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THEOLOGY, NEWS AND NOTES FOR DECEMBER 1988



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Introduction: Islam and Stones

by J. Dudley Woodberry, Integrator

The Black Stone stands at the center of the Muslim world. For the past year we have watched and read about youths from the West Bank and Gaza, in their frustration against injustice, throwing stones. Most were Muslims. The Synoptic Gospels speak of another stone, which the builders rejected, which has become the head of the corner (Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10, Luke 20:17). This Stone has not only been rejected by the Jewish religious leaders, but by most Muslims too — at least as “more than a prophet.” These stones represent the major issues with which we are here concerned.

The Black Stone: this issue

The Black Stone is at a corner of the *Ka'ba*, a cubical building in the center of Islam's holiest mosque in Mecca. As all Muslims point toward it when they pray, so all the articles in this issue point toward it in some way.

The first, “American Islam: My Muslim Neighbor,” shows how close Muslims are to each of us every day. Yet they are related to Muslims worldwide when they all pray toward that stone five times a day and whenever they go on the yearly pilgrimage.

“Christians and Muslims: Encounters in History,” the second article, points to the history of conflict and reproachment between the world's two largest religious communities. The oldest historian of Mecca, Azraqi, reported that when Muhammad conquered Mecca he ordered that all the idols and paintings in the *Ka'ba* be removed except the picture of Jesus and Mary; so from the very beginning, beside the Black Stone, Islam has had to decide how to relate to Jesus and Christians. Yet, by changing the direction of prayer from Jerusalem to

Mecca, Muhammad turned from closer ties to his Jewish and Christian roots.

The third article, “Theological Interpretation: Bridges and Obstacles,” also has associations here. The bridges are seen in biblical characters we hold in common, such as Adam, who is believed to have built the *Ka'ba*; and Abraham and his son, who are reported to have rebuilt it. The obstacles are seen in the fact that non-Muslims are barred from entrance, and there were a number of conscious divergences made from Judaism and Christianity when the direction of prayer was turned from Jerusalem.

“Muslim Spirituality: Expressions of Faith,” the fourth article, likewise points to the *Ka'ba* with its Stone, for two of the five “Pillars of Faith” — prayer and the pilgrimage — point to it. Likewise it is believed to be the place of the final judgment.

The tensions expressed in the fifth article, “Muslim Women: Varieties of Perspectives,” are likewise felt in women going around the outside of the *Ka'ba*. They may go with the men with their heads covered but unveiled, yet the menstruating ones are taboo and may not.

The final article, “Folk Islam: the Animistic Substrata,” is perhaps most closely associated with the Black Stone. It is a meteorite like the sacred stone in Ephesus (Acts 19:35). Dating from the pre-Islamic period, it is still touched or kissed by pilgrims to get *baraka* (blessing) from it. This is one of the folk practices that was adopted in the orthodox cult which made it easier for other folk practices to be retained by common devotees.

These articles are all by past or present students or professors at Fuller. A Muslim scholar was invited to contribute but declined. Thus, they are all by Christians, who are barred from the Black Stone and all of Mecca

physically, and who can never fully enter into the faith of a Muslim. Unable to pass the gate on the road, I used to strain to look out the window of planes in the nearest air corridor. All I could see was a shiny dot of black — perhaps the black cloth with its Quranic quotations stitched in gold, over the *Ka'ba*. Yet the eyes that looked from afar empathized, wept, loved, and tried to communicate — and still do.

These eyes see other areas that need to be addressed. They weep as they see the political turmoil expressed by the hurled stones. They empathize as they see the resurgence of Islam — particularly of a fundamentalist stripe — rising out of the present crises. They seek to communicate as they see Muslims with whom we share so much, yet do not share a common faith in the incarnation and the crucifixion.

The thrown stones: political issues

The stones we have seen hurled across our television screens from the West Bank and Gaza are not all thrown by Muslims. They express a frustration over land more than religion, but they represent one of many conflicts in the Muslim world that are intertwined with religion.

To understand the religious dimension we need to look first at the roots. This can be done by comparing the perspectives of Muhammad and Jesus. Broadly speaking, both preached, “Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.” Neither was well received in his hometown. But there the similarity ends. Muhammad decided to rule rather than suffer, so he left Mecca and went north to Medina, where he

"What has Khomeini tried to do in Iran? He has sought to rule rather than suffer in God's name..."

could start to rule that kingdom in God's name. Jesus did the opposite: he chose to suffer rather than rule at that time.

The Arabian Prophet chose an earthly kingdom while Jesus said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." Muhammad believed that the kingdom could be brought by promulgating the Law and enforcing it, though this should not include forcing non-Muslims to become Muslims (Quran 2:256). Since people are in a state of natural purity (Quran 30:30), they can follow the Law. Jesus told Nicodemus, who as a Pharisee focused on the Law, "You must be born again." The Law, as Paul was to say later, required a righteousness it could not empower. The kingdom would not be brought by force; so back went the sword and the ear to where they belonged.

Finally, what we in the West call "religion" and "politics" overlapped in Muhammad's understanding. Though Jesus taught that our faith applied to every area of life, including the political, he allowed for a distinction between realms of Caesar and God.

When we look at history, we see that immediately Muhammad's understanding of the kingdom was put into effect. Within 100 years of Muhammad's death in 632 A.D., the Muslim Empire stretched from southern France in the west to Central Asia in the east. In contrast, Christians remained a suffering minority for 300 years until Constantine. Obviously Christians forgot their roots at such times as the Holy Roman Empire and the Crusades.

Muhammad's view of the kingdom can help us understand many events today. When India was to receive independence at the end of World War II, many Muslims refused to remain as

a suffering minority but opted for a new country called Pakistan — "Pak" meaning pure or holy, and "istan" meaning land. This was to be a land where Muslims could rule rather than suffer, and set up an earthly kingdom where religion and politics overlapped. Throughout its history we have seen the struggle between those who wanted to impose Muslim Law (*shari'a*) and those who felt it was no longer relevant or enforceable — a struggle duplicated around the world in countries like Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria and Indonesia.

What has Khomeini tried to do in Iran? He has sought to rule rather than suffer in God's name, and have the Law of God, as he understands it, govern an earthly kingdom.

Lebanese government was based on a ratio of six Christians to five Muslims. Parliament reflected this. Although the key governmental positions were divided between the different religious communities, the president, commander of the army, director of education and director of intelligence were always Christians. This was no longer acceptable as the ratio shifted in favor of the Muslims through biological growth, emigration, and the influx of Palestinians when they lost their homeland or were forced out of Jordan.

The Palestine conflict over land is increased because many religious Jews and Muslim Arabs have similar views of the kingdom — an earthly kingdom where they should rule rather than suffer, where religion and politics overlap, and force may be used. Add to this that both feel they are the people of God through Abraham and either Isaac or Ishmael.

And both need the same real estate — Jerusalem and especially the Temple/Dome of the Rock area. This place is most sacred to the Jews and the third most sacred area to the Muslims. Therefore, Egyptians charged in the 1973 war during their sacred month of Ramadan shouting "*Allahu Akbar*" ("God is greater"); while for religious Jews, during their sacred Yom Kippur, it too was a holy war.

The rejected stone: evangelistic issues

The Synoptic Gospels speak of a stone which the builders rejected, which has become the head of the corner. The mental picture sounds like the position of the Black Stone in the Ka'ba. The Jewish leaders rejected him as the Christ because he did not fit into their blueprints for their religious edifice. Muslims accept him as a prophet but not "more than a prophet."

We might ask what Jesus would say to a Muslim even though he lived 600 years before the start of the Muslim calendar. Though space prohibits the development of the ideas here, we do find Muslim parallels to different members of Jesus' audiences in the Gospels.

First, we can see how Jesus would deal with cultural obstacles by looking at his interaction with the woman of Samaria in John 4. The parallels between Islam and Samaritan religion are obvious. They are both alterations of Judaism, where the Law is similar, central and all-inclusive, and the Patriarchs are held in common. The prejudice between Jew and Samaritan was similar to that between Muslim and Christian today. It is interesting that Jesus starts by being willing to receive from the woman (vs. 7) — so important with people who want to be known as hospitable. He establishes the social contact and is willing to

"The parallels between Judaism and Islam are numerous. Biblical and Quranic law are similar."

drink with her before talking business. He ignores her apparent rebuff, which called attention to their prejudices (vs. 9), seeking instead to arouse a felt need for him and what he had to offer (vs. 10).

He does not identify himself as the Messiah in response to her question, "Are you greater than our father Jacob?" (vs. 12). She would have misunderstood the term this early, even as most Muslims misunderstand terms like "Son of God" used too soon today. In telling her to call her husband (vs. 16), he shows the advantage of fostering group decisions. He avoids arguing over where one prays, and instead focuses on her aspiration to worship aright (vss. 20-24). There is the use of personal testimony (vss. 28, 39) and leading people directly to Christ so they can hear his words (vs. 41).

Secondly, we can see how he deals with legalism in John 3, the story of the Pharisee Nicodemus. The parallels between Judaism and Islam are numerous. Biblical and Quranic law are similar. The creedal affirmations of the unity of God are almost identical. Prophets are shared, and both reject a Suffering Messiah. Muslims emphasize the Law like the Pharisee did, and Jesus immediately shows that a new birth is necessary (vs. 5). The Law does not give life. He also shows God's unconditional love (vs. 16) — a contrast to the Quran, where God only loves those who love him (3:31-32).

Thirdly, an example of how Jesus would deal with theological problems is found in Matthew 16. Here we see that Muslims are walking along a path where Jesus' Jewish disciples have already walked. Peter called Jesus the Messiah (vs. 16) but misunderstood his job description, considering the

crucifixion unthinkable (vss. 21-22). Group opinion keeps Peter from God's revelation (vs. 23), and the cost of discipleship is great (vs. 24). Jesus deals with all of these.

Fourthly, we see how he would deal with popular practices in Luke 10, when he sends out the disciples. Jesus dealt in a context like folk Islam, where there was concern for power. He dealt in a world of spirit powers (the demonized boy in Luke 9:37-43), power objects (the hem of his garment in Luke 8:41-56), power places (the Pool of Bethesda in John 5:1-47), power rituals (anointing with oil in Mark 6:13, and believing prayer and command in Mark 9:14-29), and power people (Jesus himself in Luke 5:17-26). In this kind of a world he sent his disciples out to engage in a wholistic ministry of healing the sick, exorcising demons and announcing God's rule — demonstration and proclamation (Luke 10:9, 17). However, he built in guidelines. They were to go in partnership (vs. 1). Their task was to prepare the way for Christ's coming (vs. 1). Prayer was necessary (vs. 2). When he said, "I send you as lambs in the midst of wolves" (vs. 3), their power was expressed in vulnerability, in the cross. Their instructions were not always the same (vs. 4; cf. Luke 22:35, 36). His worldview included awareness of the devil and demons (vss. 17-18), over which he gave authority (vs. 19), but prioritized evangelism over exorcism (vs. 20). Above heaven and earth there is a Father (vs. 21); there is no need to be in constant fear.

Finally, in Acts 9 we see how Jesus would deal with the kind of radical activism we see among some fundamentalist Muslims today. Paul was "breathing threats and murder against the disciples." Jesus breaks through the resistance with a vision (vss. 3, 12) — a frequent occurrence in

Muslim conversion to Christ. They need to see Christ, whom they are persecuting in the name of religion (vss. 4-5). Christians need to be aroused to provide fellowship and nurture (vss. 15-19).

We have been reflecting on stones — the Black Stone, thrown stones, and the rejected Stone. Let us now look at a rock — the Dome of the Rock, which appears on the front cover of this issue. Jesus stood overlooking this site when he told his disciples to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). When we take our Lord's vantage point today, where the temple stood in Jerusalem is the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque. Judea and Samaria are where frustrated youths — mostly Muslim — are throwing stones. The uttermost parts of the earth contain 970 million

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Islam in America

by Kent Hart

The startling white tower juts into the sky, set against a background of condominiums in Pomona, a Los Angeles suburb. Pomona, like most American communities, has always had its share of church steeples, but this tower is a monument to a certain change on the religious landscape of America.

It is a minaret, part of the traditional architecture of an Islamic mosque. And it says that Muslims have set up shop to worship on Garey Avenue.

Pomona is not the only American community with a new minaret. There are an increasing number throughout the United States, and the signs indicate that the architectural landscape will include more mosques (with or without their minarets) in the future.

Mary Lou Putnam lives near the mosque in Pomona. She works at a Christian arts school two doors down. When the mosque was constructed a few years ago, she was surprised by the number of Muslims in her area. But she says she feels no threat from their presence. "In fact," she said, "they have been courteous and kind neighbors."

A neighbor on the other side also says she is untroubled by the Muslims' presence: "It's another religion, and we have the freedom to worship here in the U.S." She said it would only upset her if her Muslim neighbors openly proselytized. Perhaps she does not know that the mosque distributes a brochure titled "Introducing Islam to Non-Muslims."

Slowly, the American church is beginning to realize that the three million Muslims in the United States are becoming a forceful presence, that mosques are purchasing our dead and

abandoned urban churches, and that Muslims are busily convincing nominal Christians to turn to the "final" revelation of Islam.

Twenty years ago — even 10 — Muslims were lumped into the "other religions" category in any national survey of Americans' faiths. Such would not be the case today. In the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, David Barrett estimated that in mid-1980 there were 1,883,000 Muslims in America, representing 0.8 percent of the population. By the year 2000, he estimates that 1.2 percent of American society will follow Islam. Earlier this year the Islamic Society of North America reported that there were 4.6 million Muslims in the United States.

These statistics are impressive — maybe even scary. Yet lest hysteria and the all-too-prevalent stereotyping of all Muslims as violent terrorists continue, I hope that American Christians will take the time to learn about Muslims, their beliefs, and their methods of operation in the United States. The Christian church cannot reach out to those it does not understand — or worse — only fears.

Muslims began to trickle into the United States from the Middle East in the mid-1800s from what was then known as Greater Syria. Yvonne Hadad, perhaps the foremost authority on Muslims in America, says that the first Middle Eastern immigrants were Christians, and that Muslims came when they heard of the financial successes of their former neighbors.

Uniting the voice of Islam

These early Muslim immigrants' faith soon cooled to nominalism, and a strong Islamic presence was not established until the founding of the Federation of Islamic Associations (FIA) in 1952. The FIA was established by an American officer in World War II,

who discovered that he was not able to be listed as a Muslim on military roles, but rather had to designate "other" as his religion. After his discharge, he returned home to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he began to work toward establishing an organization that would unify the voice of Islam in North America. (Incidentally, due to his request, President Eisenhower later gave American Muslims religious recognition on military rolls.) As its name implies, FIA united various community Islamic Associations and worked to produce an image of the United States as a significant home for Muslims.

Soon after the FIA was formed, two of its officials met with Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who gave \$50,000 for a new mosque in Detroit. The two officials also brought back from the foremost Islamic university, Al-Azhar in Cairo, four *imams* (Islamic teachers), who worked to strengthen orthodox Islamic tradition.

The FIA continues today, holding annual conventions. In June 1980 it moved into new offices in Detroit, which were purchased with a \$100,000 gift from a Middle Eastern political leader.

Keeping the faith among students

Today, the Muslim Student Association (MSA) influences more Muslims in the United States than any other organization. Established in 1963 at the University of Illinois-Urbana, it is now headquartered outside Indianapolis.

The MSA's original purposes were to improve students' knowledge of Islam, to perpetuate in them the

"In a Muslim country, a mosque is simply a place for prayer, but mosques here...are the focus of the Muslim community."

Islamic spirit, and to train them to live in a non-Muslim culture. In recent years, however, as more Muslim students have come from the oil-rich Gulf states, the MSA has broadened its platform to emphasize the production and distribution of Islamic knowledge, the establishment of Islamic institutions, *da'wah* (propagation of the faith), the recruiting and training of personnel to strengthen and spread Islam, and the promotion of unity among Muslims.

When immigration law reform in 1965 made it much easier for students to settle in this country, many chose to do so. No longer students, they needed to replace the MSA with a new support network. So they formed professional organizations, such as the Islamic Medical Association, the Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers, and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists.

In 1982, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) was formed in Plainfield, Indiana as an umbrella organization for the MSA and the professional organizations that grew from it.

Assistance from Mecca

Though it is not specifically focused on the United States, the Muslim World League (MWL) has profoundly affected Islam in the United States. Founded in 1962 in Mecca, the MWL was created to assist Islamic causes throughout the world.

It distributes free of charge English translations of the Quran and other Islamic literature. It also provides information about Islam through lectures and pamphlets, and has an office to provide for the needs of Muslims in prison.

The MWL also supports Islamic missionary activity. It provides *imams* — generally Arabs — for American mosques, and contributes financially

to the MSA and other Islamic organizations throughout the country. In late 1981, it gave more than half a million dollars to 16 mosques in the United States.

In 1977, the MWL sponsored the first Islamic Conference of North America in order to coordinate the work of various Muslim groups across the United States and Canada. More than 200 mosques and Muslim associations were represented.

Community life

In a Muslim country, a mosque is simply a place for prayer, but mosques here in the United States are the focus of the Muslim community. Though they range in style from a room in a home to a converted church or an elaborate, architecturally Islamic mosque, most perform as centers for Muslim education, much as a church's Sunday school program would do. Many mosques also house Islamic libraries and promote their activities in newsletters. Weddings and funerals are also held in mosques, a practice that is uncommon for a mosque outside North America.

In America, the role of *imam* has also been enhanced. In the Muslim world, an *imam* generally only leads prayers and instructs members in the Quran and Islamic law. But in the United States, he must also maintain the mosque, provide counseling services similar to those offered by Christian clergy, and act as Islamic spokesman to his community.

The Islamic Center of New England is a typical American Islamic center. A Syrian immigrant established a mosque in Boston in 1932. Thirty years later, after various delays, the families who made up the Muslim community decided to construct a center so that their children could be brought up

properly in Islam and Arabic culture. Besides being a place for prayer, the center also offers family counseling and help for the needy. The community considers the center's major function to be providing Islamic religious instruction in Arabic, so students can read and write the Quran. By 1982, the number of students had multiplied so rapidly that the center constructed a new school, where classes are held for four hours every Saturday.

Though most American Muslims live in large cities — especially Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Houston, Dallas, Minneapolis, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. — they are not generally concentrated in specific neighborhoods.

The notable exception is the Detroit/Dearborn area, where about 25,000 Arab Muslims live in one square mile. Theirs is a tightly knit community, and many of the inhabitants are related to each other, living much as their parents and grandparents did in the Middle East.

Another area with concentrations of Muslims is metropolitan New York, where there are expansive neighborhoods of Arabs and Pakistanis.

Other notable Muslim communities are those on the major college and university campuses throughout the United States. Yet reliable estimates of the size of these communities are not available.

The main Muslim ethnic communities in America are comprised of Arabs, Iranians, Indo-Pakistanis, Indonesians, Turks, Kurds, Afghans, Malays and Albanians. A growing number of American blacks — many disillusioned by the nominal churches in which they grew up — are also a part of one form of Islam or another.

"...Muslims face many dilemmas in America, not the least of which is maintaining their very identity."

Da'wah and the spreading of Islam in America

As the Muslim community establishes itself here, the performance of *da'wah*, or propagation of the faith, is becoming more organized and overt. *Surah* (or chapter) 16:125 of the Quran encourages the Muslim to "call men into the path of your Lord by wisdom and godly admonitions."

One of the earliest attempts to convert Americans to Islam was the American Islamic Propagation movement, started in 1893 by an American convert to Islam, Muhammed Webb. After converting to Islam in the Philippines, he returned to New York to begin his work as a propagator. He became a great critic of "church Christians" and of Christian missionary activity in the Muslim world.

However, it seems that *da'wah* has become a great concern for Muslims here within just the last five or six years. In 1981, Islamicist Marston Speight said that the Muslim community was only "concerned with consolidating its presence on the American soil and providing for a healthy Islamic environment in which its members can grow." Outreach to others was a peripheral concern. In a 1980 article in *Christianity Today*, the author claimed that Muslims in North America were showing little inclination to proselytize.

Since 1981, things seem to have changed. At ISNA's third annual convention in 1984, several sessions were devoted to *da'wah*, and Muslims were encouraged to invite Americans to the truth of Islam. In fact, ISNA listed *da'wah* as one of its four major goals.

In a conference sponsored by the Islamic Center of Southern California in 1983, Isma'il Faruqi said:

We must convert 50 to 75 million Americans. It is possible, especially because the lower strata of society

have been suffering from the bankruptcy of the social order. They are groping for salvation and you can give them that salvation. Most of the conference focused on *da'wah*.

An interesting form of *da'wah* is being promulgated in New Mexico. High on a plateau surrounded by mountains and overlooking a village is an adobe mosque and *madrassa* (school) — a multimillion dollar complex that covers more than a thousand acres. The project director, an American convert to Islam, Nuriddeen Durkee, conceived of the project to promote Islam in America. The mosque is truly a magnificent building. The project has already had success, as several of the people working on the project have become Muslims.

Because Muslims (especially the major branch called Sunnis) are not usually structured hierarchically, they are often not well organized. As early as 1977, there was some call for organization and coordination of *da'wah* in the United States. Note what this Muslim student asked for:

At no other time in the history of North America has there been a more favorable circumstance for the spread of Islam as there is today. The Western man has very much realized the hollowness of his existence...That Islam alone can meet this challenge from without is evident as the rising sun in the sky...But lack of concern for the coordination of efforts in the Islamic *da'wah* is, indeed, pathological...Maximization in Islamic work can only be relevant by coordinating our efforts systematically.

In 1985, an article in *Islamic Horizons* pled for an organized Islamic movement. It said *da'wah* among

locals must be the primary task of any organization that wishes to be a true Islamic movement. This task of *da'wah* should be of higher priority than the Muslim communities' religious and educational needs.

American Muslims' problems

Despite this call for *da'wah*, Muslims face many dilemmas in America, not the least of which is maintaining their very identity. A survey published in a San Jose newspaper concluded that the strict commitment to Islamic ideals by the immigrant generation tends to reverse dramatically among the immigrants' children and grandchildren. Second-generation Muslims, the survey revealed, tend to marry outside their faith, fail to observe the month-long fast of Ramadan and other religious practices, drink alcohol, swim at public beaches, and dance, among other things.

Some Muslims perceive that a major reason for this problem is that they lack Muslim educational institutions that might counter the adverse effects of American culture. Though Islamic Sunday schools exist, their training is not extensive enough. Though there is now one Islamic college in Chicago, many more are needed, from the Muslim's point of view. They want their children to be trained in Muslim schools during their formative and teen years.

Another common problem for Muslims here is their dietary restrictions. They are not to eat pork or anything with pork products in it, and their food must be *halal*, which is similar to a Jew's kosher food. To be considered *halal*, meat must have been slaughtered properly and received the proper mention of the name of God.

A letter to the editor of a Muslim publication illustrates this dietary

Encounters in History

by Dean S. Gilliland

Twenty years ago the eminent Dutch missiologist Hendrik Kraemer wrote one of his last articles. In it he noted wistfully that Muslim people had yet to see what Christianity really is. He spoke of the new day, already upon us, when improved Muslim-Christian relations would be possible only if the West were emancipated from its colonialistic mind-set. The article carried the title, "Islamic Culture and Missionary Adequacy" (*Muslim World*, 1969, 244-51).

Generally, right from the eighth century, the encounter between Christians and Muslims was an appalling failure. The Crusades resulted in a terrible breach between the two faiths. The Reformation, especially Luther's condemnation of the "Turks," widened the chasm even further (see *Luther's Works*). Then the long years of colonialism in the early 20th century institutionalized Western imperialism over most of the Muslim world. There were notable exceptions (e.g. Zwemer, McDonald), but the general feeling among churches after World War II was that Muslim peoples were almost a hopeless case for Christian mission or, even worse, that Islam was a futile apostasy not worthy of the call of the gospel.

Kraemer had committed much of the writing of his lifetime to show that the conduct of both Christianity and Islam had been "sheer tragedy and shame." He felt deep pain about what the Church had done against Muslims throughout history, especially during the colonial period. His regret in 1969 was that "The Muslim world has never had a chance to see the Christian Church as she is according to her true nature, but has always been presented with a lamentable caricature" (*Ibid.*). But while Kraemer was critical, he was also hopeful. He left no doubt about the need of salvation for Muslim

peoples or the adequacy of the gospel to meet that need. He always worked from the assumption that the cross of Christ has claim upon all peoples, which, without any question, includes the Muslim world.

Kraemer's prophetic word came at the crucial period when self-awareness and independence for nations of the Muslim world had already begun. This meant that efforts in new relationships would be possible. Creative forms of witness to Muslim people would now be open to those who are "willing to walk in new ways of obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Ibid.*). It would be heartening to see the variety of ways Christians have found to live alongside Muslims today, to take note of creative forms of mission and the relational styles of mission that have developed during the last two decades. Yet, when considering the context, why should we imagine that our efforts to engage Islam in a dialogue with the gospel are new or different or better than what was accomplished by apostles to Islam in the 13th century?

The surprises of history

History has a way of lighting the way for us if we are humble enough to look back. It is folly to think that a voice such as Kraemer's had never been raised in the long journey out of centuries past. We always see things best through the segments of time that are closest to us. Rarely do we celebrate God's interventions in history which so often took place when they were most needed and least expected.

It should not be a surprise that in the darkest days of the Crusades God faithfully called out special servants to show a different way. If the wall of colonialism was a formidable barrier

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"Conversion is not by force, but by words and deeds and supreme faith in the power of the gospel to save..."

in relating to Muslims, how impossible, by comparison, it must have been to confront the inhumanity of the Crusades and sound a clear word for the gospel. Yet in that most unlikely circumstance, the darkest of hours, a faithful God found his faithful witnesses. Keeping the historical context in mind, they would not accept things as they were, but called for a different course, becoming, themselves, the embodiment of innovation.

Three personalities are historical prototypes, as it were, of the sort of change in attitude and approach that Kraemer envisioned for our own time. Out of the checkered history of the encounter of these two faiths, we humbly accept the fact that saints on the order of these three showed us the way. Each of them strove, beyond others in their time, for missionary adequacy.

St. Francis: absolute belief in the power of the gospel

St. Francis' efforts to convert no less than Kamil the Sultan of Egypt during the late Crusades is an almost incredible account. Such faith, such holy audacity, is rare. To attempt to convert the most powerful Muslim personage of the time would be seen as complete folly.

The purposeless fifth Crusade (1215-1244) was dragging on without end in sight. Francis and those closest to him prayed about the mission for a whole month, after which he confessed that he had gained so much strength in his spirit that "no power on earth could stop him" (Moorman, *History*, 1968, 18). On the day of embarkation so many brothers gathered to accompany him to Egypt that Francis decided

to ask a small boy who was standing near the ship to select 12 to travel with him (Sabatier, *Life*, 1916, 227).

The journey took them first to Syria and then to the destination of his mission, Egypt. God had revealed to Francis that he must go directly to the Sultan. So radical was Kamil that he had decreed that whoever brought him the head of a Christian would be rewarded with a Byzantine gold piece (Bonaventure in *St. Francis*, ed. Habig, IX 7). Francis, with his trusted companion Illuminato, asked Cardinal Pelagius for permission to witness to the Sultan. The cardinal said that the enemy was "treacherous, brainless and falsehearted," but after some delay granted the request simply on the grounds of Francis' zeal.

Francis and Illuminato quoted Psalm 23 as they walked straight into the enemy lines during the full pitch of battle. They were caught, beaten and brought before the Sultan in chains. The Sultan was overjoyed because he thought they wanted to become Muslims. "On the contrary," Francis said, "we have a message from God himself that you should surrender your soul to God" (Bishop, *St. Francis*, 1974, 128). And having begun this way, Francis "proclaimed the Triune God and Jesus Christ the Saviour of all" (Bonaventure, IX 8). When the Sultan was advised that he should behead the friars for preaching, he declined, and instead invited them to stay with him as his guests. Bonaventure records Francis' amazing reply:

If you are willing to become converts to Christ, you and your people, I shall only be too glad to stay with you for love of him (Ibid.).

Such presumptuous terms for accepting Arab hospitality would be unheard of in that day or this! Further, Francis offered to walk through fire, alone, and if he were to come out unharmed the Sultan should be

prepared, with all his people, to embrace the Christian religion. The Sultan demurred, but was impressed, nevertheless, and offered Francis presents. When Francis refused the gifts, Kamil, even more amazed, gave Francis freedom to preach the gospel in his house and in all the areas of his compound. Upon their departure, the Sultan asked Francis to pray to the Lord for him, the king of Egypt, that God might show him which religion to embrace.

Subsequently, in 1244, Kamil was the principal figure in the retaking of Jerusalem for the Muslim Saracens. Obviously, then, he did not convert to Christianity, but it is not an overstatement to say that Francis' effort set a radically different course for witness. Stephen Neill notes that it was not simply a demonstration of Francis' personal zeal but a manifestation of a new spirit for world mission (Neill, *History*, 1964, 116). Beyond this, Francis introduced an attitude so important for our own day. Conversion is not by force, but by words and deeds and supreme faith in the power of the gospel to save, even in a hostile environment.

Fra Rinaldo de Monte Croce: the beginnings of missiology

A natural consequence of the Crusades was the heightening of interest in Europe for the Near East. This brought an awareness of peoples not known before and a sense that something ought to be done to put things right.

One from among the steady stream of monks who took up the pilgrimage to the Holy Land was Fra Rinaldo de Monte Croce. His perception of the times and his insights as to how to approach people of the Muslim faith

"(Rinaldo) made profuse notes about the charity of Muslims...their good manners and their respect for God."

were markedly different from most. This Dominican left his remarkable imprint on the "science of mission," as we call it today, primarily because he was determined to live with Muslims and build personal relationships with them over the long term. This, he sensed, was the only way to dialogue effectively with them about the gospel. In addition, he saw the good sense of establishing contacts in major cities, and of relating to the Muslim/Arab cultural institutions in a positive way.

His heart was set on Baghdad when he began his journey eastward from Italy in 1288. En route he demonstrated an unusual gift for preaching in Arabic during a six-month stay in Egypt. Before arriving in Baghdad, he frequented the churches of the Nestorians and the Jacobites, whom, he felt, must also be brought back to the truth. His interactions with the Kurds and Tartars are carefully recorded in his journal. The journal alone became a model for missions in his days, and something of a guidebook for those who followed him.

Once in Baghdad he demonstrated a gift for communication that was unusual for his time and commendable even by today's standards. For example, he attended schools with Muslims, feeling that this would be the most authentic environment for learning the Quran. Socially, he was welcomed into the inner circles of Muslim families, and they often asked him to speak about his views of God and Christ. He emphasized the positive aspects of Muslim peoples and their faith. In his journal, called the *Itinerarium*, he made profuse notes about the charity of Muslims, their taste for study, their devotion, their good manners and their respect for God. He admired the spirit of unity they exhibited with other Muslims. Even so, he rejected fiercely their beliefs and marveled that "so base a

doctrine" could produce such good works (*Muslim World*, 1918, VIII 45-51).

The importance of Rinaldo's encounter with official Islam is that so soon after the Crusades he could be critical of the Muslim faith and yet experience open relationships with Muslims over an extended period. His best known work is entitled *Against the Law of the Saracens*, which is a sharp refutation of Islam. It was used by others long after his death. His tract *Confutatio Alcorani* provided Martin Luther with some of his earliest knowledge about Islam (Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology*, 2, I, 116ff.). In a manuscript fragment which Rinaldo wrote are five rules for missionaries going to the Near East. How interesting they are in light of what we have learned since.

- 1) Do not use interpreters.
 - 2) Know the Scriptures — the text itself — not an exposition of it.
 - 3) Know the doctrines of the different sects.
 - 4) Discuss religion only with notables, leaders.
 - 5) Be fervent, faithful, moved only by the love of God for souls (*Muslim World*, 1918, VIII 45-51).
- Rinaldo's approach and insights into mission method gives him a unique place in the long process which leads us to Muslim persons and their faith.

Ramon Lull: head and heart for the Muslim world

Martyrdom was counted as the crowning glory for the Christian, the ultimate witness. Death by stoning came to Ramon Lull at age 82, while he was preaching in the streets of a repressive Algerian town. It was as though he had wished to die, and it was not difficult to arouse the hostility

of the fanatics of Bugia. Only three years before Lull had said:

Everything I have in the world I have left that I might honor God, procure the good of others, and exalt the Faith. I have learned Arabic and laboured to convert the Moslems. I have been flogged and imprisoned. For forty-five years I have labored to move the Church and Christian princes, that they might promote the common weal of the Church. Now I am old and poor, yet still I have the same purpose, and I trust that, with the Grace of God, I may persevere therein even unto death (Hillgarth, Ramon Lull, 1971, 56).

Grieving over the Crusades, the young Ramon was convinced that the conversion of the Saracens to Christianity would never come by fighting. Pernoud records that Lull wrote in his meditations, "The thought has come to me that this conquest cannot be accomplished except in the way that you, Lord, with your apostles accomplished it, that is, through love, prayer and the shedding of tears" (Pernoud, *Crusaders*, 1963, 278).

Lull was drawn to Muslim North Africa. In his early 30s he felt an irrepressible call from God to live the life of Christ in full view of the Muslim people. Addison, the Islamic historian, writes that "from the hour of his conversion to the hour of his martyrdom, the central strand of (Lull's) manifold career and the innermost motive of his ardent activity was missionary" (Addison, *Approach*, 1942, 41).

What Lull did to turn the attention of the Christian world toward their responsibility to Muslims was remarkable. But the greatest thing about him was the unquenchable and all-consuming zeal with which he approached Muslims from every side and with every possible means. Though courageous, St. Francis'

Barriers and Bridges

by Evertt W. Huffard

encounter with the Sultan was, by comparison with Lull's experience, an isolated foray into the Muslim world, from which he returned to engage in other ministry. Lull's was a commitment to one purpose and that only — the winning of Muslim people to Christ. As with all others of his time, his manner was confrontational and often provocative, but it was an alternative to war.

Lull's conviction was that messengers to the Muslim world must be prepared both spiritually and intellectually. The comprehensive way in which Lull worked to achieve this resulted in a level of training not known before. Carefully prepared as he was in Latin, Arabic, theology and philosophy, he convinced James II, ruler of Majorca, to set up a missionary college at Miramar. Thirteen friars enrolled from the start. Lull worked patiently with five popes, petitioning all of them to set up more schools and offer language courses in the major universities. When none of the popes listened, he wrote directly to the king of France. The result was that a general council which met at Vienne (1312) set up chairs of oriental

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Several years ago in *Christianity Today* Dwight Baker listed five reasons why a whole church vanished from North Africa, the Middle East and Asia Minor before the advance of Islam. Although the Eastern Orthodox churches — the survivors of a long history of Muslim governments and suppression — may have taken offense, many judgments continue to be shared today by Christians in the West. Baker identified as roots of the decline the lack of Scriptures in the language of the people; a doctrine of works; a lack of a sense of spiritual power in the lives of Christians; the loss of a missionary thrust; and the loss of an Eastern identity. The foreignness of Christianity to the local people precipitated the fall of the church long before the Muslims arrived. Christianity, he concluded, "was no longer carried in the hearts of its people, native to its own culture, and propagated by the missionary efforts of all its members" (*Christianity Today*, Nov. 25, 1966, 5).

Unable to withstand the indigenous appeal of Islam, and internally weakened by the losses to Islam between the eighth and 15th centuries, the church suffered its greatest losses in influence and numbers. Muslims became enemies. They were a threat to Christian doctrine, worship and existence. Attempts have been made to attribute all these losses to the sword of Islam, but history has forced a broader interpretation. The defeat of the Crusades in the 12th century, the open denial of fundamental Christian doctrines like the cross of Christ and

the authority of the New Testament, and the more contemporary tensions between Western capitalism and the Muslim state continue the hostility.

Theological hospitality

When hostilities hinder open and honest communication, the first signs of progress are seen in attempts to listen to one another. We have discovered that Muslims remain unmoved or confused by the proclamation of answers to our theological questions. Their questions are different. It is difficult to responsibly address these new questions without adequately rethinking our own theology. Therefore, missiology has witnessed a shift from a defensive, even hostile apologetic of the Christian faith in Muslim evangelism to an honest, open and hospitable expression of faith in Christ. The emergence of a new "theological hospitality" can be seen when book titles encourage you to "share your faith with Muslims."

In *Reaching Out* Henri J.M. Nouwen writes that the application of the second great commandment to our lives ("love your neighbor as yourself") will require a personal transformation from hostility to hospitality. Nouwen introduces this transformation with the observation that

Sometimes events in our lives breed feelings of bitterness, jealousy, suspicion and even desires for revenge, which need time to be healed. It is realistic to realize that although we hope to move toward hospitality, life is too complex to expect a one-way direction. But when we make ourselves aware of the hospitality we have enjoyed from others and are grateful for the few moments in which we can create some space ourselves, we may become more sensitive to our inner movements and be more able

"Progress...began with a willingness to listen to what Muslims were saying, and a new desire to understand their worldview."

to affirm an open attitude toward our fellow human beings (1975, 55).

Most Western missionaries have consistently discovered new dimensions of hospitality from Muslim friends or neighbors. Their cultural heritage has made it possible for them to exercise more social hospitality than Westerners are accustomed to receiving. However, the Christ-centered theological heritage of Christianity makes it possible for Christians to show more hospitality theologically than those who are bound to a legal system of works (as the orthodox devotees may be) or limited by fears of precarious evil forces (as the popular devotees may be).

If our theology is hostile, it would naturally be perceived as bad news to Muslims. The transformation from theological hostility to hospitality will continue to encounter obstacles in Islamic doctrines. For example, *tawhid* (divine unity) represents a rejection of the Trinity as idolatry, with the vilest of sins being *shirk* (associating a partner with God). Or, their anthropology of *khalifa*, which elevates man to a vicegerent, renders man as merely ignorant and atonement for sin as unnecessary. For example, *Surah* 2:34 attributes the fall of Satan to his failure to bow to Adam. Also, the belief in the single universal culture of the *ummah* (community) of Islam maintains such a strong bond between religion and politics that any evangelistic activity or conversion has very negative political consequences. One is simply not free to leave Islam. Hostility is further compounded by battles between the Bible and the Quran; Jesus and Muhammad; and a personal, reasoned-out faith response

to God over against an inherited group-oriented religious identity.

Hospitality requires both a "poverty of mind" and a "poverty of heart," according to Nouwen.

Someone who is filled with ideas, concepts, opinions and convictions cannot be a good host. There is no inner space to listen, no openness to discover the gift of the other...

When our heart is filled with prejudices, worries, jealousies, there is little room for a stranger (1975, 74-75).

Jesus assured the multitudes that the "poor in spirit" were the true participants in the blessings of the Kingdom of God. Hostile theology seldom reflects this quality of the Kingdom of God.

Rethinking our own theology

Progress has been made in recent years in theological interpretation that builds theological bridges for Muslims to develop a new relationship with Isa (Jesus), the Messiah. It began with a willingness to listen to what Muslims were saying, and a new desire to understand their worldview. To identify the "good" in the gospel from their perspective, some rethinking of Christian theology must also take place.

In *The Cross Above the Crescent* (1941) Samuel Zwemer wrote of the need for a better theology in relationship to the thought world of Islam. Duncan Black MacDonald, in an article in *Muslim World* (1944), pleaded for a more theocentric motive and message. Kenneth Cragg's *The Call of the Minaret* (1956) represented one of the best efforts to listen to the message of the minaret and to develop a responsible theological reply.

With increasing research and two major conferences on Muslim evangelism (Colorado Springs in 1978

and Zeist, Holland in 1987), there is a consensus that Christian theology could be more incarnational or more receptor-oriented in a Muslim context. Although issues over the extent to which the Quran could be used in Muslim evangelism and the parameters of contextualization have yet to be resolved, they cannot be resolved until more Muslim believers become a part of the process. The door is open.

Balanced theological interpretation, cross-culturally, works from a high view of Scripture and a high view of culture. Questions of function and meaning pierce surface interpretations. For example, W.C. Smith identified the true functional parallels in the Christian-Muslim encounter as the Bible and the *Hadith* (the sayings and deeds of and about the prophet); Jesus and the Quran (the uncreated Word of God); and Paul and Muhammad (a messenger of God) (*The World of Islam*, ed. J. Kritzeck and R.B. Winder, 960, 52). Although Muhammad is elevated in folk Islam to divine status that makes him more like Christ than Paul, these parallels raise questions about theological starting points. The defense of the Bible, conviction of sin, or the nature of the church may not be as effective as our Christology. Ironically, this has been the arena in which Christian witness has been the weakest. Such a theological interpretation will force Christians back into the Gospels. It will call for a faithfulness to Jesus Christ before demanding response to logical proofs. Therefore, we can observe a necessary shift from C.G. Pfander's *The Mizanu'l Haqq* ("Balance of Truth") in 1910, where proofs of the truth of Islam were examined to lead one to decide for himself or herself which was true or false, to David Owen's *Serit al-Mashih* ("The Life of the Messiah") in 1987, in

"For the gospel to be good news to Muslims, they must see in it the glory or blamelessness of God in the power of the resurrection..."

which the story of Christ is told in a classical Quranic style and thought form.

Thematic theologizing

Recent efforts in theological interpretation have developed themes within the Muslim worldview that can also be traced in the Bible. The goal is to avoid as much of the "foreignness" as possible in the selection of these themes. For example, an individualistic approach, based primarily on the theme of personal love, anticipates a simple one-step, immediate decision for Christ on the completion of a logical presentation. We cannot expect the Muslim to "fall in love" with Jesus the way many Christians select their mates in the West. This Western contextualization does not export well.

Cross-cultural "bridging" evangelism to Muslims appreciates the relationship a person has with his or her community. It allows time for a decision to be made within a strong group context on the basis of a message built around themes from within their own meaning system. It also seeks to answer questions raised from a folk religious worldview common to most Muslim communities. This quantum leap has produced some helpful resource material on biblical themes, like blessing, honor, kingdom and gratitude.

In 1978 Kenneth Cragg encouraged the development of Old Testament themes like the oneness of God, signs, creation and gratitude as theological bridges. The resulting theological interpretations would come from the realization that seventh century (A.D.) Arabia was more like the "Samaria of Elijah than the Jerusalem of Jesus" ("Islamic Theology: Limits and Bridges" in *Gospel and Islam*, ed. D. McCurry, 1979, 197).

From his experiences with Muslims in West Africa, Larry G. Lenning

challenged a historically hostile attitude toward Muslims and the dominance of a Western worldview in evangelistic teaching with a shift from a love-based theology to a ministry of blessing. Defining blessing as divine favor, beneficent force, efficient power, holiness, sacredness and charisma, he concluded that blessing is "a strategic concept that must be basic to any bridge — theological, missiological, and liturgical — that the Church attempts to build to Muslims in West Africa" (*Blessing in Mosque and Mission*, 1980, 133).

Bruce Nicholls in 1978 and Salim Munayer in 1987 grappled with the theme of the Kingdom of God as a bridge to Muslims. Nicholls believes the *ummah*, the kingdom, is "the objective reference point to evaluate, reject, adapt, and transform culture in the faithful proclamation of the gospel and the building of the Church" ("New Theological Approaches in Muslim Evangelism" in *Gospel and Islam*, 1979, 161). A study of the kingdom in this context will lead to new implications of the gospel for the people of God rather than the person of God. The syncretistic theology of a "churchless Christianity" in the West will not be perceived as good news to Muslims, who have lived in the security of the *ummah* all their lives, nor will it transform culture.

My own experiences in the Middle East and research at Fuller has led me to develop yet another theme: honor. Muslims have not been as impressed by our messages of the love of God as we have. They did not begin their spiritual pilgrimage nor maintain it by persistently asking the question "Am I loved?" or, for that matter, "Am I saved?" They want to know if Allah and his Word are honored and protected.

References to the honor and glory of God abound in the Bible. John

summarizes the incarnation as the full revelation of the *doxa* (OT *kabod*, glory or honor) of God, full of grace (hospitality) and truth. For the gospel to be good news to Muslims, they must see in it the glory or blamelessness of God in the power of the resurrection, and the honor of Jesus in his submission and loyalty to God's divine will. Their path of faith may be different. Some may come to God in response to his honor and grow in love, while others may first respond to God's love and grow in honor.

By opening our own hearts and minds to the Muslim's frame of reference, the future for Muslim evangelization looks hopeful. These efforts toward theological hospitality require patience. As Cragg has observed,

This issue, then, between Islamic and Christian theology is not that about acknowledging God rightly, which we both seek to do. It is how, and by what criteria. He is rightly recognized. What we both need here is not recrimination about our theologies but patience about their frame of reference" (*Jesus and the Muslim*, 1985, 191). ■

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Muslim Spirituality

by Phil Parshall

Is it possible to use the word "spirituality" to describe the central religious motif within Islam? Would Muslims be agreeable to such a designation for describing their allegiance to God? Technically, the word is inadequate. Orthodox Muslims are more prone to focus on submission than spirituality. Submitting to the revealed Word of Allah is, to the Muslim, a more concrete and objective task than interaction with a more subjective "spirit force."

Having made this distinction, I am still proceeding to use this conceptual term in a general sense to describe the Muslim's quest for God. It not only is a word well understood and embraced by Christians, but it has also been popularized within the Muslim setting through its usage in the title of a recent academic tome, *Islamic Spirituality: Foundations*, edited by the renowned Islamic scholar, Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

Spirituality is multi-faceted. It influences every area of life. It is impossible, within the confines of this brief article, to touch on all aspects of Muslim spirituality. However, I will seek to elucidate some of the important profiles of Muslim interaction with God. This will be set forth in a more personal style, drawn mainly from my observations and relationships with Muslims over the past years of my ministry in Islamic contexts. I will also include a brief critique in each section.

God-awareness

The Quran declares God to be omnipresent. "Unto Allah belong the East and the West, and whithersoever ye turn, there is Allah's countenance. Lo! Allah is All-Embracing" (*Surah* 2:115). God is spoken of as being nearer to the believer than his jugular vein (*Surah* 50:16). In a real sense, this

acknowledged presence of Allah in the life of a Muslim is a counterpart to the Christian being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Orthodox Islam, however, seems more comfortable with the concept of Allah being near, rather than having residence within. The mystical Muslim is the exception as he comes closer to the Christian position of God within the believer. But, to all Muslims, accessibility to a very near God provides a reinforcing framework to their spiritual lives.

The Quran has several explicit exhortations regarding the believer's duty to keep Allah within the higher level of consciousness. "Remember Allah, standing, sitting and reclining" (*Surah* 3:191) is one of these commands. Another citation is, "Think of Allah much, that ye may be successful" (*Surah* 8:45). This verse sounds a bit like an exhortation from a positive-thinking manual.

Dhikr, which means recollection or remembering, is very important in the worship liturgy of mystical (Sufi) Muslims in particular. The name of Allah, or alternatively, a short religious phrase, is constantly repeated with intense concentration. Usually *dhikr* is done communally at a special gathering. This type of repetition of God's attributes can cause the devotees to be swept away in a sea of emotion. The world is forgotten, the pains of everyday life temporarily lessen, and Allah becomes a pulsating, dynamic reality.

Any ritual or habit can easily lose its force. Repetition tends to have an anesthetizing effect. The Muslim is very aware of this insidious danger to his spiritual life. My Muslim friends assure me that they seek to concentrate deeply on the name of Allah as they repeat it.

Since in Islam the Word became Book rather than flesh, there is a

greater stress on the verbal. The question arises, does all of this form verge on the magical, the superstitious, the manipulative? The mystical Muslims respond, "We leave that analysis to the scholars." Meanwhile, "Allah, Allah, Allah..."

Sacred Scriptures

The word Quran in Arabic means "recitation." It is likely that the root of this word is the Syriac *qeryana*, which carries with it the meaning of giving a scriptural reading or lesson in church. This word was then adopted into Arabic as a title for the Muslim compilation of Scriptures.

Muslims claim the Quran to be pure and unchanged from the time of its revelation to the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century to the present day. It is the inerrant word-by-word revelation of Allah. Herein we find a pristine example of the mechanical dictation theory of the inspiration of Scripture.

Millions of Muslims have testified to the power and impact of the Quran on their lives. Dr. Ali Selman Benoist, a French medical doctor, shares his witness:

The essential and definite element of my conversion to Islam was the Quran. I began to study it, before my conversion, with the critical spirit of a Western intellectual... There are certain verses of this book, the Quran, revealed more than thirteen centuries ago, which teach exactly the same notions as the most modern scientific researches do... This was my reason for presenting myself on 20th February 1953 at the mosque in Paris, where I declared my faith in Islam and was registered there as a Muslim by the Mufti of the Paris Mosque, and was given the Islamic name of "Ali Selman" (A.S. Benoist, *Islam Our Choice*, n.d., 38).

"...I often make this statement to my students: 'Muslims are more biblical in their worship forms than are contemporary Christians.'"

The Quran provides a perceived spiritual reality for the Muslim. The first sentence chanted in the newborn infant's ears is the *shahadah* (confession of faith in Islam). At a very early age the child sits in a Muslim school and learns parts of the Quran by rote memorization. The marriage ceremony contains large sections from the Scriptures. Throughout life the prayers recited by Muslims are selections from the Quran. At death the final remembrance of the devotee is spoken in a service dominated by the chanting of the Quran.

The Quran is the highest level of communication direct from God that shapes and molds the lives of the vast multitude of humanity known as Muslims. Without a Quran there could be no such thing as spirituality within Islam.

Worship

When teaching a course on Islam, I often make this statement to my students: "Muslims are more biblical in their worship forms than are contemporary Christians." Immediately, I have their attention and curiosity. Proof texts are then presented, of which the following are but a few.

Numbers 16:22 — Moses and Aaron fell on their faces and prayed.

1 Kings 8:22 — Solomon stood before the Lord and spread out his hands.

II Chronicles 6:13 — Solomon knelt on his knees.

Psalms 95:6 — "Come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."

Matthew 26:39 — Jesus "fell on his face and prayed."

Mark 11:25 — Jesus told his followers to stand and pray.

1 Timothy 2:8 — "Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands."

All of the above forms are common to the Muslim prayer ritual. In the Bible there is no reference to praying with one's eyes closed. Muslims pray with their eyes open. There is only one reference in the Bible to praying while being seated (II Samuel 7:18, repeated in I Chronicles 17:16). Yet, this is by far the most common posture of prayer for evangelicals, and one almost never used by Muslims.

Salat is the universal Muslim practice of prescribed ritual prayer. The word is probably best translated as "worship," as it carries with it the connotation of supplication with adoration.

Worship in Islam is highly liturgical. Form cannot be divorced from content. Spirituality is experienced at its most dynamic point of contact between God and man as the worshiper, with an intense level of submission, bows prostrate before Allah in the company of the faithful.

We as Christians can learn much from the Muslim form of prayer. The humility expressed in bowing; the exaltation of God; the repeated use of Scripture; and the bestowal of peace upon the person on the right and the left; all can be retained as form and legitimately filled with Christian content. I realize that there are certain churches with these emphases, but, sadly, many omit these uplifting features of worship.

Suffering

It is all very simple. Everything that occurs in the life of a Muslim is the will of Allah. All is foreknown and foreordained. The potter unilaterally molds the clay. The puppeteer manipulates the puppets according to his

own desire. Suffering endured through submission to God is an intensely spiritual act.

It is not always so straightforward. In 1971 my family and I endured with our Muslim friends a bloody, nine-month civil war in East Pakistan. No one will ever be able to calculate the terrible loss incurred among the 75 million people, 85 percent of whom were Muslims.

I saw hundreds of dead bodies thrown into huge piles at the University of Dhaka. On one trip into the countryside I surveyed whole villages completely burned to the ground. While driving around Dhaka, I frequently had to divert my 6-year-old daughter's attention while we drove past a dead person who had been indiscriminately shot by a nobody-made-somebody through the power of an ancient, yet deadly, rifle. I visited the bunkers where soldiers had kept the beautiful Bengali women as sexual playthings. In one such area I saw women's hair hanging from the trees. The soldiers had cut the women's long hair so that they, in desperate shame, could not perform the final indignity of suicide. The only path to self-destruction had been for the women to use their hair to hang themselves.

At times I would verbally probe into the depths of my Muslim friends' souls. I would ask, "How can West Pakistani Muslims engage in such genocide against fellow believers?" As we listened to the call to prayer wafting ethereally above the sound of the machine guns, my friends would wage battle between memorized theology and practical realities. They wanted — oh so much — to rest comfortably in the sovereignty of God. But somehow the words would not come. The immediate was too pressing. Angrily, the answer came, "Those sons of pigs are not Muslims. They are heathen who will burn

"The option of doing good or committing sin continually lies before every Muslim. He is not bound...to choose corruption."

forever in hell!" Perhaps it was ultimately Allah who was allowing people to suffer, but it was hard for the Bengalis to see beyond the one who was pulling the trigger or throwing the fire bomb.

Muslims are accused of being fatalistic and, to some extent, that is true. But do not we as Christians also engage in first cause dilemmas? To both the Muslim and the Christian there is a cosmic spiritual struggle being waged in regard to the acceptance of evil and suffering in this fallen world.

Practical holiness

Sin, to the Muslim, is not an inherited trait. Adam and Eve had a choice set before them. They could have walked in the path of Allah and righteousness, or, listening to the voice of Satan, they could have chosen to do evil. The option of doing good or committing sin continually lies before every Muslim. He is not bound, through inheritance, to choose corruption.

The Muslim, however, does indeed struggle with the lusts of the flesh. One oil company in Saudi Arabia regularly checks out its Saudi employees for venereal disease. Among the men who leave the country for vacations it was found that half of them had syphilis or gonorrhea.

The video revolution has taken its toll on Muslim morality. It is not uncommon for X-rated movies to be shown in small rooms where customers can crowd in and enter a world of fantasy that they could never have imagined existed. These improvised "theaters" are proliferating throughout the Islamic world.

In Manila I have seen an Arab walking through the five-star Philippine Plaza Hotel with one arm around a prostitute and the other

hand going through his prayer beads. Many discos and massage parlors in Manila's red light district have their signs written in Arabic as well as English.

On the other hand, I can give many examples of Muslims who live ethical and moral lives. My close friend, Dr. Ali, has been offered sex in a number of enticing situations in his travels. He has always refused promiscuity by a loving reference to his wife and through a word of witness to his vibrant faith in Allah.

Sir John Glubb lived for many years among Muslims. He observed, "I know that Islam can produce fine men, and even saints, and that the 'image' of Muslims entertained by most people in the West is completely untrue" (*The Life and Times of Muhammad*, 1971, 8-9).

Christians react against amputation and decapitation as penalties for sin within Islamic countries. Muslims reply that strict measures must be taken in order to ensure that God's reign on earth is fulfilled through obedience to the Quran. It is not wrong to enforce spirituality, they strongly assert. And so the standoff continues. Christians see holiness as a matter of personal choice. Muslims agree, but go on to say that political and legal structures should be a forceful guide to such choices. Otherwise liberty becomes license, which ends in social degeneration. They proof-text their argument by citing moral decadence in countries where Christians have been in a majority for hundreds of years.

Hell and heaven

But as for those who disbelieve, garments of fire will be cut for them; boiling fluid will be poured down on their heads. Whereby that which is in their bellies, and their

skins too, will be melted (*Surah* 12:19-20).

There are 77 allusions to hell in the Quran. Persons are sent to hell for immorality, lying, engaging in corruption, scoffing at the prophet's message, denying of the coming hour of judgment, not responding to the needs of the poor, and having an inordinate fixation on the acquisition of wealth.

Muslims do not have absolute assurance of eternal life. "Only Allah knows," is the Muslim's response to a query concerning his future destination. But he has hope that Allah's mercy will finally prevail and that, if he does go to hell, his sojourn will be of short duration.

Has fear of hell caused Muslims to become demonstrably more spiritual? The question drags us down into a maze of subjectivity. But it is fair to say that many Muslims are affected by fear of the wrath and justice of Allah. Others, however, continue on in their ungodly ways, quite unaffected by any concern for future judgment. Not altogether unlike Christianity!

Heaven is strictly for Muslims. It is a closed fraternity. The Quran speaks of the beautiful gardens of paradise, rivers of milk, along with "rivers of wine delicious to the drinkers." On all sides are fountains and pavilions. Luscious fruits are available in abundance.

But the aspect of heaven that has captivated Muslim artists, poets and laymen has nothing to do with the above. It has to do with beautiful, young, sensual virgins who are available to Muslims who were faithful to Allah while on earth. These women relax on green cushions and fair carpets (*Surah* 55:72-76). They are fair in complexion, with wide, lovely eyes (*Surah* 52:20). They will be wed to

Women in Islam

by Marguerite Kraft

devout Muslim believers (*Surah* 44:54). It is understood that these women are not the wives of their Muslim husbands on earth. They are a creation especially designed for the enjoyment of faithful Muslims in heaven. Though Muslim women go to paradise, little is said about them there. Yet the desire for paradise is indeed a motivation and a much anticipated reward for faithful allegiance to Allah.

Conclusion

There is much in Islam that is spiritually commendable. The Muslim quest for God and regularity in worship is a challenge for Christians to imitate. Their integrated worldview, which prioritizes spiritual concerns, should cause us to ponder our view of the separation of church and state, which often leads to an inept and voiceless church sitting on the sidelines of a secular society. Islam seeks to penetrate and even control

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Since Islam is found in many of the world's societies, there is a great variation in the perspectives of Muslim women from society to society. We will meet four women from four countries: Amina from Nigeria, Aisha from Morocco, Zohra from Algeria, and Zaynab from Egypt. The perspective of each of these reflects the history, the environment, and the societal customs followed in a specific culture within Islam.

In each of these perspectives the Muslim woman has a different picture of reality. An examination of some of the components making up that picture of reality will help us understand the variation of perspectives. The picture of reality we have in our minds affects the way we feel about what we do, how we prepare for life, what our goals are, how we relate to those around us, and the satisfaction derived from the activities and relationships of life.

Amina

Amina, a Hausa girl in northern Nigeria, has grown up in a woman's world. Helping her mother with domestic duties since she was 5, and dressed with body cloth and scarf like the adult women since she was 6, she was taught to sit quietly, talk softly, and never disagree with a male. She was allowed to go outside only for specific reasons, such as running errands for her mother, who could not go out; selling food or handcraft items for her mother; or carrying messages.

Her religion has prescribed that women are dependent on men, and that women are fulfilled through subordination to men. She is under the authority of her father and brothers, and someday she will be under the authority of her husband. It is her religious duty to Allah to marry and bear children, as many as Allah will give to her and her husband.

Amina is in school, but not for very long, because her parents are making arrangements for her marriage. The husband-to-be and his family are preparing a bride-price, to be given to the bride's family and to the bride. Amina will automatically become a member of her husband's family, but unless she produces sons she will likely not have a permanent place there. Her children will belong to her husband, and he will be responsible to provide economic support for her and the family. If she has sons she will be supported by them in her old age.

As in most of the world's societies, the status and role that provide meaning in life will be functions of her participating in what may be called "the women's community." From birth she will spend nearly all of her time with other women, learning from them and participating exclusively in women's activities. She will know exactly what is expected of her and never find herself in competition with any of the members of "the men's community." She, along with the other women in her community, will turn to the pre-Islamic cult of the Bori to ward off or discover causes of misfortune, to obtain information and assistance in daily life, and to seek supernatural protection. In Bori, the spirits possess specific women whom they choose so that other women may receive answers from them for their needs.

Amina, as long as she is of childbearing age, will live in seclusion except for special occasions, such as naming ceremonies, marriages, funerals, and medical care. News of the world and changing events will be brought by the constant surrounding flow of children and female relatives who live with similar restrictions.

Amina will undoubtedly conduct business in her home by preparing and selling food to enable her to carry

"Zohra finds it difficult to feel satisfied with life because of all sorts of prejudices on the part of society and family practices."

out traditional obligations, such as providing her daughters with proper dowries. Her children and her husband will buy the supplies she needs from the market and then sell for her outside the home what she makes. Amina is very satisfied with life as she envisions and experiences it. The greatest tension will come if she is not able to bear children.

Aisha

Aisha, a woman from the middle class in a city in Morocco, has also grown up in a woman's world. Always wearing her cloak and veil when outside, she moves about the city shopping or doing other business. She has worn the veil and cloak since she was a young girl. She and her husband live with her mother- and father-in-law. Her husband gives his wages to his mother, who takes care of all expenses. Aisha, like the other neighbor women, spends much time on the flat roof of her house — hanging out washing, preparing grain and other foods, and resting.

Aisha, dressed in her finest clothes and wearing much jewelry, joins the other women for special celebrations which are held in homes. Beautiful, colorful clothes are for the benefit of the women's world. Music and dancing by both amateurs and professionals, and lots of food, are part of these celebrations.

Aisha participates in other meaningful activities. She enjoys going to the public bath, where the women socialize and relax. There she gets the news and also looks for marriage partners for her sons. When she has a specific need, she goes to a saint's shrine, where she makes a vow. If such help is given, she would perform some task, for example, give a party of thanksgiving, make a return visit to the shrine, or give a contribution for the upkeep of the shrine. At times she

goes to one of the fortune-tellers in the city to make life a little easier. She enjoys her life spent mostly with women in a variety of activities.

Zohra

Zohra, a working-class woman in Algeria, sees herself as sharing in the development of her country. Algerian women, sometimes carrying bombs in their purses and placing them at strategic targets, played an important part in the revolution which brought about independence from colonial power. With independence they were to be given formal education, raised status, and the right to work.

Zohra works in an office and is generally away from home 10 hours a day. She has double responsibilities because she also has daily household tasks. Should she succeed in getting her husband to help with the housework, both her own family and her in-laws would harass her. Society sees even a working woman first as wife and mother, with the home as her primary domain. It is her private life that validates her professional life, and not the reverse.

Zohra, like other working women, sees herself within the bounds of Islam. She feels that a woman was not seen as an inferior being by the Prophet, and Islam does not cut women off from work and education. She personally does not wear the veil, but some of the other working women do.

Because she is a woman, however, Zohra sees no opportunity to be promoted in her job. Most of the jobs available to women in her country are thankless, laborious, and ill-paid. There is no on-the-job training. She and other working women are trying to get government assistance for transportation, day-care centers and help with domestic tasks. There are

laws dealing with these issues, but they are not enforced.

Zohra finds it difficult to feel satisfied with life because of all sorts of prejudices on the part of society and family practices.

Zaynab

Zaynab, an upper-middle-class woman of Egypt, was sent to England for her education. Her brothers attended government schools and Egyptian universities, but she was sent to a private foreign school. Her parents did not want her to mingle with the undesirable members of the lower social class in the Egyptian schools.

Zaynab is married and her husband is on a fixed income. Since she already has domestic help, going to work is a means of improving their standard of living and producing extra income for luxury items and more expensive clothes. Because of her language skills and her ability to deal with foreigners, she is earning good money working for a foreign business in the city. She hopes that someday she will be able to establish her own small business, a boutique for imported goods such as clothes and cosmetics. Already she faces competition from other trained women and men for the few clerical job openings on the higher level. Should she begin her own business she will still be in competition. In order to survive in her work she will need to sharpen her skills and develop feelings of self-esteem and self-reliance.

Since an upper-middle-class woman like Zaynab traditionally is protected by the status and power of her biological family even after marriage, she enjoys a great deal of independence from her husband in regard to private income and property. However, due to government regulations for paying social security and

"...in some areas...(s)pirits are invited to possess a woman so that questions may be asked directly of the spirits."

other benefits to domestic help, it is necessary today for both Zaynab and her husband to be involved in the required contracts and legal documents.

In spite of Zaynab's aspirations to work outside the home, she still views success in terms of a husband and a happy family life. Besides the old virtues of good reputation and family background, the possession of cars, expensive clothing and a comfortable home are all part of her goals. Since women are increasing their activities outside the home and are no longer using the veil, Zaynab's children will probably select their own marriage partners, or at least make the initial suggestion. Her daughters, therefore, find it necessary to spend more money on clothes and hairpieces in the quest for a husband.

Components of a Muslim woman's picture of reality

In order to understand better the variety of perspectives found among Muslim women, we will look more closely at their picture of reality. There are several components which influence that picture. Those which seem to be most important are 1) Islamic values, 2) traditions, 3) social class, 4) formal schooling, 5) an urban or rural setting, 6) the laws of the nation, and 7) the expectations of husband, family and society. We will examine each separately.

1. Islamic values, based on the Quran and Shari'a law, underlie the laws that affect marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance. Women are to be obedient to men, to inherit half as much as a brother inherits, to own their own fortune, and to dress modestly. Men are to be in charge of women because the "strong" must protect the "weak." Allah has destined women to the role of wife and mother,

and promises them paradise if they believe, do good works and are obedient to their husbands and Allah.

2. Tradition affects her view of a variety of things. Stemming from a pre-Islamic worldview, in some areas women are expected to interact with spirits at shrines. Spirits are invited to possess a woman so that questions may be asked directly of the spirits. Pre-Islamic traditions likewise tend to govern whether a woman covers her face, pulls a shawl partially over her face, or moves about modestly without covering her face. With the onset of menopause, women are perceived to be less dangerous, mixing more freely with men, and expressing their views more freely too.

3. Social class also affects her picture of reality. The women of traditional elite families learn how to organize and delegate authority by handling servants and large homes. With lots of leisure hours they spend much time visiting each other's homes. Middle-class women may attend these social times as well. The status of the hostess depends on the number and status of the guests who visit. Seclusion has been practiced most consistently by this group of women. However, some of the educated elite today do not emphasize physical seclusion, but good judgment, honesty and proper behavior.

Women in the middle class often are required to work in order to retain that standard of living. It is preferred that they work in the home so as not to cause the husband to lose face and bring embarrassment to the family. The work they do in the home is often considered an extension of domestic activities, and must be compatible with reproduction and the care of children. Cooking food to sell, plaiting hair and sewing are some of the ways women earn money. If the husband

can earn enough to support the family, the wife keeps all that she earns for her daughters' dowries, or for other family needs. Women from the middle class tend to have middle-level education and lower-status occupations, such as teaching and nursing.

Lower-class women are more apt to be forced to work outside the home, even though this is considered disgraceful and an embarrassment to the husband. These women often are not literate, so their work outside the home resembles their traditional tasks, such as housekeeping or working in handicraft factories. Sometimes men in this class express their insecurity by exerting tight control over the working wife.

4. In many Muslim lands formal schooling for girls has only become popular since independence. Training for womanly duties is perceived as best accomplished through apprenticing rather than formal schooling. Some girls have attended Quranic schools through the years, but formal (Western) education for women has become widespread only recently.

A Muslim worldview considers it very important for the bride to be a virgin, so traditionally girls were married soon after puberty. From an early age, her elders controlled her movements and activities, since the family honor depended on her chastity. Schools are, therefore, likely to be segregated. As a girl reaches puberty she is less apt to remain in school. Girls are expected to be modest and uncompetitive, so motivation for doing well in school is often lacking.

The governments in Muslim countries have made remarkable progress in improving the access of girls and women to all levels and types of education — vocational, scientific,

"Legal reforms...have been enacted in many areas, but often the paper legislation does not represent the social reality."

medical and professional. Formal education is often seen as a means of moving up in social class, especially from the working class. However, prescribed sex roles and strong feelings toward division between the sexes channel most women into traditionally prescribed female roles. The willingness to give women formal education is often either so they can be better Muslims, wives and mothers in the Islamic way, or to raise the economic level of the country.

5. Whether a woman lives in an urban or village environment makes a difference in the way she perceives reality. Worldview in the rural setting defines communal living, with the extended family working together. Rural mothers often believe that schooling is wasted on girls, but if required by law, they allow them to go to primary school. In many cases, secondary school is considered too risky — the girls may lose their virginity or feel dissatisfied with life. Girls can be protected much more easily in the village setting.

In the city the extended family becomes less important as a source of security and strict role definition. Individual family members tend to work separately, and often it is necessary for girls and women to work outside the home for economic reasons. There is more opportunity for school, and a variety of jobs are available. Often it is easier for women to find employment than for men. In order for a woman to work, however, the husband or father must give his permission. There is often prejudice against certain jobs — such as personal secretary, saleswoman or television artist — where one works closely with a man or appears before the public. Change is taking place at a much faster rate and in many more areas of life in the city, but traditional

patterns exist side by side with Western innovations.

6. Legal reforms which attempt to restructure and reinterpret Islamic law are taking place in the Muslim world. The areas where legal reforms have been achieved in some countries include: removing the veil; establishing a minimum age for marriage; prohibiting marriage without the consent of both bride and groom; ensuring female children the right to education; limiting the practice of polygamy; giving women the right to initiate divorce and receive more protection when divorced; and focusing on the welfare of the child in child custody cases rather than automatically placing the child in the care of the father after he or she reaches a prescribed age.

Legal reforms, which often have been designed by the Western-oriented urban elite, have been enacted in many areas, but often the paper legislation does not represent the social reality. Often women are totally ignorant of their rights under the new legislation. Even if they were aware of them, it would take much courage to go against the various social pressures they would face if they insisted on their rights. The effect of legal reforms on a Muslim woman's picture of reality would depend on whether she was in the rural or urban setting, on how long the nation has had the reforms in place, and on how much effort has gone into enforcing them.

7. The expectations of husband, family and society influence the Muslim woman's picture of reality. Muslim women see women's concerns and problems as inseparable from that of men, the family and the wider society. Since the husband has control over whether his wife works outside the home, it is not unusual for a woman to marry a man of lower social status in order to be able to teach.

Husbands of their own class would lose face if their wives worked.

Young men who have been educated abroad see the advantage of a double income, so they sometimes encourage their wives to work. The family influence is felt when one has an educated sister, and when progressive fathers allow their daughters to stay in school and postpone the age of marriage. Western education for a girl is often seen as an asset she takes into marriage. The bride-price is higher for a girl who has finished school.

The wife who produces only daughters or who is presumed to be sterile is often maltreated by the husband's family. In addition, the husband is often pressured to take another wife to produce males. Sons are important in providing economic help for their parents after marriage, and especially in their old age.

Muslim societies tend to see women as the preservers of culture. They must reflect tradition and continuity. Since women are in charge of the home, the family centers around them and depends upon their

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Folk Islam: The Animistic Substrata

by Earl E. Grant

Because of my years of service in the United Arab Emirates, this essay largely reflects folk Islam only as it exists in the Middle East. It goes without saying that this phenomenon has many variations throughout Southern and South-east Asia.

On the level of high religion, orthodox Islam has the same look the world over. The "five pillars" are well-advertised and well-known, and the only official Quran is in Arabic. There are, to be sure, many variants, but the two basic groups are Sunni (90 percent) and Shi'a (10 percent), with the Sufi mystical tradition in both. In addition, throughout the world one frequently encounters secularized forms of Islam and Muslim Marxists.

"Folk" or "popular" Islam, on the other hand, is not just another subsystem. It is, in fact, an animistic substrate that underlies all these variants. Indeed, it existed long before Islam emerged in A.D. 610, and has profoundly shaped every aspect of Muslim life since. The result is that the varied forms of Islamic religious expression today have roots far beyond those within classical Islam. The division is between "high" or "ideal" Islam and "low," "folk" or "popular" Islam. As a result, throughout the world radical differences can even be perceived within the forms, functions and meanings of "ideal" Islam when contrasted with "folk Islam."

Folk Islam has a different authority base than that of orthodox Islam. Its origins can be traced to traditions and to subsequent shaping by variations in the interpretation of the Quran. Local religious practitioners are the power brokers within Muslim villages. They hold unquestionable control over the lives of people. They often accumulate great wealth and prestige

through their sale of amulets, their contracted service as fortune-tellers, and their role in the healing of disease. They provide love potions, assistance in divination, magical cures for disease. They guarantee protection against enemies, whether human or demonic. These practitioners meet the immediate and existential needs of the people, helping them through times of disease, death, destruction and the other imponderable crises of life.

In short, they hold power, real and imagined, and exercise it in ways that bring people under their control. The role played by the dominant village leader or sheikh in settling local disputes likewise became a decisive antecedent to the credibility of the folk practitioner, since the two invariably supported one another in village activities.

Folk religion practices within popular Islam have been passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition. Volumes have been written on their existence, primarily in Arabia, during the period preceding the inception of Islam. From W.H.T. Gairdner's first effort (*The Reproach of Islam*, 1920) and those of Christian workers in the early 1900s, such as Samuel M. Zwemer (*Influence of Animism*, 1920), the emergence of anthropologically informed missionaries writing from their own personal observations and experiences has established folk Islam as an animistic substratum (e.g., B. Musk, "Hunger of the Heart" in *Gospel and Islam*, ed. D. McCurry, 1979; P. Parshall, *Bridges to Islam*, 1983). It is significant that newspapers published throughout the Muslim world today make no attempt to challenge or hide its realities.

The historical development of folk Islam

An examination of Arabia's polytheistic and animistic pre-Islamic culture, coupled with its evolution throughout subsequent centuries up till the present, will confirm the existence and interpenetration of this particular animism throughout this long period. Such a historic presentation presses one to confront questions such as: When and how did folk religion enter Islam? Has it become an integral part of Islam throughout its existence? Does it exist today?

The early development of this phenomenon within Islam itself is the result of a borrowing and assimilation process that began at the very dawn of Arabian history. This religious development was interrelated with every element within Arab culture. In addition, the shaping of the social life of Arabs was influenced by material factors. These include the geography of the country in which Arab society lives, the techniques known to them, and their relations with neighboring societies. In any material environment a particular social system will emerge that seems most congenial to its people.

In the Arabia of pre-Islamic times the simple family of one man, one woman and several children would not have constituted a viable unit. Meeting the needs and crises of life in that harsh environment demanded larger social units — the extended family, the clan and the tribe. Arab communities emerged that were held together by loyalty to a local leader or by descent from a common ancestor. In the absence of any central government, each community was self-contained, with its own authority structure. Each community had its own religious center and adopted its own stone idol or tribal stone. More often than not

"The religious activity of the animists influenced (Mohammad) though he verbally rejected them."

each household often had its own household "fetish" stone.

Topographical conditions produced a pastoral people of nomadic lifestyle. Overpopulation and adverse weather conditions inevitably increased poverty. With poverty came the nomadic Arab penchant for military aggression against those communities controlling the more fertile lands to the north. Raids on vulnerable communities often resulted in intermarriage with conquered peoples. As a result an ethnically mixed population came into being. When the religious beliefs and practices of Islam were being developed, they tended to assimilate into the already developed Arab folk religious system.

Pre-Islamic Arabic culture was based on agriculture and the spice trade. It was the spice trade particularly that furthered social intercourse between desert Arabs and other peoples. Religious assimilation increased as Arabs exposed themselves to the peoples of captured areas and their religious expressions. Mecca and other active centers of commerce developed on flourishing trade routes. These centers organized fairs and pilgrimages to further their commercial ventures. Folk religion was inevitably exploited to promote commerce, and polytheistic idolatry was prominent at these commercial centers.

The many struggles between Persia and the Byzantine empires exposed these Arabs to three major forms of Christianity — Monophysite, Syriac and Nestorian. Jewish communities were also encountered. For centuries Arabia had been the home of Jews and Christians. Early in his career, Mohammad was greatly affected by the teachings which were common to both religious groupings. He also could not fail to note the many folk religion practices of the day, particularly the use of amulets by Jews and

Christians alike. The religious activity of the animists influenced him though he verbally rejected them. In addition, Arab folk religion was profoundly influenced by a variety of extraneous Judeo-Christian practices.

Islam adapts folk religion

Pagan beliefs and practices from the pre-Islamic period were readily assimilated into Islam. They have survived to this day. Edward Westermarck notes that

Some of them have been...absorbed by Islam, others merely exist side by side in native ritual and belief, occasionally under lukewarm protests from the orthodox (*Pagan Survivals*, 1933).

Scholars writing on this subject are in agreement that two factors existed which explain the persistence of animistic forms in Islam today. The first arises from Mohammad's personal influence and the second from the cultures encountered in his military conquests. Westermarck continues:

Generally speaking, the survival may be traced to two main sources: first, the Arabic paganism prevalent at the time when Mohammad appeared as the founder of a new religion, and secondly, ideas and practices current in the countries to which it spread (1933, 13).

The Muslim expansion and conquest of lands beyond the Arabian heartland allowed for interfacing with many peoples and their religious beliefs and practices. An inevitable exchange of religious ideas took place with all conquered peoples. An easy toleration of both Muslims and foreign religious beliefs and practices, many of them animistic, resulted in

their uncritical incorporation into "popular" Islam.

A number of factors must also be identified as essential to our understanding of why monolithic Islam broke down around the ninth century, and from then on evolved into a variety of distinctly separate Islamic civilizations. These various patterns of Islamic civilization emerged after nomadic invaders from outside the Arab world joined themselves to the existing milieu and began contributing modifications derived from their own particular folk religion and practices. Then too, provincial areas in the larger empires eventually became strongly autonomous under the leadership of restless local rulers.

In addition, extensive trade between cities provided the necessary opportunity for the accelerated absorption of various "folk" religious forms into urban Islam. This growing urbanization was inevitable, since the cities became centers of political stability. By the 12th century Islam had penetrated deeply into many areas that formerly had been peripheral. This meant an additional interfacing with new local "folk" religions, and the absorption of many of their practices into Islam.

At the beginning of the 16th century the "Iranian Revival" culminated in the creation of a large and powerful Islamic Persian empire. Its "folk" religion inevitably moved outward with the spread of this political hegemony and was increasingly absorbed into Arabic thought and religion.

The rise and subsequent flourishing of Sufism was among the most important of all factors. Sufism was the dominant form of Islamic mysticism. It had both "high" and "low" forms, comparable to "high" and "low" Islam. Sufism became the

"The folk Islam practitioner's authority depends largely on his proven power to deal with the spirit world..."

vehicle for some of Islam's deepest religious thought and expression.

It was inevitable that in the interplay of diverse peoples and their cultures great varieties of local religious residue shaped the "official" folk Islam. When Islam interfaced with these additional cultural forces and absorbed their religious practices, the result was syncretistic. Indeed, the emergence of local charismatic and pious political leaders also served to authenticate the folk practitioners and thereby added to their authority and influence.

Phenomenological development

To understand the varied animistic substrata within folk Islam we need to understand its phenomenological dimensions. Classical Islam ("high religion") is an explanation system that focuses on transcendent issues. It seeks to deal with questions of ultimate origin, purpose in life, and the ultimate destiny of peoples. Consequently, its concerns are cosmic, and deal with other-worldly realities, such as Allah and angels.

Dr. Paul Hiebert recently stated: On the "little tradition" level there are mosques, schools and governments; local festivals and birth, visitation, marriage and death rites; and local theologies. On the "great tradition" level there are great centers such as Mecca and Cairo, advanced seminaries, monastic orders, and missionary agencies. Throughout the leaders are priests and prophets, many of whom are formally trained in orthodox beliefs ("Folk Islam," unpublished paper, 1987, 2).

In sharpest contrast, folk Islam is an explanation system that deals with the realities existing in this world. It focuses on the problems of immediate, everyday life. It deals with crises:

disease, death, drought, the question of well-being, guidance in decisions and in interaction with the spirit world. Belief systems are handed down through oral tradition from father to son, mother to daughter, and master to apprentice. Folk Islam is informally organized, linked with persons or places possessing intrinsic power or blessing (*baraka*). They are often not highly institutionalized. "There are few formal institutions, but many shrines, sacred places, amulets, medicines and rites" (Hiebert, 1987, 2). The folk Islam practitioner's authority depends largely on his proven power to deal with the spirit world, to heal and to discern the future, rather than on any hierarchical position. His dominant concern is to meet felt needs.

The meaning of life and death

All Muslim Arabs are faced with the meaning of life and the inevitability of death. This means they have to come to terms with bodily disease, personal failure, the breakdown of interpersonal relationships and natural disasters. Islamic society must provide and maintain meaning in life. Explanation systems are required to account for misfortunes, diagnose their causes and find methods of coping with them. Life must have purpose. No culture can long avoid such questions as: What is the meaning of life here and now? Why are we here?

Furthermore, questions on ultimate matters must be set forth within the context of the everyday "here and now" of life. A measure of balance must be achieved between all the forces surrounding Muslims, whether good or evil. They must be able to control their social and physical environments. They must have some

way to secure guidance for their own lives. Hence, they seek recourse to magic — inherent in all folk religion — to resolve these human problems. They believe that through the manipulation of "power" or the control of hostile or benevolent spiritual beings, both this-worldly and other-worldly, they will obtain the answers they need.

The attempts of ordinary Arab Muslims to live their lives to ensure personal advantage is perhaps best observed at times when life is precarious in its balance. Such occasions are provided by the rites of passage (cyclical crises) through which all people must pass. They provide excellent examples of Muslim attempts to maintain balance in a world which threatens disequilibrium or chaos. Muslim efforts to control "power" and "beings" are very revealing. Life itself is a complexity of several sharply demarked transition stages, from its inception to death. The entrance upon these states is marked by rites of passage leading to inevitable transformation realities made visible through rituals.

At the onset of each transitional stage, the appropriate practitioner is summoned to seek the help of the suitable "power" or "being" allegedly able to carry the Muslim safely to the next state. He brings the paraphernalia deemed necessary to control the proceedings. In addition, he stipulates the particular activities that his Muslim "client" must carry out, such as visits to a saint's tomb on auspicious days, or special vows repeated to a specific saint coupled with the promise of remuneration to the practitioner, thereby guaranteeing the realization of the "client's" desires and needs. Prophylactics are simultaneously employed to repulse evil "power" and evil beings. These may include charms, metal shapes,

"If there is one theme that dominates the Muslim it is the reality of power."

variously colored cloth and clothing, and the burning of special incense.

Ritual purity is invariably required on these occasions, such as would particularly be the case in preparing the dead for burial or in the delivery of a child. In these two cases, certain ablutions are followed by those in attendance. The deceased are thus cared for, and the mother and child will subsequently be required to follow prescribed purification rites. Taboos are observed to prevent imbalance during all transitional periods, when the possibility of disaster is high. In the majority of these cases all ritually unclean people are kept away. Attempts are thereby made to deceive the *jinn* (demons) and to ward off the evil eye. Baleful realities are particularly malevolent during times of potential disaster.

Muslims, along with all other peoples, are curious to ascertain what the future holds, and therefore seek constant recourse to fortune-tellers. They desire to peer into the future in search of answers to questions concerning the unknown — whether past, present or future — questions that bear on possible success or failure, questions that address the planning of one's life. Fortune-tellers are essential if one would know the sex of an unborn child, or find a suitable spouse for a child, or succeed in business, or pass a school examination.

Divination in folk Islamic practice concerns those activities undertaken to ascertain guidance through omens, astrology, magic and the spirits of one's ancestors. In contrast, the use of vows, oaths, curses and blood sacrifices constitute attempts to manipulate impersonal power or spirit beings to ensure either deliverance from problems or success in special undertakings.

Muslim Arabs strive to live out their live in relationship to this-worldly as

well as other-worldly realities that personally impinge on them. In their desire to control fate they automatically reach after all available resources, believing that through them a life in harmony and in balance will be possible. In times of possible disequilibrium most Muslims energetically seek to control the "power" and "beings" available to them through these special activities. All this seems perfectly reasonable to their worldview, however strange and irrational such strenuous activity may appear to outsiders.

Conclusion

If there is any one theme that dominates the Muslim it is the reality of power. Islam arose as a protest against idolatry, and as a call to people everywhere to worship Allah, the one supreme God. The Quranic revelation claims to be the final unfolding of Allah's word to humankind and provides to those who submit themselves unconditionally to it — His divine will — a complete system of faith and behavior that allegedly supersedes the revelations given earlier to Jews and Christians.

Islam is an easily understood religion, for, on the surface, it provides the securities of both dogmatic theology and communal identity. But beneath its simplicity of design, and despite the sublime confidence of its devotees, it is accompanied by a sub-surface world of menacing realities with which its formal expressions of security are unable to cope. Upon exploring this world we encountered a complex, variegated mass of beliefs and practices that are as diverse in their origin as the various cultures (more than 5,000!) in which Islam has taken root. This is the world of charms and incantations, demons and angels, fears and magic. Through recourse to

these the average Muslim hopes to surmount the crises of life — oppression, sickness and death.

Indeed, the sheer remoteness orthodox theologies have ascribed to Islam's Allah has accentuated the average Muslim's need for magic. If Allah's hand is not near to protect and heal, if his eyes are indifferent to the hostile forces that menace the lives of his devotees, then charms and spells and curses and incantations must be enlisted against them. Only through such manipulatory procedures will peace of mind, health of body, and harmony within families and communities be assured.

Illness or injuries do not just occur. They befall victims, at particular times and in specific ways, because of identifiable hostile factors, such as the evil eye, an enemy's curses, malevolent spirits or other menacing realities. This view of causality, in its relation to disease, requires response, or there will be no relief, no cure. The practices employed to counteract them may appear strange and irrational, for the Christian has been warned against the use of charms, amulets, talismans, herbs, divination, magic and sorcery. ■

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"The Four Spiritual Laws and Evangelism Explosion simply will not work for the vast majority of Muslims."

Introduction

From page 5

Muslims, the largest religious group outside the Church. A response to the Commission must include them.

We are also told that the Dome of the Rock is on Mount Moriah, where Abraham brought his son to sacrifice — a story shared with Muslims. That day Abraham's son was willing to give up all his ambition and wealth to be a dead sacrifice. God let him be a living sacrifice; what was given up for self could now be used for God. It will take the same dedication for us, the children of Abraham by faith, to answer the call that comes from the minaret of al-Aqsa Mosque five times a day — "Come to salvation" — for salvation is in the rejected Stone. ■

Islam in America

From page 9

having nightmares because their Jewish and Christian classmates harass them.

Much needs to be done to educate the American population on Islam and Muslims in our midst. A large part of the problem is that we do not understand them, and it seems to be human nature to mistreat those we do not understand. This burden, of course, rests most heavily on the church.

The church's opportunity

I am certain that the influx of Muslims to the United States has happened with God's full knowledge. Though it is important for us to understand them, understanding is

not enough. Could it be that God expects his people to reach out to these Muslim nations, who will — according to Revelation 7:9 — be among the throng represented at God's throne in eternity?

Converts from Islam and ethnic national Christians are reaching out to Muslims in Southern California and Houston, to name two places. These Christians are probably seeing more fruit than cross-cultural witnesses in the United States.

But churches must also get involved in this opportunity. Though mobilizing churches for this effort is a difficult task, more has to be done. The church has been less than successful in sending laborers overseas to these people, but we have a chance to improve the record at home.

Christians need to be trained to understand the Islamic faith, learning how Muslims view the world and how we may effectively minister to them the truth of Jesus Christ. The Four Spiritual Laws and Evangelism Explosion simply will not work for the vast majority of Muslims.

Maybe what we need most is vision: a heart that sees Muslims the same way God sees them — and all peoples — with compassion and brokenness. ■

Encounters in History

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languages in two universities (Beck, *History*, 1982, 393). Should any in our own day need patience, this was finally achieved only two years before his death (*Ibid.*).

The encounter today

The burden of relationships today between these two faiths is that Muslim people should see Christians as they were meant to be seen, and

experience the Church as truly the Body of Christ. It is also just as true that Christians, in many places, still need to discover the virtues and truth about Islam and Muslim people. It is not easy. It has never been. Our efforts to understand continue to be handicapped by a distorted presentation of the Muslim world. This negative legacy of history is being reinforced daily by events that result in caricatures of both sides rather than in true images.

Yet for all the difficulties there are signs of progress. While the theological struggle continues, much more attention is being given to common ground rather than to heating up the old polemics that have been mutually destructive. Human issues have drawn Muslim people into a common world family where leaders of nations, Christian and Muslim, now stand with each other on more level ground.

History has taught us that the changes do not come evenly or quickly. Just as in many ways Hendrik Kraemer had a unique and sometimes lonely role in the period of a declining colonialism, so the stalwarts of a much earlier history had to stand against the status quo. They were not always right. It is easy to judge their methods, just as judgment on our shortcomings will surely come from those who will follow us. But they laid down precedents which are foundational for approaching the Muslim world today: direct involvement with persons, relationships that are long term and are built on deeds as well as words, commitment to study and knowledge, willingness to be involved deeply with Islam with a readiness to be misunderstood by our own side, strength to criticize in truth while not

losing touch with lives and, in the end, to be given totally to the demands of the Cross, and to declare his grace openly.

Today Christians are taking these principles of constructive encounter more seriously than ever before. It is a mission road that we travel with much more confidence because these saints have gone before us. ■

Muslim Spirituality

From page 18

social and political structures in order to assure spiritual values.

Many of my reservations about the Islamic brand of spirituality have been evident. More basic than these concerns is the clash between the doctrine of Islamic and Christian soteriology. But the discussion is outside the purview of this writing.

I consider it a privilege to have spent half of my life among Muslims. I have wept and laughed with my Muslim friends. I have been exhilarated and depressed by their behavior. Their religion, at varying times and in varying circumstances, has challenged me, annoyed me, frustrated me, and dumbfounded me. Muslims have provided many new and instructive experiences for me. To them I am eternally grateful. My life is richer and much fuller because of my walk among them. ■

Women in Islam

From page 21

efforts. Women have control of the information on which important decisions are based. Society recognizes how significant the role of wife and mother is in day-to-day activities. In many areas, if a woman

stays single for a length of time, or if she begins to become economically independent, she will be labeled a prostitute.

Conclusion

In this presentation of various women from different geographic areas and social classes, we have tried to look through their eyes to gain insight into their perspectives. We have seen what kinds of expectations each has, and how she relates to men and to other women in her own society. Similarities such as modesty and religious commitment, and differences such as goals and dress have been observed. Through contrasting four women with different perspectives and focusing on some specific variables, it is obvious that one must be careful not to generalize or stereotype Muslim women. ■



FOCUS ON FULLER

Fuller and Ecumenism by Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.

On November 2 this year Roman Catholic Archbishop Roger M. Mahony spoke in Fuller's chapel service. Not since Cardinal Timothy Manning's visit in 1973 has the archbishop of Los Angeles spoken at Fuller. President David Allan Hubbard invited Archbishop Mahony to speak on ways in which the Roman Catholic Archdiocese and evangelicals in Southern California might more easily reach out to one another.

Earlier in the year Dr. Hubbard and the archbishop agreed to establish an ongoing discussion over issues of mutual concern. The result was the formation of the Southern California Roman Catholic/Evangelical Committee, composed of representatives from both communities.

The committee is co-chaired by Monsignor Royale Vadakin and Dr. Richard Mouw, and overseen by the Archdiocese's Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. Of particular interest to the committee at the present time are issues relating to Hispanics and youth. Dialogue has thus far focused upon greater understanding on both sides, as well as on issues of nominality among Christians, and the relationship between Christian confession and culture.

As a point of entry into the Fuller community, Archbishop Mahony chose to address himself to several of the articles which appeared in the March 1988 issue of *Theology, News and Notes*. This issue, devoted to a discussion on ecumenism, included the perspectives of Fuller faculty

members, a Roman Catholic student, a Roman Catholic priest, and the general secretary of the World Council of Churches.

Archbishop Mahony did not understate the differences which separate the Roman Catholic and evangelical communities. But he challenged the seminary community to "walk courageously in expressing and respecting the other," thereby making it "more faithful to the call that is deeply and uniquely (its) own." While there are people who believe that ecumenical discussions lead to a lowering of standards, Mahony said, it is the uncompromising personal and corporate integrity engendered by discussion which brings about understanding and cooperation. All who engage in dialogue must be able to articulate who they are, what they believe, and how they live it out. But each party in the discussion must have the right to speak for itself.

Because of past histories, Roman Catholics and evangelicals may find it more helpful to *begin* a meaningful rapprochement by looking at *issues* rather than *tenets*, *mutual service* rather than *doctrines*. The old ecumenical adage, "Doctrine divides; service unites," may be a helpful model. Both parties should seek to dispel outdated "labels, caricatures and put-downs," Mahony said. This will facilitate cooperation and true reciprocity at both "grass roots" and "high levels," an approach which may prove especially helpful in relation to the Hispanic community.

Reflecting upon the winds of change since Vatican II, and the new breath of the Spirit in the Roman Catholic Church, Archbishop Mahony held open the door to greater cooperation. He pointed out that "Roman

Catholics are not monolithic," and that Roman Catholic involvement in ecumenism is merely in the "infancy stage." But precisely because the Spirit is blowing through the Church, one can expect greater cooperation. The archbishop highlighted the work of the committee as indicative of that. He also suggested that "respect life" issues, such as abortion and euthanasia, and mutual concerns over violence hold promise for collaboration. Similarly, issues on "war and peace, economic development, anti-apartheid and other racist issues" hold promise.

The archbishop invited members of the Roman Catholic/Evangelical Committee and selected evangelical youth specialists to participate in the Archdiocesan Youth Day next April 20, at the Anaheim Convention Center. He also expressed his openness to official Roman Catholic presence in a similar "gospel-based youth ministry event in the life of Fuller."

As the committee continues its work, the prayer and support of the whole Fuller community is solicited. We take this opportunity to thank Archbishop Mahony for participating in the life of the seminary this November, and pray that in time unity in the Lord will be greater than those things which currently divide us.

Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.

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