to be done before two o'clock, for the Ministry Office would close then, and the Undersecretary was leaving for a conference in Switzerland the next day. When we took the copies in, we had made a slight adjustment that had not been discussed and he would not accept. So we had to retype the copies. He agreed to meet us at 6:00 AM the next morning before he left for Switzerland. This time the copies were acceptable and he signed them.

We returned to Philadelphia and began the process of interpreting the results to the church. A report was sent to the Board immediately. I then prepared a full report of all that had led up to this trip and the results of our actions. This material was sent to the other agencies and to the synod superintendents across the church and to the Presbyterian Board and to the Division of Foreign Missions of the National Council of Churches. We wanted them to hear from us rather than through news articles. We also prepared a release for The United Presbyterian, our church news magazine.

At the end of that first week home I was scheduled to attend the synod meeting of our Northwest Synod. It was our most difficult relationship. It covered Washington and Oregon, felt isolated from the denomination, and had some of our most conservative churches. Before the meeting was finished someone posted a small article from Time Magazine reporting on our agreement under the heading "Bowling to Nasser". The tone was that the Americans had lost to Egypt.

I was assigned a half-hour on the agenda. I decided just to tell what had led to the problem, show how all options were closed to us, and then tell about our meetings. I had no eloquent arguments, I was relating information. I felt the room get quieter as I talked and sensed that the same intense mood that had gripped the mission in Sidi Bishr was gripping this group. The Spirit that had led us through this experience was now doing the interpretation. When I finished there was silence for a moment, and then someone called for a period of silent prayer for the mission in Egypt. No one argued or even questioned our decision. Later in the summer I had the opportunity to give a public report to the New Wilmington Missionary Conference, and I experienced the same mood in the audience and the same sense that the Spirit was guiding the interpretation.

To my knowledge this agreement about teaching Islam in the mission schools had no negative effect. I cannot remember that anyone resigned over this issue. The schools continued under Christian leadership and have continued to serve the people of Egypt while under control of the Evangelical Church. The change from being a synod to being an independent church was accomplished after the merger.

CHURCH UNION NEGOTIATIONS

As mentioned earlier the merger with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. occupied a great amount of time and energy, especially in the last two years. The plan for union was sent to the presbyteries of both churches by each General Assembly in the early summer of 1956.

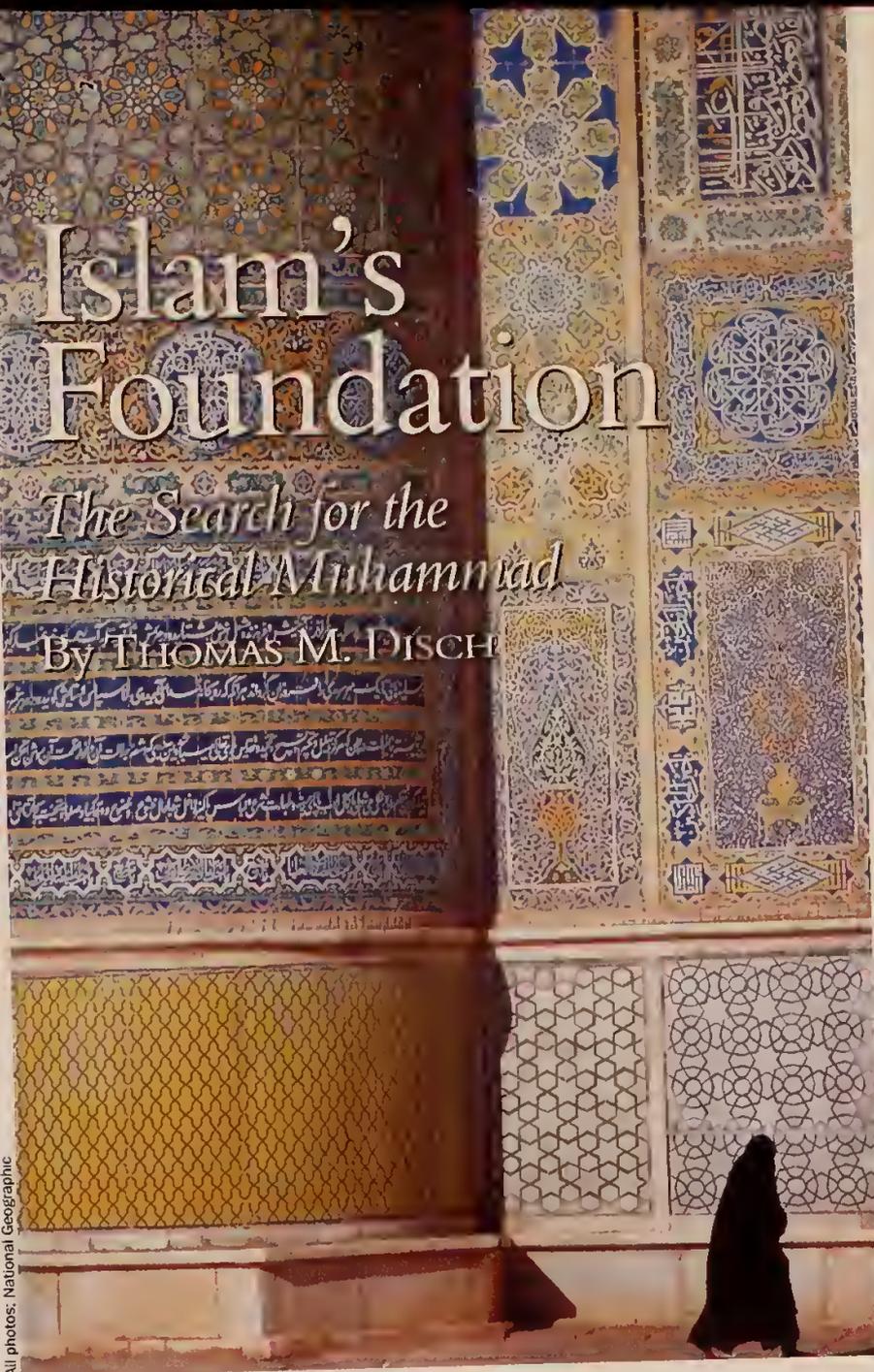
We had a good contact with the staff of the Board of Foreign Missions in John Coventry Smith. He had been raised in the United Presbyterian Church and his middle name was for a missionary in Egypt. He had gone to Muskingum College and was friends with Hugh Kelsey, our treasurer. His missionary service had been in Japan, and he had been interned during the war. When he returned to the states. he was called to be pastor of the Mt. Lebanon UP Church, our leading congregation in Pittsburgh. He was later called to be the Regional Secretary for the Far East on the Presbyterian Board staff. His ability had gained him a position of

Islam's Foundation

The Search for the Historical Muhammad

By THOMAS M. DISCH

All photos: National Geographic



Living as an expatriate in Rome in the early 1970s, I came to know a young Arabist studying at the Vatican Library, who amazed me during the course of a long holiday banquet by explaining that the received wisdom among most non-Muslim scholars was that the Koran, far from being the work of Muhammad, had been compiled well over a

century after his death—if, indeed, there ever was such a person.

I had read a brief life of the Prophet and some few selections from the Koran chosen to inculcate an irenic respect. My reaction to the holy text was more along the lines of *ho-hum* than *gosh-*

wow (I could find nothing to compare to the poetry of Job or the epic grandeur of the Ramayana). But the notion that the Prophet might be no more than a figure in an Islamic foundation legend, a poetic creation like Romulus and Remus, was startling, for

my sense of the matter (absorbed as a college undergraduate) was that promulgated by the nineteenth-century historian of religion Ernest Renan, who held that “in place of the mystery under which the other religions have covered their origins, Islam was born in the full light of history.”

All that was before the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the ensuing decades of Islamic terrorism, the fatwah pronounced against Salman Rushdie, and the events of September 11. Since that string of dire events, understanding the history of Islam is no longer another easily shirked intellectual duty, but a matter of immediate and pressing concern. With Islamic fundamentalists—inspired by a zealotry that seems conscienceless and unremitting—calling for a holy war against Western civilization, it has become germane to inquire into the subject proposed by the title of Ibn Warraq’s latest book, *What the Koran Really Says*.

Warraq may well be the most prominent authority on Islamic history and culture who is not a Muslim apologist or a political partisan but a critic. His three earlier books—*Why I Am Not a Muslim* (1995), *The Origins of the Koran* (1998), and *The Quest for the Historical Muhammad* (2000)—constitute a unique resource for Western readers seeking an overview of Islam that is informed, forthright, and undaunted by the likelihood of an extremely hostile reception among orthodox Islamic scholars, for whom any murmur of criticism can be a *casus belli*. For prudential reasons Warraq writes under an assumed name, and his publisher tells us only that he was born in the Middle East and lives and teaches in America. But, secure within his anonymity, Warraq dares to say those things that other Arabists can only hint at, or which they bury under truckloads of philological dust: that “Muhammad” was no Arab, that the Mecca from which he did not come did not exist at the time he wasn’t there, that the Arab conquest

What the Koran Really Says
A Textual Commentary
 by Ibn Warraq
 Prometheus, 600 pp., \$36

Thomas M. Disch is a novelist whose latest work in progress is “Mecca: A Vision of the Next Crusade.”

of the Mediterranean preceded the establishment of the Islamic faith by a good two centuries, and that the Koran was compiled from a variety of sources in order to provide the far-flung conquered peoples with a suitably "Arabic" religion—a religion, that is, free of the taint of the rival monotheisms in which it had its source, and which, very often, Islam was supplanting.

"Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph," as the Second Book of Samuel puts it, has been the response of orthodox Islam to this feat of infidel scholarship. Against Warraq's phalanx of learned demolition experts, orthodox Islamicists have little recourse but to denounce Warraq as a hostile witness and to sneer, as one critic does in the pages of the *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, that he has not "the honesty or courage to divulge his identity." That seems to be the worst his enemies can come up with by way of contesting his methods and theories, for they offer no rebuttal to arguments that will strike most impartial readers as persuasive.

Worse still from the Islamicist point of view, the arguments they shy away from are not uniquely Warraq's methods and theories. He acts in his three most recent books as an anthologist of Koranic scholarship over the past century and as a popularizer of the work, published two decades ago, of John Wansbrough. That Wansbrough's work should have remained so obscure in the decades since his *Quranic Studies* of 1977 and *Sectarian Milieu* of 1978 suggests that it was written primarily for Arabic scholars, an audience who for the most part responded first with a shudder of horror and then a prudential silence. It well may be that the *only* defense against Wansbrough is to pay him no heed. Insofar as he did not himself act to make his work more widely accessible to a general readership, he assisted in keeping the shutters drawn and the cobwebs undisturbed.

There are scholars who have taken

their cue from Wansbrough—Patricia Crone, Michael Cook, and G.R. Hawting, among them—and their works have been excerpted or summarized in one or another of Warraq's books. If there is to be a true "clash of civilizations," Wansbrough's theories are the literary equivalent of the explosives that brought down the two ancient Buddhas in Afghanistan.

All that stands in the way of such an un-meeting of the minds is the natural human reluctance on the part of all but the most fiercely inquisitive in the West to pursue the arduous trail of clues mapped by these scholars. Even without the aggrieved hostility of Muslim scholars it would be no easy mystery to unravel. Yet the essence of the problem can be easily stated, and has been, in an essay by Herbert Berg:

As Wansbrough notes, "Bereft of archaeological witness and hardly attested to in pre-Islamic Arabic or external sources, the seventh-century Hijaz [the area around Mecca] owes its historiographical existence almost entirely to the creative endeavor of Muslim and Orientalist scholarship." That is to say, all Islamicists acknowledge that all the information we have about the first two centuries of Islam come from compilations and writings whose present recensions date from little earlier than the third Islamic century (i.e., 800 C.E.).

In short, the Dark Ages of Islam are a good deal darker than those of the West, and through all the years that the Sword of Islam was busy subduing the Near East and the Mediterranean, there were no written records of Muhammad that survive, no mention of the Koran—only hearsay assertions many times removed, in later sources. If these assertions are submitted to close textual analysis, using the tools of modern philology that have been used in the study of the Bible, what remains is a text riddled with inconsistencies and evidence of repeated tampering, a text with clear-cut borrowings from Judaic, Christian, and even Zoroastrian sources. Further, its Arabic is often ungrammatical to the point of incoherence, thus lending it to a history of tendentious "interpretations." In short, the Koran's texts (there are various



"Korans," often in conflict with each other) are chiefly a scandal and an intellectual embarrassment as the basis of an examined religious faith.

Christians in the West have been living with just such a scandal for at least the last two hundred years. It came to a crisis during the Victorian era as the educated middle classes of Europe and America shared scholarship's "quest for the historic Jesus." The shock waves generated by those inquiries still can be measured among all denominations, from the least doctrinaire Unitarians to the most diehard fundamentalists—who yet, for all the

difference in their creeds, have found a way to occupy the same political space.

Across the globe Islam has a poor track record (which Warraq documents in many chapters of *Why I Am Not a Muslim*) at addressing the essential civilizing task of learning to tolerate other points of view and to join the West in a common era in which scholarship is not a hazardous occupation. Commentators on the Koran have been sentenced to death for suggesting that Muhammad's parents might not have been Muslims, and Islamic fundamentalists like the Taliban institute Orwellian regimes in the name of Islamic law.

It is best to read Warraq's four books in the order they were published. The latest, *What the Koran Really Says*, deals with the subject at its most fundamental level, studying the language of the Koran, searching out linguistic echoes of its debts to its sources, and dealing with passages of a symptomatically obscure nature. While such questions have their undeniable fascination, they can't rival the themes of his first book, *Why I Am Not a Muslim*, for the power to instruct, dismay, and shock. The first chapter alone is worth the cover price, for its brief history of how Islam came to be viewed so benignly and uncritically in the West. Far from being the conspiracy of slanderers conjured up by Edward Said in his influential study, *Orientalism* (1978), Western historians from Gibbon to Foucault have acted to exonerate the Prophet and his believers. Little wonder then that when Khomeini pronounced his fatwah against Rushdie many Western intellectuals joined him in reprobating Rushdie for his "blasphemy."

The double standard by which the West is denounced for its imperialism while Islam refuses to recognize the rudiments of international law has reached its pinnacle in the responses to September 11. Is Islam, as President Bush has hopefully declared, just like Christianity and Judaism in its love of peace and yearning for brotherhood? It would be wise to take Ibn Warraq's crash course in the subject before answering that question. ♦

The Butler Didn't Do It

A Victorian Murder, Solved.

BY SUSAN BALÉE

In Emily Eden's popular 1859 novel *The Semi-Detached House*, old Mrs. Hopkinson observes, "I like a good murder that can't be found out; that is, of course, it is very shocking, but I like to hear about it." Mrs. Hopkinson was echoing the sentiments of her Victorian readers, who had an insatiable appetite for murder in novels, newspapers, plays, and street hawkers' broadsheets.

One of the most famous Victorian murders that couldn't be found out was that of Charles Bravo, a thirty-year-old barrister who died after his intestines were burned to shreds by a corrosive poison in April 1876. The young husband, married less than six months, died in his wife's mansion in Balham, south London. Within a week, the police knew Bravo's death had not been a suicide (as they originally insisted), but a murder. The problem for the bumbling local police was not a dearth of suspects, but an abundance, including Bravo's unhappy wife, Florence Ricardo Bravo; her ex-lover, the aged Dr. James Gully; the housekeeper and Florence's companion, Mrs. Cox (whom the barrister had informed she would soon be dismissed); and the couple's former coachman, George Griffiths, whom Bravo had recently fired for a minor infraction.

The Balham Mystery, as it has been known for well over a century, has been the subject of numerous books and even a BBC television mini-series, but

A writer in Philadelphia, Susan Balée is the author of articles on Wilkie Collins, M.E. Braddon, Oscar Wilde, and Victorian culture.

no one has ever solved the puzzle of Bravo's murder. He ingested antimony, a poison colorless and tasteless in water, from his bedside water jug, but no one knows who put it there. Even Agatha Christie—who hypothesized that old Dr. Gully was the murderer—

nevertheless acknowledged that Bravo's death was "one of the most mysterious poisoning cases ever recorded."

Not anymore. James Ruddick, the author of an earlier true-crime book, *Lord Lucan: What Really Happened*, has solved the mystery by going beyond the published record of the coroner's inquest (all that other commentators have ever had to go on) and gaining access to the primary sources. Ruddick examined the full reports of the investigating officers, the forensic reports of the physicians involved in the case, and the complete statements of all the witnesses. Most important, he tracked down the descendants of all the principal suspects, discovering documentary evidence in New Zealand and Jamaica that provides enough evidence to expose the real killer—evidence that none of the investigators had in 1876.

Ruddick's proof is compelling, but he doesn't give it away immediately. Instead, *Death at the Priory* reads like a first-rate murder mystery whose key points are bolstered by the author's deep knowledge of the Victorian era. Bravo's murder occurred soon after legislation broadened the rights of women and the lower classes. It occurred after the explosion of sensational fiction by such writers as Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon had moved the locus of crime from

Death at the Priory
Sex, Love and Murder in Victorian England
by James Ruddick
Atlantic Monthly, 224 pp., \$24

Gothic castles to the bosom of the Victorian family.

Collins's *The Woman in White* and Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* were blockbuster bestsellers when they appeared in the early 1860s. Indeed, by the time of Charles Bravo's murder, there had been so many high profile murder trials, celebrity criminals, and bestselling novels about killers disguised as respectable citizens that it began to be difficult to tell the facts from the fiction, the cause from the effect: Did highly publicized murder trials breed the novels, or did the novels breed the crimes? Certainly, many commentators at the time thought the latter. The Reverend Francis Paget, writing in 1868, observed that sensation novelists were providing would-be murderers with a how-to manual: "For the benefit of students in the science of Toxicology... the most approved methods for poisoning have been set forth with medical and surgical minuteness."

Meanwhile, readers crossed class boundaries, and the working classes and aristocrats were as united in their love of these books as they were united in their penchant for real-life murder trials. Homicide, as Richard Altick wrote in *Victorian Studies in Scarlet*, "became institutionalized as a popular entertainment, a spectator sport." Every new murder that cried out from the newspaper pages validated sensation novels and helped to create more of them.

So, for instance, the case of Madeleine Smith, the daughter of a wealthy Glasgow architect, who was tried in 1857 for poisoning her lover. (Many scholars think *Lady Audley's Secret* derived from this case.) Madeleine Smith, in the midst of a torrid affair with a French shipping clerk, suddenly met someone suitable to marry. Alas, her lover, who had saved the many letters she had written him crowing about their sexual escapades, decided to blackmail her. In February 1857, according to chemists' accounts, Madeleine Smith bought arsenic and her hapless lover Emile began to suffer from the gastric attacks that ultimately

killed him. By the time of the inquest in the summer of 1857, the dock at Edinburgh was overrun with gawkers. Never had such a lovely, young, and well-born prisoner stood in the witness box. Prompted perhaps by Smith's glamour (as well as the omnipresent British francophobia), the jury returned a verdict of Not Proven, and Madeleine Smith walked free.

Florence Bravo wasn't so lucky, or perhaps she just didn't have Madeleine Smith's chutzpah. At nineteen, Florence Campbell caught sight of her first husband, a twenty-two-year-old grenadier, Alexander Ricardo. He was a



Charles Bravo

dark, handsome, dashing young man with distinguished and wealthy parents (his father was a Liberal MP, his mother a society beauty). They married in 1864 and Florence immediately began badgering Ricardo to give up the military, settle down in style, and produce a brood of children. In 1868, he capitulated, but he could not fulfill himself with the usual round of aristocratic pursuits—hunting, fishing, riding—and soon he turned to other women and alcohol.

Not surprisingly, the husband and wife began to fight, and Ricardo's verbal abuse ultimately became physical. Just before Christmas in 1870, Florence Ricardo left her husband and returned to her parents' house. Unfortunately for her, Robert Campbell told his

daughter that it was "morally offensive" for a wife to leave her husband and that he would not permit her to stay. Florence became hysterical and a compromise was reached: Florence would go to the Hydro, an aristocratic sanatorium run by the eminent Dr. James Gully, to recover her nerves.

Florence recuperated so well that she precipitated the first great scandal of her life: She seduced her doctor. Dr. James Gully, a kind and empathetic man who listed Gladstone, Disraeli, Dickens, and Darwin among his patients, was nevertheless a small, pale, bald man in his sixties. It is a testament to his charisma that Florence fell so completely in love with the genial old physician. By consummating their relationship, both Florence and Gully took an enormous risk. Not only were both married (Gully's wife was in her eighties and confined in a mental asylum) but both were well-known society figures. If their liaison became known, they would be judged mercilessly and their reputations destroyed.

At first, Florence Ricardo must have thought she'd escaped without punishment: She'd taken a lover, and no one was the wiser. And then—*quelle chance*—Alexander Ricardo drank himself to death in April 1871. Best of all, he hadn't bothered to change his will, and Florence inherited forty thousand pounds, a fabulous fortune at that time. The wealthy widow bought a mansion in South London called the Priory.

Poor old Dr. Gully followed Florence to London at her request, buying a house five minutes' walk from the Priory. He had asked Florence if she would marry him when his wife died. Florence wasn't too sure she really wanted to marry this kindly substitute father, but she was certainly enjoying the sex with him. At least, until the day they were caught *in flagrante*, at the home of friends Florence was visiting in Surrey. Florence had been ostensibly "entertaining" her doctor friend in the drawing room while her hosts were out for a walk. As fate would have it, the hosts returned for an umbrella, at which point "they heard the unmistakable sounds of sexual activity... When

INDIANS FROM THE RIO GRANDE TO CAPE HORN

BY THE REV. THOMAS C. MOFFETT, D.D.

*Secretary of the Indian Mission of America and of the Commission on the
Indians of Latin America*

THE statements of this article regarding the Indians from Mexico to Patagonia have been compiled from various sources, to answer five questions and reveal the neglect and the need of evangelization and Christian nurture for the millions of the native American race who are without missionaries. As a preliminary observation the statement of the Rev. W. F. Jordan may be noted: "There is an America, largely unknown to the rest of the world, almost totally undeveloped, untouched and unaided by modern Christian and philanthropic effort. A section of this in Central and South America constitutes 'the greatest stretch of unevangelized territory in the world.' Here the population is overwhelmingly Indian, and can be fittingly termed 'Indian America.'"

Who Are Indians?

The classification of racial groups, where blood of various strains has mingled for generations, is difficult. In 1519, Cortez and his Spanish Conquistadores reached Mexico, and into the empire of Montezuma, soon overthrown and devastated, there was introduced the Caucasian race, destined to become socially, politically and racially dominant over the populations of the red race. The question "What constitutes an Indian?" has been variously viewed by scientists and publicists. A person whose native American Indian blood is one hundred per cent pure

is easily classified, but what about persons of mixed blood?

In view of the increasing interest which students of the American Indians have been showing in the question, Dr. Warren K. Moorehead, a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners and director of the department of anthropology of Philips Academy, addressed a questionnaire to leading scientists and other interested persons, and the subject was discussed at a meeting of the American Anthropological Association. Dr. Moorehead combined a summary of the replies with his own observations as follows:

By the designation "Indian" is meant a male or female of native American Indian descent whose father and mother were native, aboriginal Americans in whom the quantum of Indian blood predominated. Further, as Indians under this designation are included such persons in whom the quantum of blood is one-half Indian and one-half white, that is the father of white descent and mother of Indian descent, or vice versa. Also are included under the designation "Indian" persons of one-fourth quantum of Indian blood.

For the purposes of the present study of the populations of Latin America, the classification of only those individuals of predominantly Indian blood is accepted as marking the line of distinction between redmen and other races.

How Many Indians in Latin America?

The twenty republics occupying the vast area of the Western Hem-

isphere south of the United States have a population of approximately 80,000,000. Estimates of the "Statesman's Year Book" and other investigations authorize a classification which it does not claim to be accurate but which serves the purpose of division into groups for ready reference as follows: White population, 18,000,000; Indian, 17,000,000; Negro, 6,000,000; mixed White and Indian, 30,000,000; mixed White and Negro, 8,000,000; mixed Negro and Indian, 700,000; East Indian, Japanese and Chinese, 300,000. From another source, one-third of the population of Latin America has been estimated as Indian. Dr. S. G. Inman, in "Problems in Pan Americanism," says: "Although the process of assimilation by the Iberian conquerors in the early days went on rapidly, resulting in the large mestizo population which constitutes the bulk of the population today, it must be said that this process seems now to have practically ceased, leaving intact an aggregate community of some 18,000,000 of pure Indians, scattered from Mexico to Patagonia."

Of the Highland Indians of the Andean Republics, Dr. George M. McBride, reports:

In Bolivia, 50 per cent of the inhabitants are classed as of pure Indian blood, while 27 per cent are of mixed race with the Indian character predominating. (Census of 1900.) In Peru, out of a total population of 4,500,000, the Indians number about 2,500,000 or over 55 per cent. In Ecuador, there are practically no persons of pure Spanish blood and the pure Indians are estimated as about 1,600,000. In Colombia, about 10 per cent of the population is of pure Indian blood. Though no exact statistics are available as to the exact numbers, the major divisions are probably about

as follows: Quechuas 3,000,000; Aymaras 500,000; Colombian civilized Indians 500,000.

"There is no need to describe the admirable features that characterized the Inca Empire, which extended over almost all of the upland territory, embraced in the three republics of Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, or the inferior but still advanced culture of the Chibchas in Colombia. Prescott, in his "Conquest of Peru," Sir Clements Markham in "The Incas of Peru," and Thomas A. Joyce in "South American Archæology," considered these people worthy subjects for their masterly sketches. The Indians of those celebrated days were by no means exterminated by the Spanish. They survive, probably in reduced numbers and certainly under great oppression, but still capable of the achievements that distinguished their ancestors. Among the humble peons on the Andean farms, and particularly among the still existing independent communities that occupy the more isolated sections of the plateau, there live many worthy sons of once distinguished families. Though submerged beneath the surface of the present social and political life and deprived of almost every opportunity for economic, intellectual or spiritual advancement, these rugged mountain people preserve many of the physical, mental and moral qualities which in centuries past made them dominate the destinies of the entire continent. This is peculiarly true of the Aymara and the Quechua tribes, the most numerous as well as the most promising of these Indians.

"The Lowland Indians of South America, in contrast with the highland peoples, are largely uncivilized. Due in great part to their

unfavorable geographical environment, they have never developed in the social scale but remain, as they have been for ages past, in a state of greater or less savagery. They are divided into multitudinous small tribes, sometimes loosely federated but generally at more or less open warfare one with the other and each speaking a distinct language or dialect. The Araucanians of south central Chile are far above other lowland tribes, possessing a fairly high degree of civilization, with agriculture and stock raising well advanced and an organized patriarchal government.

"Any calculation of the numbers of lowland Indians in South America can be only rough estimates. No census of the republics concerned attempts to state their Indian population of the forests in more than general terms. The following is an estimate based upon the most reliable data available: Brazil 1,300,000; Peru 1,000,000; Ecuador 700,000; Bolivia 400,000; Venezuela 300,000; Chile 102,000; Colombia 100,000; Paraguay 50,000; Argentina 30,000; The Guianas 40,000, total, 4,022,000.

"In Mexico and Central America as in South America, exact enumeration of the Indians is entirely lacking. The following figures are only approximately correct but are based upon the most accurate statistics available: Mexico 5,224,500; Guatemala 1,202,150; Salvador 234,650; Nicaragua 180,000; Panama 91,000; Honduras 60,000; British Honduras 20,000; Costa Rica, 3,500; total 7,015,800."

Why Is This Called the Continent of Neglect and of Opportunity?

Regarding the neglect of these millions of Indians and their needs religiously, socially and education-

ally, note the following statements from those who have carefully studied this situation. Dr. McBride writes of the highland Indians:

These Indians are neither educated nor Christianized. For four centuries they have lived side by side with Europeans. Yet the vast majority of them can neither read nor write, speak no languages but their own, are familiar with only a few empty symbols of Christianity and worship, as of old, the spirits that, to their simple fancy, inhabit fields, rocks and mountain peaks. As to their needs, very little has been done for them in any way, either by missionary agencies or by the governments in whose jurisdiction they live. In general, they have been entirely neglected and left in their primitive state, to become the prey of a slowly advancing wave of civilization in which Christianity has played no part. They have thus been entirely at the mercy of traders, industrialists and slave raiders.

Mr. Kenneth Grubb, says:

There are few missions today which work in the indigenous tongue of the Indians. If you speak to an Indian in Spanish or Portuguese, you do not make much progress; but if you talk his own language you get along much better. Perhaps the problem of the civilized Indian is much the same as that of the uncivilized. The difficulties that have prevented the progress of Protestant missions among the Indians are due first of all to the nature of the country. Communication is difficult.

Secondly, the linguistic diversity which obtains among the tribes. Some years ago I published a map presenting a linguistic classification of 350 different tribes speaking different dialects, not all of course radically different; they belonged to about 50 well marked different linguistic stocks.

Another question is that of identification. The habitat of the Indians is a serious matter; the identification of his tribal identity is another one, for without that, one cannot know in what

language to approach the Indians or whether it is a language whose linguistic affiliations make it worth while to commence work among them.

We are not in the position in the Amazon basin to start any vast schemes of education among the 350 uncivilized tribes of Latin America, but spiritual attainments are to be desired. This is especially the case because the Indian of the interior is entirely in a savage state. For instance, in June, 1925, I was offered human flesh among the Indians. Among the same tribe I was finally robbed of all my possessions and clothes and turned out naked in the forests. You can readily see under those circumstances that one's life is at stake sometimes.

Dr. John A. Mackay, speaking on "Adventures in the Mind of Latin America," gives a suggestive point of view:

South America is probably the only great region of the world in which there is no deep-rooted racial prejudice. It is today the world's largest crucible of race fusion. No race is excluded on ethnic grounds from entering this crucible. Where exclusion exists it is due entirely to economic reasons. There is fundamentally no such thing as racial antagonism. Inter-marriage between the four ethnic families has gone on and continues to go on. A keen student of South American sociology, Sr. Jose Vasconcelos, the distinguished Minister of Education during the Obregon administration in Mexico, has entitled his latest study of the Southern continent: "The Cosmic Race." His thesis is that South America is the sphere where a new "cosmic" race, a fifth member of the ethnic family, is being evolved to whose formation the white and the black, the red and the yellow races are making their contribution. This would be the true ecumenical race of the future.

Regarding Peru, it is stated:

Societies to combat intemperance, social vice, Indian exploitation and oth-

er deeply-seated evils are scarcely more than projected. The most effective of these is probably the Aborigines Protection Society of Peru. This is doing a great work in defending the rights of the Indians. The activity so far has almost wholly been in opposition to abuse of the Indian, rather than in positive effort to raise him above the position which permits of the abuse. The whole force is Peruvian except a young German-Peruvian secretary.

In an article entitled "Indigenous Simplicity," William F. Jones wrote in *The Atlantic Monthly* for August, 1928, this characterization:

In the casual habits and mental behavior of the peoples indigenous to them, the true understanding of the Latin American countries may be found. Observers often make the mistake of looking for complex psychological processes and oblique explanations in these people. The secret of understanding them rests in simplicity, not complexity. Their ideas, their thoughts, their actions, are childishly simple. Like children they give free vent to their emotions, like children their amusement is generally at the expense of someone else's discomfort; like most children, they are inherently honest, but sometimes put their own trivial gratification foremost at unexpected moments.

Among the Indian natives I have seen the trait of honesty so often that I have no patience with the prevalent opinion that the native is a thief. One custom that surprises the stranger in the larger Mexican cities is the casual way in which people carry sacks of money about the streets. There being no paper currency business houses send boys and clerks to and from the banks, unguarded, carrying thousands of pesos.

Dr. Robert E. Speer, speaking of unoccupied areas, said:

The opportunity at least is given for us United States people to make some amends to the Indian race which

is so rapidly being wiped out. Very hard that problem is going to be in many respects, one of the most difficult problems of pioneer missionary work that Christianity has ever undertaken. The heroic tasks have not all been exhausted by the martyrs before us. There are tasks as heroic, challenging the church of this generation, and it may be that out of this congress a spirit of sacrificial appeal will go to the hearts of the young men and young women of our Christian churches that will lead them forth into those great perils of life involved in the evangelization of these Indian peoples. . . . The most needy and uncared for sections are the Indians of the Amazon, the Aymaras of Bolivia, the Quichuas of Bolivia and Peru, and the tribes of Ecuador and Colombia. There are savages among these Indians, but they are not inaccessible.

The Honorable Ignacio Calderon, late Minister of Bolivia to the United States, wrote for *Current History* the following plea:

The Indians constitute the working force of the respective countries. They cultivate the land, exploit the mines, construct roads and are employed in all kinds of manual labor. Notwithstanding centuries of submission, the Indians remain a sturdy and intelligent race, without which the countries that have them could not subsist. No greater duty devolves on the democracies of America than to make intelligent and educated citizens of the now abject and oppressed Indians. Every sentiment of humanity, every principle of justice and duty call for the redeeming of those millions of abused members of the so-called Latin American Republics, where no equality in fact exists, and where want of education leaves these victims at the mercy of their oppressors. The time has surely come for something to be done.

What Have the Evangelical Forces Planned and Projected for the Indians of Latin America?

In January, 1920, the Committee of Reference and Counsel of the

Foreign Missions Conference of North America and the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America discussed a program of work among the Indians. The total population not reached by evangelical effort was stated to be between 11,500,000 and 12,000,000. The uncivilized lowland Indians were represented as, in general, totally neglected. This field of effort was proclaimed the noblest task to which a Christian missionary could devote his life. It was proposed that a deputation to South America on the Indian fields should be organized. Vigorous and coordinated action was called for. A Committee on Findings reported as follows:

The interest in all discussions has proved conclusively that there is an honest and earnest purpose on the part of all boards and their missionaries to solve the problems and push the work to victory with the help of Christ and His church. This conference was intended to bring the needs and conditions of work for Indians to light as had never before been done. The result is an unmistakable conclusion that the churches are under obligation to undertake on a scale never before attempted the evangelization and the Christian education of aboriginal Americans of whom there are not less than 15,000,000 full bloods between the United States and Cape Horn, to say nothing of the many millions more who are largely of Indian blood.

This conference therefore urges every board, to which allocations of work for Indians are suggested by the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, to assume those responsibilities to the fullest extent possible.

In April, 1924, the Commission on Indian Work in Latin America was organized. The purpose was stated to be "to study and promote missionary work among native-speaking Indians in Mexico, Cen-

tral America and South America." The significant statement was made by Mr. A. C. Snead that "the claim of the Latin American Indians upon the Christian church is a claim of a neglected race. They have been deeply affected by the political and economic life of Christian civilization and always to their detriment. There are more languages among these peoples in which the Gospel is not available than in any other part of the world today." Dr. William I. Haven, Chairman, said:

Each missionary group working among these Indians should be requested by some central authorization to send in all the knowledge they have so that a group of experts may put this whole picture together. We can no doubt get the cooperation of the American Geographical Society, the National Geographic Society, the Pan-American Union, the Museum of Natural History and like organizations. The second thing is to get that knowledge out among the Christian people through our churches. There are resources that should be put into this enterprise in faith, in life and in money, in the hands of Christian people in this country, that can be brought into service if we can get this information to the people. It is up to us to set the church on fire for the task. Maybe it cannot be done. We must not say so nor must we think so. It can be done if we will all get together.

Five years later, the commission was reorganized, May 15, 1929, to be composed of representatives of the various agencies at work among the Indians of Latin America.

The Evangelical Congress held in Havana, June 20, 1929, gave special attention to the Indian problem. Extended resolutions were passed with the following opening statement:

The commission believes that, as a preliminary step the congress, as a

representative of the Christian churches, should confess with pain and repentance the lack of attention with which it has regarded for years the evangelization of the Indians, and it proposes to awaken a Christian responsibility in the respective national churches so that they shall not fall into such neglect again.

What Are the Prospects of the Work?

The tabulations of reports from some thirty-five organizations, having relations to Indian fields of Latin-America, are at the offices of the commission, 419 Fourth Avenue, New York.

The educational advance for South America, through the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, has greatly impressed a number of outstanding leaders of the church. Here one nation was speaking its message of friendship to a sister continent. Bishop William F. Oldham, after considering this program, summed up his impression, with which other leaders are represented as agreeing, when he said: "Without undue enthusiasm, speaking deliberately as a man who all his life has been out on the firing line, associated with large projects in different parts of the world around, I say that the educational advance for South America is the most comprehensive challenging program for Christian service that I have ever known."

Dr. Webster E. Browning, writing in the REVIEW, April, 1928, on "Notable Conquests in Latin America," stated:

Help for the submerged Indian masses did not enter into the plans of Evangelical forces fifty years ago. Even that which is being done today is tragically inadequate to the needs of these millions of fellow Americans, as pagan as were their forefathers when Columbus first looked on the shores of America. Yet, considerable

interest has now been aroused in the problem, a number of missions have been organized, in one country there are now fourteen where three years ago there was but one, and it is hoped that steps may soon be taken to organize and coordinate these various bodies and carry forward a work which shall bring to the hundreds of widely scattered tribes the benefits of Christianity.

At the annual meeting, in March, 1929, of the Evangelical Union of South America, A. Stuart McNairn said:

A new day is dawning for South America. One can hardly realize the tremendous contrast of things as they are today and as they were only a few years ago. There was a time when

that land seemed to be not only closed to the Gospel but utterly neglected and shut out of the thought of God's people in this land of ours. But far more thought and prayer and service have been given to South America than ever before. And the result is seen today in doors wide open throughout the whole continent. The faces of the Indians are toward the light, and wherever they see our work they say, "Come to us and teach us and help us." With their own hands they are building little churches and schools and looking to us for the teachers who shall bring them into the light.

A new day is dawning for South America. Let us welcome it and take our part in making it the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A NEW NOTE IN TRAVEL

MAKING travel a vital factor in promoting international understanding and good will without eliminating its pleasing vacational features is being emphasized in the many tours being arranged for the season of 1930 by World Acquaintance Travel, Inc. Distinguished men and women are among the leaders of these various groups.

Some of the tours have been arranged strictly for study and special observation. Others are of the sightseeing variety. Among those with a definite objective, is a group led by Leonard Barron, Horticulture Editor of *Country Life*; a motor tour through Spain and Italy will be under the leadership of Mrs. John Walton Paris; a tour to the Social Service Conference in Upsala under Mrs. John Ferguson and Mrs. Josephine Stearns; a Friendship Tour under the auspices of the Methodist Church, and the Good Will Pilgrimage of the

International Council of Congregational Churches to England; an Art Appreciation Tour under Mrs. R. Edson Doolittle; and a Dante Pilgrimage under Mrs. George H. Camehl.

The National Federation of Business and Professional Women are arranging their third year series of tours under World Acquaintance Travel. Eight Quinquennial Tours to the Meeting of the International Council of Women at Vienna, May 27 to June 9 are also among the study tours.

With but few exceptions, all tours will visit Oberammergau and the Passion Play. Each group will also have the advantages of the hospitality and cooperation of the International Committee of World Acquaintance Travel. This Committee has been organized for the purpose of bringing World Acquaintance Travelers in closer touch with the problems, institutions and social life of the nations.

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Planet Art

DAFFODILS AND TURBANS

Though most closely associated now with the Netherlands, tulips hail from modern-day Turkey. Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, the Holy Roman Empire's ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in the mid-1500s, noticed the striking flowers while on a trip to Istanbul. The Turks called them *lalé*, but Busbecq's interpreter mistakenly gave him the term *dulban* or *tülbend* (turban), which was further corrupted to *tulip*. The ambassador sent some bulbs back to a gardener friend in Vienna, where they generated a stir that eventually blossomed into "tulipomania."

Did You Know?

Unusual fruits of Western encounters with Islam.

ELESHA COFFMAN

Sport of sheikhs

Long before blue grass and white fences came on the scene, horses ran for the roses in the Arabian desert. Horse breeding probably started in Central Asia, perhaps as early as 4500 B.C., but those sturdy beasts were built mainly for war and heavy labor, not speed. Arabian horses, by contrast, were useful in raids largely because of their blazing quickness. This also made them a lot more fun to play with. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when European princes wanted to rev up the local ponies, they purchased stallions in Is-

lamic Turkey and Arabia. All Thoroughbreds today can trace pedigrees back to three stallions imported to Britain between 1690 and 1730: Godolphin Arabian, Byerly Turk, and Darley Arabian 2. No wonder the world's richest race is run in Dubai.

Middle Eastern menu

One needn't be a falafel fan to partake of quintessentially Middle Eastern food. The names for all of these delicacies come from Arabic: apricot, artichoke, banana, citrus, coffee, ginger, lemon, orange, sherbet, sorbet, and sugar. Other English words with Arabic roots include alcove, algebra, almanac, caravan, cipher, magazine, monsoon, nadir, sheriff, sofa, talisman, tariff, zenith, and zero.

LIBRARY CIRCULATION

Documents copied or stolen from Muslim libraries fueled the European Renaissance. Works of Aristotle and many other ancient greats had been lost in the West for centuries before traders and crusaders reintroduced them. However, Muslims cannot take full credit for the learning they cultivated. Muslims got many documents from Roman and Byzantine libraries that came under their control during Islam's early expansion (see page 19), and Muslim leaders often employed Christian scholars as tutors (see page 39). In this way Islam both drove a wedge between Eastern and Western Christians, by occupying the territory between them, and bridged them, by facilitating an extremely belated intellectual exchange.



En la casa del Rey blanco. Et si los blancos
 enaren te dar yaq cada ues al fe; pe-
 to. uenjen los pueros por a so mas
 z meiores. Este es el departami-
 ento deste uiego. z esta es la figura
 dell entablamiento.



Este es otro uiego departado en q ha
 oize seys uiegos q han a seer entab
 ladoz assi como estan en la figura del
 entablamiento z han lo de usar de

co ponendolo en la segunda casa del al
 fil puero. z entran el Rey puero por su
 casa en la casa de su camallo. El segun-
 do uiegos es el uiegos qual non blan.

PAWN TO SULTAN FOUR. Knights, bishops, and rooks may smack of medieval Europe, but chess may have originated in about the same time and place as Islam: seventh-century Arabia. And like early Islam, chess had Persian, Arabian, and even Indian influences. In that era, land-based trade routes through Asia formed the backbone of world commerce, putting people and artifacts from scattered regions in close contact. Muhammad learned much about the world from such exchanges, though not all of his information was reliable (see page 10).

Unpopular music

It's probably been a long time since any Methodist church put "For the Mahometans," a selection from John and Charles Wesley's 1780 hymn collection, up on the song board. For one thing, the text refers to Muhammad as a Unitarian. Actually, many eighteenth-century Christians would have agreed, as one of few things they knew about Muhammad was his insistence that "There is no God but Allah" (see page 14). Of course, the hymn has a few other incendiary phrases as well, though many Christians then—and not a few now—would stand by them:

The smoke of the infernal cave,
 Which half the Christian world o'er-
 spread,
 Disperse, Thou heavenly Light, and
 save
 The souls by that Impostor led,
 That Arab-chief, as Satan bold,
 Who quite destroyed Thy Asian fold.
 O might the blood of sprinkling cry
 For those who spurn the sprinkled
 blood!
 Assert Thy glorious Deity,
 Stretch out Thine arm, Thou Triune
 God
 The Unitarian fiend expel,
 And chase his doctrine back to hell.

Count on it

Westerners call our numbers "Arabic," because the notation system came to Europe via Islamic Arab mathematicians sometime in the Middle Ages. The first written record of Arabic numbers in the West is a Spanish codex from 976. Adoption crept along among the educated elite until the fourteenth century, when Italian merchants finally ditched their Roman I's and V's. Other traders wisely followed suit. Interestingly, Arabs didn't develop the "Arabic" number system. They picked it up around 750 from Hindus, who had invented it some 150 years earlier. **CH**

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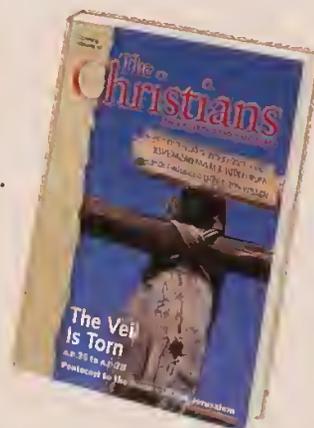
The Christians: Their First Two Thousand Years

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your mind, your heart & your spirit.



Peter eats with the centurion Cornelius
an illustration by Michael Dudash

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Christians & Muslims

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Stone



Scala/Art Resource

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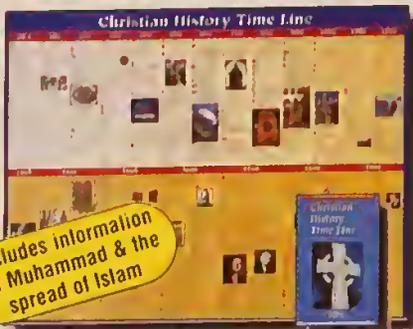
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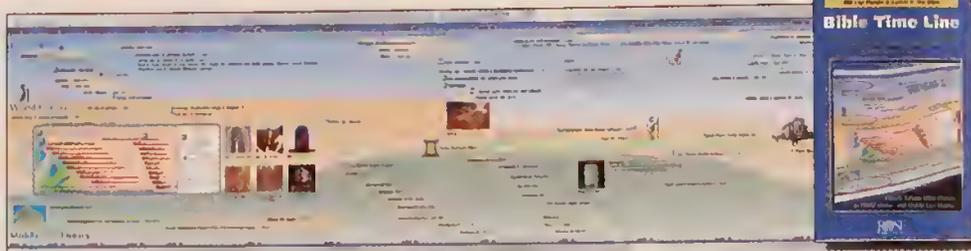
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From the Editor

The Cover's Story

On January 27, 537, Byzantine Emperor Justinian dedicated the magnificent Church of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) in Constantinople. "Glory to God, Who has deemed me worthy of fulfilling such a work," he prayed. "O Solomon, I have surpassed thee."

About a generation later, a widow in Mecca gave birth to a son named Muhammad. He reportedly prophesied to one of his followers, "You shall conquer Constantinople. Glory be to the prince and to the army that shall achieve it." Muslim armies tried repeatedly to make the prophecy come true, besieging Justinian's capital seven times in as many centuries.

The siege party in 1453 brought an extra weapon—the Janissaries, an elite corps of men taken as children from Christian families and raised as Islamic warriors. With this force Sultan Muhammad II overwhelmed the defenses of the last Emperor Constantine, who spurred his horse into the oncoming ranks of Janissaries and was never seen again. Muslim fighters broke down the doors of Hagia Sophia and killed or imprisoned hundreds of Christians hiding inside.

Muslims transformed Hagia Sophia into a mosque by removing Christian objects, whitewashing mosaics, and installing plaques with Qur'anic texts on the pediments. As our cover image shows, though, the transformation was hardly complete. Some Christian ornaments were destroyed, but many were merely hidden.

After Turkey became a secular republic, in 1924, Hagia Sophia became a cultural museum, and art historians were able to restore dozens of Christian elements. Today, the Christian and Islamic embellishments coexist awkwardly in a space no faith can claim. When Pope Paul VI visited the site in 1967 and privately recited a Hail Mary, a group of Muslim students responded the next day by performing a ritual prayer and sending the Vatican a picture of Muhammad the Conqueror.

Like the Qur'anic plaques, Islam was grafted onto a Judeo-Christian foundation. Like the mosaics, Christian communities in lands conquered by Muslims have experienced aggression, attempted transformation, benign neglect, and periods of restoration. And like Hagia Sophia, places that have been occupied alternately or simultaneously by both religions provoke intense passions.

Byzantine historian Georgius Phrantzes, who watched the cathedral fall, lamented, "How unfathomable and incomprehensible is Thy wise judgment, O King Christ! . . . Who would not have mourned for you, O holy temple!"

When human wisdom fails to grasp the divine mind, we do mourn. We should also try to learn.

This issue looks at the historical places, people, and events that continue to shape Christian-Muslim relationships. The Crusades, which we addressed in issue 40 (1993) and revisit on page 19, may be the most cited flashpoint, but they are only a slice of the story. Encounters between the two faiths have produced a range of outcomes, from repression (page 16) to debate (page 39) to radical reconsiderations of Christian theology (pages 31 and 41). Much of the tale remains "unfathomable and incomprehensible," but, especially now, it must be told.

—Elesha Coffman



R. Whillock

September 11 has raised a multitude of questions. These authors have the answers.

As former Sunni Muslims now believers and professors of Christian theology and history, the authors are widely respected for their ability to clearly explain to Christians the beliefs and practices of the various Muslim sects. Between them, the two brothers have addressed a U. N. committee, regularly address churches and seminaries across the nation, and have been interviewed on the BBC, CNN, the 700 Club, Janet Parshall's America, and scores of local broadcast media.



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Confused no more

I devoured the issue on Thomas Aquinas. I was surprised that somewhere I had picked up some very incorrect information about this great man. I labored under the misconception that he taught that when the human race fell, it was only partial (the intellect did not fall), and that John Calvin's doctrine of total depravity was an attempt to correct this error.

CATHY PHELPS
Lemont, Pennsylvania

Thank you for the clear explanation in issue 73 of the difference between monks and friars. I grew up in a Roman Catholic parish administered by the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans), but we always—erroneously—called the “friary” the “monastery.” So there’s lots of education needed even in the Roman portion of the vineyard!

BILL BRUNS
via the Internet

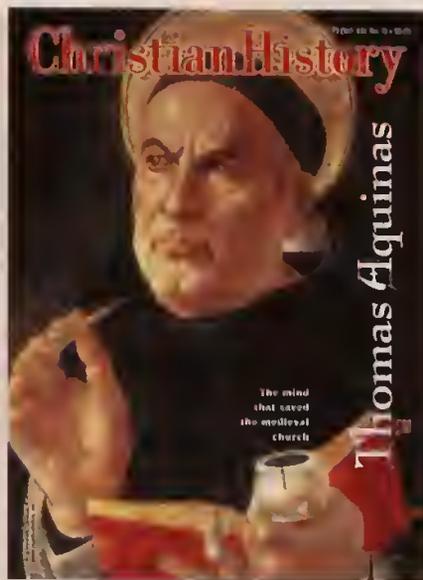
Remember the Reformation?

The articles in the recent issue gave a very imbalanced picture, possibly because every one of the authors appeared to be writing from the Roman Catholic perspective.

There is nothing wrong with this as long as it is good scholarship, but in this case, there was not one mention of the fact that Aquinas was the author of the scheme known as the “Paid-Up Capital of the Bank of Indulgences.” This was not some minor interpretation of Scripture but a grand fraud that brought about a scale of corruption that finally led to the Reformation.

Another important omission was that the true effect of introducing Aristotle has been to place Greek philosophy on virtually an equal footing with Scripture.

IAN T. TAYLOR
Zimmerman, Minnesota



If the Protestants Norman Geisler knows accept the teachings of the medieval Catholic church (“Link,” page 44), then he knows a very different group of Protestants than I do. The Protestants with whom I am familiar do not ask for the prayers of departed saints, do not fill their churches with statues of those saints, do not hope to gain indulgences, and do not believe in the doctrine of transubstantiation.

At the Reformation, we Protestants renounced many important beliefs of the preceding centuries. I personally believe that this break was, on the whole, a disastrous mistake. But we cannot even discuss the matter seriously if we do not admit the reality of the break.

EDWIN TAIT
Durham, North Carolina

Miscellany

On page 2 (“Did You Know?”), under the heading “Lighten Up,” mention was made of Aquinas’s dispute over “one completely silly question.” I just wanted to point out that this same dispute occurred before King Darius in the apocryphal book of 1 Esdras. In this charming story, three young men, one being Zerubbabel, offer their opposing

views regarding the strength of wine, the king, women, and truth. According to this account, found in chapters 4 and 5, it was Zerubbabel’s wisdom concerning the strength of women and truth that led to Darius’s decree to rebuild Jerusalem!

PASTOR ROB GREENSLADI
Newport, Washington

As one steeped in the Thomist tradition and as one interested in religious orders over the years, I believe you are in error on page 2 when you identify the Dominicans as being the lower left circle on page 3 and the Augustinians as being in the lower right. While both wore black, the religious in the lower right also wear white robes under the black *cappa*. I believe that this is the Dominican habit. The Augustinians, to whom Martin Luther belonged, wore only black.

FR. HARRY ALLAGREY
Ukiah, California

Because those in the lower left were depicted walking outdoors, as were the brown-clad Franciscans, I guessed that the lower left circle showed a mendicant order—the Dominicans. Apparently the artist chose to illustrate the usually stationary Augustinians traveling and the usually traveling Dominicans sitting still. —ed.

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Muhammad amid the Faiths

The prophet's interactions with paganism, Judaism, and Christianity birthed puzzling prophecies and a legacy of strife.

JAMES A. BEVERLEY

An old Arab tradition tells of Abraha, a powerful Christian warrior from Abyssinia, who was set to besiege Mecca just after the middle of the sixth century. Abraha wanted to destroy the *ka'ba*, the main shrine of Mecca, along with its idols.

When soldiers tried to get Abraha's elephant, Mahmud, to join in the campaign, Mahmud refused. Instead, he bowed in prayer toward the holy shrine, which Muslims believe was built by Abraham.

Despite the embellishment, this story illustrates that the Arabian peninsula was home to Christian, Jewish, and pagan traditions prior to the birth of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. While this tale ends with a peaceful twist, contact between the faiths has more often involved searing conflict.

Mobile melting pot

By the fourth century, Christianity had a major presence in Africa and a lesser presence in southern Arabia. By the fifth century, a sizeable Jewish population also lived throughout Arabia. In the early sixth century, Dhu Nuwas, a Jewish leader, ruled part of Arabia, and Christians were at peril under his reign. In the town of Zafar, 200 Christians were burned inside their church. Paganism thrived outside the enclaves of the two monotheistic faiths.

Muhammad was born about 570. His father died near the time of his birth, and he lost his mother when



TANKS WITH TRUNKS. The prophet's enemies threaten Mecca (from a sixteenth-century manuscript).

he was 6. He was cared for briefly by his grandfather and then raised by Abu Talib, his uncle, who was also head of the prominent Hashim clan in Mecca.

In the closing decades of the sixth century, a thriving trade network spread from Saudi Arabia north to Syria, east as far as India, and into northern Africa. Early Muslim histories report that Muhammad traveled with his uncle on trading journeys as far as Syria.

Muhammad most likely learned about Christianity through contacts with Christians along the trade routes of the Middle East. Unfortunately, traders were seldom reliable theologians. Muhammad gained a grasp of monotheism

from his Christian and Jewish acquaintances, but he never understood the orthodoxies of either religion.

Marked for greatness

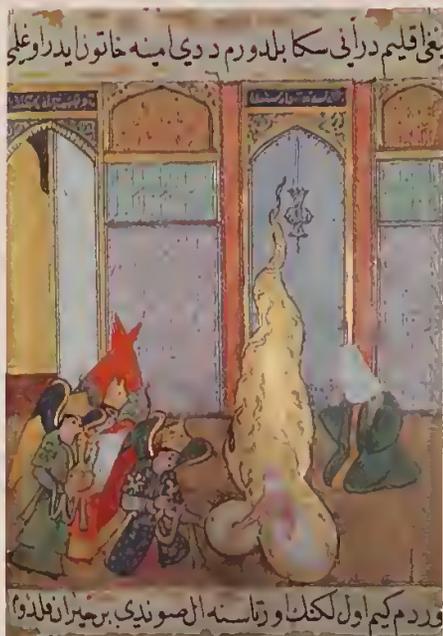
Muslims, of course, do not believe that any earthly influences tainted Muhammad's message. He was a

NIGHT VISION. Led by the angel Jabril (Gabriel) and carried by the mythical creature Buraq, Muhammad journeys from "the sacred place of worship" (Mecca) to "the further place of worship" (Jerusalem) and finally to heaven, where beautiful maidens offer him gifts. The vision was Muhammad's reward for withstanding persecution. Islamic martyrs are promised the same treatment.

این داستان در شاهنامه
 برین درشن نمایان
 تا آنکه درین دشت
 آید آن کس که درین دشت



او من بر دست کینه
 شد بر آن پر جان
 بر آن کرد بر بر آن پشت
 این در آن در آن پشت
 شد بر آن پشت
 از بر آن آید به پشت
 این شیشه سینه بود که نام
 خلق در زمین شایسته
 بگفت سوی ترا دست جان



NO ORDINARY LIFE. The Qur'an includes no birth narrative for Muhammad, but tradition developed a story of three visiting kings (left). Tradition also holds that the rock under the famous dome (top) is both the site of Abraham's test of faith and of Muhammad's mystical night journey. Muhammad's death, though, was pedestrian: he died in the arms of his wife Aisha, whom he had wed when she was 9.

prophet and spoke solely for God, though only a prescient few recognized this at first.

In one famous Muslim legend, Muhammad encountered a Syrian Christian monk named Bahira on the caravan trail. According to Ibn Ishaq, the famous biographer of Muhammad, Bahira was expecting to see a prophet when Abu Talib's company visited him.

No one seemed to fit the prophetic description, though, so Bahira im-

plored everyone from the caravan to come to the feast he had prepared.

Bahira called in Muhammad and questioned him about his spiritual life. Then the monk "looked at his back and saw the seal of prophethood [some physical mark] between his shoulders." Bahira then told Abu Talib to take his nephew home "and guard him carefully against the Jews." He also reportedly told him that "a great future lies before this nephew of yours."

According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad's life changed forever in the year 610, on the seventeenth night of the Arabic month Ramadan, when the angel Gabriel called him to be a prophet of God (Allah). Muhammad's first wife, the wealthy widow Khadijah, and a few friends affirmed his newfound monotheism, but he met fierce resistance in polytheistic Mecca.

Allah confirmed Muhammad's prophethood in 620, bringing him by night to Jerusalem. There he conversed with Jesus, Moses, and Abraham. Then, according to the Qur'an, Muhammad and his angel companion were taken by ladder (called a *miraj*) to the seventh heaven. Muslims believe that the Dome of the Rock was built on the site of his ascension.

Meccans, however, still rejected Muhammad's message and persecuted the messenger. So, in 622 (year 1 of the Muslim calendar), Muhammad fled to Medina, about 250 miles north of Mecca.

For eight long and bitter years, the prophet and his small but growing cohort battled his Meccan enemies. He experienced significant victories, notably on March 15, 624, at Badr, and major setbacks, including a battle at Uhud just a year later.

By January 630, Muhammad triumphed, took control of Mecca, and destroyed the idols in the *ka'ba*—except, according to tradition, the statues of Jesus and Mary, which he left untouched. Medina, however, continued to be his home base. From there he launched a major military campaign into Syria and arranged treaties with Christian tribes.

Muhammad made a final pilgrimage to Mecca in early 632. He was in poor health but made it back to Medina. He died there on June 8, 632, in the embrace of Aisha, his favorite wife.

A garbled gospel

Though Muhammad had regular (and often hostile) contact with Jewish tribes, particularly in Medina, there is no evidence that he had sustained interaction with Christians. Likewise, there is no hard evidence that the Gospels were translated into Arabic

during his lifetime. F.E. Peters states in his work *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam* that most of the Christian terms in the Qur'an are from an Aramaic dialect.

Muhammad's unfamiliarity with orthodox Christians or with their Scriptures is evident throughout the Qur'an. The text refutes Christian claims that Jesus died on the cross, that he was the son of God, and that God is a triune being. It also refutes claims Christians have never made, including that Mary was a sister of Aaron and Moses (Sura 19:28) and that Mary was part of the Trinity.

Muslims do not accept the prophet's ignorance as the reason for these discrepancies. They argue that Muhammad and his text are correct, but Christians and Jews corrupted their Scriptures—every single copy.

Cultural factors also contributed to Muhammad's misunderstanding of Christianity. Given the common Arab view in his time that success signals divine blessing, it would have been very difficult for him to believe that Allah would let any of his prophets die by crucifixion. The Qur'an scoffs at the very idea.

Sura 4:157 contains the famous denial. After reference to those who attack God's prophets, it talks about those who boast "we killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Apostle of God."

The text goes on to say: "but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not."

From this one verse comes Muslim objection to the Christian redemption narrative.

Ahmed Deedat, a popular Muslim apologist, goes to great lengths to argue that the New Testament actually teaches what was revealed to Muhammad on the topic. Deedat's pamphlet *Crucifixion or Crucifiction?* claims that abandoning belief in Calvary will free the Christian "from his infatuation and will have freed the Muslim world from missionary aggression and harassment."



WORDS TO FIGHT BY. Sixteenth-century Sultan Murad III commissioned this illustration of Islam's first military success: the 624 Battle of Badr. As Muhammad watches his troops, Gabriel dictates a piece of the Qur'an.

Peoples of the Book

Whatever mistakes Muhammad may have made about the Bible, his ideology is largely framed in terms of Jewish and Christian concepts and practices. He considered himself the heir to both traditions, and early portions of the Qur'an express a clear hope that the "peoples of the Book" would accept Muhammad as a prophet. When they did not, Muhammad's patience wore thin.

Later portions of the Qur'an build a strong polemic against both Jews and Christians, condemning the former for their unbelief and the latter for their confusing and erroneous views about Jesus' death and identity. Still, Muhammad retained a positive outlook toward Christians in general. This is illustrated along several lines.

First, Muhammad decreed that Christians (and Jews) were to receive protection under Muslim rule. Pagan

Islam 101

Basics of a foreign faith

The Five Pillars of Islam

1. **Shahadah:** Confession of faith. "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger."

2. **Salat:** Prayer. All Muslims are to pray five times every day, facing Mecca.

3. **Zakat:** Tithing. Muslims must give at least 2.5 percent of their total wealth to the poor and needy.

4. **Sawm:** Fasting. During the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims are to refrain from food, water, and sex from sunrise to sunset.

5. **Hajj:** Pilgrimage. If at all possible, at least once in a lifetime Muslims are to travel to Mecca to engage in rituals of prayer and worship at the central shrine in Islam's holiest city.

The Qur'an

- The Qur'an, in Arabic, is the perfect Word of Allah.
- The Qur'an contains 114 chapters, or *suras*.
- Muslims believe that the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad by the archangel Gabriel.
- The Qur'anic material was composed from 610 through Muhammad's death in 632.
- The final compilation was completed about 650.

The Prophet

- Most Muslims believe that Muhammad was sinless, but not divine.
- Most Muslims believe that the



KA'BA TODAY. As many as two million Muslims trek to Mecca each year to encircle the black stone, as Muhammad prescribed.

prophet was illiterate.

- The prophetic status of Muhammad is not to be questioned.
- Muhammad provides the greatest example for all aspects of life.
- The traditions about the prophet are known as *hadith*.
- Allah gave the prophet permission to have 12 wives.

Other Major Muslim Beliefs

- Islam started with Adam, not with Muhammad.
- People are saved by the will of God through obedience to God's law, *Shari'ah*.
- Though humans are imperfect, they are not fallen through original sin.
- Those chosen by God for salvation will enter paradise. Only God knows whom he has chosen.
- The damned will burn in eternal torment in Hell.
- All countries and peoples should follow Islam and Islamic law.
- Muslims are to engage in *jihad*, which usually means private spiritual struggle.
- Jihad sometimes demands defense of Muslim territory and

military aggression.

- God will restore the world at the end of time through a coming human leader known as the *Mahdi*.
- Muslim males can marry up to four wives.



CERTIFICATE OF PILGRIMAGE, 1432.

Muslim Groups

- Almost 90 percent of Muslims belong to the Sunni tradition.
- Shi'ite Islam is popular in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and several Persian Gulf states.
- Sufi Islam represents the mystical path.
- The Islam practiced in most Muslim countries is heavily influenced by local folk customs.

Muslim Views of Jesus

- Jesus was a prophet of God but not the Son of God. He was a lesser prophet than Muhammad.
- He was born of the virgin Mary.
- He performed many miracles.
- He was protected from a death of crucifixion.
- He did not rise from the dead.
- He ascended to heaven after his death, and he will return to earth.
- He was a faithful Muslim, or follower of Allah.

Arabs faced a much harder reality: convert or die.

Muhammad extended personal hospitality to Christians on at least one occasion. When he was in Medina, he received a delegation of Christian leaders, led by Abu Harith, the bishop of Najran. Given contemporary Muslim anger over the American presence in Saudi Arabia, it is more than significant that Muhammad met the Christians in the mosque in Medina, and that he allowed them to pray there facing Jerusalem, as was the Christian custom.

Muhammad also sent a letter to assure Christian groups of protection under his rule. Muslim historian Abu Abd Allah ibn Sa'ad, who died in 845, preserved two versions of the letter, which reads somewhat like the famous pact that Umar, a later Muslim leader, made with a Christian tribe (see page 18).

One version of Muhammad's letter states: "All their churches, services and monastic practices had the protection of God and His messenger. No bishop will be removed from his episcopate, no monk from his monastic state, no priest from his priesthood. There will be no alteration of any right or authority or circumstance, so long as they are loyal and perform their obligations well."

Muhammad showed less tolerance for Jews. He forced two powerful Jewish tribes out of Medina after they rejected his prophetic claims. A third tribe, the Qurayza, was dealt with more harshly.

When the Qurayza did not come to the aid of the prophet, he confined them in a compound, then dug a trench in the market area. In the words of Ibn Ishaq, the Islamic biographer, the prophet "then sent for them and struck off their heads in those trenches as they were brought out to him in batches."

Muhammad took no similar action against any Christian groups, but the prophet's military campaigns against fellow Arabs, the massacre of the Qurayza, and the raid into Syria near the end of his life laid the ideological groundwork for Muslim persecution of Christians. Likewise, the polemic of



CHAIN OF COMMAND. Despite his many wives, Muhammad had no son, so his deputies (the four men on his left) were left to continue fighting his enemies—and each other. At least two of his first three successors were assassinated.

the Qur'an provided theological justification for the later *jihad* against Christians as the Muslim empire expanded west to Spain, north to Constantinople, and east to the farthest corners of Asia.

Neither the Qur'an nor Muhammad's legacy is unequivocal on the proper relationship between Muslims and members of other faiths. Muslims

still internally debate whether Allah would approve of all the steps the prophet's followers have taken along his path. **CH**

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Secrets of Islam's Success

It spread faster than any other religion in history.

Here are some reasons why.

ELESHA COFFMAN

When Muhammad died, in 632, Islam could boast only semi-stable control over part of the Arabian peninsula. The prophet's territorial gains had been mainly pagan losses. Further expansion required conquest of Christian lands—a task that would prove all too easy, thanks to years of imperial and doctrinal wars.

To Islam's west lay Egypt and the rest of Christian North Africa. Once consolidated under the Roman Empire, by the sixth century the territory was divided between Latin-speaking Berbers in the west and Greek-speaking Byzantines in the east, with a few Baal-worshippers in the south.

Africa's theological divisions ran even deeper. Byzantines upheld the two-faceted definition of Christ's nature affirmed by the Council of Chalcedon in 451, but Egypt's Monophysite ("one nature") Christians, along with churches in Armenia and Syria, vehemently rejected it. African Christianity was also plagued by controversies among Catholics, Donatists (who insisted that all other Christians were apostate), Nestorians (who disagreed with both Monophysite and Chalcedonian Christology), and radical desert ascetics.

To Islam's near north and east sprawled the massive, though fading, Persian Sassanid Empire. The Zoroastrian Persians had persecuted Christians severely in the fourth century, judging the new friends of Persia's old enemy, Rome, to be a threat. After a toleration edict in 409, though, the Persians opted to control the church rather than destroy it.

By meddling in ecclesiastical governance, Persia had sent the local church into serious decline by the turn of the seventh century. Conflict between Nestorians, the majority Christian group, and their sworn enemies, Monophysites, has-

tened the slide.

To the northwest lay the shrinking Byzantine Empire, the remains of Roman glory. By Muhammad's time, battles with Persia had forced the Byzantines to withdraw from provinces such as Egypt and Syria and protect their capital, Constantinople. The Egyptians and Syrians were glad to see them go, taking their high taxes and persecution of "heretical" churches with them.

Hail to the new chiefs

With the Middle East in such disarray, Muhammad's successors were able to make rapid gains. The Muslims proved to be both fear-



POWER ON PARADE. Saddles, turbans, banners, and fine clothing set Muslims apart from the Christians and Jews living under their protection. Islamic law made religious minorities virtually invisible, draining those communities of members and of the motivation to seek much more than survival.



some warriors and shrewd politicians, sometimes killing or uprooting their enemies, sometimes grinding them down with economic and religious oppression.

The first Islamic *caliph* (deputy), Abu Bakr, was murdered before he could make much of a military impact beyond central Arabia, but his successor, Umar, routed a Byzantine army in Syria and hounded the last Persian shah to his death. Damascus, Jerusalem, and the Persian capital, Ctesiphon, fell like dominoes.

Umar solidified control of the Arabian peninsula and assumed at least nominal authority over Persia's far-flung properties. He also built the first mosque in Jerusalem. But his stunning success created challenges.

Christians significantly outnumbered Muslims in most of Islam's new territories. In addition, Christians had diplomatic and medical expertise that Muslims lacked. Killing all of the Christians made no political sense, and in any case, the Qur'an advocates better treatment for "Peoples of the Book." Umar's solution, as described in his famous pact (see page 16), established Christians and Jews as *dhimmi*,

or protected persons.

On the surface, the terms seem quite fair, especially for the seventh century. In exchange for paying extra taxes, *dhimmi* qualified for nearly all rights and protections under Islamic law. More importantly, unlike pagan Arabs, Christians and Jews were not forced to convert to Islam.

Christians thought they were getting a good deal. High taxes were nothing new, and Muslim authorities took no sides in the bitter doctrinal wars that divided the Christians. The Nestorian patriarch wrote to a fellow cleric, "They have not attacked the Christian religion, but rather they have commended our faith, honored our priests . . . and conferred benefits on churches and monasteries."

Stealth oppression

Unfortunately, seventh-century Christians failed to see the deeper threat of Umar's bargain. Modern apologists for Islamic tolerance generally make the same mistake. Protected status really meant second- or third-class status, with strictures guaranteed to erode all religions but Islam.

Granted, both Eastern (Byzantine)

and Western (Roman) Christian powers put a high priority on enforcing what they deemed to be true religion, and neither was above using physical or civil coercion to achieve this aim—in the seventh century or for centuries afterward.

Indeed, Muslims apparently adapted parts of their policy on other religions from existing Christian codes. It is less often reported that Muslims also looked to Persia's ghetto-like *melet* system for guidance.

At various times, especially under comparatively secular caliphs, Islamic regimes did display more religious tolerance than Christian regimes, particularly toward Jews. But neither the Qur'an nor Islamic law, which are much more closely linked than the Bible and any past or present system of governance, ever sanctioned the fundamental equality that predicates modern tolerance.

One of the most popular verses in the Qur'an states, "There is no compulsion in religion" (2:258). Yet the Qur'an also mandates:

"Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and His

The Pact of Umar

Islamic protection came with a price.

Though attributed to Umar, caliph from 634-644, this document probably evolved into the ninth century. Shaikh Hasan al-Kafrawi, a professor of canon law in Cairo, affirmed the pact's outlines as late as 1772. This translation is mainly taken from Al-Turtushi, Siraj al-Muluk.

We heard from 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Ghanam [died 697] as follows: When Umar ibn al-Khattab, may God be pleased with him, accorded a peace to the Christians of Syria, we wrote to him as follows:

In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate. This is a letter to the servant of God Umar, Commander of the Faithful, from the Christians of such-and-such a city. When you came against us, we asked you for safe-conduct (*aman*) for ourselves, our descendants, our property, and the people of our community, and we undertook the following obligations toward you:

We shall not build, in our cities or in their neighborhood, new monasteries, churches, convents, or monks' cells, nor shall we repair, by day or by night, such of them as fall in ruins or are situated in the quarters of the Muslims.

We shall keep our gates wide open for passersby and travelers. We shall give board and lodging to all Muslims who pass our way for three days.

We shall not give shelter in our churches or in our dwellings to any spy, nor hide him from the Muslims.

We shall not teach the Qur'an to our children.

We shall not manifest our religion publicly nor convert anyone to it. We shall not prevent any of our kin from entering Islam if they wish it.

We shall show respect toward the Muslims, and we shall rise from our seats when they wish to sit.

We shall not seek to resemble the Muslims by imi-

tating any of their garments, the cap, the turban, footwear, or the parting of the hair. We shall not speak as they do, nor shall we adopt their surnames.

We shall not mount on saddles, nor shall we gird swords nor bear any kind of arms nor carry them on our persons.

We shall not engrave Arabic inscriptions on our seals.

We shall not sell fermented drinks.

We shall shave the fronts of our heads.

We shall always dress in the same way wherever we may be, and we shall bind the girdle round our waists.

We shall not display our crosses or our books in the roads or markets of the Muslims. We shall use only clappers [wooden noisemakers used to call people to worship] in our churches very softly.

We shall not raise our voices when following our dead. We shall not carry lighted candles on any of the roads of the Muslims or in their markets. We shall not bury our dead near the Muslims.

We shall not take slaves who have been allotted to Muslims.

We shall not build houses overtopping the houses of the Muslims.

(When I brought the letter to Umar, may God be pleased with him, he added, "We shall not strike a Muslim.")

We accept these conditions for ourselves and for the people of our community, and in return we receive safe-conduct.

If we violate any of the conditions of this agreement, then we forfeit your protection and you are at liberty to treat us as enemies and rebels.

Umar ibn al-Khattab replied: Sign what they ask, but add two clauses and impose them in addition to those which they have undertaken. They are: "They shall not buy anyone made prisoner by the Muslims," and "Whoever strikes a Muslim with deliberate intent shall forfeit the protection of this pact."

Apostle have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of superiority and they are in a state of subjection" (9:29).

Umar's pact is thus not a peace treaty, but a description of the terms of his victory. Per the prophet's instructions, it prohibits what Allah prohibits (wine) and imposes a steep tax—failure to pay the poll tax (*jizya*) voided the contract. It also codifies Muslim superiority while humiliating

anyone who clings to another religion.

Even some provisions that seem preferential undercut non-Muslim communities. For example, dhimmi were exempted from military service—and from the rich bonuses in pay and plunder that soldiers received. This placed dhimmi beneath *mawali*, recent Arab converts to Islam who were barred from some privileges but could serve in the military.

Despite the obvious incentives to convert, most Christians and Jews under early Muslim rule held onto their

faith. But resistance eventually died out in all but a few pockets. The inability to build new places of worship or repair old ones, the prohibition on evangelism, and the fact that Muslim men could marry Christian and Jewish women (and raise their children as Muslims) while dhimmi could marry only their own kind achieved exactly what they were supposed to achieve. Islam won the region. **CH**

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A Deadly Give and Take

Crusaders fought many terrible battles in the Middle East, but Muslims started—and won—the war.

PAUL CRAWFORD

Osama bin Laden called America's response to September 11, a "new crusade and Jewish campaign led by the big crusader Bush under the flag of the cross." He clearly meant to link the military campaign to European campaigns from a millennium ago, during which, the prevailing mentality holds, Christian warriors unjustly attacked Islamic possessions in and around Palestine.

By establishing this connection, though, the fugitive fanatic admits more than he alleges. In the Middle Ages, as in 2001, Islam struck first—and in such a way that the West would certainly respond.

Waves of conquest

Jerusalem has changed hands many times over the centuries, but the seventh century was particularly tumultuous. Pagan Persians stormed the city in 614. Eastern Christians, led by Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, reclaimed it by 630. Within a few years, though, Islamic forces had broken the Byzantine military and chased them out of Palestine.

Jerusalem surrendered to a Muslim army in 638. Construction began soon afterward on a mosque at the Temple Mount. Sophronius, the patriarch of the city, is said to have burst



LESSER MEN. This twelfth-century Romanesque mosaic depicts a crusader's Moorish foe with sub-human features. The feeling was mutual. Usamah, a Muslim warrior who fought with Saladin, called the Europeans "animals possessing the virtues of courage and fighting, but nothing else."

into tears and wailed, "Truly this is the Abomination of Desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet!"

After capturing Jerusalem, the Muslim armies poured through the eastern and southern provinces of the reeling Byzantine Empire. In the 640s Armenia in the north and Egypt in the

south fell to Islam. In 655 the Muslims won a naval battle with the Byzantines and very nearly captured the Byzantine emperor.

By 711 Muslims controlled all of northern Africa, and a Muslim commander named Tariq had set foot on European soil—on a rock that took his



SWORD SWAP. A fourteenth-century French account of the First Crusade shows Muslim warriors wielding Western weapons. In fact, the Muslims' own battle equipment and style was better suited for the fighting.

name (Jebel al-Tariq, corrupted into Gibraltar). By 712 Muslims had penetrated deep into Christian Spain. At the battle of Toledo that year, they defeated the Spanish and killed their king. The Spanish kingdom promptly collapsed.

Surviving Christians retreated into the mountains of northwestern Spain and dug in their defenses. The Muslim armies bypassed them and began raiding across the Pyrenees into France.

Meanwhile, in the East, Muslims continued to push into the Byzantine Empire. By 717 they had landed in southeastern Europe, and they besieged the Byzantine capital, Constantinople. Had they taken the city, they might have conquered the entire continent. But the Byzantines resisted. Their capital would not fall to Islam until 1453.

Western Christians stopped the Muslim advance into their territory in 732 at the Battle of Tours (or Poitiers), France. Charles of Heristal, Charlemagne's grandfather, led a Frankish army against a large Muslim raiding party and defeated them, though Muslim raiders would continue attacking Frankish territory for decades. For his victory, Charles became known as the Hammer—in French,

Charles Martel.

After regrouping, Muslim forces began to move into south central Europe, launching invasions of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica in the ninth century. They mounted operations on the Italian mainland as well, sometimes at the invitation of quarrelling Christian powers.

In 846 Muslim raiders attacked the outlying areas of Rome, the center of western Christianity. This act would be comparable to Christians sacking Mecca or Medina, something they have never done.

Toward the end of the ninth century, Muslim pirate havens were established along the coast of southern France and northern Italy. These pirates threatened commerce, communication, and pilgrim traffic for a hundred years or more.

During the tenth century, however, the tide began to turn. In the East in the 950s and 960s, the Byzantines mounted a series of counterattacks. They eventually recovered the islands of Crete and Cyprus and a good bit of territory in Asia Minor and northern Syria, including Antioch. They lacked the strength to retake Jerusalem, though they might have struggled harder had they known what terrors the city would soon face.

New threats

In 1000, much—perhaps even most—of the population of the Holy Land was still Christian, of one affiliation or another. This was about to change.

One reason was the rise of a local Muslim ruler named Hakim, who was possibly insane and certainly not an orthodox Muslim (he claimed to be divine). Hakim persecuted Christians and Jews fiercely. In 1009 he ordered the destruction of the rebuilt Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The Christian population of the Holy Land began to shrink under his tyrannical rule.

Hakim aroused great hostility even from other Muslims, and his reign was soon over. The Byzantines, distressed by the damage to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, negotiated with the Muslims and in 1038 were allowed to begin rebuilding it again. But the losses to the local Christian (and Jewish) communities were harder to repair.

Another, and perhaps more serious, cause of distress for the local populations of all faiths was the intrusion into the Middle East of the Seljuk Turks. The Seljuks, pagan nomads from the steppes of central Asia, made steady inroads into the more sophisticated world of the Muslim Arabs in the early eleventh century.

In 1055, the Seljuks captured Baghdad, destroying a long-lived Muslim dynasty and seriously disrupting the stability of the Middle East. This might have provided an opportunity for the Christian Byzantines to recover their lost provinces, but even as the Seljuk Turks conquered the Arabs, they converted to Islam. The Muslim Arab overlords of the region were thus replaced by harsher, coarser Muslim Turks.

Pleas from the East

In 1071 Byzantine Emperor Romanus Diogenes confronted a Turkish invasion force in the far eastern provinces of the Byzantine Empire. The two armies met at the village of Manzikert, near Lake Van, and the Byzantines were utterly defeated. As a result of this disaster, the Byzantines



BREAKING AND ENTERING. In the frames of this medieval Castillian book illustration, Muslim forces besiege, attack, and loot a crusader fortress. The illustrator editorializes the tale by suggesting that the crusaders never returned fire (frame 3) and that the raiders were temporarily transfixed by a portrait of the Madonna (frame 5).

The Battle of Tours, 732

Four contemporary accounts paint two radically different pictures.

ISLAMIC

Near the river Owar [Loire], the two great hosts of the two languages and the two creeds were set in array against each other. The hearts of [Muslim leader] Abderrahman, his captains and his men were filled with wrath and pride, and they were the first to begin to fight. The Moslem horsemen dashed fierce and frequent forward against the battalions of the Franks, who resisted manfully, and many fell dead on either side, until the going down of the sun.

Night parted the two armies, but in the gray of the morning the Muslims returned to the battle. Their cavaliers had soon hewn their way into the center of the Christian host. But many of the Moslems were fearful for the safety of the spoil which they had stored in their tents, and a false cry arose in their ranks that some of the enemy were plundering the camp; whereupon several squadrons of the Moslem horsemen rode off to protect their tents. But it seemed as if they fled; and all the host was troubled.

And while Abderrahman strove to check their tumult, and to lead them back to battle, the warriors of the Franks came around him, and he was pierced through with many spears, so that he died. Then all the host fled before the enemy, and many died in the flight.

— anonymous Arab chronicler

Musa being returned to Damascus, the Caliph Abd-el Melek asked of him about his conquests, saying "Now tell me about these Franks—what is their nature?"

"They," replied Musa, "are a folk right numerous, and full of might: brave and impetuous in the attack, but cowardly and craven in event of defeat."

"And how has passed the war betwixt them and thyself? Favorably or the reverse?"

"The reverse? No, by Allah and the prophet!" spoke Musa. "Never has a company from my army been beaten. And never have the Moslems hesitated to follow me when I have led them; though they were twoscore to fourscore."

— anonymous Arab chronicler

CHRISTIAN

For almost seven days the two armies watched one another, waiting anxiously the moment for joining the struggle. Finally they made ready for combat. And in the shock of the battle the men of the North seemed like a sea that cannot be moved. Firmly they stood, one close to another, forming as it were a bulwark of ice; and with great blows of their swords they hewed down the Arabs. . . .

At last night sundered the combatants. The Franks with misgivings lowered their blades, and beholding the numberless tents of the Arabs, prepared themselves for another battle the next day. . . . Unaware that [the tents] were utterly empty, and fearful lest within the phalanxes of the Saracens were drawn up for combat, they sent out spies to ascertain the facts. These spies discovered that all the squadrons of the "Ishmaelites" had vanished. In fact, during the night they had fled with the greatest silence, seeking with all speed their home land.

The Europeans, uncertain and fearful, lest they were merely hidden in order to come back by ambushments, sent scouting parties everywhere, but to their great amazement found nothing. Then without troubling to pursue the fugitives, they contented themselves with sharing the spoils and returned right gladly to their own country.

— Isidore of Beja's Chronicle

The Muslims planned to go to Tours to destroy the Church of St. Martin, the city, and the whole country. Then came against them the glorious Prince Charles, at the head of his whole force. He drew up his host, and he fought as fiercely as the hungry wolf falls upon the stag.

By the grace of Our Lord, he wrought a great slaughter upon the enemies of Christian faith, so that—as history bears witness—he slew in that battle 300,000 men, likewise their king by name Abderrahman. Then was he [Charles] first called "Martel," for as a hammer of iron, of steel, and of every other metal, even so he dashed and smote in the battle all his enemies. And what was the greatest marvel of all, he only lost in that battle 1,500 men.

— The Chronicle of St. Denis



CHARLES LEADS THE CHARGE

lost all the territory that they had recovered, painstakingly, in the ninth and tenth centuries. This included the entirety of Asia Minor, the breadbasket and recruiting ground of the empire.

Succeeding Byzantine emperors sent frantic calls to the West for aid, directing them primarily at the popes, who were generally seen as protectors of Western Christendom. Pope Gregory VII received these appeals first, and in 1074 he discussed leading a relief expedition to Byzantium himself. But this proved impractical, and no aid was offered. The Byzantines continued sending appeals, however, eventually finding an audience with Pope Urban II.

In the meantime, Turkish invasions continued to affect the Holy Land. Jerusalem, which was held by the Shi'ite Fatimid dynasty of Egypt, was captured by the Seljuk Turks in 1071. The Turks, suspecting (rightly or wrongly) that the local Christian population might prefer their former Fatimid rulers to the new overlords, persecuted them. In 1091, Turks drove out the Christian priests.

The Fatimids, meanwhile, bided their time. When the moment was right, they seized the city again—in 1098, just one year before the First Crusade would arrive to recapture it.

In 1095, the West finally responded to the plight of Eastern Christians by mounting the First Crusade. In 1099, crusaders stormed Jerusalem. Like the capture of Jerusalem by the Persians in 614, but unlike the negotiated surrender to the Muslims in 638, this attack ended in a bloody massacre of the city's inhabitants. "Heaps of heads and hands and feet were to be seen throughout the streets and squares of the city," a medieval historian wrote.

A Christian kingdom controlled much of the Holy Land until 1291, when the Muslims once again conquered the area. But the crusades themselves were military failures. Whatever battles Christians could claim, Muslims would win the war.

Islam strikes back

The recapture of Jerusalem by Christian forces in 1099 did not, at first, draw much notice from the Mus-



BATTLE HORNS. Muslim armies used music to signal troop positions through clouds of dust. Crusaders brought some Muslim instruments, and minstrels to play them, back to Europe, where they influenced the local sound.

lim world. A few poets wrote laments on its capture. Abu l-Muzaffar al-Abiwardi, an Iraqi poet, called for a response:

Sons of Islam, behind you are battles in which heads rolled at your feet.

Dare you slumber in the blessed shade of safety, where life is as soft as an orchard flower? . . .

This is war, and the man who shuns the whirlpool to save his life shall grind his teeth in penitence.

The titular supreme ruler of the Islamic world, the caliph of Baghdad, also issued a statement of regret. But in general, local Muslim rulers adapted to the presence of the Christian rulers of the crusader states just as they had adapted to the intrusion of the Turks: here were new players on the stage of the Middle East.

Before long, that began to change. A series of Muslim rulers, including Zengi, Nur al-Din, and the famous Saladin, fought to reunite the fractured parts of the Islamic Middle East. These leaders initiated a *jihad*, a

counter-crusade against the Christians of Jerusalem and the surrounding regions. A desire to reconquer the city figured more and more notably in Muslim writings.

By the end of the twelfth century, Saladin had reconquered Jerusalem more or less permanently. The entire Holy Land was back under Islamic control by 1291.

Christians repeatedly tried to launch crusades to drive back the renewed Muslim assault, but these attempts all failed. Crusading was too difficult, dangerous, and costly. Besides, the growing kingdoms of Europe were more interested in their own affairs than they were in the fate of Jerusalem or of Eastern Christians.

Europe under siege

By the fourteenth century, a new Muslim force had appeared in Asia Minor: the Ottoman Turks. Brought into southern Europe by one side in a Byzantine civil war, the Ottomans quickly established a base from which



SACRED TROPHY. Saladin captures the True Cross from crusaders. Christians always saw the battle for Jerusalem in highly religious terms. Muslims initially attached less significance to the city, which is only the third-holiest in Islam.

to expand.

Christian Balkan powers began to fall before the Ottoman advance. Christian leaders like Prince Lazar of Serbia, John Hunyadi of Hungary, and the Albanian guerilla commander Skanderbeg put up a heroic resistance, but in vain. The drumbeat of Muslim advance had resumed.

Lazar was defeated and killed in the first battle of Kosovo in 1389. Bulgaria was overrun in 1393. John Hunyadi was defeated in 1448 at the second battle of Kosovo while trying to mount a campaign to save the beleaguered Byzantines, who by now were virtual prisoners inside their capital city of Constantinople.

Constantinople was sacked in May 1453. The last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI, died in desperate fighting around the gates of the city.

Legend has it that an Orthodox priest was celebrating mass in the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) when Muslim troops broke in. He escaped by walking miraculously into the altar, from whence, according to the legend, he will return once Constantinople is Christian again.

The legend is doubtless just that. But no more Christian services were conducted in the cathedral—Hagia Sophia, like most of the other churches of Constantinople, was converted into a mosque.

Over the next 200 years, European strength grew to match, then exceed,

Islamic power. European states also began to claim colonies around the globe. Muslims lost their grip on land-based Asian trade and never developed the naval technology to keep pace with Europeans at sea.

In 1683, the Ottomans launched a final attack on Europe, staging their second siege of Vienna (the first took place in 1529). Once again, the city seemed on the verge of falling. It was saved by what may have been the last true crusade.

A Polish force, led by Jan Sobieski, caught the Turks by surprise and relieved the siege. Sobieski also, it is said, brought coffee and croissants onto Western tables when he discovered the Turks' uneaten breakfasts in their tents.

Muslims made no more serious attempts to take the city, or any other territory in Europe. The Muslim world was slipping into a long period of decline from which it is only now emerging.

Crusades reconsidered

Though some Christians decried the crusades while they were happening (see page 28) and soon afterward (see page 31), anguish over this episode in history dates primarily from more recent years. In the early 1950s, at the end of his sweeping three-volume history of the crusades, Sir Steven Runciman put it this way: "The Crusades were a tragic and de-

structive episode. The Holy War itself was nothing more than a long act of intolerance in the name of God, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost."

Muslims, too, have lately taken a darker view of the crusade era. Until relatively recently, they saw the battles as episodes in the long contest between Islam and Christianity—a contest initiated by Islam. Now, statements like this, from Lebanese journalist Abin Maalouf in the 1980s, are more common: "[T]here can be no doubt that the schism between these two worlds [of Islam and Christianity] dates from the crusades, deeply felt by the Arabs, even today, as an act of rape."

In the late 1990s, an American child led a "Reconciliation Walk" across Europe and the Middle East, distributing hugs, apologies, and a written statement, saying, "We deeply regret the atrocities committed in the name of Christ by our predecessors" to the bemused Muslims he and his companions met along the way.

The child's activities fit into a larger pattern of Western amnesia about the conflict between Islam and Christianity, and of fashionable Western self-loathing. Muslims have offered no apologies. Some Muslim leaders still call the faithful to counter-crusade today, viewing themselves as continuing the tradition of Muslim conquest of Christian lands (though many of those lands have ceased to be Christian in any meaningful way). Muslims in general seem to have accepted the Christians' self-description as unjust aggressors.

But if Christians are allowed to wage war when attacked, and if Christians believe that their religion has a right to exist outside the sphere of Islamic law, perhaps modern Christians should take a second look at the crusades and their historical context, in which Christianity was under near-constant pressure from the Islamic world from the seventh century to the seventeenth. **CH**

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Soma Halliday Photographs

DISGRACED. The fate of France's pious King Louis IX (with halo, top panel) in some ways mirrors the crusading enterprise. Captured in 1250, he was ransomed at steep cost and went on to rebuild several Christian fortresses. But he utterly failed to retake Jerusalem. His second crusade got sidetracked, and he died, far from home, of dysentery.

3 Phases of Christian-

Islamic Ascendancy



- 570** ^ Muhammad born
- 610** Gabriel calls Muhammad to be a prophet of Allah
- 622** Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina
- 632** Muhammad dies
- 638** Jerusalem surrenders to Muslim military
- 711** Muslims invade Spain
- 717** Caliph Umar II begins first general persecution of non-Muslims
- 726** John of Damascus leaves public office, enters monastery
- 732** Charles Martel defeats Muslim armies at Tours (Poitiers) >
- 781** Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I debates Caliph Mahdi



- 807** Caliph Harun al-Rashid orders destruction of all newer churches
- 850** Caliph Mutawakkil forces Christians to wear yellow patches
- 956** Seljuk Turks embrace Islam
- 988** Prince Vladimir of Kiev adopts Christianity, stopping Islam's advance into Eastern Europe
- 1009** Fatimid Caliph Hakim destroys Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem
- 1025** Muslim raiders level a temple of Shiva in Gujarat, India
- 1055** Seljuk Turks capture Baghdad, ending a stable Islamic dynasty
- 1071** Byzantines lose major battle at Manzikert
- 1091** Seljuk Turks drive Christian priests out of Jerusalem

Crusades



- 1099** ^ First Crusade recaptures Jerusalem
- 1118** Military Order of Knights Templar formed to protect Holy Land pilgrims
- 1147** German knights of Second Crusade suffer major defeat at Dorylaeum, in Asia Minor
- 1169** Saladin comes to power in Egypt



- 1187** ^ Saladin's forces crush crusader army, take Jerusalem
- 1191** England's Richard the Lion-Heart negotiates access to Jerusalem

ISLAMIC ASCENDANCY

CRUSADES



570

1091 1099

Muslim Interaction

Ottoman Rise and Fall

1204 Fourth Crusade sacks Constantinople, an allied city

1216 Jacques de Vitry named bishop of Acre



1219 ^ Francis of Assisi preaches to Saladin's nephew

1238 Thomas Aquinas writes *Summa Contra Gentiles*, an apologetic aimed at Islam

1244 Christian settlers forced out of Jerusalem

1261 Byzantines regain Constantinople

1291 Fall of Acre ends Christian power in Holy Land

ISLAMIC ASCENDANCY: Sonia Halliday Photographs, Archivio Iconografico, S.A./CORBIS; CRUSADES: AKG London, Topham/The Image Works; Scalzi/Art Resource; NY; OTTOMAN RISE AND FALL: Mary Evans Picture Library, Sonia Halliday Photographs, The British Library

1300 Sultan Osman I founds Ottoman Empire in present-day Turkey



1315 ^ Christian missionary Ramon Llull stoned by Muslim crowd in Algeria

1389 Christian Prince Lazar of Serbia defeated and killed at first Battle of Kosovo

1393 Muslim forces overrun Bulgaria

1453 Ottoman Turks take Constantinople

1492 Spanish capture Grenada, ending Reconquista

1509 Portuguese fleet sinks Muslim fleet in battle near India

1520 Sulaiman the Magnificent comes to power

1529 First Islamic siege of Vienna

1683 Second siege of Vienna

1736 First of many territorial wars with Russia

1854 Ottomans and Russians face off in Crimean War

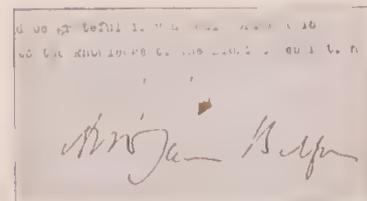


First Siege of Vienna

1878 Ottomans lose Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria due to Slavic uprising

1911 Italians win Libya

1915 Turks begin brutal campaign against Armenian Christians



1917 ^ Balfour Declaration, backed by many Western Christians, proposes Jewish homeland

1919 Ottomans lose Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and Mesopotamia in Treaty of Versailles

1924 Kemal Ataturk abolishes caliphate, founds secular Republic of Turkey

OTTOMAN RISE AND FALL

1291 1300

1924

Spiritual Warriors

As their brethren attacked Muslim fortresses, these evangelistic crusaders fought for Muslim souls.

STEVEN GERTZ

TRAILBLAZING PREACHER

Francis of Assisi

1181-1226

Writing his first Rule in 1209, 27-year-old Francis called on his followers to preach to and convert Muslims: "Let any brother who desires by divine inspiration to go among the Saracens and other nonbelievers, go

with the permission of his minister and servant."

Francis, a radical who had renounced his father's wealth to embrace a lifestyle of poverty and relentless preaching, sent his first missionary to one of the crusader states in Syria in 1217. Two years later, he commissioned six more men to go to Morocco. News eventually filtered back

that five of the friars reached Morocco and began preaching in the streets, but they were decapitated by angry Muslims.

As the father of a growing order, the Friars Minor, Francis debated whether he should visit the war zone himself. Eventually he responded to a call from Pope Honorius III, who sought preachers to invigorate the sol-



BEHIND ENEMY LINES. Francis's audacious attempt to preach to Saladin's nephew stands out as one of few bright spots in Christian-Muslim relations. Even so, Francis did a better job of inspiring other Christians than of persuading Muslims.

diers of the Fifth Crusade.

In 1219 Francis set sail for Damietta, Egypt, where crusaders were besieging a Muslim fortress. While the battle raged, Francis hatched a plan to cross over the lines to try to convert Saladin's nephew, Sultan Malik al-Kamil.

The sultan's sentinels, thinking Francis and his companion Illuminato came with a message from the crusaders, ushered them directly into al-Kamil's presence.

When the sultan questioned them about their business, Francis answered, "We are telling you in all truth that if you die in the law which you now profess, you will be lost and God will not possess your soul. It is for this reason we have come."

The sultan's counselors called for the friars' execution. They told al-Kamil, "Lord, you are the sword of the law: you have the duty to maintain and defend it. We command you, in the name of Allah and of Muhammad, who has given us the law, to cut off their heads here and now, for we do not want to listen to anything they have to say."

At this, the sultan refused to listen to Francis, but neither would he kill him. "I am going to act against the law," he said, "because I am never going to condemn you to death. For that would be an evil reward for me to bestow on you, who conscientiously risked death in order to save my soul for God."

The sultan then offered them gifts and land, but Francis refused, and the sultan escorted them safely back across Christian lines.

The friar didn't stay long in Egypt, and after visiting the crusader city of Acre, he sailed for Italy, never to return. But his followers and indeed the whole of medieval Christianity treasured this tale of courage. He inspired his order to send more missionaries.

Jacques de Vitry later wrote of the Franciscans, "Not only Christ's faithful but even the Saracens . . . admire their humility and virtue, and when the brothers fearlessly approach them to preach, they willingly receive them and, with a grateful spirit, provide them with what they need."



MISSION-MINDED. Ramon de Penyaforte believed that academic training—particularly in Arabic language and Christian apologetics—was the key to success in evangelizing Muslims. Unfortunately, he saw few results.

INQUISITOR AND EDUCATOR

Ramon de Penyaforte

ca. 1175-1275

Ramon de Penyaforte was a well bred and well known teacher of canon law at the University of Bologna when the "kidnapper of souls," Dominic de Guzman, came to town with a call to poverty. Ramon shocked his students and colleagues by leaving his position to return to Barcelona and join the Dominican order.

Ramon's arrival in Barcelona came at a strategic time. Across Spain, as Christian rulers took the offensive against Muslim forces, Dominicans followed them to convert both apostate Christians and devout Muslims. Pope Gregory IX asked Ramon to travel the country preaching the crusade against the Moors. Ramon was so effective that the pope called him back to Rome to serve as his confessor and, later, as inquisitor of heretics.

The new inquisitor keenly understood the need for a coherent response to Islam. When his colleagues appointed him to lead the Dominican order in May 1238, he encouraged fellow Dominican Thomas Aquinas to write an apology against the heretics' errors. The result was the formative *Summa Contra Gentiles*. In it Aquinas used reason to convince Muslims of the truth of Christianity, since they refused Scripture's authority.

Ramon lost little time in training his order in Aquinas's apologetic. He secretly set up schools for missionaries in Tunis and Barcelona. His schools soon attracted interest. Friar Humbert de Romans wrote of them with glowing praise: "From Spain we learn that the Brethren, who for some years have given themselves up to the study of Arabic language, have made great progress, and what is still more praiseworthy is that they have converted Saracens, many of whom have already received Baptism."

For all his efforts, though, Ramon never accomplished what he set out to do. Some 30 years after Pope Honorius III authorized both Franciscans and Dominicans to evangelize the Moors of Spain and North Africa, Ramon could point to few Muslim leaders even leaning toward Christianity.

CRUSADER BISHOP

Jacques de Vitry

1160-1240

Jacques traveled a long road to the East. Born in France, he studied at the University of Paris, then sought out the mystic Marie d'Oignies, who encouraged him to preach. He soon won renown across Europe for his attacks on the heretical Albigenses. His reputation earned him an appointment, in 1216, as bishop of the crusader city of Acre.



NO GREATER LOVE. Missionary Ramon Llull hoped to die "in the glow of love." Martyrdom at the hands of those he sought to evangelize fulfilled his wish.

As bishop, Jacques turned his attention to the conversion of another band of "heretics"—Muslims. In the spring of 1217, he undertook a preaching tour of the coastal region of Syria, which was then under crusader rule. To his delight, two Muslims converted and were baptized in the church of Tortosa.

Encouraged by this early success, Jacques traveled to the Christian-Muslim borderland to preach. But he soon found that most Muslims hesitated to embrace Christianity, for fear of retribution from other Muslims. So he aligned himself with the crusaders, reasoning that Muslims would dare to convert if soldiers could protect them.

The plan failed. Sometimes the crusaders themselves obstructed his work. Soldiers commonly took Muslim captives, many of them children, as slaves. Jacques wanted to convert and baptize them, but under the laws of the crusader kingdoms, any Muslim who converted gained his or her freedom. Therefore, some crusaders refused to allow Jacques to come near their slaves, "although these [Muslims] earnestly and tearfully requested it."

By 1227, Jacques had given up and gone home. Crusader fortunes had reversed, and neither the conversion nor the defeat of the Muslims seemed likely.

MARTYRED MYSTIC

Ramon Llull (Raymond Lull) 1235-1315

Ramon Llull was born on the island of Majorca, off the coast of Spain. Decades before, King James II of Aragon had captured Majorca from the Moors. The king awarded land to his captains, including Llull's father. So Llull lived a privileged life, eventually rising to a position of overseeing the king's feasts. He also gained fame as one of the kingdom's finest poets.

But in July 1266, Llull saw a vision of Jesus on the cross, and his life changed dramatically. He quit writing amorous poetry and retired to a cell, where he spent the next nine years learning Arabic with his Muslim slave. A tragic fight that led to his slave's death strengthened his resolve to serve God and inspired his motto, "He who loves not lives not."

Around this time, Llull learned of Francis's visit to the sultan and discerned God's call on his life as a missionary to Muslims. As his father had wielded the sword as a soldier, he would wield the sword of the Spirit as a missionary.

A prolific writer, Llull wrote an astonishing 321 books in Latin, Catalan, and Arabic, many of which responded

to Islamic challenges to Christianity. His *Ars Major sive Generalis* (1275) locked horns with Muslim philosophers Avicenna and Averroes on the grounds that Christianity was rational, an innovation in Muslim-Christian dialogue.

In his novel *Blanquerna* (1287), he outlined two methods of converting Muslims, one peaceful (preaching) and one violent (crusade). Llull appeared to have vacillated between them, though in his *Llibre de Contemplacio en Deu* (1273), he stated clearly that the Holy Land should be conquered not by force of arms, but "by love, prayers, and the shedding of tears and blood."

Llull did more than write—he labored to build schools that would train missionaries for service in Muslim lands. In 1276, he established his first school in Majorca, which taught not only theology and philosophy, but also Arabic and the geography of Islamic lands.

"The man unacquainted with geography," he wrote, "is not only ignorant where he walks but whither he leads. Whether he attempts the conversion of infidels or works for other interests of the Church, it is indispensable that he know the religions and environments of all nations."

His next step was to convince the papacy of his vision. But corrupt Nicholas IV and Boniface VIII took more interest in lining their pockets. Discouraged, the missionary decided to go to North Africa himself.

In 1291, 1307, and again in 1314, he talked with and preached to the *ulema*, or Muslim literati. Threatened, imprisoned, and banished twice, Llull would not be silenced. "Death has no terrors for a sincere servant of Christ who is laboring to bring souls to a knowledge of the truth," he told his captors.

Years before, he wrote in his *Llibre de Contemplacio en Deu*, "Men are wont to die, O Lord, from old age . . . but thus, if it be your will, your servant would prefer to die in the glow of love." On June 30, 1315, a Muslim mob granted his desire by stoning him to death in Bugia, Algeria. **CH**

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From Crusades to Homeland Defense

Martin Luther responded to Islam with a new military philosophy, fresh focus on the Qur'an, and provocative readings of biblical prophecy.

GREGORY MILLER

Ego usque ad mortem luctor adversus Turcas et Turcarum Deum," Martin Luther wrote. "I will always struggle to the death against the Turks and the god of the Turks."

Luther was not the only European of his era to fear a deadly battle with Islamic forces (i.e. Turks). During the reign of Sultan Sulaiman the Magnificent, 1520-1566, the Ottoman Empire reached its greatest geographical extent and the height of its military power. Throughout Europe pamphlets reported one Ottoman victory after another. As far away as England, the word "Turk" conjured images of surprise attack and invasion.

It is significant for the history of Christian-Islamic relations that the Ottoman Empire hit its peak as the Protestant Reformation got underway. Protestant reformers made many uncharitable statements about Islam, sometimes reflecting medieval prejudices more than sixteenth-century circumstances. Still, because of their theological orientation, reformers altered Christians' interpretation of Islam in ways that have shaped attitudes into the Modern period.

To fight or not to fight

Early in his career, Luther identified God's displeasure with the church as the real reason for the Ot-

tomans' successes. In 1518 he asserted that "to fight against the Turk is to fight against God who is punishing our sins through them." When faced with Turkish aggression, Christians first must repent.

These statements produced unintended consequences. Some people erroneously interpreted Luther as advocating a position of non-resistance. Roman Catholics accused him of handing



FEAR AND LOATHING. As Ottoman Turks threatened Vienna in 1529, Europeans imagined the worst: children slaughtered, women raped, and peasants led into slavery.

over Christians to the infidels. Pamphlets told stories of some who had, as a result, joined the Muslims, or "turned Turk."

Luther abhorred this reputation. His friends encouraged him to write a clarification of his increasingly embarrassing comments.

As critics attacked Luther, Turkish forces stepped up their attacks on Europe. At the battle of Mohaç in 1526, Turks destroyed the entire Hungarian force in less than two hours. Sulaiman occupied Budapest and claimed a large portion of Hungary. In 1529 the Ottoman armies moved against central Europe in a campaign that culminated in a siege of Vienna.

Although forced to withdraw, Sulaiman gave every indication that the Ottoman armies would be back. Given the severity of the Turkish threat, Luther reported that the news of the siege of Vienna made him physically ill.

In his pamphlets *On War Against the Turks* (1529) and *Military Sermon Against the Turks* (1530), Luther clarified his position on the Christian response to Islam. Most significantly, he emphasized his absolute rejection of the crusade as a blasphemous confusion of the spiritual and the secular. Christians *as Christians* were not to lead or even participate in battle.

Further, he argued that ecclesiastical attempts at military leadership an-



MEEK MEETS MAGNIFICENT. A groveling Western ambassador seeks audience with mighty Sulaiman. Muslims still consider Sulaiman, whom they call "The Lawgiver," a paragon—the last truly great leader of a dominant Islamic empire.

gered God. Clergy should preach and pray, not bear arms and fight. According to Luther, soldiers had a right to protest a church-led military crusade through disobedience.

"If I were a soldier and saw in the battlefield a priest's banner or cross, even if it were the very crucifix, I would run away as though the very devil were chasing me!" he wrote.

According to Luther, no religious cause justified military action against false Christians, heretics, or even Turks. Spiritual enemies must be fought with spiritual weapons alone. Crusade, or holy war, was never permissible.

This represents a significant departure from mainstream medieval theol-

ogy. Since Pope Gregory the Great (died 604), theologians had argued that the coercion of those who held false beliefs was an appropriate cause of war.

Luther's criticism of crusades did not mean Christians could never use violence against the Turks, however. He wrote his *Military Sermon* specifically to admonish the "fist" against the Ottomans. But the fist belonged to political authorities, not to the church. Though Christians as Christians should never wage war, Christians as rulers sometimes must.

For Luther, the war against the Turks was his generation's example of a "good war." Legitimate rulers had a duty to defend society against the

Turks, just as they would oppose all disturbers of the peace.

By extension, if called upon to give material or physical support to the military effort against the Turks, Christian subjects should give willingly. In the *Military Sermon*, Luther warned:

If you hold back and refuse to pay or to ride [in battle], look out—the Turk will teach you. . . . [H]e won't demand taxes or military service from you, but instead attack your house and home . . . stab you to death (if you are so lucky), shame or strangle your wife and daughter before your eyes, hack your children to death and impale them on the fenceposts. And, what is worst of all, you must suffer all this with a wicked, troubled conscience as a damned unchristian who has been disobedient to God and his government.

Limited respect

Luther viewed the Turks as terrifying but not purely evil. At times he praised them for their piety. He believed the discipline of the Turks would shame papists so much that none would remain in his faith if he were to spend just three days with the Turks.

In demonstrating the religious "superiority" of the Turks over the papists, though, Luther primarily wanted to highlight the emptiness of works-righteousness. In the end, Luther always used the same argument: no matter how spiritual a religion looks, all without Christ are lost.

Yet ambivalence in Lutheran comments about Muslim rule opened up new possibilities for the acceptance of the Ottoman Empire as a legitimate European state. Luther recognized that, despite fabled ruthlessness, the Turks were admirably efficient governors. Strictly enforced order was better, in his mind, than no order at all.

Luther's strong emphasis on obedience to authority also influenced his advice to Christians taken captive by Turks. He admonished them to obey their captors at all points—unless called upon to kill fellow believers. He even suggested that this approach might save Muslims as well as Chris-



AKG London

WHAT IF? Niklas Meldemann, the artist who produced the 1530 woodcut on which this 1851 lithograph is based, was not the only European who saw the siege of Vienna as a sign that Islam was closing in on Christian civilization. Protestants, especially, believed the siege might bring on the end of the world. But Viennese garrisons, supplemented by Spanish infantry, chased the Turks away after just 25 days. The Viennese spent the next several decades improving their defenses.

tians. Citing the biblical examples of Joseph and Daniel, Luther wrote that obedient Christian captives stood a better chance of converting Muslims than did professional missionaries, Scripture, or preaching.

A foul, useful book

As early as 1529, Luther lamented that he had no accurate Latin translation of the Qur'an. About this time the Zürich reformer Theodor Bibliander initiated his study of Arabic with the

intention of publishing the first-ever typeset Qur'an.

By 1542 Bibliander had completed his edition, but public fear that the Qur'an might threaten the Christian community jeopardized the entire project. All printed copies were seized, and the printer was jailed. Several Protestant leaders across confessional lines (including Luther, who added an introduction to the text) intervened, and the printing was allowed to continue. Luther supported the publica-

tion of the Qur'an in Latin because he considered the public knowledge of the Qur'an to be the greatest weapon against Islam.

Access to the Qur'an encouraged new interpretations. Luther's understanding is typical of much early Protestant thought. He viewed the Qur'an to be fundamentally a law book, not on a par with the Bible, but similar to the papal collections of canon (church) law. Yet whatever disagreements Luther had with canon

Four jihads

Jihad means more than warfare, but the sword is central to Islam's texts, its history, and its founder.

MATEEN A. ELASS

Recently terrorist activities by purportedly Muslim groups have increased debate over the place of violence in true Islam.

Moderate Muslims say violence has no place, because Islam is a religion of peace. In their minds, it is as unfair to judge Islam by extremists as it would be to judge Christianity only by the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, and the Puritan witch hunts.

Is such a comparison reasonable? Does it do justice to the canonical teachings of both religions? The answer to these questions is found at least partly in a study of the Islamic concept of *jihad* and its lack of a full counterpart in Christian orthodoxy.

Spiritual jihad

The word *jihad* is often translated as "holy war," but it literally means "struggle" or "exertion." In its religious context, it always involves a fight against evil, but this can take many forms: jihad of the heart, of the mouth and pen, of the hand, and of the sword. Jihad of heart, mouth, and pen are sometimes spoken of as "spiritual jihad," particularly among the Shi'ites (the largest Islamic minority party, comprising roughly 10 percent of the Muslim world).

All Muslims must engage in jihad of the heart, which finds a rough parallel in the Christian command to put to death the sin nature. Muhammad clearly commanded his followers to fight their sinful tendencies, as did Je-



WORDS AS WEAPONS. Jihad of the mouth can mean polemic, verbal threats, or, as shown in this thirteenth-century illustration, preaching. The goal for all four types of jihad (of the heart, mouth, hand, and sword) is the advancement of Islam.

sus. Islam, though, offers no assistance in this struggle from the Holy Spirit, the counselor and guide promised to Christians.

Jihad of the mouth aims to undermine opposition to Islam through speech that takes one of two forms. The first, verbal argumentation, finds a Christian parallel in the discipline of apologetics. The second, curses and saber-rattling, has roots in pre-Islamic Arabia, where the art of extemporaneous imprecatory poetry was prized as

a means of verbal jousting between warring tribes.

Generally, a war of words is considered preferable to one of physical violence. Muslims still employ this tactic. When Saddam Hussein bragged before the Gulf War that coalition troops were facing "the mother of all battles," he was engaging in a jihad of the mouth.

Jihad of the pen applies the written word to Islam's defense. Over the last thirteen centuries, much Islamic ink



WESTERN DISTORTIONS. A seventeenth-century French "history" depicts horrors perpetrated by Turks on Christian prisoners. Such treatment was uncommon, if not fabricated—some of the tortures are lifted directly from European conflicts. Muhammad allowed his followers to take prisoners of war, but he recommended holding them for ransom, not killing them.

has presented Muhammad as the ultimate prophet of God and his message as the perfect will of Allah for all humanity. The central doctrines of the Christian faith, though sadly misunderstood by many Muslim scholars, have been the special target of Islamic apologetics.

Jihad of the hand seeks to promote the cause of Allah through praiseworthy deeds. Muslims' exemplary treatment of others and devotion to God are supposed to prove the superiority of their message and serve as a vehicle for the proclamation of their beliefs.

Christians also embrace the concept of jihad of the hand. As Francis of Assisi is credited with saying, "Preach the gospel at all times; if necessary, use words."

"Lesser" jihad

The last and most troublesome form of jihad is that of the sword. This

aspect dominates Islamic history and jurisprudence.

When the word *jihad* occurs in the Qur'an without any modifier, or with the typical modifier "in the cause of Allah," it invariably refers to the call to physical combat on behalf of Islam. It is often linked with the word *qital* (fighting) in the context of dealing with unbelievers.

Some modern Muslims downplay this understanding, arguing that in Islamic tradition war is called the "lesser jihad." Indeed, according to one disputed tradition from the *hadith* (the collection of texts concerning Muhammad's actions or statements, second only to the Qur'an in authority), when Muhammad returned from the field of war he said, "We have all returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad."

Some companions asked, "What is the greater jihad, O prophet of God?"

He replied, "Jihad against the desires."

Presumably the jihad of the heart is greater because it is unceasing, whereas the jihad of the sword continues only as long as there are unbelievers unwilling to submit to the rule of Islam. Nonetheless, this tradition demonstrates that Muhammad engaged in military jihad, and he commanded his followers to engage in it as well.

Doctrines of war

The Qur'an contains seemingly contradictory teachings on jihad of the sword. Islamic scholars, however, note that Muhammad's teaching on jihad developed over time as the circumstances of his growing community changed. This accounts for the seeming contradictions, which actually describe four distinct stages of development.

First, when Islam was a fledgling movement and Muhammad endured persecution from his extended tribe in Mecca, he counseled his small band to engage in a policy of peaceful persuasion. Sura (chapter) 16:125-6 declares, "Invite [all] to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious. . . . But if you show patience, that is indeed the best [course] for those who are patient."

Many Muslims today regard this as the proper approach for the Muslim community any time it finds itself an overwhelmed minority in an unreceptive host culture.

When Muhammad fled Mecca in 622 (the *Hegira*) to the friendlier confines of Medina, followers still in Mecca faced serious threats of property loss and bodily harm. This antipathy arose in response to the prophet's attacks on the Meccan caravan trade—the primary means by which Muhammad financed his mission.

Muhammad subsequently decreed that fighting was permissible only to ward off aggression and reclaim property confiscated by infidels. So, for example, Sura 22:39 says, "To those against whom war is made, permission is given [to fight], because they are wronged, and verily, God is most powerful for their aid. [They are] those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right, [for no cause] except that they say, 'Our Lord is God.'"

Within a few months, this permission to fight in self-defense became a religious obligation to battle those who initiated hostilities against the Muslim community or its interests. "Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for God loveth not transgressors. And slay them wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out. . . . But if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith" (2:190-194).

As the doctrine of jihad developed, Muhammad taught that those who sacrificed their lives in battle for the cause of God would be guaranteed admission to the highest level of



LIVE BY THE SWORD... The Qurayza, whom Muhammad defeated at Badr in 624, rallied to win the 625 Battle of Uhud (shown). In this case, as in many others, it is difficult for Muslims to claim they were merely defending themselves.

heaven—no small reward in a religion where one's hope of heaven otherwise depends on near perfect obedience to divine law.

Conversely, those able-bodied Muslims who refused the call would suffer divine punishment (9:38-9). Not surprisingly, the number of Muslim men willing to commit their lives to warfare surged from this point on.

The third stage of development moved jihad from defense to offense. Muslims were told to take the initiative in war but to refrain from attacks during the four sacred months, which were recognized by all tribes within the Arabian peninsula as months for

religious pilgrimage.

"When the forbidden months are past," the Qur'an declares, "then fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in each and every ambush. But if they repent, perform the prayers and give alms, then leave their way free" (9:5).

The final development of the Qur'anic concept of jihad removed any limitations on the timing of battle in the cause of Allah. When commanded by a recognized Muslim leader, Muslims could attack non-believers in any season and on any land not yet surrendered to the



FOLLOW THE LEADER. Jesus modeled peace and mercy, ordering his disciples to stand down even as a deadly conspiracy closed in around him. Muhammad set a very different example both in the Qur'an and in the stories about his life.

armies of Islam. The famous Sura 9:29 (see page 18) lays out this ambitious plan.

Applying the law

Which of these stages is meant to be normative for Islam? According to standard Islamic jurisprudence, it is the fourth—expansionist jihad, understood as armed struggle against unbelievers, whether or not the Muslim community has been attacked. The law of abrogation in Qur'anic hermeneutics (see Suras 2:106; 13:39; 16:103), in which later revelation always trumps earlier texts, affirms this.

Islamic history bears out this expansionist bent. One century after the appointment of the first caliph, Abu Bakr, Islam had become an empire reaching across North Africa up to Spain in the west and across Asia into India in the east. By the end of the next century (the second century *Anno Hegirae*), Muslim territorial conquests had peaked, and Islamic jurisprudence had fully defined the behaviors and conditions governing "holy war."

The terms of jihad closely parallel Augustine's "just war" conditions. Only proper government authorities

can conduct jihad. Fighting must avoid harming non-combatants, hostages, prisoners, and property (especially trees and landscape), and its ultimate goal must be to secure justice and peace.

For Islam, however, the causes of justice and peace are synonymous with the advance of the Muslim state, for politics and spirituality are inextricably bound together in the dream of one world under the complete dominion of Allah and His followers. So whereas Christian "just war" principles do not support the notion of establishing the kingdom of God by force, the Islamic doctrine of jihad unapologetically does.

When the *ummah* (community or state) of Islam faces its history of coercion and expansion, there is no shame or repentance. Islam, unlike Christianity, teaches in its most authoritative sources that force is justifiable in the cause of Allah. Far from feeling regret over past conquests, Islam takes pride in this heritage.

Indeed, many Muslims look back on the first three centuries of Islam as the golden years of their heritage and long for a return to world ascendancy.

Tales of two founders

The actions of Jesus and Muhammad show the stark contrast in founding principles between their two religions.

When Jesus is arrested at the Garden of Gethsemane, the disciples grab their swords. Peter strikes off the ear of one opponent. Jesus immediately commands his followers to stand down and declares that violence is not the appropriate means to accomplish the Father's will.

According to Matthew 26:53, Jesus claims that, should he want to win a military victory, he could easily call on his Father, "who will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels." Instead, rebellion is met with love, animosity with forgiveness.

While hanging on the cross, he prays for those who have wronged him, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Love for enemies, sacrifice for their well-being, is the way of Jesus.

According to Sahih al-Bukhari (4:280b), one of several similar stories about Muhammad reads thus: "Anas bin Malik said, 'Allah's Apostle entered (Mecca) in the year of the conquest (of Mecca) wearing a helmet over his head. After he took it off, a man came and said, 'Ibn Khatal [a pagan opponent] is clinging to the curtains of the ka'ba [a recognized behavior for seeking mercy]. The Prophet said, 'Kill him.'"

While there is certainly room for debate over how well Christians and Muslims have followed the teachings of their respective leaders, there is no doubt about the contrasting visions of Jesus and Muhammad for how God's kingdom should be advanced. Just war theory has played a relatively minor role in the spread of Christianity across the globe. Jihad has been at the heart of Islam's expansion. **CH**

MATEEN A. ELASS is senior pastor of Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Warrenville, Illinois. Born to a Syrian Muslim father and an American mother, he converted to Christianity at age 20 and was disowned by his father for 14 years. They later reconciled. Mateen loves Muslims and has deep respect for his heritage.

Divided by Christ

Whether Christians under early Muslim rule used polemic or polite dialogue to defend their faith, they hit an impasse at the Incarnation.

SAMUEL HUGH MOFFETT

Christians who lived under Muslim rule in the eighth century found themselves with an unusual status—second-class but sometimes respected, more often pitied for their “inferior” religion than directly persecuted. This led to some interesting debates.

Then, as now, some Christians cast the discussion in confrontational terms, while others opted for measured interfaith dialogue. The ways in which John of Damascus (ca. 675-749) and Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I (779-823 or 778-821) approached Islam highlight the contrast.

(Note: Nestorianism, which rejected the complete blending of Christ’s human and divine natures, was denounced at the 431 Council of Chalcedon. Despite this apparent deviation from orthodox Christianity, Patriarch Timothy presents the faith clearly in his debate with the caliph.)

Polemic contrasts

John of Damascus, like his father and grandfather before him, held a position of honor in the local Muslim government. But for reasons unknown, in about 726 he retired from public office and entered the great monastery of Mar Saba (St. Sabas) near Jerusalem.

While there he wrote the *Fount of Knowledge*, a massive work that contained a section “On Heresies.” Here we find his judgment against Islam, which he viewed not as a new religion but as a heretical schism from Christianity. He also viewed Islam as a



WALLS, NOT BRIDGES. John of Damascus withdrew from Islamic society to Mar Saba monastery, where he wrote harshly of “the superstition of the Ishmaelites.” He saw only conflict between Muslim teaching and Christianity.

threat—while he was writing *Fount of Knowledge*, a nearby bishop was executed for preaching against Islam.

John begins with the unequivocal statement, “There is also the superstition of the Ishmaelites which to this day prevails and keeps people in error, being a forerunner of the Antichrist.”

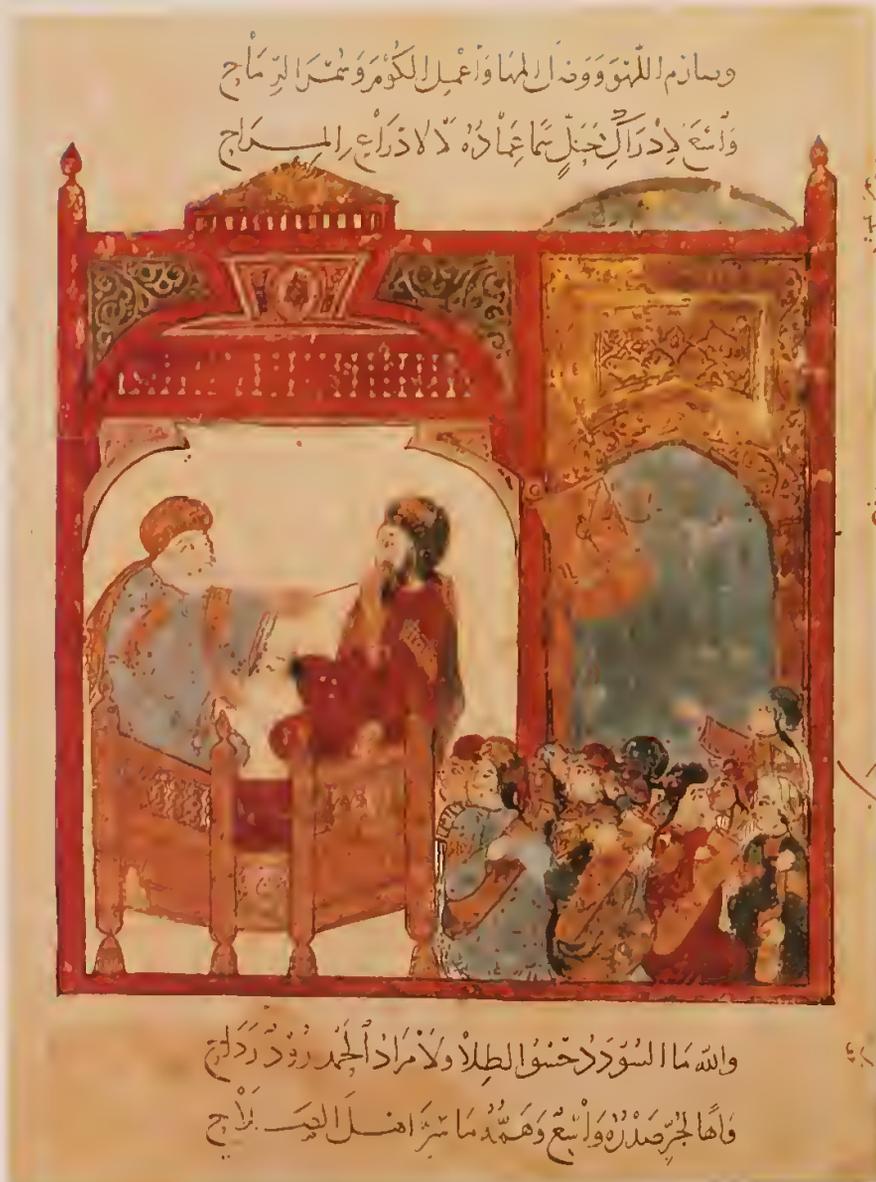
Although John does not soften his language, he does at least credit Muhammad with leading his people from idolatry to monotheism, to the “One God, creator of all, who has [not] been begotten . . .” Then the argument

quickly resumes.

John was no gentle compromiser. He was severely careful (and was usually successful) neither to distort Muslim teaching nor to paint it any more Christian than it actually was.

He finished the sentence above with the complete Islamic formula: “who has neither been begotten nor has begotten,” thereby clearly relating all his criticisms to the basic theological difference between Islam and Christianity, namely Christology.

John’s subsequent arguments are subsidiary: the lack of reference to



LISTEN AND LEARN. The Islamic world used to host many lively debates, both between Islamic masters (as shown here) and between members of different faiths. Someone like Patriarch Timothy could not debate a Muslim ruler today.

Muhammad's prophethood in the Bible (which Muslims accept as revelation); the impossibility of separating God from his Word and his Spirit; the defense of Christian veneration of the cross as no more an idolatry than the Muslim veneration of the *ka'ba*; and criticisms of Muslim polygamy.

All these are lesser differences. To John, the crucial difference is this: the God of the Muslims is not the Christian God. Allah had no son. John's God is the Father of Jesus Christ.

Polite distinctions

Patriarch Timothy took a more moderate approach in his dialogue

with Abbasid caliph Mahdi a generation later. The all-powerful caliph invited the argument himself, and, considering the times and the situation, both patriarch and caliph displayed remarkable tolerance and courtesy.

As the patriarch later recorded the proceedings, he had scarcely finished the customary complimentary address when the caliph "did something to me which he had never done before; he said to me, 'O Catholicos, [how can] a man like you who possesses all this knowledge and utters such sublime words concerning God, . . . [say that God] married a woman from whom

He begat a Son.'"

Thus, as bluntly as when John of Damascus 40 years earlier wrote against Islam, the arguments began again on the subject of Christology.

But Timothy was no polemicist, and times had changed. He coolly agreed that the statement was a blasphemy: "Who would say such a thing?" Nevertheless, he continued, "Christ is the Son of God"—not, however, "in the carnal way." And the debate went on for two days.

The arguments ranged from how God could have a son and how he could die, to the mathematical contradiction involved in the doctrine of the Trinity; and from Muslim claims of Muhammad's supreme prophethood to their charges that Christians had corrupted their own Scriptures.

On the second day, the caliph asked the most sensitive question of all. "What do you say about Muhammad?" One can almost sense the tense silence in the room as all wondered how the Christian from the *dhimmi* would answer his Muslim king.

Whereas John of Damascus brusquely described Muhammad as "a false prophet," Timothy managed to combine polite diplomacy with Christian integrity.

The patriarch noted the good that Muhammad had accomplished: he "taught the doctrine of the unity of God, . . . drove his people away from bad works and brought them nearer to the good ones, . . . separated his people from idolatry and polytheism, and attached them to the cult and the knowledge of one God."

The caliph said, "If you [only] accepted Muhammad as a prophet, your words would be beautiful and your meanings fine."

The patriarch, equally courteous, compared the Gospel to a precious pearl and closed with this prayer for the caliph: "May God grant to us that we may . . . share [the pearl of the faith] with you." **CH**

SAMUEL HUGH MOFFETT is emeritus professor of missions at Princeton Theological Seminary. This article was adapted from his book *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol. 1 (Orbis, 1998).

Sonia Halliday Photographs

Imperial Evasion

When the West finally gained influence in the Islamic world, Christians lost their nerve.

ANDREW F. WALLS

In the nineteenth century meeting with the Islamic world, Europe, while sometimes changing its mind, believed it already knew all that was necessary. Thus Western thought frequently engaged, not in a debate with Islam, but in internal debates about Islam.

On the topic of nineteenth-century Africa, these debates focused less on comparative religion than on colonial policy. One of the initiators was Reginald Bosworth Smith, a Harrow schoolmaster who knew no Arabic,

had no cross-cultural experience, and was no great theologian.

Nearly all of Smith's writing has a single theme: the responsibilities attached to British imperial power. Patriotism allied to moral earnestness sounds through his work—including his strangely influential *Mohammed and Mohammedanism* (1874).

His desire is that British power, beneficent in intent, shall be beneficent in reality. To act in the right way is to act in the Christian way, and Britain is a Christian country. Indeed,

he declares that Christianity is the birthright of the English.

To this Smith adds a cheerful evolutionism. He arrives at a formulation whereby all religions are moral, rather than theological, in origin. They have come into existence to meet social and national moral needs. They raise humanity gradually toward God.

Following Smith's theory of the origins of religions, one can readily acknowledge that Islam established righteousness at the time of its birth. For instance, while Christians com-



MISSION OF MISERY? An 1815 satire against the British governor of India accuses missionaries from several Western denominations of sowing evil among the native Hindus and Muslims they sought to save. The Indian spokesman says he likes the Anglican bishop's hat (*Topy*) but has no use for a slave master's God.

monly complain of the depressive effect of Islam on women, it can be shown that Muhammad significantly raised the status of women in early Arabia.

But the theory can go further. Islam can still establish righteousness today, whenever it encounters a people at a lower stage of development than itself. Without, therefore, giving up the idea of the superiority of Christianity, and even leaving open the possibility that Muslims will eventually see the need for a higher ethical norm, Islam can be seen as Christianity's ally in the task of raising humanity.

This is not, of course, the vision of missionary Christianity. Smith's vision is that of birthright Christianity, the fortunate inheritance of Britain. As imperial expansion brought British rule to more and more peoples where Islamic influence was already at work or at hand, Smith's book could be read as a tract for the times. The expansion of Islam might actually improve the lot of "native peoples."

That was not to say that Islam was true, and certainly not to say that it had any relevance to Western society. All questions of truth claims could be bypassed; the administrative convenience was that Islam was, or could be, socially elevating.

Christianity's failures

Smith's views were enthusiastically endorsed by the Afro-West Indian man of letters Edward Wilmot Blyden, who wrote with the authority of one who had been a Christian missionary. He could give Bosworth Smith's argument a new dimension, detailing on the one hand the baleful effects in Africa of a Christianity heavily imbued with Western values, and on the other the blessings already brought to Africa by Islam.

Islam had brought unity instead of tribal division. It had kept foreign influence at bay. It had provided a basis for economic and cultural progress. It had harmed the African psyche less than Christianity had, for Western color prejudice and the imposition of Western cultural norms had confused African Christians and inhibited African artistic expression.

Further, Islam was less materialistic than Christianity. In colonial society an African had little to gain by becoming a Muslim, but everything to gain by connecting with the mission-dominated education system.

"I believe," Blyden wrote, "that Islam has done for vast tribes of Africa what Christianity in the hands of Europeans has not yet done. It has cast out the demons of fetishism, general ignorance of God, drunkenness, and gambling, and has introduced customs which subserve the highest purposes of growth and preservation. I do not believe that a system which has



EMPERESS-IVE. Queen Victoria reigned over a majority of the world's Muslims.

done such things can be outside God's beneficent plans for the evolution of humanity."

As a rhetorician, Blyden outpaces Smith, but it was Smith who haunted missionary writers and speakers for a generation to come. And their concern was not usually with his facile theology, but with his sociology. This sociology appealed to a great deal of the educated British public, whose opinions created the climate in which administrative decisions were made.

New doors closed

The growing empires of the Western powers collided with Islam from West Africa to East Asia. The foremost ruler of the world's Muslims was no

longer the sultan of Turkey but Queen Victoria. The Royal Republic of the Netherlands also claimed vast numbers of Muslim subjects, and the twentieth century was to bring a time when, with the caliphate collapsed and Turkey secular, the emir of Afghanistan was almost the only genuinely independent Muslim ruler left in the world.

Thus most of the Muslim world passed under the rule or dominance, of powers that had always been considered Christian. But, despite the optimism of some missionary commentators, this did not usher in a great new era of accessibility.

Indeed, the colonial powers were sometimes more efficient at gatekeeping than the sultan had been. There seemed now good reasons why public policy should control the access of missions, not only to areas that were Islamic, but also to areas in which Islamic influence was, or might soon be, at work.

The era of imperial expansion is, of course, the era of missionary revival. Hundreds of new missionaries from the West pushed the frontiers of mission forward, seeking—in the eloquent title of a popular series of books at the time—the Conquests of the Cross. As regards Africa, the idea developed of a race with Islam, a competition for the peoples of the continent.

And what appeared to the mission constituency to stand in the way was the colonial administration, so tender of Islamic susceptibilities, it seemed, and so misled by the spirit of Bosworth Smith about the social effects of Islam, that it encouraged Muslim expansion and hindered Christian conversion. In the race for the soul of Africa, Christianity must contend with handicaps and heavy weights imposed by the administrative policies of Christian countries. **CH**

ANDREW F. WALLS, a scholar at the University of Aberdeen and the University of Edinburgh, is author of *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Orbis, 2002), from which this article was adapted. His essay on this topic originally appeared *Journal of Religion in Africa* 29 (No. 2, 1999). Used by permission.

Justice and Peace

Because broken promises fueled Islamic militancy, the road to stability must be paved with good faith.

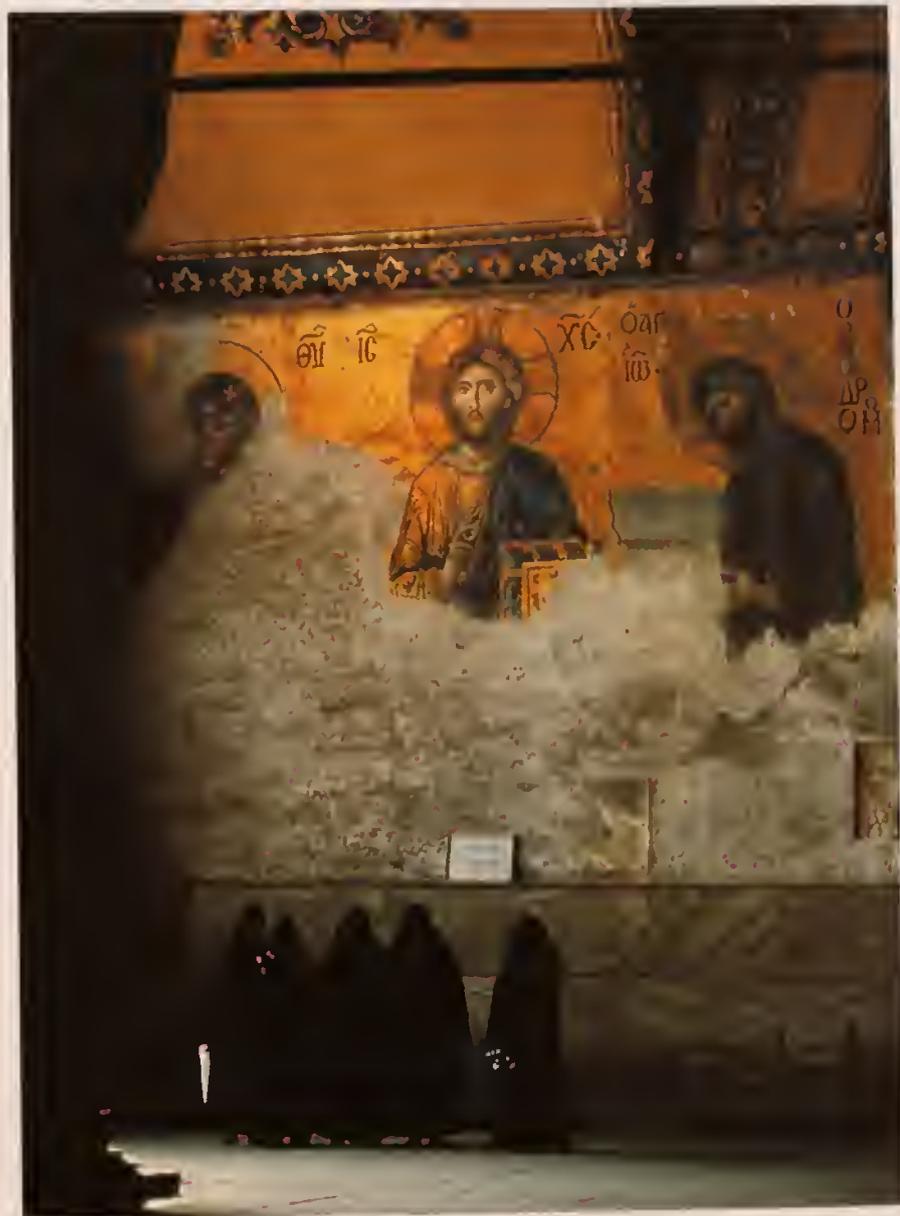
A conversation with J. DUDLEY WOODBERRY

For all the Western media talks about the "Arab street," most of us can scarcely imagine what that world is really like. Fuller Seminary professor J. Dudley Woodberry knows. Since 1957, he has studied, taught, and ministered in Lebanon, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, and he has visited 35 other predominately Muslim countries. We asked him to describe how Muslims view history, society, and the West.

This issue looks at turning points in Christian-Muslim relations from a Christian perspective. How might a Muslim history read differently? Would Muslims focus on the same events?

Their history would be similar in many ways, although obviously what might be an "up" for us might be a "down" for them. It would depend on the type of Muslim, because that which creates hostility would be a "down" for many Muslims as well as for Christians. Both groups are looking for good relations without giving up their evangelistic mandates.

There would, however, be significant differences. For example, last summer I was asked by a Muslim theological faculty in Turkey to gather a group of Christian scholars for a dialogue on topics including the Crusades. Most of us don't feel at all responsible for the Crusades. We're very individualistic in the West, and we just weren't around back then. But we apologized twice for what the Crusades did not only to Islam, but



CHRISTIANITY UNMASKEO. Muslim women gaze at a restored mosaic of Mary, Jesus, and John the Baptist at Hagia Sophia. The Muslim world is equally watchful of Western actions in the Middle East, which reflect on Christianity.

also to the region that is now Turkey. And we practically got a standing ovation for that. Quite obviously, with their sense of group responsibility and trauma, that's a much a bigger issue for them than for us.

Then there's the colonial period, which most Westerners would not think of as a Christian invasion. With our sense of the separation of church and state, we see colonialism as political. But for many Muslims, colonization represented a crusading spirit that also manifested itself as support for Zionism and Israel. Such feelings have been obvious in the statements of Osama bin Laden and even of some Palestinians recently.

Does Islam always link what we would consider the religious and the political?

The overwhelming majority of Muslims see Islam as a total way of life. Of course, many Muslims today, because of a pluralistic world or because in some regions they are a minority, know they're going to have to emphasize the religious aspects and not be bound by some of the seventh-century political ideas of Islam.

But in general, Muslims view the separation Americans make between church and state as an unhealthy one. They would even point to the breakdown in morality that we have here as evidence of what happens when you take religion out of the other arenas of life.

What, then, would Muslims see as the ideal political and religious system?

Well, you have more than one point of view. The Islamist or fundamentalist view is that all of the answers are in the Qur'an and in the practice of Muhammad and the early Muslim community. If we just return to that, we'll be all right.

Conservatives would join with the fundamentalists in looking backward. By conservatives I mean those who focus on the adaptations of the first

300 years of Islam. In that time the four major schools of Sunni law and Shi'ite law were established, Shari'ah law was developed, and the major schools of theology were in place. Conservatives would say the adaptations were enough, and if we just return to those, everything will be all right.

Others realize that fundamentalists and conservatives oversimplify things. These Muslims still idealize Muhammad and the era of Islamic dominance and culture during the Abbasid Period [750-1258], but they understand that we've got to live in the modern world. They attempt to retain and emphasize the values of that early period, as they remember it or have reconstructed it, within modern legal systems and pluralistic nations.

One of the values of early Islam was aggressive expansionism. What do non-fundamentalist Muslims make of that?

What you see in the early expansion, particularly of the first hundred

years, was the extension of Islamic military and political power. There was not much forced conversion at that time.

The goal was to establish an ambiance that favored conversion, and conversion indeed followed during the next couple of hundred years, from North Africa to the Indus River. Although there were jihads in Africa and elsewhere, Islam was largely carried by the trader or the Sufi, or mystic, missionary.

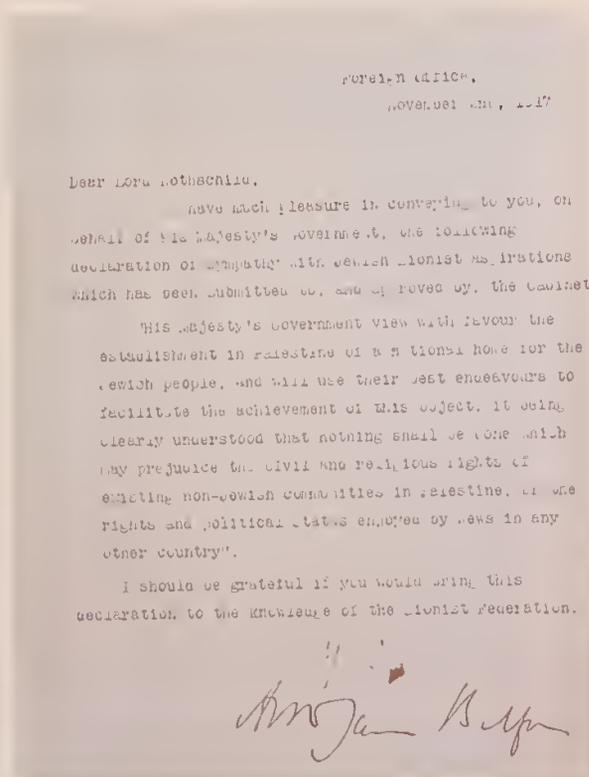
Now, if Larry Poston is right in his book *Islamic Da'Wah in the West*, Muslims reversed this strategy in Europe and North America, seeking to evangelize first. Then, with enough converts, an ambiance would be created that would make it possible for Islam to have more political control. Many Muslims, though, realize that this is not at all likely to work in the West, so they are not trying to follow through with it.

What is being preached in mosques today, in North America and elsewhere?

Unfortunately there is a lot of anti-Western, and in some cases anti-Christian, preaching going on. Islam has been radicalized because of the sense of injustice in American policy on a number of issues, most crucially Palestine. But even in the Iraqi situation, where we focused on the weapons of mass destruction, what the Arabs and Muslims see on al-Jazeera television are the children who have died in the last 10 years from inadequate medicine and food.

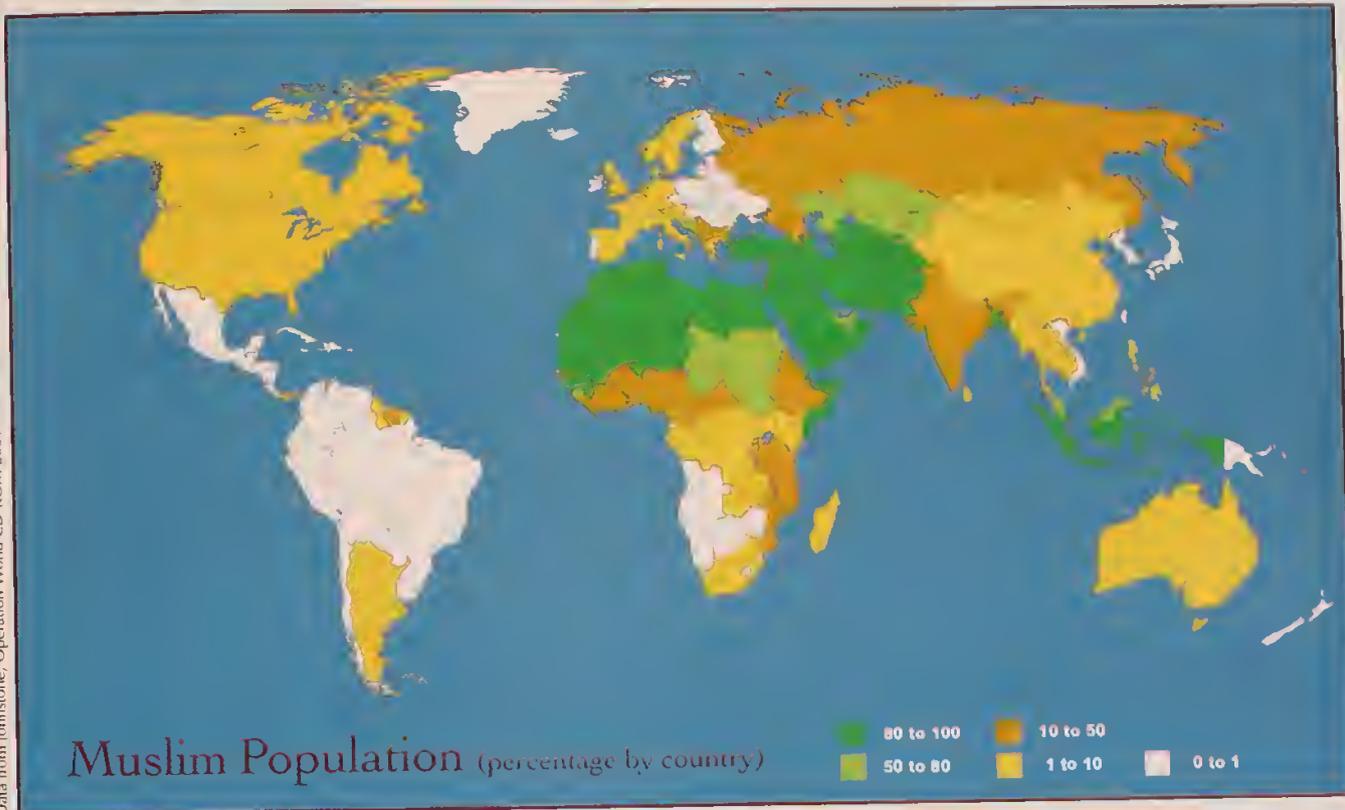
With that sense of injustice, we're getting a lot of preaching, particularly in Muslim majority countries, against the West and against Christianity, as it is associated with the West. In this country, we're getting a much broader spectrum, because we have some Muslim leaders who are working very hard for reconciliation and understanding.

The more there's the sense



A MODEST PROPOSAL. Arthur James Lord Balfour's letter marked the first imperial endorsement of Zionism. Balfour had originally championed Uganda as the site for a Jewish homeland, but Zionist leader Haim Weizmann talked him into backing Palestine.

Based on a map by Global Mapping International - www.gmi.org
Data from Johnstone, Operation World CD-ROM, 2001



of injustice, the more the preaching in the mosques of the Muslim world takes on a militant flavor. We often forget that militancy is directly related to a sense of trauma in the Muslim community.

As long as there's a sense of being threatened by the West, or by secularization, or by injustice, there's going to be militancy. We trace this through history quite easily. Conversely, the more that there's a sense of justice, the less there's going to be militancy.

So there have been times when the Muslim world perceived the West as being just?

Oh yes, very much so. Right up until the creation of Israel, the United States had a good reputation in the Middle East. That wasn't true for other Western countries, though.

In the Husain-McMahon correspondence at the beginning of World War I, the Arabs were told that if they sided with the Allies against their Turkish masters, who had sided with Germany, they would get independence. One year later, Sykes-Picot Agreement divided the Middle East between the British, the French, and

the Russians (the Russians got cut out of it, so it ended up being just the British and French).

And then you have the Balfour Declaration, which says the British government would look with favor upon the creation of the national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, as long as this did not in any way interfere with the rights of the local inhabitants.

Both the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration violated the earlier agreement with the Arabs. From then on Muslims began to express anti-British sentiment, and anti-French, as the French took control of what's now Syria and Lebanon.

U.S. President Woodrow Wilson did not have colonial aspirations, and America chose not to participate in the League of Nations' post-war division of conquered lands. Christian schools and hospitals throughout the Middle East, northern India (now Pakistan), and Iran also prompted positive attitudes toward the United States.

Then, at the end of World War II, Harry Truman violated Franklin Roosevelt's promise to Abdul Aziz, the king of Saudi Arabia, not to do anything on Palestine without consulting

the Arabs. The United States gave major support, in the United Nations and elsewhere, for Israel. That's when Americans became the bad guys in the Arab view.

Ever since, Muslims have had a bitersweet attitude toward the United States. They see our humanitarian activities, but Palestine is such a big issue for them that it really overrides everything else.

Do you see any hope for defusing Islamic militancy and stabilizing relations between the West and Islam?

I see a hope, and I *know* it will come, if it comes, from an increased sense in the Muslim world of not being in trauma, of not being treated unjustly. As Micah says, "What does the Lord require? He requires justice."

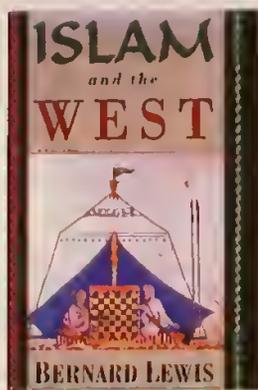
The Islamic world will notice if we are really looking for justice as well as peace, and if we are willing to lean on the Israelis as well as the Palestinians to make changes and come to a resolution. Whatever our views of eschatology, we should not be supporting things that in any other part of the world we might consider unjust. **GH**

Christians & Muslims

Because the topic of Christian-Muslim relations is so broad, this issue will likely raise as many questions as it answers. Here are some suggestions for further exploration.

General Introductions

Scholar Bernard Lewis deserves the distinction, noted in the *New York Times Book Review*, as "the doyen of Middle Eastern studies." He writes critically but fairly of Islam,



avoiding the unfounded optimism of authors such as John Esposito, Karen Armstrong, and Jane Smith and of media packages such as PBS's *Islam: Empire of Faith*. Lewis's recent articles in *The Atlantic Monthly* (see www.theatlantic.com) introduce his main ideas, which receive fuller treatment in his most popular non-specialist titles: *Islam and the West* (1994), *The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last*

2,000 Years (1995), and *What Went Wrong: Western Impact and the Middle Eastern Response* (2001).

Though an able guide, Lewis does not address Islam from a Christian perspective. Useful, general-audience resources that do represent this perspective include James A. Beverley's *Understanding Islam*, from the Nelson Quick Guide to Religions series (2001); George W. Braswell, Jr.'s *Islam: Its Prophet, Peoples, Politics and Power*, from Broadman & Holman (1996); Ravi Zacharias's *Light in the Shadow of Jihad*, from Multnomah (2002); and *The World of Islam* CD-ROM, from Global Mapping International (2001; see www.gmi.org).

Lastly, for a fantastic collection of primary source documents, scholarly works, and other links, see Paul Halsall's Internet Islamic History Sourcebook, www.fordham.edu/halsall/islam/islamsbook.html.

Provocative Landmarks

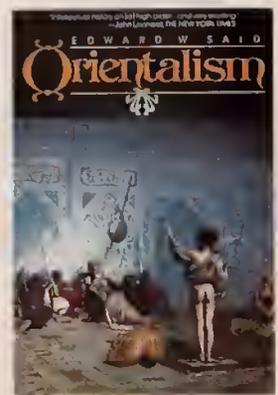
The West has lacked a consensus attitude toward Islam for decades. As a result, the landscape of literature on the topic features crags of controversy amid plains of more moderate offerings. It's helpful to know where the crags stand, because so much of the field is oriented around them.

Sir Steven Runciman's three-volume *A History of the Crusades* (1951-54) damns the Christian combatants while

depicting Muslims as innocent and heroic victims. Far too many Westerners accept this assessment unquestioningly. The April 8, 2002, cover story of *U.S. News & World Report*, for example, purporting to offer "The truth about the epic clash between Christianity and Islam," parroted Runciman without any reference to dissenting opinions.

In *Orientalism* (1979), Edward W. Said, one of the founders of post-colonial studies, argues that the West fabricated an image of the Eastern "other" in order to conquer and dominate the Islamic world. Subsequent efforts to describe Islam on its own terms, without even a whiff of judgment, follow in Said's wake.

One writer who has not followed Said's lead is Bat Ye'or, author of *The Dhimmi* (1985) and *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude* (1996). Ye'or (the name is a pseudonym for an Egyptian-born Jewish scholar) attacks Islam's fabled religious tolerance by documenting harsh practices and policies directed at non-Muslim minority populations since the seventh century. Arguments and counter-arguments continue to swirl in the dust she kicked up, though the fable seems to be holding fairly firm.



Evangelism & Apologetics

This issue aimed to describe the history of Christian-Muslim contact, not prescribe a Christian response to Islam. For perspectives on this crucial issue, see:

James Dretke, *A Christian Approach to Muslims* (William Carey Library, 1979)

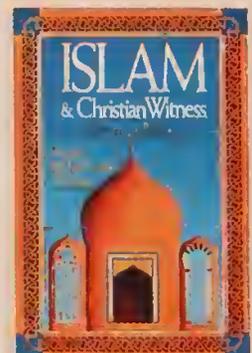
Phil Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism* (Baker, 1980)

Martin Goldsmith, *Islam & Christian Witness* (IVP, 1982)

J. Dudley Woodberry, *Muslims and Christians on the Emman's Road* (MARC, 1989)

The Muslim-Christian Debate, www.debate.org.uk/

Answering Islam, www.answering-islam.org



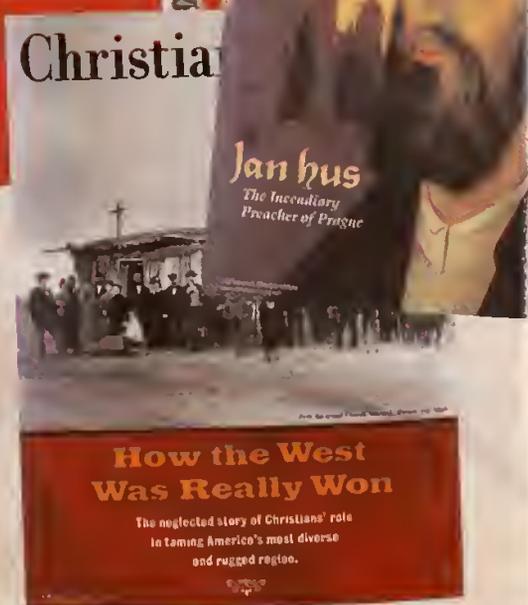
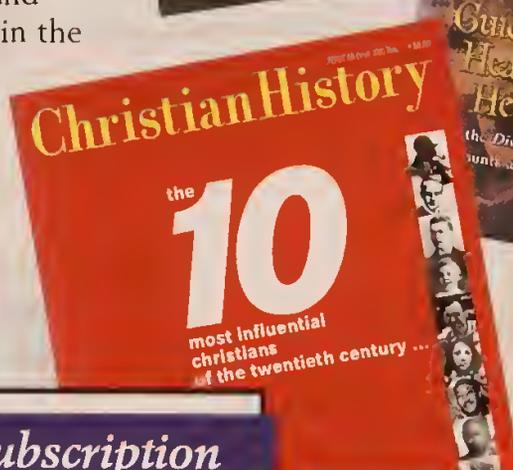
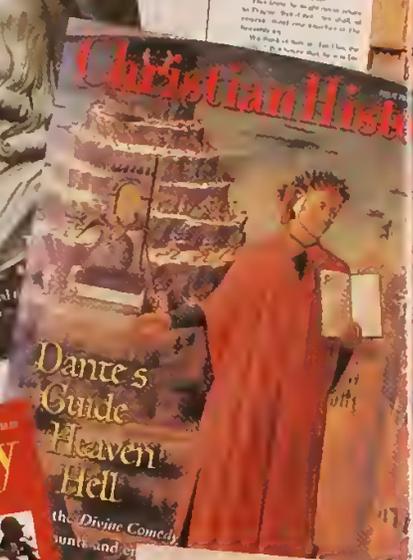
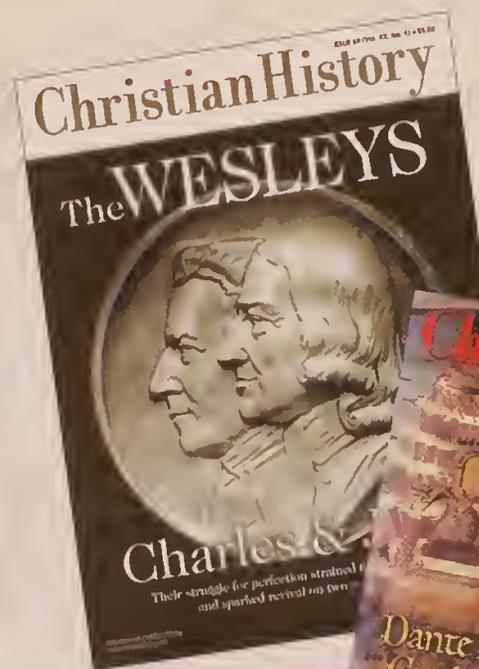
-- The editors

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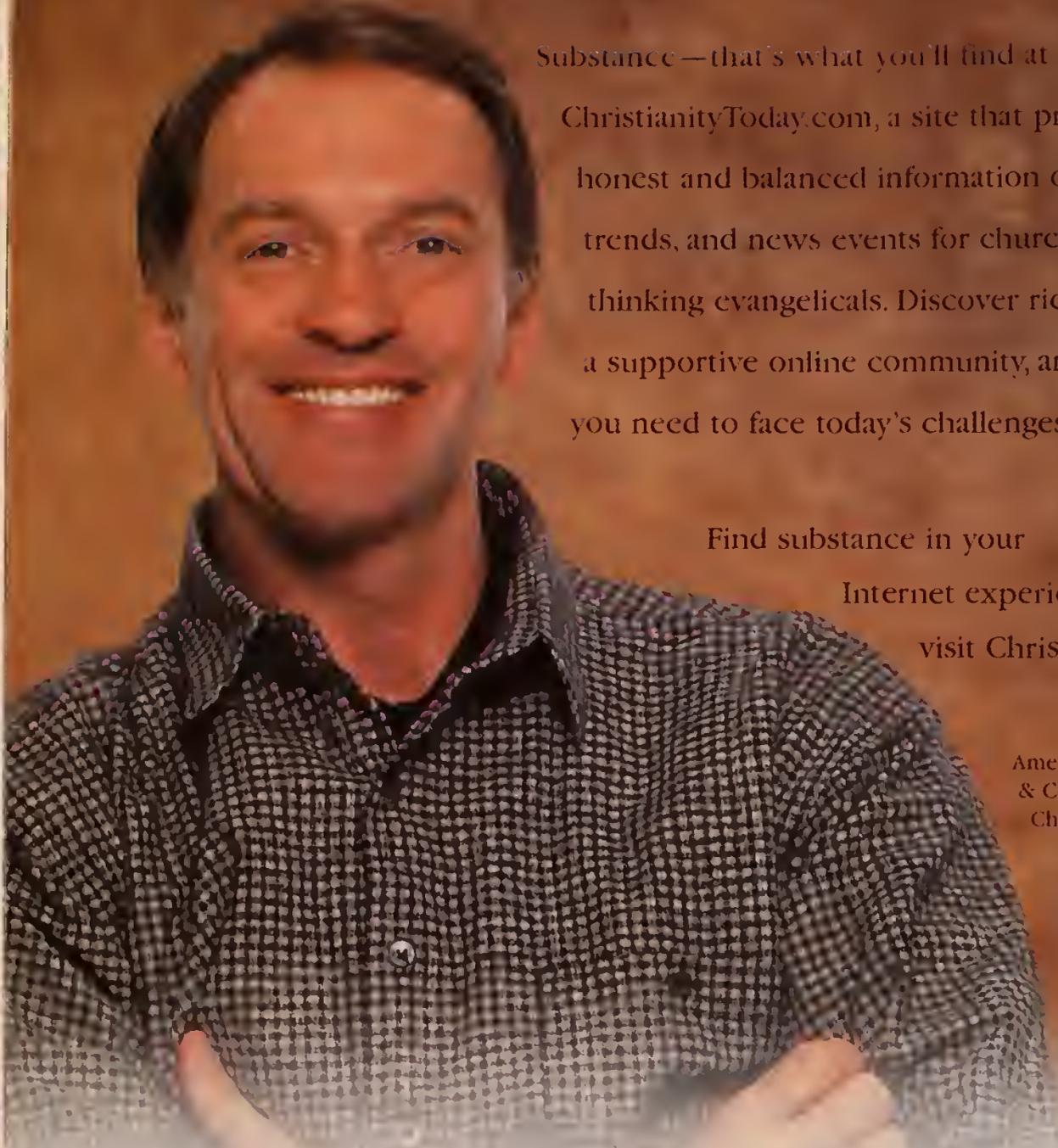
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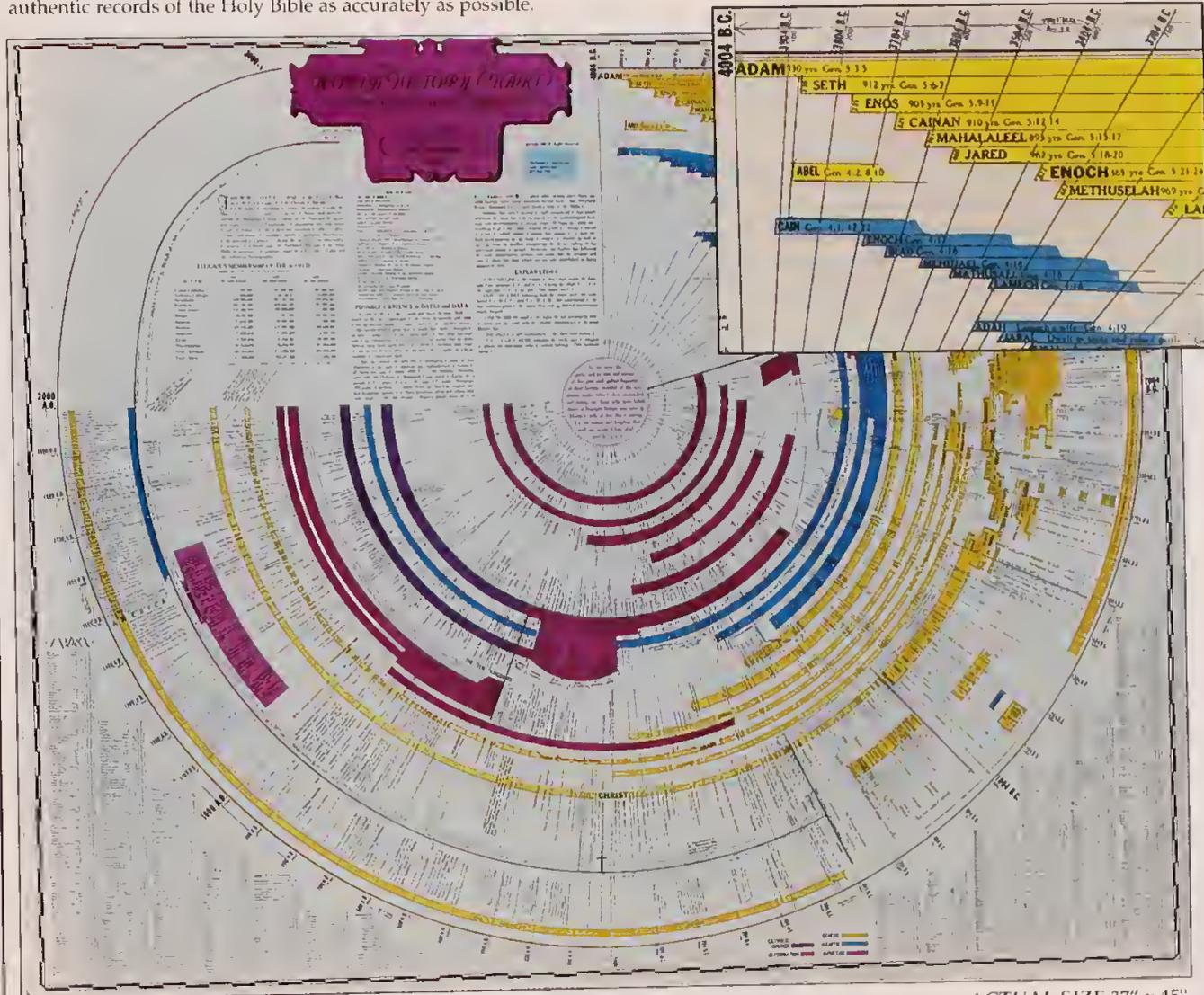
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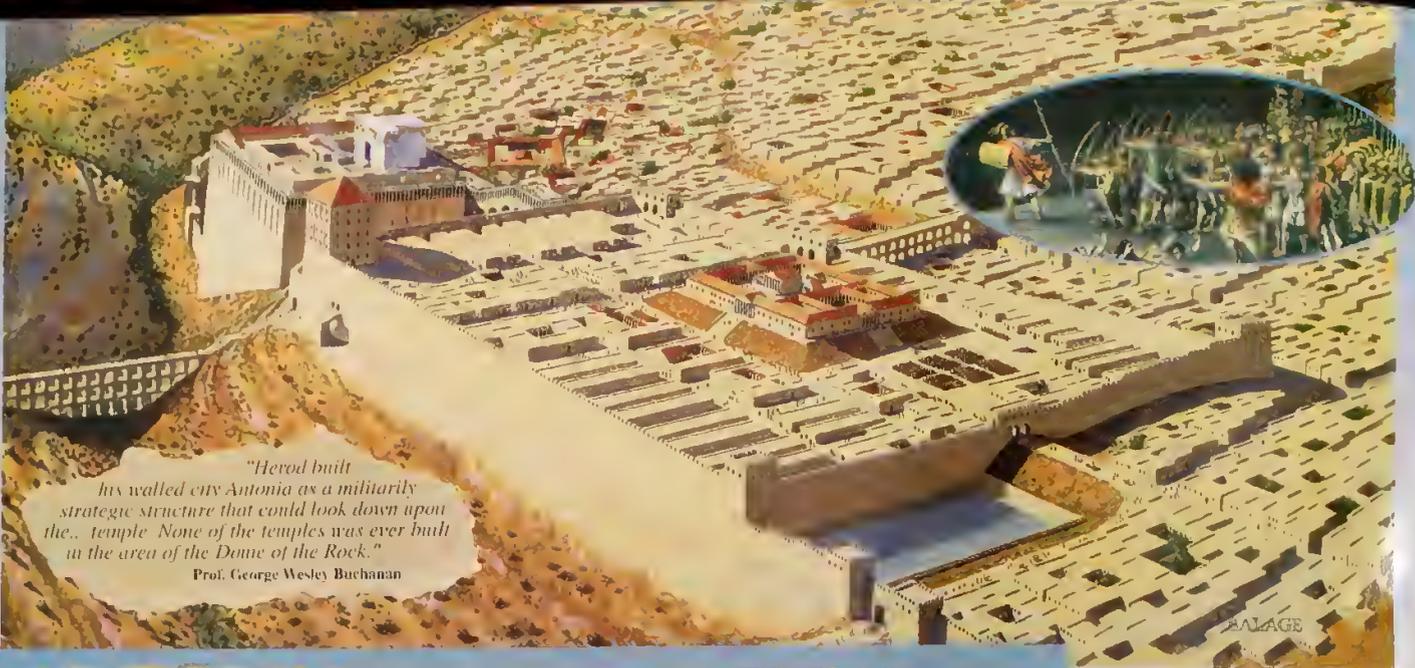
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"Herod built his walled city Antonia as a militarily strategic structure that could look down upon the Temple. None of the temples was ever built in the area of the Dome of the Rock."
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[inset above] AUGUST 10, 70 A.D.
 Soldiers from the Roman 10th Legion begin their final assault on the Temple precinct from Fortress Antonia.

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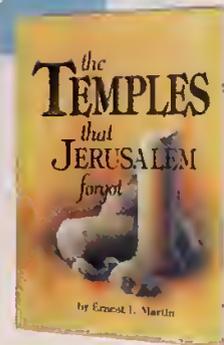
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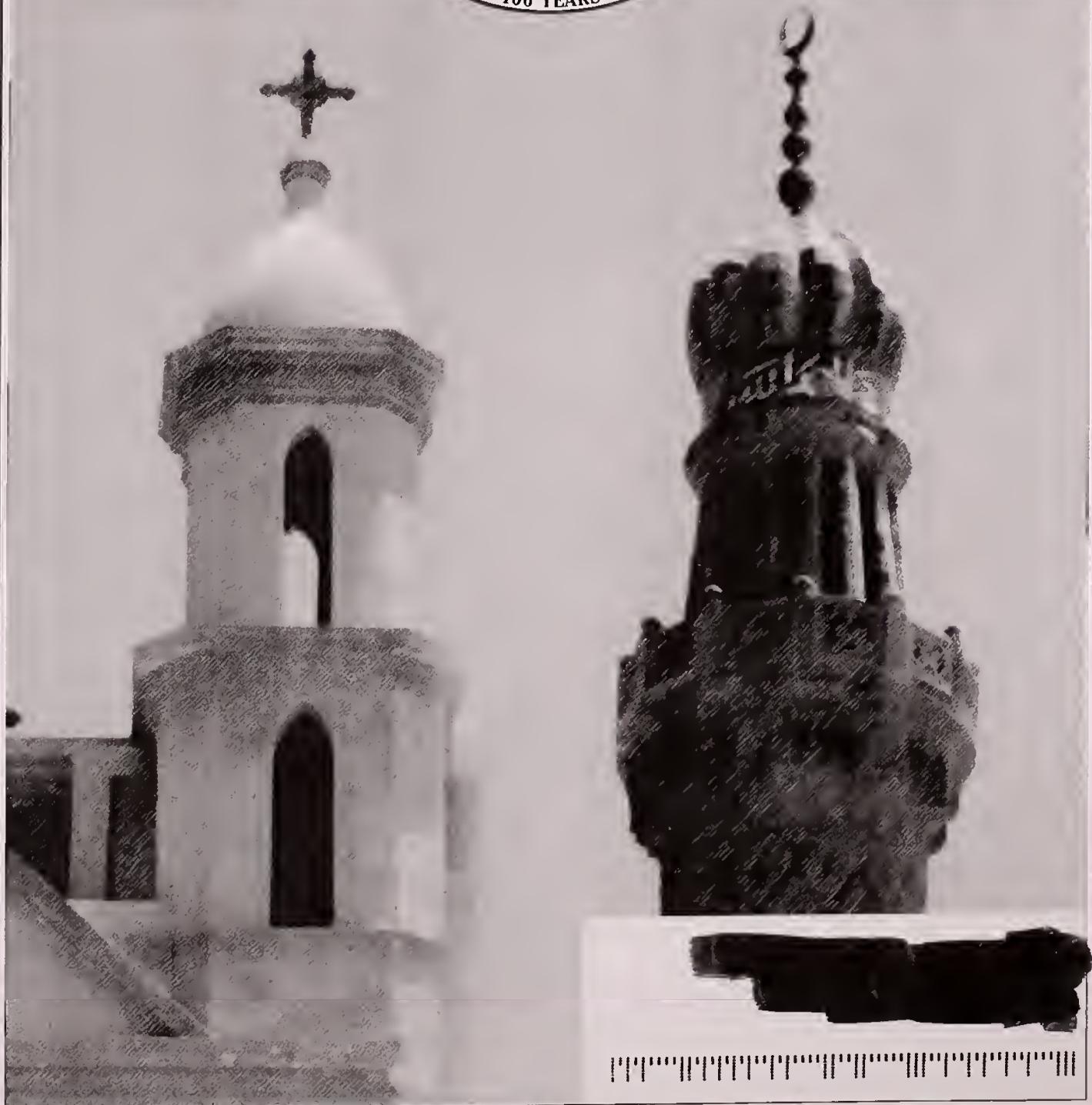
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Understanding Muslims in a Time of Crisis

Is Violence the Only Way?

YUSUF ABDALLAH

In Islam, Abraham is one of the great prophets. He is appointed Imam to the Nations, the model Muslim for all people to follow. In isolated segments his life story appears in various chapters of the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book. His life as depicted in the Qur'an is quite different from the version in the Bible. But one story has similarities, the story of Abraham offering his son as a human sacrifice to Allah, though the Qur'an seems to indicate it was Ishmael, not Isaac, that Abraham was prepared to kill.

I quote the relevant verses from the Holy Qur'an (ch.37:100-109):

Abraham prayed: O my Lord! Give me a righteous son.

Allah answered: Sa we gave him the good news of a boy ready to suffer and forbear. Then, when the son reached the age of serious work with him, he said, "O my son! I see in a vision that I offer thee in sacrifice: Now see what is thy view."

The son said, "O my father! Do as thou art commanded: Thou wilt find me, if Allah so wills, one practicing patience and constancy. So when they had both submitted their wills to Allah, and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead for sacrifice, We [Allah] called out to him, "O Abraham, thou hast already fulfilled the vision! Thus indeed do we reward those who do right, for this was obviously a trial and we ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice. And we left this blessing for him among generations to come in later times: "Peace and salutation to Abraham."

Violence and Peace

The Muslim clergy in our country, as well as President Bush and Mayor Giuliani and others, have stated that Islam is a religion of peace. But they are omitting the basis of that peace, which is total submission to the will of Allah, and complete obedience to his commands, to the point of giving up one's life in joyful, willing surrender to Allah. Muslims work toward world peace by seeking to bring all nations under the guiding influence of Islam. It will be the peace that occurs when the desert chieftain, god, is in total charge of his people, and they willingly submit to the dictator god.

The chief prophet of Islam, Muhammad, gained his power by fighting and overpowering other tribes, making them subject to Allah. His army conquered the city of Mecca, using warlike

tactics. Those who rejected Islam, particularly among Jews and Christians, were at times brutally murdered so that the peace of Allah would rule.

How do nations maintain that peace?

We read in the Qur'an, chapter 5:33-34:

"Those that make war against Allah and his messenger [Muhammad] and spread disorder in the land shall be put to death or crucified or have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides, or be banished from the land. They shall be held up to shame in this world and sternly punished in the hereafter, except those that repent before you reduce them. For you must know that Allah is forgiving and merciful."

Anyone who dares to challenge Islamic rules is either killed, maimed, or sent out of the country. That is how Allah's peace is maintained.

Let's reconsider the willingness of Ishmael to offer his own life as a sacrifice to Allah. According to the Qur'an, Abraham asked his son if he were willing to die. I will give the answer in today's context:

Ishmael said, "Father, when there is a war, who is chosen to go fight the enemy? Isn't it logical that the strong young men would go? If we were at war, surely I would be the one to go fight, in order to protect you and mother. And if I died in battle, you would be sorrowful, but you would be so proud of me. And if it meant that you and mother could be safe, I would gladly give my life for you. I would consider it my duty as your son.

"Now, father, it is very important that you fully obey Allah. You are going to be an example to all humanity of what a true man of Allah is. Allah has shown you to sacrifice me. I have been willing to live for Allah to honor you. We must all die some time. Isn't it better if our death glorified Allah? Dying in order that you may completely obey Allah... what nobler thing could I possibly do. I am ready, father, I will do what you ask. I am not unwilling or difficult. I will submit myself to you without resisting. I am ready to die."

In humble submission, the two obedient men, an elderly father and his young son, submitted their wills to Allah. They turned the rule of their lives over to their maker. They walked off into the wilderness together.

...continued on page 4

True Muslims understand the honor of dying for one's people and one's God. They, like Ishmael, are ready.

But many Muslims do not feel they are faithful enough to do that. My Muslim friend and I studied the Qur'anic life of Abraham together. His son had been born prematurely. "I could never offer him in death to God," he said.

Muslim Grievances

Muslims feel it is a great honor to die in a battle against the enemies of Allah. These enemies include the United States, Israel, and the moderate Arab governments that are open to work with the West.

- Generally, Muslims around the world deeply resent the founding of the nation of Israel. The Israelis humiliated the Palestinians, many of whom were Muslims, by stealing their houses and lands, chasing them away and killing whatever Arab patriots dared to fight back.
- Generally, Muslims resent the U.S.A. air base in Saudi Arabia. The "infidels" are living among the "believers."
- They hold the U.S.A. responsible for the deaths of perhaps millions in Iraq because of the sanctions imposed there.
- They know that aid from the U.S.A. helps keep several moderate Arab governments stable, and they dislike that.
- Muslims hate the immoral influences in Islamic culture introduced by Western television and movies. Nearly naked women parade across the screen, consumption of alcohol is encouraged, such sins as adultery, homosexuality and godless secularism are openly condoned, espoused and laughed at.

The greater the influence of Islam in a Muslim's life, the more he hates the economic, political and cultural influences of the U.S.A., named the great Satan by some. The dedicated Muslim living in a Muslim land looks at his own government as compromising true Islam when it accommodates Western ideas of democracy and secularism. Money and safety seem to be the desire of even the Muslim nations.

Is it any wonder that there is a strong religious revival going on all over the Muslim world, which seeks to fight the immoral excesses of the West and bring even moderate Muslim nations

back into the fold of true Islam? And is it surprising that those united in their love for Allah should work together across national boundaries in the only fight that seems to work, namely, terrorism?

While we may look upon the plane hijackers as terrorists, millions around the world consider them true martyrs in the righteous wars of Allah against sin and unbelief. Like Ishmael, they were willing to sacrifice themselves to help bring Allah's peace to humanity. They are deluded into believing that the evil they do is good.

What are the lessons we can draw from all of this? I believe President Bush and our government are very wise to declare a war on terrorists and those countries that harbor them. The free nations must resist and fight such treachery as caused the horror in New York City, Washington, D.C., and a field out in the country south of Pittsburgh.

But bombs and freezing bank accounts and destroying terrorist training camps can't win this war. It is primarily a spiritual war and it must be won spiritually. How?

We can listen to the hijackers. Our society is secular and immoral and spreading bad influences around the world. We should hate these things as much as the hijackers did. We should work as hard to eradicate these evils as the hijackers did. I couldn't believe that the world crisis of the moment was never mentioned the following Sunday in the church I attend. We must heed the call to repentance, and repent of our laxity, and unconcern, and become prayerfully involved in the good fight for morality, decency, and respect for law and authority.

This is a time to pray for our enemies and those who harm us.

We must get the gospel to the Muslim people. Many Muslim lands are closed to the gospel, but God has brought between seven and ten million Muslim people here to the United States and Canada. Churches must develop outreach, evangelistic and social, to reach these millions. If we had done a better job here in South Florida [where the author lives] in reaching Muslims, perhaps the hearts of the hijackers who lived here could have been changed by Christ.

...continued on page 5

Understanding Muslim Theology

The West in the End Times

JAN JONGENEEL

The attack on New York City and Washington, DC was terrible. It was terrorism, and more than that. The mere use of the word "terrorism" does not really explain what happened. Hidden behind this attack we discover a religious worldview, a religious way of understanding the world that needs to be understood and exposed. In my opinion this attack was deeply rooted in Muslim apocalyptic (end-time) thinking.

Islamic Eschatology

Christians are familiar with apocalyptic thinking. Today, as well as in the past, Christians have turned to the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation to determine what will happen in the end times. In the course of history they have identified Nero, the Pope and also Saddam Hussein as the Antichrist. However, there are also Muslim groups who are preoccupied with end-time questions. They are convinced that Muhammad is the last prophet and the Qur'an God's final revelation. Islam is the final world religion and in the end times all people on earth will become followers of Islam. This has been determined by Allah.

The Qur'an contains prophecies that deal with the present as well as the future. They refer, for example, to the "*animal [monster] from the earth*" (27:82), which is more or less comparable to biblical references to the Antichrist (Rev. 13). Ali Akbar has interpreted these prophecies in his bestseller, *Israel and the Prophecies of the Qur'an* (1974), published in Malaysia and distributed worldwide.

He does not consider Israel to be the chosen people of God, but a people that has disregarded Moses and killed the prophets. Allah is merciful towards all, even Israel. After all, He gave Israel

a second chance after the Babylonian captivity and now, in the State of Israel, a third and final opportunity to repent, but to no avail. The people and nation of Israel will be punished for hardening their hearts. It is not happening yet because the West props up the State of Israel. However, when the West has been totally weakened, Israel will be destroyed. Allah will not allow himself to be continually ridiculed by a shameless Israel.

According to Akbar, the West and, particularly, the United States is the Antichrist that floods the whole world with atheism, materialism and sensualism. The West leads humanity away from God and causes it to become immoral. Just consider the destructive results of the sex industry, economic imperialism and apartheid. The greatest sin of the so-called Christian West is that it transformed the prophetic message of Jesus – "peace be upon him" – into doctrines such as the sonship of God, the Trinity and reconciliation through atonement. The doctrine of the Trinity has changed the pure doctrine of Jesus into tri-theism, and that, in fact, is paganism. Obviously, it is impossible to make peace with this Antichrist. At his time, and in his way, Allah will deal with this Antichrist in a final and definitive way.

Ali Akbar also announced the tragedies of our times and placed them in an apocalyptic framework. At the end of time the Antichrist will break loose from all constraints and attempt to devour everything in its way. Allah, of course, is more powerful than the Antichrist. At a time determined by Allah, he will send the prophet Jesus to this earth to gather all the true believers, the Muslims, and hide them in the mountains. Then he will

...continued on page 6

Christ's death on the cross must be lifted up and proclaimed clearly. Even in the Qur'an, before Abraham would have killed Ishmael, God provided an animal for sacrifice. In the Bible we know that God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, substituting his death for ours, and then pronouncing forgiveness to those who believe. Christ died for Ishmael, too. The death that pleased God was the loving sacrifice of his Son. Hijacker blood has no value

to bring in God's Kingdom. It is the shed blood of the Lamb of God that makes God's Kingdom possible. ✝

Yusuf Abdallah is an Arab Christian who has worked among the Muslims in Miami, FL, for more than 15 years. This article was first presented as a talk to the staff at the offices of Latin America Mission in Miami, Florida.

cause a terrible illness to come upon the West that will consume all flesh (radio activity).

The stench of the doomed Antichrist will be terrible. However, Allah will be merciful to all true believers. He will give abundant rain, which will wash away all filth. Then the earth will be clean and inhabited only by believers.

In his influential book, Ali Akbar makes it abundantly clear that in his opinion all these things are not merely speculation about the distant future, but hard reality here and now.

The message of his book is that now for the last time the Christian West is called to humble itself and repent before God. Yet, it will not happen because the West has completely identified itself with Israel. Even before the iron curtain came down, Akbar strongly argued [in his 1974 book] that Allah's patience had run out. The years 1985 to 1988, a time frame some 40 years after atomic bombs had been dropped on Japan and the State of Israel had been founded on Muslim territory, would mark the end of the West's opportunity to repent and the end of the crushing power of the Antichrist.

The attacks by Muslims from various countries on Western and, in particular, US targets in 1993, 1995, 1998 and 2001 are more than terrorist acts. They appear to be rooted in the end-time thinking I have briefly described. Retaliatory acts by the West in general and the US, in particular, will not make a big difference, except to strengthen the apocalyptic fervor of Islam. Terrorism is not the central issue. The heart of the conflict lies in a fundamental clash between civilizations (cf. Samuel Huntington) and the conflicting religious views regarding the future.

Answers Needed

The West will have to provide a moral as well as a religious answer to this conflict as it starts a process of self-examination. Might it be possible that there is an element of truth in the Muslim point of view and, especially, in that of Muslims preoccupied with the end times? Hasn't the West contributed to the Palestinian problem and the unequal distribution of earthly goods? Abraham Kuyper once said that the robes of repentance are very becoming on human beings. Shouldn't the West ask for forgiveness instead of getting ready for reprisals? However, as we ask these questions, it should be crystal clear that in no way the recent attacks can be justified, not even with an appeal to the Qur'an. ✝

Dr. Jon Jongeneel is professor of missiology at the University of Utrecht in The Netherlands. Professor Tuit of Colvin Theological Seminary provided the translation.



*Mohammad Ali Mosque
in Coiro, Egypt*

A Christian Perspective on Islam and Terrorism

AN INTERVIEW WITH RICK LOVE

Q. How can people do evil things in the name of religion?

A. Since September 11, people around the world have been asking this question. The atrocities of that day shocked and astounded. As horrific as they were, Christians must still be guided by the wisdom of our Lord Jesus who said, *"Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?... You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."*

Sadly, church history is replete with examples of evil perpetrated in the name of Christianity. There have been far too many times when Christians have blatantly violated the example and teachings of Christ. Perhaps the ugliest, most relevant and well-known example is the Crusades of the Middle Ages, when true Christians and "professing" Christians engaged in "holy" war. They brutally tortured and slaughtered thousands of Muslims to regain a piece of territory both groups deemed holy.

Without diminishing the horror and inhumanity of the suicide bombings, Christians must admit that in the misguided name of "religion," we have also committed atrocities. We can't point the finger!

As Christians, we not only need to get the logs out of our eyes, but we also need to speak truth and not bear false witness. This means that we must be accurate and fair when we describe another religion. So, why did the Muslim terrorists feel they were right in committing these atrocities in the name of Islam?

It is common to read articles and hear speeches in the present crisis that describe Islam as a peace-loving religion. But is this really accurate? It is one thing to say that there are many peace-loving Muslims (which I believe) and quite another thing to say that Islam is a peace-loving religion.

Let me explain. I see at least two things inherent in the religion of Islam that have been used by terrorists to promote violence.

First, Muhammad rode into Mecca on a stallion with a sword in hand to conquer by force. By contrast, Jesus saddled up a donkey to ride into Jerusalem to humbly suffer and die for the sins of the world. Herein lies the difference. Jesus founded a

religion based on moral persuasion. From the beginning, Islam has condoned the use of the sword. Historically, not all Muslims have used it. Thankfully, many modern Muslims refrain from it. But Islam is a religion which sanctions force, if necessary, to advance its purposes.

One other aspect of Islamic faith also has the potential to fuel the fire of evil. The Islamic faith (at least at a popular level) puts a strong emphasis on salvation by works. Muslims have no assurance of heaven. However, if a Muslim dies while engaging in holy war (*jihad*), he is assured of entering heaven. The deluded terrorists who crashed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon thought they were in a holy war against America. In fact, they saw themselves in a battle against infidels everywhere, including moderate Muslim governments. They were willing to lose their lives in this attack in order to secure paradise.

Thus, these tragic acts represent an earth-shattering clash of worldviews. The terrorists' perspective of the world, filtered by a radical interpretation of Islam, sees only two sides: "true Islam" and "infidels." This narrow viewpoint resulted in these unforgettable atrocities.

Q. Do most Muslims think they are in a holy war against America?

A. Absolutely not! Islam comes in a variety of forms: liberals, moderates, conservatives, non-violent fundamentalists and violent fundamentalists (who embrace terrorism), to name a few. So we must distinguish between the majority of Muslims and the minority of violent revolutionaries. We must differentiate between the radical fringe of Islam and the mainstream. To be sure, fundamentalist terrorism is a cancer in Islam. But to lump all Muslims together as terrorists would be comparable to saying that all white Christian men in the United States are part of the Ku Klux Klan or the Neo-Nazi movement. This is unjust, unloving, and unchristian. And it's plain wrong.

Q. What do you think God could be doing?

A. I believe God may use these tragic events to change the global landscape in many ways. The devil would love to see the world divide into two camps: Islam vs. the West. So would the terrorists! A wisely orchestrated international alliance against

...continued on page 8

terrorism could result in a different way of dividing the world. I could foresee Islam being divided into two camps: non-violent moderates and fundamentalists vs. violent fundamentalists and terrorists. Potentially, this could lead to a greater respect for human life and dignity and a recognition of common values between us. I am praying for the advance of God's kingdom in Muslim countries. Because of the alliance between Muslim countries and Western countries, more Christians are being confronted with the needs of the Muslim world. I am praying this results in more workers being mobilized to serve among Muslims. This tragedy could result in greater receptivity among Muslims and greater freedom to preach the gospel. In the past, Islamic militancy or the imposition of Islamic law has sometimes caused a backlash among ordinary Muslims. Following the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, Muslims became disillusioned with Islam and looked for meaning and hope elsewhere. Disillusioned Muslims around the world may be more receptive to the gospel — that is, if they have an opportunity to hear it!

Q. What can I do to demonstrate Christ's love to Muslims?

A. First, we must stand against all forms of hate crimes and racism aimed at Arabs and Muslims around the world (and especially in America). Now is an unprecedented moment for Christians to express our love to innocent Arab and Muslim neighbors by protecting them and helping reassure their personal security at this time.

Second, Christians, especially those in the West, should seek out Muslims and begin building bridges of love. If we show real love now — if we make innocent Arabs and Muslims feel that we are together in this international tragedy — then we will touch their hearts in ways that will not soon be forgotten. They will tell other Muslims around the world of how they were touched by our love. And that will make much easier the job of every Christian who is involved in evangelism among Muslims, both in our country and around the world, for a long time to come.

Third, now is the time for church leaders to meet with leaders of the mosque to enhance mutual understanding and perhaps discuss ways to work together against terrorism.

Q. How should Christians battle against terrorism?

A. The devil and the hosts of hell are ultimately behind this grievous act. We must recognize the demonic nature of all evil. Our hatred and anger should be channeled against the enemy of our souls. As Paul says, *"Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."*

We need to pray that the kingdom would come on the nations of the world, that the power, righteousness, peace and joy of the kingdom would rest on political and religious leaders throughout the world.

We need to pray that true justice will prevail. As God's Word makes plain, *"Justice and only justice you shall pursue"* (Deut. 16:20). Government pursuit of justice against the terrorists should not become an excuse for indiscriminate bombing of thousands of innocent people. This is revenge, not justice. And it is not Christian.

The response to this attack will in all likelihood trigger a host of other responses that could either help or hinder the spread of the gospel. Thus, we should pray for a strong coalition of nations — including moderate Muslim nations — that will vow together to see that terrorism cannot continue. Strength of relationships between Western and moderate Muslim nations, rather than military might, will most likely be the key to victory in the response against terrorism.

Q. How do these terrorist attacks impact the church in Muslim countries?

A. What most Christians need to understand is that they have brothers and sisters throughout the Muslim world. We are fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household. In a recent prayer meeting, I joined our staff in praying for the small fellowships of Muslim background believers in Pakistan — some of whom dress just like Osama bin Laden!

There is immense tension throughout the Muslim world. Let's not forget the potential for massive violence against our national brothers and sisters who are left behind. Military action against Afghanistan [or any other Islamic country] could trigger

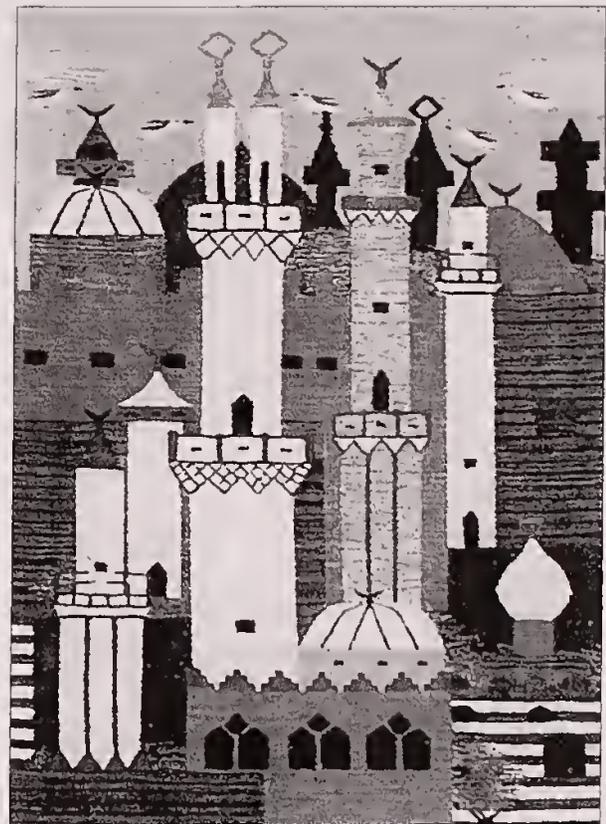
a blood bath against our precious fellow believers around the Muslim world. As Christians, we have family in these Muslim nations! Please don't forget to pray for them.

Q. Should we continue to evangelize Muslims under the present circumstances?

A. I see parallels between our present crisis and the life of Queen Esther. Esther knew her people were targets of terror! She was face to face with evil. But God raised her up "for such a time as this." She boldly stepped out, trusting the Lord with the famous words: "If I perish, I perish." As God used Esther to avert the destruction of her people, so too I believe he wants to use the church to avert the destruction of innocent Muslims. Even more importantly, this is an opportunity to avert the eternal destruction of Muslims by redoubling our efforts to reach them with the words of eternal life.

There are more than one billion Muslims in the world today—one-fifth of humanity. The vast majority wake up every morning with no Bible, with no church, with no one to tell them of the way, the truth, and the life. In the last 25 years, more than 100 times as many American Christians have gone to the Middle East to serve their country in a military capacity than have gone to the Middle East to serve the King of kings by proclaiming the gospel of peace! Where are the Christian heroes who will step forward in this pivotal time in history to be involved in the greatest of all rescue missions? Where are the Christian heroes who will lovingly demonstrate Christ's mercy and boldly proclaim Christ's truth to Muslims for such a time as this? ✠

*Rick Lave has served for more than 20 years among Muslims. He holds a D.Min. degree from Westminster Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Fuller Theological Seminary. He is the author of *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God* (William Carey Library 2000) and *Peacemaking: Resolving Conflict, Restoring and Building Harmony in Relationships* (William Carey Library 2001). He is adjunct professor of Islamics at Fuller Theological Seminary and Columbia International University. He serves as International Director of Frontiers.*



Cairo, the City of Mosques. A Beduin's wall hanging found in a village at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

September 11 and Muslim Missions

PIETER C. TUIT

The events of September 11 have impacted not only to the United States, but also the rest of the world. Melba Maggay from the Philippines wrote that this was an attack not just against America, but against the entire civilization that it symbolizes. It should not be forgotten that many citizens of other nations also lost their lives on this memorable date.

Countless pages have already been written analyzing what happened on September 11 and, especially, why it happened. This in itself has caused quite a debate on a number of issues. At the time this article is written, the bombing of Afghanistan is still going on and people in the US, Australia and other parts of the world are wondering whether it is safe to open their mail. Life is not and will not be the same again. However, it is important to recognize that many people outside the USA in one way or another already have had to live in this kind of uncertain climate for a long time.

The events of September 11 have created a renewed interest in Islam, a religion followed by more than one billion people in the world, making it the second largest religion after Christianity. A lot has been written about Islamic fundamentalism. Calvin College faculty held a spirited e-mail discussion on the nature of Islam in light of September 11. E-mail discussions abounded and many web-sites pointed to more information on the subject. Some authors continued to proclaim Islam as a peaceful religion while others pointed to areas in the world where non-Muslims experienced Islam as being far from peaceable. It is clear, then, that diverse points of view are addressing the issue.

Diverse Points of View

Dr. Dudley Woodberry, no stranger to Islam and the readers of this magazine, and his wife lived in Peshawar, Pakistan, which he calls the birthplace of the Taliban and Osama bin Laden's main conduit to the world when the bombs started to rain on Afghanistan. In a helpful article on the peaceful and/or militant nature of Islam he points out how important it is to understand the diversity within Islam and its roots. Dr. Woodberry notes that some of the recitations of the Qur'an are peaceful and that others are militant, depending on the occasion. This means that one can argue for either a peaceful or a militant Islam by selecting certain verses from the Qur'an or illustrations from history.

Dr. Woodberry points, for example, to verses in the Qur'an such as 2:256 "*There is na compulsion in religion*" and 5:82 "*The nearest in affection to the believers ore those who say, 'We are Christians'*" as instances of a peaceful interpretation. He explains that in the Middle Ages, Muslim governments were commonly more tolerant of Jews and Christians than Christian governments were of Jews and Muslims.

In contrast to the above, Woodberry quotes verses that support the militant position. Verses such as 2:216 "*Fighting is prescribed for you...*"; 2:190-192 "*Fight in the cause of God those who fight yau ond sloy them...for tumult and oppresion are worse than slaughter...Fight them until there is no mare persecution and appresion and there prevails justice ond faith in Gad.*"; 9:5 "*Fight and slay the infidels.*"; and 49:15 "*The true believers ore thase who...strive with...their lives for the cause of God.*" Dr. Woodbery concludes that militants like bin Laden believe that fighting and slaying is prescribed by God and because Americans cause oppression and injustice, and are infidels, Muslims must strive with their lives for the cause of God.

In another article, Dr. Jan Jongeneel from The Netherlands points to apocalyptic movements in Islam that are the driving force behind the terrorists. (For greater detail, see Jongeneel's article in this issue of MM.) His article further explains the question, "*Why Do They Hate Us?*" raised in the October 15th issue of *Newsweek*. Jongeneel refers to a book written by Ali Akbar, entitled, *Israel and the Prophecies of the Qur'on*. According to Akbar, God's patience with Israel is running out and when the West has been weakened, Israel will fall.

For Akbar, the West and, in particular, the USA is the Antichrist inundating the whole of humankind with atheism, materialism and sensualism. The West is leading people away from God and causes them to become immoral. To top off the offense, belief in the Trinity is just another form of paganism. Clearly, Allah cannot live in peace with the West, the Antichrist.

Jongeneel concludes that the attacks by Muslims on Western and, in particular, USA targets are more than terrorism because they are rooted in Islamic apocalyptic thinking. The heart of the issue is not just terrorism but a fundamental clash between

civilizations. In this context he raises the question whether the West will need to go through a process of self-examination. He brings up the Palestinian question and the issue of the unequal distribution of goods on earth. He quotes Abraham Kuyper who said that the robes of repentance look good on human beings. Melba Maggay writes that he sees the beginnings of a full-scale and long predicted "clash of civilizations."

There are also many voices that continue to defend the peaceful nature of Islam. All this can be very confusing and bewildering, especially when we don't recognize any longer life as we have known it before.

An Approach to Missions

As a way of dealing positively with all these often conflicting views and keeping the mission mandate of the church in mind, I'd like to suggest the following missions approach as we reach out to Muslims:

First, it is important that the church and its members become more knowledgeable about Islam. A basic understanding about the history, teaching and practices of Islam will be of great help. This must include an understanding of the various factions within Islam. It will be helpful also if there is a basic knowledge of how Islam is applied politically in the various countries of the world. For example, many people refer to Indonesia as the largest Muslim country in the world. The truth is that even though Indonesia has the largest Muslim population, it is not an official Islamic state. Indonesia has its own state ideology, called *Pancasila*, which guarantees freedom of religion for Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists. (One is not allowed to be an atheist in Indonesia.)

Second, it is important to realize that Islam is no longer a religion practiced in far away countries. Churches in the Detroit area are neighbors to the largest Muslim population concentration in the USA. A Muslim center is located right by Burton Street and Kalamazoo Avenue in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the city of churches. Who could have imagined that 30 years ago? In many Western countries, people belonging to the Islamic faith have become neighbors to people who worship God through Jesus Christ, or who worship no gods at all. I lived in Holland for three months earlier this year and every Friday there would

be Muslim tracts in our mailboxes. Muslims have become our fellow citizens, fellow Americans, fellow Canadians. As citizens they have the same rights as people from other religions and backgrounds. These rights must be respected and safeguarded. It is important that Christians are known as people who are committed to safeguarding those rights.

Third, it is important for Christians as citizens to understand the impact certain political policies have on Muslim-Christian relations. America's support for Israel is one example. Understanding does not necessarily lead to agreeing with grievances; however, it can lead to a better forum for discussion. What for many people may be a purely political matter, is for others a religious issue. The church must continue to be reminded of her obligation to bring the saving gospel of Jesus Christ to all peoples and nations. This includes the people belonging to the Islamic faith. More than one billion people are Muslims. However, the number of missionaries working among them is small in comparison with the number working among other groups. There are understandable reasons for this. Nevertheless, perhaps this is a wake up call for the church to re-examine the way it allocates mission funds and personnel. To reach out to Muslims with a Western success mentality is not going to be helpful. A commitment lasting several generations may be needed in order to be truly effective.

Fourth, in the West, Christians need to learn how to reach out to their Muslim neighbors and fellow citizens. God may have given the church in the West a special opportunity in this regard. People who are uprooted as they move to other countries often are very open to the gospel. However, it is important to know how to do this. For example, it would not be helpful to invite your Muslim neighbors over for dinner and serve them pork chops! If you are committed to building bridges to the Muslims in your neighborhood, it may be helpful for your family to make the commitment not to eat pork, or not to have it in the house at all. Then you can tell your Muslim friends that no pork touches your plates. This is, in a way, a small but yet symbolically significant sacrifice to make.

Fifth, Christians in the West who have a desire to build bridges need to know the points of contact between Christianity and Islam. Many of the Old Testament prophets are also honored by Muslims.

Jesus is considered a great prophet. The Qur'an teaches the virgin birth. Christians must also be aware of the great gulf between Islam and Christianity. They need to understand how repulsive the teaching that God could have a son is to Muslims, or how pagan the doctrine of the Trinity sounds to them. It is important, therefore, that the church pray more fervently for God's life giving Spirit to work in the hearts of those who follow the teachings of Muhammad.

Sixth, it is important that the Christian and the church do not become naive about Islam and recognize the positive public image it is trying to create. Islam is a religion in which faith and life, and faith and politics cannot be separated. The Reformed concept that all of life is religion is bedrock teaching for Islam. Islam by nature cannot be pluralistic. This may not be a major problem when dealing with moderate Muslims. It is important, therefore, that positive relations be established with moderate Muslims both locally and internationally. Dr. Woodberry writes that ultimately moderate Muslims can best deal with extremists in their midst. Fundamentalist Islam which sees the West and, especially, America as the Antichrist, is another story. It is not helpful to try to explain this away when we have the need for Islam to look good so that we can permit ourselves to be tolerant. The West and the Church cannot afford to be naive about Islam, in general, and fundamentalist Islam, in particular. Still, Dr. Woodberry points out that research has shown that wherever fundamentalist Muslims have tried to enforce *Shari'a* law, as the Taliban have done, Muslims demonstrate a greater receptivity to the gospel if there are friendly Christians in the region.

This is, therefore, a special challenge for the church of Jesus Christ and the Christian as they reach out to the Muslim sinner with the saving love of Jesus Christ. Let's not forget that the Muslim also is a creature after God's image who on account of sin lives in rebellion against God. Muslims are first of all sinners standing in need of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

The events of September 11 brought home to the United States the kind of insecure world not experienced before in this nation. At the same time the events of that date have in a special way brought home to the church of Jesus Christ the world of Islam and the countless Muslims in need of Christ and his gospel of salvation. May the church of Christ all around the world not neglect this challenge and opportunity even as it comes to terms with living in uncertain times. ✝

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Professor Pieter Tuit was appointed to the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary earlier this year. See also the introduction to consulting editors elsewhere in this issue.

Homeschooling Matures • Vietnam's New Tragedy • The Hispanic Patriarch

Christianity Today

September 9, 2002

Doors into Islam

September 11 has made
Muslim evangelism even more dangerous
rewarding.

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AOL Keyword: ChristianityToday

On Hajj, Muslim pilgrims
gather for noon prayers
at the grand mosque in
Medina, Saudi Arabia.



Doors into



KARIM JEBREILI / AP

AFTER WATCHING the *Jesus* film and listening to Christian radio, on July 15, 2001, Samuel (not his real name) took a monumental step for an Afghan and Muslim—he received Christ as his Lord and Savior. Soon thereafter, as Western aid workers were either arrested or expelled from Kabul, the Taliban came for him. They told Samuel he was guilty of “working for foreigners,” which had been legal, and threw him in jail.

For the next 14 days, they beat Samuel at least once a day with a five-foot steel cable. After the last of these sessions, he fell unconscious in his prison cell.

That night, Samuel had a dream. In it, a luminous man wearing bright white clothes appeared. The visitor, whom Samuel would later describe as having “very beautiful feet and shoulder-length hair,” spoke kindly to him. Then he said, “Get up.” In the dream, the visitor led Samuel out of the cell. Going to the front gate, the ex-Muslim met another man, who was wearing bright green (many Muslims associate green with God’s blessing). This man led him out of the prison.

Then Samuel awoke, finding his cell door open. “He walked through it to find the front gate of the prison unguarded and open,” a close Western associate says. “He walked out and into the night.”

A YEAR AFTER the September 11 terrorist attacks, Christians in many countries report fresh momentum in the spiritual battle of presenting the gospel to the world’s 1.2 billion followers of Islam. While not all stories of Muslims finding freedom in Christ are as dramatic as Samuel’s, the church has entered a new era of opportunity.

Dudley Woodberry, professor of Islamic

studies at the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, says he sees increased openness to the Christian message among Muslims. “I am noticing in various parts of the world . . . a significant increase in conversion,” says Woodberry, a former pastor to the international community in Saudi Arabia. “I don’t know all of the factors involved. All I can say is, at this point, in numbers of areas, there has been an increased level of responsiveness.”

Just 6 percent of current missionaries are focused on Muslims. Yet the signs of a breakthrough are clearly visible. Twenty mission agency leaders, former Muslims, and workers among Muslims spoke to CHRISTIANITY TODAY about current progress and problems in reaching Muslims.

Most were guarded in what information they would share, or in how they could be identified. Others respectfully declined to participate, citing possible risks to lives and ministries. Mainstream media have taken a sometimes unwelcome interest in Christian activities among Muslims, thanks in part to September 11 and to the case of Dayna Curry and Heather Mercer in Afghanistan.

“I do believe that mentioning specifics about how evangelism looks can be risky,” one worker in the Middle East says. “It inevitably gets back in the Arabic newspapers here. It has happened again just recently, implicating some dear friends.”

The risks are real: in some cases, death to converts or those who share the gospel with them. Compass Direct reports that two Muslims who converted to Christianity in Nigeria’s Muslim-run northern Zamfara state have been missing since April. The Islamic penalty for “apostasy”—changing one’s religion—is death. Westerners who share Christ with Muslims are usually only deported, however. For security

*September 11 has only intensified
the dangers and rewards
of Muslim evangelism.*

by Stan Guthrie

Islam

reasons, this report uses (and notes) pseudonyms freely throughout and leaves many places and mission agency names unspecified. Behind the stories, however, stand real missionaries and real converts from Islam.

FRESH MOMENTUM

Islam, founded by Muhammad in the seventh century, is the world's second great

every year. Meanwhile, 80 percent of Muslim "seekers" there have returned to Islam.

Robert Sayer, U.S. director of Arab World Ministries (AWM), says two dedicated missionaries with the agency, Dave and Betty (pseudonyms), did not see a Mauritanian Muslim become a follower of Christ during their first seven years of ministry in one location in the 1980s. Sayer, who notes

dreds of Muslims make decisions for Christ.

The North Africa field leader of AWM has seen positive trends across the region. He cites media outreach, increased exposure to North African believers, more prayer, and increased tolerance by governments toward local Christian expressions.

"In all of North Africa, with the exception of perhaps Libya, there has been a significant increase in receptivity to the gospel," the field leader says.

"Fifteen years ago, most were saying that it takes about five years of work with a North African before a solid conversion takes place. These days, with increased exposure to Christian media . . . this figure is significantly reduced, sometimes to weeks if not days."

Several agency and school leaders say interest in reaching Muslims has increased markedly among those planning to be missionaries. The number of students in Columbia International University's M.A. concentration on Muslims has "doubled or tripled" since September 11, according to Warren Larson, who heads the program.

"We've seen here on our own campus a real eagerness in student-led, even student-initiated, prayer

meetings for Muslims," Larson says. "They're praying for Muslims. They're thinking about Muslim work. On September 11, the whole thing just came into focus."

IMPRESSIVE GROWTH

Signs of progress have abounded, even before September 11. In North Africa, the numbers of Christians from Muslim backgrounds (in missions jargon, Muslim-background believers, or MBBS) have multiplied. In 1979 there were no known believers or church groups in Mauritania. In 1999 there were 100 and four or five groups. In Morocco, the growth over those two decades was from 300 people (and eight to ten groups) to 900 people (20 to



missionary faith, behind Christianity. The key belief is that Allah is the only God and that Muhammad is his prophet.

Reaching Muslims has always been one of the most difficult of missionary tasks. In 1900, there were just fewer than 200 million Muslims among the world's 1.6 billion people, or 12 percent. Today, after what had been optimistically labeled a "Christian century," there are 1.2 billion Muslims, or 19 percent, among a global population of 6.2 billion people. Missionary Nik Repkin (a pseudonym) estimates that an average of only one person per church-based evangelical agency working in the Horn of Africa is becoming a believer in Christ

Marketplace Ministry:
A video store owner in Amman, Jordan, with a copy of the *Jesus* film.

not come close.

"All that has changed," Sayer says. "No, we're not seeing Muslims in the heart of Islam coming to Christ in people-movement fashion, but God is indeed blessing missionary laborers."

Pat Cate of the Christar agency says in the journal *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* that one missionary couple he knows saw no converts among Muslims during their first 14 years of ministry in one location. But for the next nine years—until they were kicked out of the country—they saw hun-

GREG SCHNEIDER

COURTESY JAY SMITH

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25 groups). In Tunisia, there were perhaps 30 MBBS and two or three groups in 1979. Twenty years later, there were 150 believers and five or six groups. Even Libya has grown from no known MBBS to as many as 10. AWM says the number of believers has doubled there in the last three years.

In Algeria, 120,000 people have died in a civil war that broke out in 1992 when the military government canceled legislative elections that Islamists were widely expected to win. Church growth has been impressive there, especially among the repressed non-Arab minority Berber peo-

ples, who constitute perhaps 40 percent of the population. In 1979, there were 1,200 believers and 12 to 18 groups. Three years ago, there were 12,000 and 60 to 80, respectively. Many are from the Kabyle Berber community.

By all accounts, that growth has continued. Menes Abdul Noor is pastor of Cairo's Kasr El Dohara Church, the largest Protestant church in the Middle East. Noor's Christian radio programs are heard throughout the region, and he is a well-connected elder statesman of evangelical Christianity in the Middle East.

"There have been reports of many villages having up to hundreds of believers in Algeria," Noor says. "Of course, it is hard to give accurate numbers, but one Algerian leader said that he personally knows of 40 churches in the region around him, with congregations varying from 80 to 200 believers. We can only imagine how many more churches and believers there are."

Many factors account for the growth in North Africa. Sayer cites worship music in North African dialects as being a source of strength for area churches. The New Testament is available in various Arabic

Deconstructing Islam

APOLOGIST JAY SMITH TAKES A CONFRONTATIONAL APPROACH.

Jay Smith is a third-generation missionary kid who grew up in North India. Smith, a member of the Brethren in Christ Church who earned a master's in Islamic studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, went to London to help churches and students dealing with intellectual attacks from Muslim campus radicals. As he researched Islam, Smith came across new historical and linguistic criticisms of the Qur'an, which Muslims revere as their holy book. They believe God, using an angel, dictated the Qur'an in Arabic to Muhammad in the seventh century.

The literary critics, called Western Orientalists, are subjecting the Qur'an to the same kinds of questions the Bible has faced since the 19th century. They say the Qur'an is an entirely human, fallible document. *The Atlantic* summarized the approach in a January 1999 article by Toby Lester, "What is the Koran?"

Smith began using this kind of information to answer Muslim preachers who spoke from atop the ladder at Speaker's Corner in London. He often experienced a violent response. In April 1995, angry Muslims kicked him to the ground, nearly knocking him unconscious. Finally, the police told Smith to stop debating unless he climbed the ladder himself, so they could keep an eye on him.

Smith has debated Muslims on many Sundays since then. He had his first formal debate at Cambridge that August, facing Jamal Badawi from Halifax on the topic, "Is the Qur'an the Word of God?" He has engaged in over a dozen more formal debates since then and has trained other Christians.

Some Western missionaries, however, criticize Smith for generat-

ing much heat but little light among Muslims. Dudley Woodberry, formerly Smith's instructor at Fuller, says of the approach, "It can raise questions, particularly for the Western-educated person. I think it's probably counterproductive in a non-Western context."

Smith freely admits that the approach will not work in Muslim-

majority areas of the world, where such boldness would provoke severe persecution. But he says that Muslims in the West use it in their attempts to convert Christians, and that they interpret Christians' typical evangelical restraint as weakness. He thinks they have a point, and says current missiology has created "a whole industry of fear."

"The Qur'an has huge errors in it, enormous errors," Smith says. "My goal is to eradicate the whole edifice of Islam so that [Muslims] can then look for the alternative."



Mixing It Up: 'The Qur'an has huge errors in it,' says Jay Smith (center).

Muslim apologist Shabir Ally, of the Islamic Information and Da'wah Center in Toronto, who has debated Smith four times, runs an extensive website (www.islaminfo.com). Christians experienced in working with Muslims have their own (www.answering-islam.org). Smith also participates in a debate-oriented website (www.debate.org.uk).

Smith calls on Christians to match the passion of Muslims. "I was never commissioned to go and die," Smith says. "Most people ask me, 'Aren't you scared for your health? Aren't you scared you're going to be killed?'"

"So what? Yes, probably I will be killed. I told my wife I'll probably die before she does. If I were to die, there would be 10 or 20 people to take my place willingly."
—Stan Guthrie

COURTESY JAY SMITH

GREG SCHNEIDER

dialects, plus two Berber languages.

Missionaries are not allowed into this region, which has been under the sway of Islam for 1,300 years, but there are open doors in Europe. Robert Blincoe, U.S. director of Frontiers, credits "Silent Tsunami," an annual multi-agency outreach, for much of the progress. Every summer, young people from the United States, Europe, and elsewhere go into seven European cities with the highest populations of Muslims—including London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome—and evangelize.

"The missionaries are working with communities of Kabyle Berbers in Europe, who are coming to faith and being trained there," Blincoe says. "Then they have a heart for their homeland. They can go back to visit relatives. I can assure you it's for real, because visitors go in with them and take the opportunity to preach in the homeland."

Another cooperative summer outreach, "Operation Transit," has allowed Christians to distribute hundreds of thousands of New Testaments and video copies of the *Jesus* film—which has been produced in all of North Africa's major dialects—to Muslims visiting their home countries. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims annually pass through ports in France, Italy, Spain, and Malta to visit their families.

The ministry is having an effect. According to one international ministry that has asked for anonymity, one North African refused a packet, saying, "I will not take it! It is making too many people Christian."

Partners International helps fund a

variety of non-Western works in Muslim areas. Among them are AWEMA, the Berber Evangelistic Association, the Africa Inland Church in Sudan, and Chaya Suku, a mission agency in Indonesia.

Interdev has assisted joint works in the Muslim world since 1986. There are 75 evangelistic partnerships, many of them holistic, with more than 500 agencies—a third of them non-Western—in those regions. Sixty-three more such collaborations are in development. A stronger sense of risk is driving some ministries closer in order to share, and ultimately reduce, the risk. The North Africa Partnership, meanwhile, links more than 100 agencies from the United States, Europe, Latin America, and Africa.

Media ministries, including those using the Internet, are reporting receptivity to the gospel in North Africa and the Middle East. SAT-7, a Christian satellite television broadcaster, reports an increasing volume of viewer letters, phone calls, and e-mails since September 11.

"I well remember one conversation with a convinced Muslim," a worker with AWM says. "I began to share with him about the death of Christ. I braced myself to defend my views of Christ's death, as Muslims believe he did not die on the cross. Imagine my surprise when he pointed to

his wrists and said, 'Yes, they put the nails here.' It turns out he had seen the *Jesus* film and formed his views on the death of Christ from that film, not from the Qur'an."

Of course, even broadcasting the gospel carries some risks. When FEBA Radio began broadcasting Christian programs into the Maldives in 1998, the Muslim government expelled all foreign Christians "for life" and briefly jailed all Maldivians it suspected of converting to Christianity.

Another agency reports a circulation of 60,000 copies for one of its low-key magazines in the

region. It says demand by Western and Arab ministry partners for two of its openly evangelistic booklets in Arabic has multiplied in recent years.

Maher Fouad of the Cairo-based Arab World Evangelical Ministers Association (AWEMA) told CT, "I cannot mention the names of countries or cities for security reasons. I can say that . . . 10 years ago, the underground churches in North Africa did not exceed more than 2,000 persons, but now the numbers of believers [have] reached over 50,000 persons."

UNSTABLE, RIPE COUNTRIES

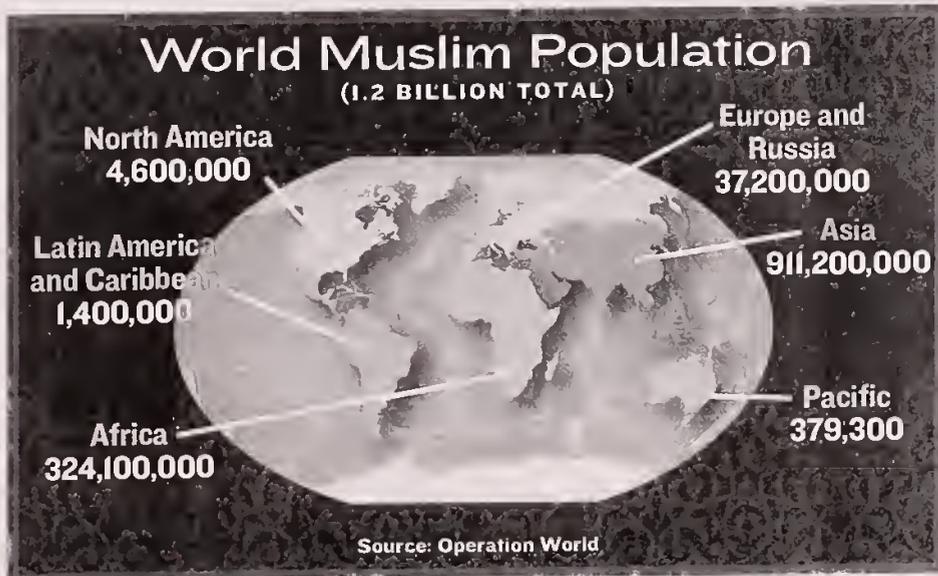
North Africa is but one area where Muslims are turning to Christ. Countries facing political instability and natural disasters have been particularly ripe, especially when Christians combine practical relief and development ministries with their words of witness. Over the last 40 years, Christian growth rates have been double population growth in Bangladesh. In 2000, the rate of increase for Christians was 3.2 percent yearly, versus 1.8 percent for Muslims.

Operation World reports that the number of MBBS of Iranian descent was just 500 worldwide in 1979 at the start of the Iranian Revolution. Abe Ghaffari was in the country for several years before the shah fell, and he saw only one Muslim come to Christ. Ghaffari says that most Iranian Muslims were nominal in their religion, more interested in economic

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'Students are praying for Muslims. On September 11, the whole thing just came into focus.'

WARREN LARSON
of Columbia International University's
master's program on Muslims



Islam

continued from page 38

advancement than in founding a pure Islamic state. Then Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini seized power.

"After the revolution, they were really exposed to Islam," says Ghaffari, who helps resettle Iranian refugees through his organization, Iranian Christians International. "They saw that Islam didn't provide all the answers and that the Islamic clergy were corrupt."

Ghaffari estimates there are now 30,000 Iranian believers from Muslim backgrounds worldwide, including 15,000 in Iran itself. Annual growth, he estimates, is between 7 and 10 percent, with pockets of revival in places such as Germany. He is uncertain how much of a factor the terrorist attacks may become in Iranian evangelism.



Sees Turnaround: Robert Sayer of Arab World Ministries says concerning Muslim evangelism, 'God is indeed blessing missionary laborers.'

"We have heard of isolated incidences where Iranians have said, 'Now we know what Islam is all about. It is violent and hateful, and we are finished with Islam.'"

In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country, the Christian minority may have reached 34 million adherents—far above official estimates. Many people became

Christians in the mid-1960s, when government reprisals left 500,000 communists and sympathizers dead. *Operation World* reports that churches on the heavily Muslim island of Java have grown by 5 percent annually since 1992, despite persecution, political upheaval, and economic woes.

In much of the country, Christians may freely evangelize Muslims, according to Nus Reima of the national evangelical fellowship there. Reima, who also works with Campus Crusade, says broadcasting the *Jesus* film and personal witnessing remain effective approaches. Muslims constitute 87 percent of the

country. Most are moderate and relatively tolerant of other faiths.

"Indonesia is a very big country," Reima says. "In some areas you have opposition. Some areas are open. We emphasize the areas that are open."

Evangelical Christianity is making steady gains in Turkey, which is an island of relative stability in the Muslim world. Three decades ago, Christians began offering Bible correspondence courses to interested people in the 99 percent Muslim nation. Today there are as many as 1,500 evangelical believers in the country, up from just a handful, according to missions observers. Christians in Turkey are becoming increasingly bold, especially in the cities. Luis Palau preached to hundreds of people, including Muslims, in 1999. A ministry leader in the country told *World Pulse*, "Now Turkish fellowships are beginning to emerge with a

new confidence. They are renting or purchasing meeting places and are doing outreach. Steady numbers of believers have managed to change their identity cards from 'Muslim' to 'Christian.'"

According to Clive Calver of World Relief, more than 1 million people in Sudan have made professions of faith since that

nation's civil war started again in 1983. While most of these people have come from animist backgrounds in the south (the share of Christians in the region has

grown from 5 to 70 percent), Muslims are also hearing the gospel.

"We also [have] many reports from workers in Sudan of . . . people coming to faith through evangelistic efforts and dreams and visions," Noor says.

Noor credits increased prayer through the AD2000 and Beyond Movement for more spiritual receptivity and reports of dreams and visions in his own Egypt.

'It's hard to miss the obvious increase in number of workers with Muslims and the number of Muslims being baptized.'

MENES ABDUL NOOR

pastor of Cairo's Kasr El Dobara Church

"We can see this especially happening in Egypt," Noor says. "Although it's very hard to give numbers, it's hard to miss the obvious increase in number of workers with Muslims and the number of Muslims being baptized." Another prayer initiative, "Arise Shine Morocco," began this year.

DREAMS AND VISIONS

Khaled AbdelRahman grew up in Iraq, believing that one day he would be an imam (leader) of a mosque. After AbdelRahman became a serious student of Islam, he began arguing about religion with some young Christians. "I created many faith problems for them," he says. They introduced him to their church's priest, who expertly fielded his questions. The priest died a year later, but AbdelRahman, now a young man, found his view of Christianity changing, and he began to struggle with the contradictions he saw in Islam.

One night, as he slept, AbdelRahman saw a vision of a man with a beard.

"Son," the man said, "why do you attack my sheep?"

AbdelRahman replied, "Who are you, Sir?"

"Jesus Christ."

"I'm not attacking your sheep, Sir. I'm trying to bring your lost sheep back to the straight path."

"You are the one who is lost. I'm the straight path."

Confused, AbdelRahman stopped pur-

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Islam

continued from page 40

suing Islam and Christianity and began pursuing a life of pleasure. About that time, his father, a high-ranking officer in the Iraqi army, died in a car crash.

AbdelRahman's mother, a journalist and native of another Arab country, assumed the death was a tragic accident. Later, AbdelRahman heard a commanding

voice as he slept: "Run away from your country now!" He knew it was the voice of Jesus. A few hours later, he was on a flight to his mother's home country (which he prefers to be left unnamed, for security reasons), feeling a little sheepish. From his grandfather's house he called his mother. She said a police unit had assassinated his father and was now looking for him.

In shock, AbdelRahman passed out. When he woke up a few hours later, he

began praying earnestly for God to show him the truth. Later, in a dream, Jesus told him, "I love you. Why don't you love me likewise? Come to me, because I have a plan for you."

AbdelRahman did so. A few months later, Iraq invaded Kuwait. After he got kicked out of his mother's country because of his evangelism and "apostasy," he evangelized Muslim refugees in the Netherlands while applying for religious refugee status, which he obtained. He now lives in the United States and works in the information technology sector. He also has an Internet-based apologetics ministry directed toward Muslims. His story can be found on www.answering-islam.org, a Christian ministry to Muslim seekers.

Woodberry says dreams and visions like this one constitute a major factor in the conversion stories of Muslims from

'Muslims feel vulnerable in this country [the U.S.]. It is a very open situation for us to befriend Muslims.'

DUDLEY WOODBERRY

professor of Islamic studies at Fuller Seminary

around the world. He has collected more than 650 testimonies from Muslims who have received Christ. He says a third of these conversion accounts mention dreams as a factor.

Warren Larson has seen some of these accounts, and he is not surprised. For 23 years Larson planted churches and worked at a Bible correspondence school in Pakistan.

"God speaks to people, Muslims in particular, through dreams," Larson says. "[He] draws them to himself, continues to work through dreams."

Frontiers is also hearing reports of dreams and visions among Muslims. The agency has 600 missionaries—250 from outside the West—serving on about 100 church-planting teams in 35 countries with Muslim areas. But Blincoe, who launched the agency's work in Iraq following the Gulf War, cautions that people are still needed.

"We can talk about miracles," Blincoe says. "But there is no substitute for the

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apostolic method that Christ directed. That is, a person with his voice should tell the gospel message. In the end, people who have had dreams and miracles still need a human being.”

ELIMINATING WESTERN BIASES

Timothy Abraham (a pseudonym) grew up in Egypt's Nile Delta region, a hotbed of Islamic fundamentalism. At 14, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood, the group that assassinated Anwar Sadat. But as a young man, following discussions with a local Coptic Christian family and through a dream in which Jesus told him, "I love you," he received Christ and was secretly baptized.

Timothy continued to go to the mosque and would pray in the same manner as the Muslims did, except now to his heavenly Father. Timothy discreetly tried to share his faith. Two Muslims eventually said a prayer with him to receive Christ.

One day the local leader of the Brotherhood invited Timothy to come with a group of Muslims to pray in the mosque. Timothy said, "Yes, I'm coming." Then the leader lifted his hand and slapped him full force, shouting, "Kafir!" (infidel). The men who had prayed with Timothy had set him up. One man on the scene, a local drug dealer, suddenly became a zealous Muslim and began beating Timothy. Others began to join in. A respected man from the community stopped the violence but said to Timothy, "I'm saving you from death, but I want to kill you myself, because you left Islam."

Abraham eventually obtained a visa and now lives in the United States. He broadcasts 14 programs a month for Muslims via the Voice of Hope radio ministry.

SOME of the greatest successes in evangelizing Muslims come through efforts at what missiologists call contextualizing the Christian message. Missionaries seek to remove what advocates such as Blincoe call "Westernized ideas of what it means to follow Christ." Of course, one of the most basic ways is to translate Scripture into the local language. Another would be to encourage new believers to worship Christ using their own forms of music. Southern Baptists working among the Muslim Kotokoli people of Togo, West

Africa, have presented the Bible chronologically and orally as a story, a form of communication this group highly values.

Three decades ago, Phil Parshall and his missionary coworkers created communities of Christ-centered believers in Bangladesh by using acceptable religious language (such as "Allah" for God or other Islamic terms) and cultural forms (such as keeping the Muslim fast). Many Muslims eventually came to Christ.

Some missionaries take it further. To avoid the ostracism that new converts to Christianity usually suffer, they encourage or permit Muslims who receive Christ to, at least for a time, worship in the mosque and to call themselves Muslims—since *Muslim* means "one who is submitted to God." Some missionaries in Muslim areas have even called themselves "Muslims," on the theory that they are submitted to God. Although Frontiers does not dictate this approach, its

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workers have a green light to experiment.

But many Muslims (and some Christians) see this as deceptive. Larson says, "Muslims don't understand it, and they think it's deceitful." A few years ago, several Western Christians were expelled from Egypt after calling themselves Muslims.

A study led by Dean Gilliland of Fuller Theological Seminary of a contextualized group in a region code-named Islampur discovered some potential theological problems with allowing believers to attend mosques. Despite having access to the New Testament and solid Bible teaching, two-thirds of the leaders surveyed said that the Qur'an was the greatest holy book. Forty-five percent did not affirm the Trinity. A third went to the mosque more than once a day.

Woodberry says highly contextual approaches work best in Asian areas where the church is not equipped to accept MBBS. "They are a small fraction [overall] but they are in one of the largest movements in South Asia," he says. In certain African areas where Muslims and Christians live together peacefully, new believers are more eager to enter the churches that reached out to them.

In northern Nigeria, however, missionaries attempted to launch a movement of Muslims who believed in Jesus but who were not tied to local churches. Although this experiment received much publicity, it collapsed.

This happened in part because of the clandestine style of the leaders, Gilliland told *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*.

DEFENDING MUSLIM RIGHTS

September 11 seems to be having two effects on Muslims worldwide. Some are becoming more radical, while others—as in Iran—are seeing their religion with new eyes and are seeking alternatives. Many Muslims are naturally drawn to Jesus and to the assurance of heaven that he offers. Most who work with Muslims say the opportunities have never been better.

Muslims feel vulnerable in India, where they, like Christians, face attacks from radical Hindus. Five months of rioting earlier this year left more than 900 people dead in Gujarat state—most of them Muslims. Christians have been

among the few defending Muslims there, and one of the only groups offering relief. Joseph D'Souza of the All India Christian Council says that he and other Christian leaders have spoken before throngs of Muslims in India about religion and peace. He says Christians and Muslims have the opportunity to resolve misunderstandings and work for the common good.

"The Christian community has stuck



Anti-Minority Mayhem: In February a Muslim mob destroyed a newly built church near El-Minya, Egypt, injuring 10 Christians.

our necks out and reached out to them," D'Souza says. "Every woman that is raped, we feel, is our sister. We want them to know that Jesus cares for them, and the church in India will stand with them as they bear the brunt of this attack. So that has opened all kinds of doors to network with Muslim leaders all across the nation" (see "Harassed Kashmir Christians Reach Out to Discreet Muslims," p. 26).

Woodberry says the same goes in America. To keep a lower profile after the attacks, two of his neighbors stopped wearing Muslim clothes in favor of Western garb. "Muslims feel vulnerable in this country," he says. "It is a very open situation for us to befriend Muslims and accompany them shopping, do things with them, try in various ways to support them and do things that will help them feel more like they

COMPASS DIRECT

belong. In building friendships in this way, often it becomes very natural to share our own motivations and concerns.”

Such opportunities are increasingly available, but there are still not enough workers. Pat Cate noted in *EMQ*, “It really can be said that Islam is the most studied and least evangelized religion.” The International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention is one of the few denominational mission boards with a large and concerted outreach to Muslims. IMB personnel are working with more than 300 predominantly Muslim people groups in 75 countries. The *2001 Annual Statistical Report* says that Southern Baptist missionaries and their partners overseas started 121 churches and recorded 3,405 baptisms among these groups. Avery Willis, senior vice president for overseas operations, says the biggest problem in bringing Muslims to faith is not theological.

“All we want to do is give them an opportunity to know the truth in Jesus Christ, and then they make the decision,” Willis says. “The biggest difficulty is just getting an opportunity for them to be exposed to the truth.”

LAST YEAR a Pakistani Muslim who memorized the Qur’an met Roy Oksnevad at the South Asian Friendship Center and Bookstore in Chicago. The Muslim teacher’s goal during their weekly visits was to learn English. Then came September 11.

Pointing to a newspaper, Oksnevad said to his friend, “If this were from God, the outcome would be love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. What I saw was an outcome of death, destruction, hatred, and suspicion.”

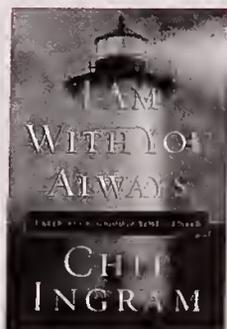
Over the next several weeks, Oksnevad, director of the Department of Ministries to Muslims at Wheaton College, shared a Christian perspective on the news. Finally, the Muslim asked him not to teach him English anymore. “You see clearly; I don’t,” the man said. “You are right and I am oftentimes wrong. Teach me religion.”

The discussion continues. 

Stan Guthrie is associate news editor of CT and author of *Missions in the Third Millennium*. For an interview with David Johnstone, see www.christianitytoday.com/goljohnstone.

“I got a raw deal.”

—chapter 1



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Islam
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Vol. 32 No. 2
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Paid For in Blood

Dr. George W. Harper, '83



Manila is a city of 12 million people – many living as “squatters” in ramshackle housing. Traffic congestion is a major problem. Manila has been named the most polluted city in the world!

Although most American Christians aren't aware of it, the church is growing faster in Asia than anywhere else on earth. Much of this is convert-growth, and with the tide of conversions to Christianity from other major religions swelling so rapidly, Asian Christians' relations with those religions' most aggressive advocates are bound to be strained. This is the context for headlines noting believers' imprisonment in China, their martyrdom in India, and even their subjection to jihad, “holy war,” in Indonesia.

Yes, holy war. The news media often note that Indonesia is home to the world's

largest Muslim community, numbering perhaps 170,000,000 out of a total population of more than 210,000,000. However, the media rarely note that Indonesia is also home to one of Asia's largest Christian communities, numbering perhaps 35,000,000 and especially numerous in regions like the Moluccas and Sulawesi. The Indonesian church's rapid growth has made believers in such places a tempting target for Muslim extremist groups like Laskar Jihad. One Indonesian who has had to face these groups' fighters head-on is my friend and former student Daniel Ronda.

Daniel was already an experienced pastor and church planter when he came to Manila in 1996. After receiving his Th.M. from the Asia Graduate School of Theology-Philippines in 1999, he returned home to Sulawesi, where he now serves as the academic dean of Jaffray School of Theology. During the latter half of 2001, that island's Christian community bore the brunt of a ferocious Muslim assault that left hundreds dead and forced tens of thousands to flee for their lives. Eventually the Indonesian government dispatched troops to restore order, and this February a ceasefire was signed, but already Laskar Jihad's leaders have distanced

ON THE FRONT LINES

themselves from that document. Will the truce hold? Even if it doesn't, Daniel expects the Indonesian church's growth to continue. Today as always, in Asia as elsewhere, that growth has been paid for in blood.

Paying an even higher price than Daniel is another former student of mine whose name I must conceal. Born into a prominent Muslim family in Mindanao, the Philippines' southernmost main island, as a young man he began to ask probing questions about the nature of life, and eventually he grew dissatisfied with Islam's answers. Then one night Jesus came to him in a dream, directing him to go to a certain place and ask for a certain individual who would tell him what he must do to be saved. That individual turned out to be a missionary who soon led him to a profession of faith. He went on to develop a very effective

outreach ministry to middle-class Muslims such as he had been. Eventually he came to Manila for further training at my seminary.

His studies were soon interrupted by his family's summons to return to Mindanao for trial as an apostate. Although he knew his life was in danger, he felt he had no choice but to comply. In Mindanao he was tried in a secret Islamic court, sentenced to death, and chained in the basement of a mosque, awaiting execution at the hands of his own brother. At the last minute, his brother surreptitiously released him, and he returned to Manila just long enough to settle his affairs before going into hiding. He made one last appearance before my class, delivering an impassioned talk on the evangelization of Muslims that brought tears to many students' eyes. I haven't seen him since then; in

fact, I don't even know whether he's still alive.

Over the months since last September's terrorist assault on America, I've often heard Western politicians and pundits refer to Islam as "a religion of peace." When I hear that phrase, I can't help thinking of these and other students of mine, past and present, to whom Islamic militants have shown a face that's anything but peaceful. ❖

Dr. George W. Harper holds a B.S. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, an M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell, and a Ph.D. from Boston University. For seven years he taught theology and church history at Alliance Biblical Seminary in Manila, Philippines. He is currently Professor of Christian History and Thought and Associate Program Director for Program Development at the Asia Graduate School of Theology, Philippines. Dr. Harper is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

George Harper and students at the Asia Graduate School of Theology in Manila, Philippines.



Dying to Hodja

Michael Shelton '00



Mike Shelton (right) and friends

For some reason that is now long forgotten, the neighbors of Nasreddin Hodja became very angry with him and wanted to expel Hodja from their town. They complained to the magistrate about him so that he was forced to summon Hodja.

The magistrate said to him "Hodja, the people of this town don't like you. They all want you to move."

"It is I who doesn't like the people here," Hodja replied. "As far as I'm concerned, they can all go to the devil."

"But they are many and you are one," said the Magistrate.

"Well since they are many it is even easier for them. They can all work together and build a village wherever they decide to go. But how can I, all alone and at my age, build a new home and cultivate a field in the country?"

Folktales featuring the comic figure of Nasreddin Hodja are retold throughout the Muslim world as a source of humor and subtle instruction. The joke here turns on Hodja's reversal of social

expectations in his defiance rather than acceptance of his community. The individual who stands against society may be a hero in the U.S. but in Narnia* he is just a Fool.

My wife, Joann, and I never planned on empathizing with Hodja. When we stepped off the plane here in April 2001, we were both fresh from training and eager to embrace our host culture in any way we could. Looking back, I realize that I was picturing our acculturation as something more like a makeover and less like the open-heart surgery that followed.

* A pseudonym for the country in which the Sheltons live and work.

ON THE FRONT LINES

MY HOME—MY BOOTS?

Our first months began well. We lived with two wonderful Narnian families who graciously introduced us to the stuff of their lives. The ladies initiated Joann into the intricacies of local hospitality—how to make the best tea and coffee, what to serve guests (nuts, cookies, salty snacks, fruit), as well as the all-important order of service (eldest guest first, coffee before tea, fruit last of all)—while I learned to always remove my shoes before going indoors and to kiss men on both cheeks in greeting.

It wasn't until we rented a home next door to our closest friends and transitioned from foreign guests to local neighbors that I began to see Nasreddin Hodja's point of view.

It might have started the day I noticed a local friend (to whom we had loaned a spare key) "borrowing" my boots. Or perhaps it was the time we returned home to find a new clothesline welded to our front balcony in front of our favorite view—a surprise(!) from our enterprising neighbors who decided they knew best what we needed and where it should go. Or it could have been any number of

misadventures that have exposed some new cultural difference regarding privacy, personal property, relationships, etc. and tempted me to rail against the whole community Hodja-style:

"Don't you people know that you're supposed to ask before touching someone else's stuff! Just because you outnumber me 70 million to one, do I have to do ALL the adjusting around here?"

Of course the Apostle Paul already answered that question with a resounding "Yes!" in his "all things to all men" speech. It's actually become a standing

Michael Shelton with new friends in Narnia.





Joann Shelton with young "Narnians"

joke on our team. Whenever someone starts to talk about some difficult aspect of Narnian culture, one of us will smile and say: "I guess you'll just have to die to that."

And we are dying here. Day by day, bit by bit, trading in perfectly good, cozy, "Made in America" expectations for tight, scratchy new Narnian values that slowly become comfortable with use.

In Narnia, Truth Is Who You Know

Ask any Narnian about the Bible and chances are you'll hear the same story:

"Moses received a book from God, David received a book, and Jesus received a book (the Gospels) but they have all been corrupted by deceitful men. A group of bishops got together and shook a table piled high with the many corrupted gospels. The four that remained on the table—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—they kept. Mohammed's revelation was never corrupted, which is why we only have one book, the Koran."

I once asked my language helper, an archaeology student who knows far more about early church history than I'll ever know, about this account. I was shocked when he affirmed every detail even while acknowledging the absence of any supporting historical evidence.

For me the historical inaccuracies were primary and irrefutable. For my friend, dates and facts were trumped by

an implicit trust in his community. His vision of truth conformed to what was universally affirmed by his family, friends, civic leaders, teachers, and national media. Where conformity is the norm, the most compelling arguments delivered from outside the community carry little weight.

Of course, the converse is also true. The same community ties that close ears can also open them. We've discovered that every lost boot and new clothesline is another milestone on the road between "foreigners" and "family." The little deaths to pride and preference ate the very things that mark our steps into a community where the gospel has never tread before as we follow the One who said: "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."

As for Nasreddin Hodja? He'll have to die to that. ❖

Michael Shelton, M.Div. '00, and his wife, Joann, recently completed their first year with a *Frontiers* church-planting team in the Middle East.

*Day by day, bit by bit,
(we are) trading in
perfectly good, cozy,
"Made in America"
expectations for
tight, scratchy new
Narnian values that
slowly become
comfortable with use.*

Editor's Note: Throughout this edition of *Contact*, the term for Islam's sacred book is referred to as the "Koran," "Quran," and "Qur'an." Each of these is correct, and reflects author preference.

Sharing Your Faith with a Muslim

Dr. Timothy C. Tennent '84

In the wake of the destruction of the World Trade Center and the attack on the Pentagon, it may not be too surprising that the central symbol on the flag of Saudi Arabia is a sword. Indeed, September 11th symbolically represents a two-edged sword for Islam. On the one hand, it represents the biggest public relations nightmare imaginable. The horrific slaughter of thousands of unsuspecting civilians has been inextricably linked to the religion of Islam. On the other hand, these same events have awakened an interest in Islam among Americans that is without parallel. The result is that the growth of Islam—even in the West—has actually increased since September 11th. Islam now outnumbers Judaism as the second largest religion in America. Americans and, indeed, the entire world, are asking fresh questions about Islam and trying to understand if what happened was a horrible departure from pure Islam or the natural culmination of its teachings and attitudes towards the West. The events of September 11th have also awakened in evangelicals an earnest desire to learn more about how to bear witness to the gospel among our Muslim friends, neighbors and co-workers. The purpose of this article is to explore briefly the basic tenets of Islam and to suggest ways we can be more effective in witnessing to Muslims.

Islam is a Globally Diverse Religion

The word "Islam" means "to submit" and refers to the religion of over one billion people known as Muslims who comprise the second largest religion in the world. Contrary to popular understanding, most Muslims are not Arabs, nor are the largest Islamic countries in the world found in the Middle East. In fact, Islam embraces followers from Indonesia to Central Asia to East Africa and from India to China to Europe and North America. Indeed, hundreds of people groups and races follow the faith of Islam. The Islamic religion is second only to Christianity in its ethnic diversity and geographic spread.

The Teachings of Islam

The core of Islamic teachings is found in a sacred book comparable in length to the New Testament known as the Qur'an. In addition to the Qur'an, Muslims regard the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad as binding and revelatory. These traditions have been codified into several massive collections known as the Hadith. The central message of Islam is that there is one God, known as Allah and Muhammad is the final prophet of Allah. In principle, Islam accepts the Jewish Torah and the Christian "gospel," though they believe that major errors have crept into these texts which we currently hold and only the Qur'an represents the final and authoritative teachings from God. In their view, the unblemished purity of the Qur'an has been preserved by God to the present time. The entire Islamic religion is centered around the absolute Oneness and sovereignty of Allah and the finality of Muhammad's prophethood. Muslims have a long-standing misunderstanding concerning the doctrine of God as taught by Christians and they regard the Christian doctrine of the Trinity to be a violation of the doctrine of monotheism. Likewise, Muslims regard the Christian teachings concerning the incarnation and deity of Christ to be a violation of true monotheism.

Duties of Muslims

The Qur'an and the Hadith outline five basic obligations for every Muslim. These five duties are known as the five pillars of Islam, which uphold the "house of Islam." The first duty is known as the Confession of Faith (*Shahada*). It is the public recitation that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah. It is this simple confession which brings you into the door of Islam and sets you apart as a Muslim. The second pillar of Islam is ritual prayer (*Salat*). This pillar refers to ritualized prayers spoken at five specified times during the day, along with prescribed postures or movements

which symbolically represent one's submission to Islam. A follower of Islam is known as a "Muslim" which means "one who submits to God." The third pillar of Islam is the giving of alms (*Zakat*). This is a prescribed percentage of one's income which is to be used to further Islamic causes and to help the needy. The fourth pillar of Islam is known as fasting (*Sawm*). During the ninth month of the Islamic calendar (a lunar calendar) Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. Faithful Muslims are to refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, sexual contact and anger during the daylight hours. The purpose of this pillar is to promote spiritual renewal among Muslims. The fifth and final pillar of Islam is known as pilgrimage (*Hajj*). Sometime during one's lifetime a Muslim is to make a pilgrimage to the central Islamic shrine in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. It is a time when all pilgrims are reminded of the equality of all Muslims before Allah.

Keeping the five pillars of Islam is generally believed to be the basis for one's acceptance with God on Judgment Day. Thus, Islam is essentially a legalistic religion which largely presupposes that salvation must be earned or attained through performing good deeds.

Witnessing to Your Muslim Neighbors

Jesus taught that "no one comes to me unless the Father draws him." It is important at the outset to remember that all witnessing rests appropriately upon the sovereignty of God. Nevertheless, God has chosen to use human vessels to bear his message. We are His ambassadors, bringing the tidings of salvation to the world, including Muslims. Here are five helpful guidelines in witnessing to Muslims.

- **First, seek to build a genuine relationship.** It is almost unheard of for a Muslim to come to Christ after only a brief meeting or exposure to the gospel. The vast majority of conversions to Christ from Islam come after at least three

years of knowing a Christian in a personal way. This underscores the importance of personal integrity and the need to live your whole life before God in such a way that it is a witness for the gospel. The saying attributed to St. Francis of Assisi is particularly appropriate when witnessing to Muslims: "Preach the gospel at all times, use words if necessary."

• **Second, learn to ask thought-provoking questions.** Many Muslims are convinced that Christians are not particularly interested in spiritual matters. Indeed, Muslims often link the secular aspects of Western culture with Christianity. It is vital, therefore, that you surprise your Muslim friend by asking questions such as, "What does the Qur'an teach about forgiveness?" or "Can Muslims be assured of their eternal salvation?" Then, offer to show your Muslim friend what the Bible says about these same questions.

• **Third, take time to read the Qur'an.** Many Christians fail to recognize the importance of Christians taking time to thoroughly read the Qur'an. I am convinced that an acquaintance with the Qur'an has several practical as well as strategic advantages. On a practical level, the Qur'an has many positive things to say about Christ which many Muslims are not aware of. Furthermore, most of the passages in the Qur'an which are regarded as blatant denials of the Trinity or the Deity of Christ are actually condemning various heresies such as modalism, adoptionism and monophysitism which had already been condemned by Christians centuries before Muhammad.

The Qur'an never actually addresses the historic Christian position concerning Christ. Understanding this will help you to keep the conversation on Christ, which is very important in witnessing to anyone, especially Muslims. On a strategic level it is important to have read the Qur'an because one of your goals is to get the Muslim to read the Bible. If you have not read the Qur'an, your Muslim friend can—quite rightfully—say, "then why should I read your New Testament?" If, on the other hand, you can say, "yes, I have read the Qur'an, and I remain a convinced Christian. Have you ever read the Bible?" It is far more likely that your Muslim friend will agree to read the Bible if you have taken the time and

effort to read the Qur'an. The Bible is the most self-authenticating book in the world. The Bible will bear witness to Christ. William Cameron Townsend, the founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators once said that the Bible in one's own language is the greatest missionary in the world.

• **Fourth, present your beliefs candidly and in love.** The Bible says, "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). This represents the proper balance in Christian witnessing. On the one hand, we must bear witness to the truth. We should share our faith with openness and not try to downplay our convictions regarding doctrines which we know separate us from Islam, such as a biblical view of Christ and the Trinity. The Trinity is fundamental to the Christian proclamation. It reminds us that, even before creation, God is a relational God. There are relationships even within the Trinity. As the Puritans once said, "God in Himself is a sweet society." In contrast, a famous Muslim scholar, al-Faruqi, once said that "Allah does not reveal himself to anyone in any way, he only reveals his will." We have the privilege of demonstrating that God is by nature a relational God and that he loves us and wants to enter into eternal fellowship with us. Only the doctrines of the Trinity and the incarnation can ever help us to communicate these essential truths. The Muslim view of God is non-relational and distant.

A proper view of Christ is essential to salvation, so we cannot neglect to clearly explain to Muslims who Christ is and what he has done. We must, in the words of Peter, "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have—but do this with gentleness and respect" (I Peter 3:15). The latter part of this verse brings us full circle to the second part of Ephesians 4:15; namely, the importance of speaking these truths *in love*. Never denigrate or criticize Muhammad or the Qur'an. Be careful against the temptation to argue with a Muslim. Sometimes Muslims will seek to provoke us to anger just to see where our hearts are. We must earnestly seek to convey the fruits of the spirit in all our conversations and relationships with Muslims.

• **Fifth, pray with your Muslim friend.** Muslims have a high regard for

prayer. In Nigeria, for example, when you want to find out if someone is a Muslim you do not ask, "Are you a Muslim?" but, "*kai masallachine*," or "do you perform ritual prayer?" It is the single most important daily symbol of Islam. However, this is a ritualized, not a personal prayer. I have never met a Muslim who was not willing for me to pray with him at the end of a conversation. Muslims believe in prayer and they are quite amazed when we pray out of a personal relationship with God and not merely a ritualized recitation of a passage from the Qur'an. Madame Bilquis Sheikh, the famous Pakistani convert to Christianity, made her prayers for Muslims the centerpiece of her evangelism. I had the privilege of being with Bilquis Sheikh years ago when she prayed one of the most powerful prayers I have ever heard. Her prayer for the Muslims started with creation and traced the work of God all the way through Christ's redemption on the cross. As I recall the prayer lasted about forty minutes! While our prayers may be much shorter, we should take our cue from Bilquis Sheikh that praying with Muslims is the most effective method of evangelism possible, because it brings your Muslim friend into the presence of the living God.

Sword of the Spirit

This article began by pointing out that a sword is the central symbol on the flag of Saudi Arabia. After all is said and done, it is not the sword of hate and anger, but the Word of God, the "sword of the spirit" (Heb. 4:12)—both the written Word and the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ—which will penetrate the hearts and lives of our Muslim friends. May this sword become the centerpiece of all our conversations with Muslims. ❖

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The Ideological Roots of Islamic Extremism

Dr. John Jefferson Davis '72



"My Muslim brothers of the World: Your brothers in the land of the two Holy Places are calling upon your help... in fighting against the enemy... the Americans and the Israelis... to expel the enemy, humiliated and defeated, out of the holy places of Islam." This 1996 "Declaration of War" by Osama bin Laden was followed two years later by a declaration which stated that Muslims should kill Americans—including civilians—anywhere in the world. Bin Laden's "Declaration of War" against America bore deadly fruit in the horrible tragedy of September 11th.

Such Islamic extremism does not represent mainstream Islam, but its roots lie deep in certain elements of the

Islamic tradition. The *Quran* itself speaks of "jihad," usually translated as "Holy War," though its more basic meaning is "struggle." The "higher jihad" is said to be the struggle to subject one's lower nature to the will of Allah, while the "lower jihad" takes the form of armed conflict against the infidels. The *Quran* does speak of a defensive form of jihad: "Fight in the way of God with those who fight you, but aggress not." (2:190) There are, however, Quranic texts which legitimate a more aggressive form of jihad: "Fight those who believe not in God... until they pay the tribute and have been humbled by you." (9:29)

After the death of Mohammed in 632 A.D. Abu Bakr, the first Caliph or

successor of the Prophet, laid down rules of war which prohibited making war against women, children, and civilians: "O people! I charge you with ten rules... Do not betray, or misappropriate any part of the booty; do not practice treachery or mutilation. Do not kill a young child, an old man, or a woman... Go, in God's name, and may God protect you from sword and pestilence."

In the medieval period Islamic legal scholars codified the tradition in a way that made the more aggressive form of jihad the canonical one, when circumstances permitted such military action against the unbelievers. According to the fourteenth century jurist Ibn Khaldun, "It is for them [the unbelievers] to choose

between conversion to Islam, payment of the poll tax, or death." The rebirth of militant Islam in the twentieth century is traced by many scholars to the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt by Hasan al-Banna in 1928. This organization, dedicated to the renewal of Islam and the purging of Islamic culture of the influences of Western colonialism, has been called the "Mother of Islamic extremist groups."

In the decades following 1928 the Muslim Brotherhood became more radical, and in 1964, the Egyptian intellectual Sayid Qutb, standing in this tradition, published the seminal work *Milestones on the Road*. This book has been called a "syllabus for radicals," playing a role in extremist Islam analogous to Marx's *Communist Manifesto* in the history of communism. Qutb applied the ideas of Ibn Taimiyya (1263-1328) to his modern Egyptian setting. Taimiyya had argued that the Mongol rulers who had conquered Baghdad in 1258 and then presumably converted to Islam were in effect *infidels*, since they were not governing the state with a consistent form of *shariah* or religious law based on the *Quran* and Sunna (traditions) of the Prophet. As "infidels" they could be resisted and even overthrown by the truly "faithful" Muslims.

Qutb argued that many, if not most, of the rulers of modern Islamic countries such as Egypt, though professing to be Muslims, were in fact living in *Jahilliya* or pagan "ignorance" because they were governing by Western rather than Islamic law. As such, they should be resisted and overthrown by force, if necessary, and the revolutionary vanguard of "true" Muslims should be prepared for martyrdom in order to bring into existence a true Islamic state.

Qutb's ideas were put into practice when Islamic radicals assassinated President Anwar Sadat of Egypt in 1981 in a failed attempt to overthrow the government. Islamic radicalism was energized by the 1979 Iranian Revolution which overthrew the Shah, seen as a corrupt ruler supported by America and the interests of Western imperialism. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan that same year was seen as a war of the godless West against an Islamic nation, and the defeat of the Russians ten years later by the Afghan "freedom fighters"

was seen as the blessing of Allah in a holy war in defense of Islam. Osama bin Laden was radicalized by his involvement in the Afghan war.

In his widely read book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Samuel Huntington has observed that Muslims "...fear and resent Western power and... see Western culture as materialistic, corrupt, and...immoral..." In the Cold War the West labeled its opponent 'godless communism'; in the post-Cold War conflict of civilizations [militant] Muslims see their opponent as 'the godless West'." This conflict of cultures is unlikely to disappear at any time in the immediate future, irrespective of the fate of Osama bin Laden and the Al-Qaeda terrorist network. Christians in the West are well advised to seek to understand the ideological and historical roots of Islamic extremism as they seek to advance the spread of the gospel in the contemporary world. ❖

For Further Reading:

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THE CHURCH AND WORLD RELIGIONS

Dr. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. President

and Colman M. Mockler Distinguished Professor of Old Testament

In 1932-33, Robert E. Speer (1867-1947) delivered his famous L. P. Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary and the Gay Lectures at Southern Baptist Seminary during that same academic year entitled "The Finality of Jesus Christ." These lectures appeared under the same title in the 1933 book published by Fleming A. Revell in New York City. Speer dared to put the issue of the world religions in juxtaposition with the fact that Jesus Christ was God's "final" and only solution to the spiritual quest of humanity. In today's most favorite oxymoron, "secular spirituality," we need courage to point to the life of the Spirit as revealed in Jesus Christ.

The case could not have been stated more succinctly: God had spoken: his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, was the final answer to all who searched for God, no matter what their religion, race, gender, or social status was.

All last year, I used the same title of "The Finality of Jesus Christ" as the theme for my Wednesday President's Chapels on an exposition of the book of Hebrews (see website: www.gordonconwell.edu/chapel). Hebrews is not one of the most frequently taught books of the Bible, but it certainly speaks directly to the pluralism and creeping universalism prevalent in our day. The writer, prompted by God's Holy Spirit, affirmed that God had spoken to all persons in all times, both in the past (through the Old Testament prophets, numerous means and numerous ways) and in the present (through his Son, and seven declarations about his Son, Hebrews 1: 1-4). These seven declarations demonstrated the Finality of Jesus Christ against all other rivals or pretenders to the throne of God. They were:

1. Jesus is "Heir of all things,"
2. Jesus is the Creator who "made the universe,"
3. Jesus is the "radiance of God's glory,"
4. Jesus is "the exact representation of [God's] being,"

5. Jesus is the "Sustain[er] of all things by his powerful word,"
6. Jesus is the Priest who "provided purification for sins," and
7. Jesus is the King who "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."

But not all agree, unfortunately. On October 15, 2001, I sent a letter to all of our alumni and friends saying, "Where is the equivalent commitment [to that evidenced by the September 11th terrorists]...? Is it not found in the challenge and call to love and serve Christ with our body, soul and all we have?... It is a call to serve the Living God who stands majestically over all men, movements and time. His kingdom will never fail or fall into ruins! His name will be glorious over all other names! His reputation will never brook any conceivable rival!"

On February 18, 2002, I received a response to my letter. It said, "I am returning your letter... You wrote: 'His kingdom will never fail or fall into ruins! His name will be glorious over all other names! His reputation will never brook any conceivable rival!' I find your words to be offensive to a (needed) message of forgiveness and compassion toward mankind regardless of race, nationality, philosophy, or religion. I am sure you are aware that stating [these quoted words] will be misunderstood as a challenge to Islam—or any (rival) religious faith—and will not contribute to solving the larger issue: an exhaustive and profound understanding of all causes of terrorist activity..." My friend ended his letter by refusing to support my appeal for the Annual Fund and by asking that his letter be published in the alumni publication.

Well, there is the heart of the matter. Do I believe in the American way of life—one that fervently strives to protect the rights of all individuals to say and think as they wish? Of course I do! If they wish to assert that $2+2=5$, I will

strenuously fight for their right to do so (perhaps, even more so than they would fight for my right to do the same!). However, should they wish to deal in my store, $2+2$ will need to equal 4, for there still is the real matter of an obligation to the truth, which is separate from my right to say, think and believe as I wish.

The Church is in the same bind when it comes to presenting the revealed word of God, especially as it is set forth in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The incomparability and exclusivity of the Living God stands as a haunting question for all mortals: "To whom then will you compare God?" "Or who is my equal?" (Isaiah 40: 18a, 25b). There is no one! No other church, denomination, philosophy, religion, or ideal even comes close to comparing with our God and his Son, Jesus Christ. The finality of Jesus is the great marker of all history and that is how time and the history of all nations and religions will end. Jesus is the exclusive "way," the absolute "truth" and the final giver and determiner of "life" (John 14: 6).

What about compassion and love to those of other faiths, philosophies and systems? By all means, let love be owed to all persons of all religions, all systems of philosophy and lack of belief (Romans 13: 8). But let us also "speak... the truth in love" (Ephesians 4: 15) just as well. For would it be an act of love to have learned we are faced with the issues of life and death in Jesus Christ's life, teachings, and death; but out of some romantic idea of compassion and political correctness, we pulled our punches and refused to share what could have been the route of deliverance and safety for all eternity? May our Lord help us and help his Church as we attempt to walk the tight line between speaking the truth and demonstrating love to all. And may that demonstration of love include speaking the truth revealed in Jesus Christ! ❖

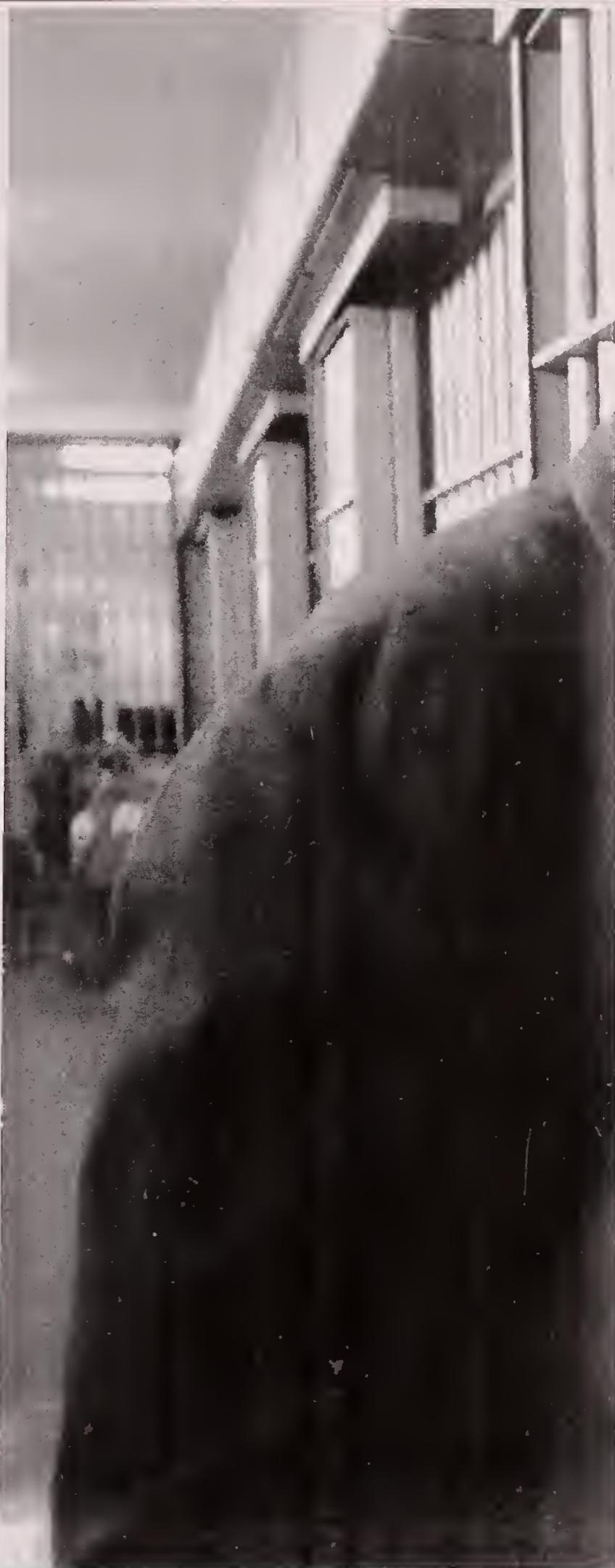
Islam and Worldview: A View from Prison

Dr. Charles W. Colson

In typically American style, he is now known as “The Shoe Bomber.” Richard Reid was born and raised in London, had trouble with the law early in his life, and in the mid-1990s found himself in Feltham, a young street crime offenders institute. There, Reid, through the witness of an Imam in prison, converted to Islam. After his release, Reid traveled in Pakistan, Cairo, and the Gaza Strip, where he allegedly had contact with numerous Islamic terrorist organizations. On December 22, 2001, Reid boarded American Airlines Flight 63 from Paris to Miami wearing shoes filled with explosives and attempted to blow up an airliner filled with innocent passengers, and himself along with them.

Since September 11 we have heard a great deal—more than we ever wanted to—about radical Islam, terrorism, and suicide bombings. While we would not suggest that all Muslims, or even the majority of Muslims, are radicals, terrorists, or would-be suicide bombers, Islam’s worldview leaves it susceptible to all three.

Americans are confused about how Islam—a religion that we have been told is known for peace and morality—can spawn the vicious murder of innocents in the name of God. The key to understanding people like Richard Reid, the terrorists of 9/11, and those who supported them is to understand the Islamic worldview.



*"Muslims believe
that we do
not need salvation."*

For most Muslims in America, Islam is simply a religion. As is the case with so many American Christians, their worldview is a brand of secularism that views religion as an add-on to life that we freely choose and over which we maintain control. This is particularly true of Americans who have converted to Islam. One American Muslim friend I know married a non-Muslim wife after his conversion and is a wine connoisseur. Strict Islam forbids both, but that is of little concern to him. His is a benign, moderate Islam that gets along very well with others. There is, however, another side of Islam that many seem reluctant to acknowledge.

For many, including Richard Reid and those who disciplesd him, Islam is more than a religion; it is an ideology with a clear sociopolitical and cultural agenda. Muslims believe in the inherent goodness of people as over against the Christian doctrine of original sin. Christians understand that we are incapable of following God's Law and are thus in need of salvation. Muslims believe that we do not need salvation. What we need is guidance and the best guidance is the strict enforcement of Islamic Law, an all-encompassing system that controls every aspect of everyday life. This thinking leads to the kind of state-centered utopianism of the Ayatollahs, the Taliban, and even the Saudis.

Richard Connerney writing for salon.com notes that neither Judaism nor Christianity...requires the existence

of a theocratic state to function fully as a religion because both their origins and endpoints exist above and beyond concerns of statehood.

Not so with Islam. The fact of Muslim military might is the rock on which the entire community of the faithful is erected. The Muslim state, with Muhammad at its head, predates the collection of the Hadith (narrations about the life of Muhammad) and the writing of the Quran itself. In Islam, it is not the religious message that promotes the faith into the halls of political power as in Judaism and Christianity, it is an original state of political and military strength that promotes the religious message.

Muslims writing to Salon in response objected strenuously to Connerney's conclusions. After all, he is not a Muslim. But consider the words of Muhammad Omar Bakri, whom the *Wall Street Journal* describes as "a poisonous cleric who runs a London Muslim organization." "We carry Islam as a political belief, a complete system. We don't carry Islam as a religion. It is an ideology." As a result, as Abu Hamza, another Islamic leader in London, contends, Muslims must fight to convert the world to Islam.

Abdul Haqq Baker, chairman of a mosque in Brixton, England, commented on the Imams who work in the British prisons: "Some of the people we've seen going into prisons we would never have them come and speak because of their





extreme views." And the *New York Times* reported that British prisons seem to have become centers for radical Islam.

While these stories concern prisons in Great Britain, evidence is accumulating that the same kind of teaching lies behind some Muslim evangelism in American prisons. The Islamic Supreme Council, a moderate Muslim group, complains that their literature is regularly removed from prison libraries by imams who consider it "un-Islamic." That is because their books and pamphlets do not include that radical socio-political and cultural agenda. The Council's literature is replaced, they say, with materials that preach "hate and war" and seek to turn American prisons into "breeding grounds for Islamic extremism."

In our ministry we have often encountered aggressive Muslim evangelization. Islam feeds off the discontent of alienated masses like many of those who populate our prisons. We have seen the ways in which American prisons are becoming breeding grounds for the likes of Richard Reid.

Prisoners have an indisputable right to religious freedom. Muslims, like Christians, should be free to make and nurture converts within prison walls. But, at the same time, we ought to be aware of what is being preached. This includes an awareness of the message and the worldview behind the message. This is

vital because ideas have powerful consequences, as we can see by looking at Richard Reid and the destruction of 9/11.

The current clash between the West and radical Islam is a clash of worldviews and never has it been more important for Christians to understand this battle of worldviews. Christians inside and outside of prison need to be aware of the conflict so that we can defend our own position, avoid getting sucked into the mushy ecumenism that views all religions as basically the same, and effectively evangelize and defend our faith inside and outside prisons.

As the life of Richard Reid demonstrates, the stakes are too high for anything less. ❖

Dr. Charles W. Colson, a Trustee of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, is Chairman and Founder of Prison Fellowship, one of the largest volunteer organizations in the world. Prison Fellowship serves the spiritual and practical needs of prisoners in 83 countries, including the U.S. Colson is a recipient of the prestigious Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. He provides a daily radio commentary to an audience of more than three million, is the author of numerous books and articles and regularly contributes articles to magazines and newspapers.

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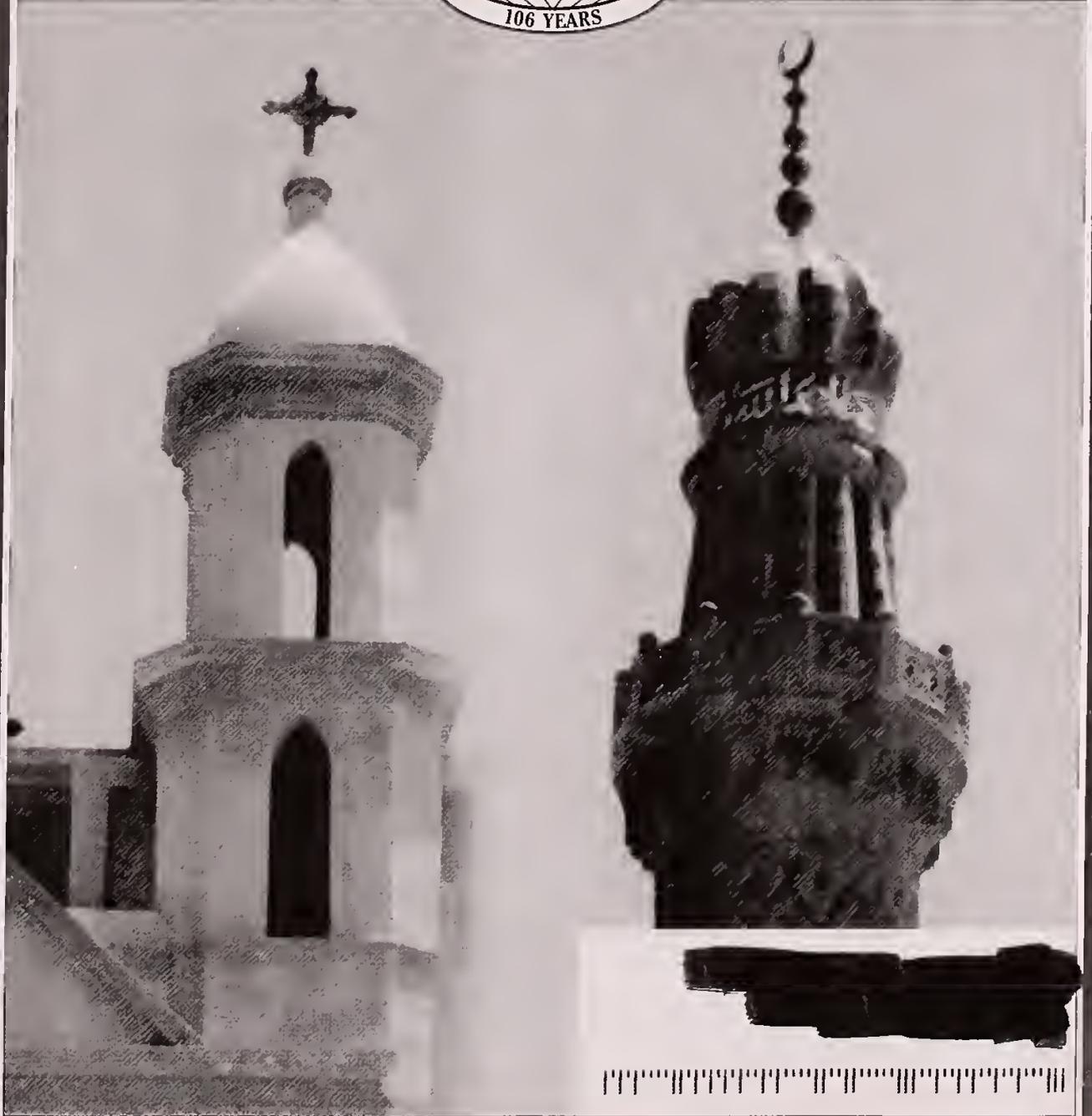
Rev. Dr. James Tonkovich, M.Div. 1980, D.Min. 1996, is Managing Editor of BreakPoint, Chuck Colson's daily broadcast ministry. Jim has worked extensively with Colson on his numerous broadcasts about Islam on that program and participated with him in the preparation of this article.

Missions & Missionaries

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Reaching Out to Muslims

The following stories come from *A Time for Peace Between Muslims and the West*, written by Judith I. Shadzi. They illustrate the importance of honoring the cultural background of Muslims when Christians reach out to them. It is important for us to remember that God made himself known to Eastern people in an Eastern way. Westerners have adapted the story of God's revelation to our Western way of thinking. Mrs. Shadzi, an American, lived for a number of years in Iran.

God Speaks in Dreams

Once upon a time in the land of the United States there was a man named Robb. Robb's heart was full of love for God and Jesus was the Lord of his life. One day Robb heard a voice that said, "My good and faithful servant, your cup runneth over. I send you to a far-away land as a tentmaker. Go teach Muslim people about Jesus."

Robb answered, "Here I am Lord, send me."

Robb, his wife Sharon, and their two children Melissa and John moved to the Middle East. Robb found a job teaching English, and they found a local church.

It did not take Robb long to make friends. He brought his first two Muslim friends, Muhammad and Ali, to church with him. But the next week they did not want to come. Muhammad said, "We do not want to come to that church because they do not treat us respectfully. We don't think they like us coming there."

Robb said, "What do you mean? I want you there."

Muhammad said, "You do not understand because you are from a faraway land; but they will never accept us in that church."

Robb did not know what to do. He went home; knelt down and prayed, "O Lord, you have sent me to the Middle East. I seek you with a pure heart. Give me wisdom and understanding as to what I should do."

Robb searched the Scriptures day and night and the word became a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his way. He pondered on all that he had read. He thought, "Islam meant submission to God, and a Muslim was one who submits to God.

On this premise, he himself was a Muslim; even John the Baptist was a Muslim.

Robb decided what he must do and circumstances worked in his favor. They had to move from their apartment and they found a home on the other side of town. They said their good-bye to the people at their church. Robb did not look for another church but decided to have classes in his own home. Robb discussed this decision at length with his mission board. This was something new. After all, what was it that Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 13:52?

"And he said to them, 'Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the Kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old.'"

Robb invited Muhammad and Ali and many other of his English students to his home to study religion. "What religion are you?" they asked him.

"I am one who submits to God," answered Robb.

"Well then," said Muhammad, "You are a Muslim."

"Yes," said Robb, "I guess that makes me a Muslim."

After a year or so, Robb had ten young Muslim men studying in his home. Robb loved his students; they were a warm, loving group of men. Robb was very happy. He found these men fascinating to study with. More and more, he was beginning to see that the Bible really was written for the Middle Eastern mind, and how much he had missed out on in the West. He was learning so much culture from studying with his Muslim friends.

Then one day Ali came to Robb and said, "Teacher, do you believe God could give knowledge to people through their dreams?"

"Yes, I do, God spoke to people in the Bible through dreams. In the book of Numbers, God told Miriam and Aaron that he would speak to a prophet in dreams. In Genesis, God spoke to Joseph through dreams; Joseph also translated dreams. In I Kings, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and Daniel the prophet had dreams from God. In Matthew, the Lord appeared unto Joseph, Mary's betrothed, in a dream. In fact, in Joel 2 and Acts 2 God promises He will pour

...continued on page 18

Reaching Out to Muslims: God Speaks in Dreams... continued from page 17

out his spirit and old men will dream dreams and young men will see visions."

"I have had a very unusual dream," said Ali.

"What was it?" asked Robb.

"I dreamed there were two tunnels, one of them was Islam and the other was Christianity. I went down the Christian tunnel and no one was there. Then I went down the Islam tunnel and I saw the Prophet Muhammad and I kissed him, and I looked around him and there was Jesus. I asked him what he was doing in the Islamic tunnel. He said, "Well, I came to earth and finished my mission, I brought God's word to the people, and some disciples followed me and some other people followed me, and a lot of people didn't."

"I asked again," said Ali, "But what are you doing at this tunnel?"

Jesus said, "You will find the answer to your question in your own book, chapter Al-Hadid, verse 27."

Ali awoke and looked up the verse, and he thought, "I have never seen that verse before." It said:

"and We caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow, and gave him the Gospel, and placed compassion and mercy in the hearts of those that followed him."

Robb told him, "Ali, the Gospel means good news, and the good news is forgiveness of sin through a repentant heart."

Robb and Ali studied forgiveness and the grace of God for the next month and one day Ali came and said, "Teacher, I have had another dream." Robb asked him to tell him about it. Ali again dreamed there were two tunnels, and he was just about to go into one when he was surrounded by a great bright light, so bright that he couldn't see a thing but he could hear voices. Then he saw a black sea all around.

He asked what the black sea was and a voice said, "This is your misunderstanding about who Jesus Christ is."

Ali thought to himself, "Yes, I do have a misunderstanding about who Jesus is."

Then two shrouded figures came into the light so that he could see them, but not their faces.

A voice said, "Choose!"

Ali said, "I can't see your faces."

"Choose!"

"I can't see your faces, which of you is right?" And then the shrouded figures pointed to each other. "Teacher, what does it mean?"

"Maybe it means God wants us to study the character of Muhammad from Jesus' point of view and study Jesus from Muhammad's point of view. They studied and then prayed for another dream.

Ali came back one day and announced he had a third dream. In this dream he entered one of the tunnels, and the tunnels came together at the end. There was Muhammad and Jesus both standing at the end of the tunnel. Ali asked Muhammad, "What are you doing here?"

Muhammad said, "I am surrender."

Ali then turned to Jesus and asked, "What are you doing here?"

Jesus answered, "I am sacrifice."

Ali said, "Now I see, what Muhammad has been telling us all along is right. We must surrender, but we must surrender to God's sacrifice."

Robb saw the lights go on for Ali. He knew this was unpredictable, Spirit-God working in a man's heart who was seeking. Robb told Ali, "Now you are a son of the Kingdom."

Robb knew there were certain terms he should not use with his Muslim friends, one was Christian. The title Christian has been discredited by the behavior of Christians in the past. ✝

Reaching Out to Muslims: This Is Not the Way

Hossein Ali had married an American girl. One of the things he had admired about her was her faith in God, even though she was a Christian. The Qur'an teaches that Muslims may marry the virtuous women of those who had received the scriptures before them.

They had lived in the Middle East for a few years but decided to return to America when their children were still quite young. Hossein Ali wanted his children to learn about God and there wasn't an organized Islamic center in their area; so he allowed his wife to take the children to church. One Sunday he even decided to go himself and see what they were teaching his children.

He was greeted at the door by the senior pastor who shook hands with him and said, "Welcome brother; we worship the same God, please come and worship with us. Hossein Ali found people very warm and loving at that church, and it seemed to be a good influence on his wife and children. In fact, his wife seemed to be emotionally maturing, and he could see an inner strength developing in her.

A few years passed and life was good. One day Hossein Ali received a promotion at work and was to be transferred to a smaller city in the heartland of America. Hossein Ali said, "We are going to see how real America lives."

They bought a lovely new home, and his wife began visiting churches in the new town. Hossein Ali started attending two different churches with the family. He was beginning to feel more at home in church, and they had some challenging classes

on how to live a godly life. All his life he had heard that Jesus was a great prophet and a supreme teacher, and it was interesting to study some of his teachings.

First, the pastor from one church came to visit them. He was friendly and even discussed Islam quite intelligently. It seemed a bit odd to Hossein Ali that the pastor would suggest he change the plaque on his wall from Allah to Jesus. After all, Allah meant Almighty God. "Well," he thought, "he probably doesn't know that."

Then one evening a group from the second church came to visit them and Hossein Ali's wife and children all gathered around. They had served their guests tea and cakes as was customary in a Middle Eastern home. The pastor of this church then asked him a very strange question. The pastor asked Hossein Ali if he died tonight did he know for sure that he would go to heaven? Hossein Ali said, "I hope I would. I have a very strong faith in God, and I can look back over my life and see God's hand on me since I was a child, in fact, the way we came out of the Middle East..."

But the pastor didn't let him finish and told Hossein Ali that is not what he meant. Hossein Ali quickly said, "But I believe in Jesus, in fact there is much in the Qur'an about Jesus." Hossein Ali's wife quickly went and brought the Qur'an, but the pastor would not even look at it.

Instead the pastor said, "That is not the same thing. In the Bible it says that even the devils believe in God."

Hossein Ali felt a hot burning sensation go through him. How could this man come into his home as a guest and insult him this way in front of his wife and children. Didn't he know Middle Eastern men were the masters of their home and demanded ultimate respect from the family members? What was his wife thinking of him; she had turned an ashen color. She had not even admitted to their guests that she was a Christian herself.

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Reaching Out to Muslims: This Is Not the Way... continued from page 19

The pastor saw that Hossein Ali and his wife became distant and unreceptive, and the group excused themselves and left.

Hossein Ali was going on a business trip and while he was away he visited the pastor in their former church. That pastor was very sympathetic. He said, "I'm very sorry, Hossein Ali, you must feel very hurt." Hossein Ali felt a little better to know all Christians did not have preconceived ideas about who he was and what he believed but somehow it wasn't enough.

In the meantime, his wife had gone to the church to talk to the pastor. The pastor that visited them was not there and she told his assistant pastor what had happened. He told her that those people that do not submit to the authority were of a rebellious nature. This made Hossein Ali's wife very angry. She said, "Why should my husband submit to your authority? The Bible is an ancient literature written to Middle Easterners in a way they can understand. Your oversimplified Western techniques are offensive to him."

The assistant pastor turned very red and proclaimed loudly, "The New Testament was written in Greek and that is what we study in seminary. What are your credentials?"

By this time, Hossein Ali's wife was shaking all over. She said, "I have every reason to believe my cultural experience in the Middle East will be a great benefit to my overall understanding of the scriptures." With that, she excused herself and left. On her way out of the church she ran into the senior pastor and explained to him how he had upset her husband. He could see that Hossein Ali's wife was very shaken and quickly agreed to write a letter to her husband.

She realized she was out of line in losing her temper, and the next day sat down and wrote an apology letter to the assistant

pastor for being disrespectful to his position as a pastor. She assumed he received the letter, although she never heard anything from him.

As the days passed, Hossein Ali became more and more depressed; his wife tried to comfort him. This was the one nightmare she had never imagined would happen. Didn't these people understand what this man had already been through: the loss of his family, his homeland, his culture, and his language? The letter arrived from the pastor but at the end of it he said, "We can't both be right. Either you are right and I am wrong, or I am right and you are wrong. I believe I am right." It was insult upon insult.

The second month she joined her husband in depression. Even the children didn't want to go back to that church anymore because their father had changed; he no longer laughed and played with them like he had before.

Hossein Ali's wife tried to write a few letters to the head pastor but would end up throwing them away because she could see her own anger in them; she knew that was wrong. At the end of the third month she finally had a four-page letter that she felt good about. She tried to explain the cultural and political implications of sharing the gospel with a Middle Easterner. She gave the letter time to reach its destination and then she called to make an appointment to speak to him. His secretary said it would be two weeks before she could get in to see him; he only took appointments in the late afternoon. She could feel the old resentment rising in her again. "Not a very convenient time for women; the time they must prepare supper. He turned my household upside down in one evening and now I have to wait two weeks to get in to speak to him," she thought. She calmly told the secretary to make the appointment the soonest possible time.

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With you partners in the Great Commission,
Sidney DeWaal

Reaching Out to Muslims: This Is Not the Way

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The day she was to visit the pastor she prayed, asking the Lord to make her heart right. She opened her Bible and it fell to the passage of Philippians 1:27

"... let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

When the pastor heard how upset Hossein Ali had become he said, "I am not in the habit of apologizing for the gospel." She said it had nothing to do with being ashamed of the gospel. That night Hossein Ali did not even get a chance to hear the gospel from the pastor. She explained to him that in reality what he had done was reject Hossein Ali as a person, he had rejected his faith in God the Father, and had rejected his effort to understand who Christ was. Hossein Ali felt rejected as a whole by the Christians anyway, and this confirmed his belief that trying to be a part of the Christian community was a useless effort in the first place.

The pastor explained that this evangelical approach was very successful in reaching out to the average American. However... he did admit he had not met a Muslim previous to his encounter with Hossein Ali; and that he would be happy to come and apologize to Hossein Ali if it would make him feel better and come back to church.

The Pastor did return one evening with a group of friends, graciously apologized, and invited Hossein Ali back to church. The apology did help even though Hossein Ali never went back to that particular church; he attended other churches. Hossein Ali said, "With this church the water of my soul has left and I have no dignity left to face these people with." He was not quite sure he would ever feel a welcome part of any church ever again. ✚

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