

3-1-1992

Theology, News and Notes - Vol. 38, No. 03

Fuller Theological Seminary

J. Dudley Woodberry

Dean Gilliland

Marsha S. Haney

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/tnn>

 Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Fuller Theological Seminary; Woodberry, J. Dudley; Gilliland, Dean; and Haney, Marsha S., "Theology, News and Notes - Vol. 38, No. 03" (1992). *Theology News & Notes*. 113.

<https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/tnn/113>

This Periodical is brought to you for free and open access by the Fuller Seminary Publications at Digital Commons @ Fuller. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theology News & Notes by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Fuller. For more information, please contact archives@fuller.edu.

THEOLOGY, NEWS AND NOTES

The Crescent ... and the Cross

FULLER
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

MARCH 1992

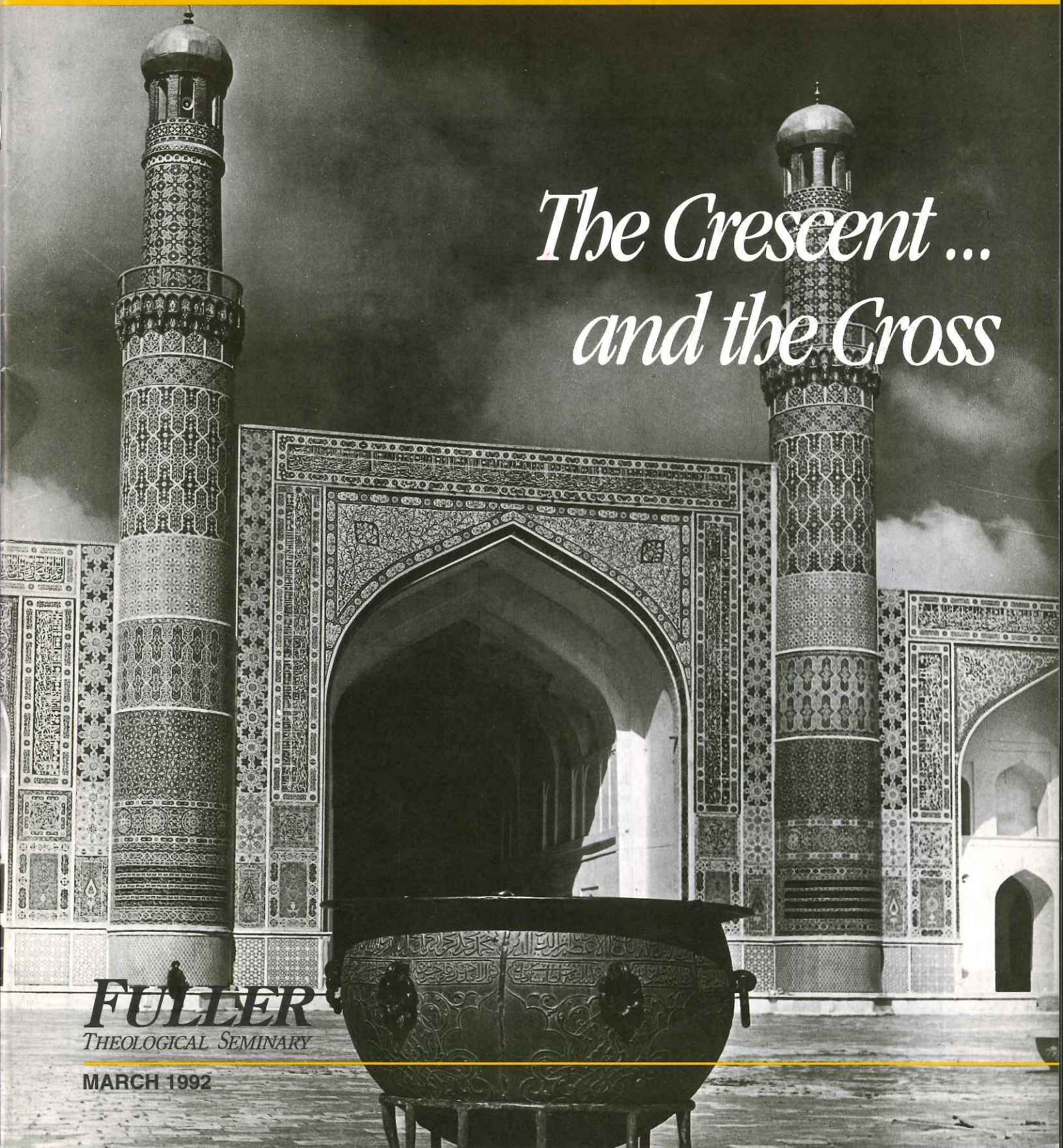


Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION: Muslim-Christian Encounter

J. DUDLEY WOODBERRY • Page 2

THE MIDDLE EAST: Crescent, Cross, and Plowshare

J. DUDLEY WOODBERRY • Page 4

AFRICA: Turning the Tide in Nigeria

DEAN GILLILAND • Page 6

THE WEST: African American Muslims

MARSHA S. HANEY • Page 8

SOUTHEAST ASIA: Parable in Muslim Dress

MARTIN GOLDSMITH • Page 10

SOUTH ASIA: Vegetables, Fish, and Messianic Mosques

SHAH ALI with J. Dudley Woodberry • Page 12

Published for the Fuller Theological Seminary Alumni/ae March 1992
Volume XXXVIII/Number 3 USPS627220

Editorial Board:

James H. Morrison, Th.M. Chairman
Colleen Benson, Ph.D.
Frederic Bush, Ph.D.
Ron Kernaghan, Ph.D.
Robert P. Meye, D.Theol.
William E. Pannell, D.D.
Marguerite Shuster, Ph.D.
Robert L. Toms, Esq.

Managing Editor: Janice E. Ryder
Editor: Linda Regensburger

A publication of Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California 91182.
Published four times a year in March, June, October and December. Second-class postage paid at Pasadena, California.

The editorial content of *Theology, News and Notes* reflects the opinions of the various authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the views of Fuller Theological Seminary.

©1992 by Fuller Theological Seminary and produced in limited quantities for the alumni/ae.

Postmaster: Send change of address to Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA 91182.

INTRODUCTION: Muslim-Christian Encounter

BY J. DUDLEY WOODBERRY

The first issue of *Theology, News and Notes* devoted to Islam (December 1988) contained an article by Dean Gilliland entitled "Encounters in History," which focused on three historical encounters between Muslims and Christians — with St. Francis, Fra Rinaldo de Monte Croce, and Raymond Lull. The present issue seeks to update these by case studies of different forms of encounter from the major parts of the Muslim world — the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, and the West. Each article describes phenomena which can be observed in other regions.

ENCOUNTERS GEOGRAPHICALLY

The Islamic resurgence is analyzed in the article on the Middle East, but local factors influence the form it takes. In Central Asia, the resurgence has expressed itself in Muslim resistance to Russification, in friction between ethnic-religious groups (as between the Muslim Azerbaijanis and the Christian Armenians) and in attempts at autonomy or independence by Uzbeks, Kirghis, and Kazakhs. The success of the Afghan *mujahidin* against the Russian occupation likewise showed the tenacity of the religious elements in society.

Muslim resurgence in South Asia has been seen first in the establishment of Pakistan as a Muslim nation in 1947, and then in the struggle between the fundamentalists and moderates.

The moderates possessed greater power until Zia ul-Haq and the right wing grasped control and attempted to institute Shari'a Law. The struggle has continued between the more secular Benazir Bhutto and the Islamic Democratic Alliance which replaced her.

In Southeast Asia, resurgent Malaysian Muslims in several provinces were able to ban the use of certain "Muslim" words like "Allah" by non-Muslims — words which historically were used by Jews and Christians before they were used by Muslims. In Indonesia, the largest Muslim country, fundamentalists have not been able to create a Muslim state. This resurgence has also been evident in the Philippines where Muslims have supported the Moro Movement for autonomy or independence in Mindanao, the only place where they are a majority.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, both Islam and Christianity are expanding rapidly at the expense of African tribal religions. This resurgence has been evident in countries where rivalry between the two faiths is most keenly felt. Thus, Muslims in Nigeria, for example, tried to follow the lead of the Sudan in instituting Shari'a Law. Likewise, in 1987, there were riots which led to the burning of more than one hundred churches in Nigeria, and to the more recent troubles described by Dean Gilliland.

Emigration of Christians in the Middle East is creating a dwindling Christian presence. In Central Asia, Christians and Muslims have viewed each other

as colleagues against atheistic Communism, and there is great spiritual hunger among both groups. But, as the Islamic republics gain more control of their own affairs, there is a tendency among some to restrict non-Muslim evangelism.

In South Asia, there is responsiveness to the gospel among many Muslims who have suffered from their co-religionists and have had their physical needs met by Christians alone, as described by Shah Ali. In Southeast Asia, the animistic Abangan Muslims of Java continue to become Christians in large numbers, but the Malaysian government still restricts evangelism. This restriction adds impetus for creative witness, such as described by Martin Goldsmith.

In Europe and Britain, Muslim immigrants have not integrated well into mainstream society, but second generation North Africans in France are responsive to Christians who care for their needs. Muslims continue to immigrate to the United States, and African-Americans continue to convert, as Marsha Haney notes. However, many Caucasians who converted to Islam have drifted away.

FORMS OF ENCOUNTER

A number of factors are evident in the forms of Muslim-Christian encounter. Marsha Haney points out the stress on ethnic roots which is made by Muslim preachers to African Americans. Ethnicity can hinder conversion when ethnicity and religion are related. Historically, ethnic barriers hindered the spread of Christianity from Christian

Armenians to Muslim Turks in Turkey and from Christian Assyrians to Muslim Persians in Iran. On the other hand, the lack of ethnic barriers between Christian and Muslim Javanese has facilitated conversion.

When such ethnic and cultural barriers exist, the need for contextualization is highlighted — that is, the expression of faith in culturally familiar forms. The putting of the message in Muslim cultural forms is borne out in the articles by Shah Ali and Martin

"... when people suffer injustice, it provides an opportunity for Muslims and Christians and Jews to work together for justice and peace."

Goldsmith, as does the remarkable growth of the church in South Asia, where "Muslim" forms of worship are utilized, though all were originally borrowed from Jews and Christians.

Traditionally, Islam is a total way of life including politics. As a result, where Muslims are a majority, Christians often feel tolerated rather than equal. Where Muslims and Christians are in roughly equal proportions, the political and social rivalry can become intense, as described in the article on Nigeria.

On the other hand, when people suffer injustice, it provides an opportunity for Muslims and Christians and Jews to work together for justice and peace, as encouraged in the article on the Middle East. Shah Ali adds to the concern for justice and peace a

concern for physical and spiritual needs. Such a wholistic approach in Christian encounters with Muslims not only expresses the breadth of Kingdom concerns, but is seen as relevant to the Muslim, who sees religion as applying to all of life.

J. DUDLEY WOODBERRY, integrator of this issue of *Theology, News and Notes*, is associate professor of Islamic studies and dean-elect of the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary. He is a graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary (M.Div., 1960), the American University of Beirut, Lebanon (M.A., 1963) and Harvard University (Ph.D., 1968). He has ministered in Lebanon, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia and has been a consultant to the White House, the U.S. State Department and other governmental agencies and international corporations relative to Islam. He is editor of *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road* (MARC/World Vision, 1989) and *Where Muslims and Christians Meet: Area Studies* (Zwemer Institute, 1989).



THE MIDDLE EAST: Crescent, Cross, and Plowshare

BY J. DUDLEY WOODBERRY

The Old Testament highlights the image of God's people beating their swords into plowshares (Isa. 2:4) and alternatively beating their plowshares into swords (Joel 3:10). Repeatedly throughout the history of the Muslim-Christian encounter, blacksmiths have been busy beating each into the other — sometimes forming the blade into a crescent-shaped scimitar for a Muslim, or the handle into the shape of a cross for a Christian. Yet in the aftermath of both the Cold and Gulf Wars, we now have an opportunity to beat both of these swords, despite their embellishments, into plowshares in the Middle East.

Three phenomena have special significance for Muslim-Christian encounter within the present Middle East context. The first is the resurgence of Islam, which has come to be symbolized by the crescent. The second is the ongoing Middle East peace process, symbolized by the plowshare. And the last is the opportunity for Christian witness, symbolized by the cross. Each draws upon ancient memories.

THE CRESCENT: THE ISLAMIC RESURGENCE

The new vitality in the Muslim world is not restricted to any region, legal or theological division, or even socioeconomic class, although its major grassroots support is from the lower and middle classes. There are different attitudes concerning this revival, both outside and within the Muslim community, and there are different perspectives within that community itself.

Islamic sentiment has been evidenced by major gains made by

fundamentalist groups in recent elections in Jordan, Egypt, and Algeria, and by popular support of Saddam Hussein from Morocco to Indonesia when he evoked religious symbols.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

As there is a dark and a light side of the moon, so there are different views of today's Muslim resurgence. Outsiders have focused on the dark side — militancy and terrorism, the Khomeini revolution, the assassination of Sadat by fundamentalists, attempts to

“... Islam is a major ingredient in the nationalism of many recently-independent Muslim countries.”

impose Shari'a religious law in countries like Pakistan and Sudan, death threats against the author Salman Rushdie, and religious fanaticism during the Gulf War.

Insiders, on the other hand, have understandably focused on the bright side as evidenced by the words fundamentalists use to describe themselves or their movement in general — renaissance (*ba'ath*), awakening (*sahwah*), revival of religion (*ihya al-din*), fundamentalism (*usuliyyah* and *salafiyya*), periodic renewal of faith (*tajdid*), reform (*islah*), original ones (*asliyyin*), and the

pious (*mutadayyinin*). These terms are in addition to the titles of their individual societies or parties such as the Muslim Brethren (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*), the Islamic Association (*Jama'at-i-Islami*), or Those of the Ancestors (*Salafiyya*).

The fundamentalists have been the most visible part of the resurgence and consequently shall receive our major attention, but they are not the only segment of the Muslim community to share in the revival. This new life has been facilitated by such factors as petrodollars and independence in many Muslim nations. The petrodollars have provided for mosques and other religious institutions for all the population, and Islam is a major ingredient in the nationalism of many recently-independent Muslim countries. The revival has, consequently, spread beyond the fundamentalists.

The various kinds of Muslims might be clustered into three major groupings. The first, and most diverse, are the *adaptionists* or *revisionists*, where the pristine faith has been adapted to changing circumstances. Historically, in the mainline branches of the Muslim community, the adaptation was done by religious scholars qualified to “exert themselves” (*ijtihad*) to make an opinion (*ra'y*) based on an analogy (*qiyas*) from the Qu'ran and the Practice of Muhammad (*Sunna*). The decisions became authoritative when a consensus (*ijma'*) had developed among the qualified scholars. Details varied between the recognized schools of thought.

Other *adaptionists* included mystics (Sufis), who borrowed freely those ideas from Christians, Buddhists, and Hindus which they felt would help them be brought into union with God. Folk Muslims, in like manner, have adapted their Islamic faith and practice to animism.

Some have rejected the traditional political role of Islam. These are groups such as the Republican Brothers of the Sudan or individuals who hold faith to be a personal matter. Others have

blended their Islamic faith with various secular political or economic philosophies such as nationalism or Marxism (as in “Islamic socialism”). Still others, like Nobel Prize-winning Egyptian author Najib Mahfuz, portray how some who may call themselves Muslims have concluded that religion is futile and God is absent in the complexities of today's world.¹

The second cluster of Muslims are *conservatives*. They believe the door for individual interpretation (*ijtihad*) (hence, development of religion) has been closed for centuries since the recognized schools of law have been established. Sunni Muslims, they believe, must follow one of the established interpretations without questioning (*taqlid*), but, of course, should hold to whatever adaptations were made to Islam during the classical period. For the Shi'ite Muslims, the door for religious development has not been closed because the leaders are believed to be in contact with the Hidden Imam who has a divine light within himself.

The third cluster of Muslims are the *fundamentalists*, who reject the religious accretions of the years and return to the Qu'ran and Practice of Muhammad (*Sunna*) as interpreted by his Companions and the Ancestors (*Salaf*) of the Community.

ITS ROOTS

The sources of the current Muslim resurgence are interrelated like the two ends of a crescent moon. The first is the *sense of trauma* felt in many Muslim communities. The second is the *opportunity to respond* provided by such phenomena as independence and influx of petrodollars. The third is the *historic precedent* of the

periodic revival of the Muslim community after decline, like the waxing and waning of the moon. The 14th century Muslim philosopher of history, Ibn Khaldun, in his *Muqaddima*, noted this cycle occurs about every one hundred years. The final source of resurgence is the *local conditions* which influence the way the resurgence appears as our different localities in the world influence the way the moon appears as it passes over. We shall now look in more detail at each source of the resurgence.

The most important root of the present Islamic resurgence is the trauma Muslims are experiencing. This has grown, first, out

“This sense of trauma in the Muslim world has been heightened by trends in the world at large.”

of the frustration and humiliation of years under *colonialism* — a particularly difficult experience for Sunnis, the majority branch of Muslims, because they had never developed a theology of suffering. If Americans remember the frustration and humiliation of not being able to free forty hostages in Iran after less than forty years of being a superpower, we can appreciate the frustration Muslims felt under non-Muslim rulers after centuries of being the superpower.

This trauma grew, secondly, out of the *search for identity*² which was a legacy of colonialism. Many different peoples had been united politically in the Muslim empires. The colonial powers often drew boundaries ignoring people groups, dividing such peoples as the Kurds, the Baluch, the Pathans, and the Arabs. At the

same time, they introduced nationalistic ideas based on ethnicity and language. As a result, individuals might not know whether they were, for example, basically Muslim, Arab, or Egyptian — each calling for a different combination of loyalties.

These conflicting loyalties have led to *political instability* resulting with rulers who have often resorted to the *suppression of opposition* which has led to deeper divisions. The lack of unity has also contributed to *military failure* against enemies such as Israel with increased disillusionment. The adoption of Western sources for material advancement has resulted in *conflicting values* between those retained by the traditionalists and the Western ones embraced by the modernists. Industrialization, fueled in some cases by petrodollars, has frequently led to a further *polarization of society*, for with the communication explosion, the poor see the rich only getting richer.³

This sense of trauma in the Muslim world has been heightened by trends in the world at large. *Secularism* continues as scientific advances have made God seem less necessary and more materialistic goals have been provided. *Political instability*, with resultant refugees, impacted the Muslim world not only from non-Muslim sources such as the Soviets in Afghanistan and the Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza, but also from Muslim sources such as the Iran-Iraq War. Both internal and external sources of instability were at play in the Gulf War.

Urbanization is leading to the breakdown of traditional values. The *population explosion* is putting increased strain on resources and the infrastructure of developing nations, which include most Muslim countries. The *economic crisis* has resulted from population growth and the widening gulf

— please turn to page 14

AFRICA: Turning the Tide in Nigeria

BY DEAN GILLILAND

Something is happening in Nigeria that has no parallel in the world today. Simply stated, it is the story of a Muslim country which has become dominated by Christians. Taking the African continent as a whole, nowhere are Christians more numerous or more aggressive than in Nigeria. There may be as many as forty-eight million Christians. On the other hand, setting Egypt aside, there are more Muslims in Nigeria than in all other African countries combined — some forty-two million. This has set the stage for a drama between Islam and Christianity that goes far beyond religion. The new balance between religions is changing society and politics and reshaping the national temperament.

THE BACKGROUND

On the Christian side, there was a period of quite decadent and short-lived Christianity which can be traced to the 16th century. This was the work of Portuguese Catholics who came to the West African coast with their trading ships. Modern Christian missions in Nigeria date from the mid-19th century. But, we have to go back to the shadowy history of the 13th and 14th centuries to trace the beginnings of Islam. By any measurement, Islam had a much earlier — and much stronger — hold in Nigeria than did Christianity for roughly six centuries. Another major difference is that Islam arrived from North Africa by way of the desert, settling far inland while Christianity came by sea, settling into the tropical south from coastal centers.

These differences are extremely important to the current situation for three reasons: (1) the

ethnic groups or tribes which were to become associated with each of the religions were (and are) radically different, culturally speaking; (2) the geographic separation in a country which is bigger than Texas and Oklahoma combined has kept the two religions apart and made communication difficult; and (3) the colonial state which developed from this situation complicated

“... there are more Muslims in Nigeria than in all other African countries combined ...”

further both the cultural and religious difference. British colonizers devised a plan to keep Muslims in control of the north, while opening up the south to Christian missions.

A word must be said about northern Nigeria. It truly was the seedbed of Nigerian Islam. Entire ethnic groups became Muslim even though the vast majority were closed to Islam and always resented their British-backed Muslim rulers. Most of these “pagan” masses would later accept Christianity. But, for several generations they were under a kind of totalitarian Islamic state and were erroneously classified as Muslims. This point needs to be

kept in mind because the changes of the past twenty years focus on these two hundred and twenty “minority tribes”, as they were called, who have now made Christianity the majority religion

THE GROWING CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE

There are many ethnic groups in the south, dominated by the Ibo and Yoruba peoples. These great communities have been associated with Christianity for nearly one hundred and fifty years. Unfortunately, because of the reasons mentioned above, the Yoruba (who also have many Muslims among them) and the Ibo considered the northern “tribes” as backward and hopelessly Muslim. When independence came in 1959, the new political structures followed these same lines. The entire north, including the millions who were not Muslims at all, were a numerical majority over the non-Muslim south. Muslims, therefore, have always dominated the federal government. All elected heads of state have been Muslim and all military presidents have been Muslim, with one exception.

Since 1960, Christianity has been growing like the proverbial wildfire. Annually, many thousands among the non-Muslim groups in the north have converted to a variety of Christian churches. While this was the result of an almost apostolic wave of evangelism, it has also been a protest to the long domination by Islam.

The fact is, there has been agitation and conflict for many years. When I first arrived in northern Nigeria as a missionary in 1956, a riot took place in the compound of the district chief who was a Muslim (and a notorious bigot). African Christians from our mission church planned the confrontation to demand that an indigenous, non-Muslim be given the district chieftanship. It was a disorderly affair, ending in the

imprisonment of many Christian leaders and a reinforcement of Muslim rule. Even so, the British district officer in charge confessed to his superiors that, “The conflict between Christians and Muslims is inevitable and, in the long run, Muslims will not succeed.”

Events now show he was right.

MUSLIMS ATTEMPT TO PREVAIL

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Muslims have become more and more innovative in their quite desperate attempts to stay in control. At first, the civil war of the 1960s was in the background since that war was perceived by many as a Muslim-Christian conflict. There has been no census since 1971, so Muslims have been working with the old percentages which were in their favor. They tried to set up the Constitution in such a way which would force the Islamic legal system on the whole country. They secretly registered Nigeria as a Muslim nation through membership in what is known as the Organization of Islamic Conference. These actions were met by strong protests as the growing Christian bloc became adamant in its opposition. Christians among the fragmented tribal units in the north now began working together politically and intensified their evangelistic programs to Muslims.

Meanwhile, a radical fundamentalism was breaking out in the Muslim camp. A Muslim “messiah figure” from neighboring Cameroon began a purge among Nigerian Muslims. His followers all demanded a return to the days of true *jihad* , including killing, if need be, for the sake of Allah. Muslims died at the hands of other Muslims. It was a serious break in the ranks of Nigerian Islam. One day in 1983, more than three hundred Muslims were killed in the sacred precincts of the mosque in Kano City. The more permanent result of this division among Muslims has been the formation of a radical fundamentalist sect within Nigerian Islam which has been responsible for

acts of violence against Christians during the last six years.

THE TURNING OF THE TIDE

Christians, for their part, came together as never before in a new organization which united all churches, including historic denominations and the African indigenous movements. One of the goals of this alliance, called the Christian Association of Nigeria, is to stop the national domination by Muslims. This has finally provided a way for the millions who make up the non-Muslim minorities to work together. It has also helped to

“We have turned our cheeks again and again. Islam understands only the Old Testament.”

reach across the separation between northern and southern Christians.

It was mentioned earlier that a fundamentalist sect among Muslims violently attacked Christians. This has happened on three occasions since 1987. In the first outbreak, innumerable churches were burned in six major cities and many Christians were killed on the spot. Christians took the early rioting against them without retaliation, but they did bring their case to the government. Local elections were held during this stressful period, and Christian after Christian replaced Muslims in local and county posts. Radical Muslim groups continued the pressure. As recently as April 1991, one hundred twenty churches were burned in the city of

Bauchi. This city has always been a Muslim stronghold, but now thousands of Christians live there. An ominous new development resulted from this incident. Because the Nigerian Army is overwhelmingly non-Muslim, soldiers who were quartered in the city took up their guns in what they felt would help the Christian cause. Five thousand Muslims were killed. Supposedly speaking for the Christians, the Army said “We have had enough.”

Just three months ago, the popular healing evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke, was booked to hold public meetings in Kano, invited there by several churches. But Kano is a sacred and special place to Muslims. Even though the Nigerian Constitution contains a clause relative to freedom of religion, Bonnke’s large, highly emotional meetings were objectionable to the Muslim hierarchy. Fearing trouble, the authorities met Bonnke at the airport and ordered him and his team out of the country. Feeling their rights

—Please turn to page 20

DEAN S. GILLILAND is professor of contextualized theology and African studies at the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary. He is a graduate of Houghton College (B.A., 1950), Evangelical Theological Seminary (B.D., 1954), Princeton Theological Seminary (Th.M., 1960), and Hartford Seminary Foundation (Ph.D., 1971). His twenty-two years of missionary service in Nigeria was climaxed with the position of principal of the Theological College of Northern Nigeria. He is the author of *Pauline Theology and Mission Practice* (Baker Book House, 1983), *African Religion Meets Islam* (University Press of America, 1985) and is the editor of *The Word Among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today* (Word Publishing, 1989).



THE WEST: African American Muslims

BY MARSHA S. HANEY

An anguished mother confides her deepest fears to her pastor: she is concerned for her child's salvation. He left home for college as an enthusiastic Christian boy and returned four years later as a young man, Islamic in faith. Another pastor, a national church leader, never speaks of his daughter who long ago decided to embrace Islam as her faith. A twelve-year-old boy, being raised by his Christian grandmother (and whose father is a devoted Muslim), is confused, and demonstrates this as he raises the question in Sunday School: "Who's right and who's wrong?" A young lady meets the man of her dreams. The only problem: she is a Christian, and he is a Muslim.

Here are but a few examples of African American Christians who experience — domestically and religiously — the tension of living in a religiously plural society where Christianity can no longer be considered the only viable religious option for African Americans.

Islam, like Christianity, claims to be a universal religion. The World Community of Al-Islam in the West, under the leadership of Imam Wallace D. Muhammad, is without a doubt, missionary in its outlook. The religion of Islam is very active in the African American community of North America. In fact, the high rate of conversion of African Americans to Islam, coupled with Muslim immigration, makes Islam the fastest growing religion in North America. Because of its rapid growth, it is impacting the African American community more than ever.

Pastors become aware of Muslim family members attending

Sunday morning services on special family occasions and especially funeral services. Occasionally a Christian pastor is called to minister to a Muslim individual or family in time of crisis. Community ministers also have opportunities to observe Muslims and their presence within the community. They know Muslims are making a predominantly positive impact in some neighborhoods and communities,

"... the largest number of American converts to Islam are from the African American population."

particularly in providing leadership to address key social issues, and in portraying sound values. Socially, economically, educationally — and, in recent years, politically — the Islamic presence is being witnessed as never before.

Whether we speak of the mother anguishing over a son who has converted to Islam, or churches seeking to engage in community ministry which desire to understand "these new, inclusive Muslims", or the young lady who wants to know more about Sunni Muslims and what her response should be to the young man who just entered her life, there are three essential questions I hear Christians raising repeatedly as they encounter Muslims (and Islam) in their personal relationships, social interactions and outreach ministries. They are: Who are they? What do they

believe? and How are we to relate to them as Christians?

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AFRICAN AMERICANS AND ISLAM
The African American Muslim is often referred to as the indigenous American Muslim, primarily because the first persons to practice Islam in North America were Africans and African Americans. Even today, the largest number of American converts to Islam are from the African American population. The Islamic influence, which was first introduced to North America in the 17th century through the slave trade, (then numerically estimated as unimportant, and which allegedly dissipated) now claims the allegiance of approximately one million African Americans, according to some estimates. Islam has a long history which has included at least five major historical movements spanning less than a century which have been aimed directly at the African American community.

Arabic speaking Africans were brought to the United States as early as 1717. Muslims continued to be transported from Africa until the mid-19th century. C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya observe that the number of African Muslims brought to North America to serve as slaves constituted as much as 20 percent of the African population on some large southern populations. The slave trade was the first which enabled people of African descent to follow Islamic beliefs and practices in North America.

Noble Drew Ali and his *Moorish Science Temple* (1913-29) became the second major means of disseminating Qur'anic teachings and Islamic beliefs. Since then, there have been at least five major attempts to impart knowledge of the Qur'an and Islamic influences among African Americans: *The Ahmadiyya Movement*, which considers Ghulam Ahmad of India a prophet after Muhammad; *The Islamic Mission of America*

(1924), whose founder, Shaikh Faisal, was a defender of Sunni Islam and often sought to correct Elijah Muhammad and others who held divergent doctrines; *The Hanifi*, which attracted middle-class African Americans, especially athletes such as Muhammad Ali and Kareem Abdul Jabbar; and *The Nation of Islam*, under the leadership of Minister Louis Farrakhan, which advocates Black separatism from white America.

The significance of these "proto-Islamic" groups, to use C. Eric Lincoln's term, is that they have set the stage for orthodox Islam to take root. The current dynamic Islamic movement led by Imam William D. Muhammad is most significant because of its 1975 turn toward orthodoxy, and its acceptance by the Islamic world community. This organization, whose leader sits on a council of imam administrators within the World Muslim Council and has been given the responsibility of certifying all Americans who make the pilgrimage to Mecca, is the largest Muslim movement devoted to Islamic proselytization in the United States today.

Each one of these movements has sought to prove Islam as a relevant and viable religious option available to African Americans. Yet it is only in recent years, as the movement from "Black Muslim" to "Muslim" and from "a prototype Islam" to "orthodox Islam" has occurred, that the African American Christian church has begun to sense the crucial, unique, urgent and unprecedented missionary challenge which Islam has created within the African American community.

WHAT AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSLIMS BELIEVE

The African American community in general has historically accepted its Muslim members without question as an integral part of their community. Since the time of the African Diaspora and the slave trade in North America, racism and race-

related issues have overshadowed religious differences between African American Muslims and Christians. Therefore, it is not uncommon today to have Muslims and Christians within the same family and for Muslim leaders to address Christian congregations. C. Eric Lincoln even relates an example of a wholesale transfer of religious loyalties when a Baptist church in Richmond, Virginia, voted to

"... racism and race-related issues have overshadowed religious differences between African American Muslims and Christians."

become a Muslim temple after listening to a Muslim imam.

As the presence of Islam as a religious influence increases, however, it appears that the Christian community has responded reluctantly and with ambiguity. A common history of racism in North America has contributed to this ambivalent attitude.

A general lack of correct knowledge about Islam as a religious faith and Muslims as religious believers must also be taken into consideration. While African American attitudes toward Islam and Muslims have been basically the same as those of the larger society (influenced by Middle East politics), friendships with Muslims have caused African American Christians to be more accepting of these persons of a different faith. Christians are also aware of the respect that most African Americans give to national Muslim leaders because of

their identification with the community. The growing Islamic presence in the African American community, however, makes it difficult for the Christian to continue to ignore Muslim differences in lifestyle and worship. Lincoln and Mamiya observe,

"The Black Church ... must not underestimate the Islamic challenge on the horizon. Islam is a proven universal religion that is undergoing a worldwide fundamentalist resurgence and the Muslims in Black communities have proven themselves to be highly motivated evangelists." (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990:397).

Having lived in one predominantly Muslim country (the Sudan) where Islamic law permeated the entire life of a people, and in another (the United Republic of Cameroon) where Christian and Muslim populations were approximately equal and the two religions coexisted peacefully, I concur with Lincoln and Mamiya's statement:

— Please turn to page 20

MARSHA SNULLIGAN HANEY is a graduate student in the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary. An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA), she is currently serving as Interim Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Los Angeles. She is a graduate of Johnson C. Smith University (B.A., 1974) Johnson C. Smith Seminary (M.R.E., 1976; M.Div., 1978), Fuller Theological Seminary (Th.M., 1990) and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in cross-cultural studies in the School of World Mission at Fuller. Reverend Haney has pastored churches and served as community minister in Juba (Sudan), Kumba (Cameroon), Detroit, Cleveland and Atlanta for fifteen years. Currently, she is a member of the national African American Evangelism Committee of the Presbyterian Church (USA).



SOUTHEAST ASIA: Parable in Muslim Dress

BY MARTIN GOLDSMITH

The Western mind is frequently accused of being unduly concentrated on conceptual thinking, whereas Eastern cultures tend rather to a more pictorial approach. The Bible, therefore, often stresses teaching through a more pictorial form, although the New Testament, with the increasing influence of Greek thought, includes much of a more conceptual nature. God's revelation of himself in the New Testament is fundamentally through his acts in history, which are then recorded in verbal form. The language of the prophets is graphic, full of imagery and vibrant with activity. It is in form and character poles apart from our traditional works of conceptual systematic theology. Ezekiel in particular uses visual forms.

In the New Testament, also, the message of the Word is taught not only with direct verbal communication but through visual signs and miracles. The structure of John's Gospel interweaves the visual sign and the preached word. The vital significance of the visual is further exemplified in the Book of Acts.

Jesus Himself taught both by deeds and also by words. However, it is important to note that his words were again not merely conceptual, but also conjured up visual imagery and were often in the form of stories and parables. In the context of Asian and Middle Eastern peoples, we may need to follow the teaching pattern of Jesus in speaking through such pictorial language. In many Asian languages, proverbs and stories form the basis of communication. In English, too, we use such

expressions as "out of the frying pan and into the fire" without the need to explain in detail the significance of such a proverb. In Asian languages, there is a far greater use of such expressions, and we need to learn to teach, preach, and express ourselves more in this way.

Jesus particularly used the parabolic form for some of his preaching. He actually states in

"Jesus himself taught both by deeds and also by words."

his early teaching that this was in order that some might not understand! His parables allowed those with ears to hear to understand, while those with closed minds failed to grasp what he was saying. Where hearts are hardened against the gospel, we are instructed not to cast our pearls before swine lest they trample our message under foot.

The need for such parabolic teaching is, however, not only to prevent the gospel from being blasphemed, but apparently also for the sake of our hearers. If they are unprepared for receiving the saving message of Christ, they can only reject it. Rejection of Jesus and His gospel is a hardening process. The more people are put into a position where they have to reject the gospel, the more difficult

it becomes for them to receive Christ later.

ADVANTAGES OF STORYTELLING

I would like to suggest that in hard Muslim areas we may be wise to use this parabolic approach to the preaching of the gospel. It has at least three pragmatic advantages as well as being a biblical form of preaching. First, such preaching may not cause anger, opposition, and rejection of the Lord, though Jesus' later parables, which all could understand, certainly did increase opposition. Even in the most fanatical Muslim society there will be no objection to our telling attractive stories which do not in any way refer to the name of Jesus Christ or to specific Christian doctrine but which may nevertheless introduce people to the sort of questions which will lead to Christ. There is therefore no reason why such preaching should not be engaged in even in core Muslim lands where our traditional forms of preaching would be illegal and impossible.

Secondly, parabolic preaching suits traditional storytelling cultures. The Christian may thus gain a reputation as a storyteller which will be quite popular. People will then travel considerable distances just to hear the stories, and they will then repeat those stories far and near. In this way he or she may be able to prepare a whole society for the gospel.

Thirdly, parabolic preaching is ideal for incarnating Christian teaching in flesh and blood. When I was a missionary in Malaysia, I got in trouble with the police when I evangelized Malays directly rather than Chinese and Indians, but I realized that I could tell stories quite acceptably without incurring political problems. Each week I used to travel down to Singapore by taxi. This meant that I had to queue for a while in my own town and then sit in the taxi for about one and a half to two hours as it drove down to Singapore. It is the custom in

Malaysia to buy just one seat on the taxi, so you share a ride with four other people. Conversation flows easily among the passengers and the driver. Both in the queue before getting on the taxi, and also in the taxi itself, I often used to tell a story. Let me give you a brief example.

Settle yourself back in the taxi and picture yourself speeding through the rubber and palm oil estates of Malaysia with its tropical heat. Next to you, jammed into the back seat, are two Muslims. In front is the driver and one other person.

"HADJI ABDULLAH'S GIFT"

"Did you hear about Hadji Abdullah and his huge gift to the mosque?" I ask.

"No, I don't actually know Hadji Abdullah. Which mosque?"

"Oh, you never heard. Well, let me introduce you to him.

Hadji Abdullah is very wealthy. He owns huge estates — rubber and palm oil, and his house has beautiful carved furniture, lovely spacious rooms, lawns and flower beds in front. Hadji Abdullah decided just recently that he should give a gift to the mosque — for the beautification and care of the mosque and also, of course, for the poor. So Hadji Abdullah went to the telephone to ring up the imam of the mosque.

'Is that you, Imam? This is Hadji Abdullah. Would it be all right if I came to the mosque this evening to give a little gift? I feel I should give a small donation to the mosque. Would that be all right?'

'Of course, Hadji Abdullah; we would be delighted to see you. How kind of you to give us your gift.'

'Imam, perhaps you could arrange for the mosque committee to be there also.'

'Oh, yes, of course, Hadji. They would all be glad to be there to receive you and of course to entertain you and receive your gift. How kind of you. Thank you.'

'All right. When shall I come? Would 7:30 be good?'

'Yes, Hadji. Seven thirty would be fine. We'll look forward very much to seeing you.'

Just before 7:30 that evening Hadji Abdullah called his chauffeur.

'Abdul, I want the car to go to the mosque.'

'Yes, Hadji, certainly. Which car would you like?'

'We'll go in the white Rolls Royce. Yes, the white Rolls Royce.'

'Yes, Hadji, certainly. Would you like it straightaway?'

'Yes, straightaway.'

And so, Hadji Abdullah was driven by his beautifully uniformed

"... picture yourself speeding through the rubber and palm oil estates of Malaysia with its tropical heat."

chauffeur to the local mosque. On arrival, the whole mosque committee was there to greet him with the Imam at the front.

'You are most welcome, Hadji. Do come in.'

They took him around to a room at the back, and entertained him with hot chocolate in the best china. Conversation was polite, and it was clear that everyone was waiting for that special moment when the gift would be presented. Hadji Abdullah was in no hurry but let the conversation move on, to heighten the atmosphere of anticipation. Finally, the critical moment came. Hadji Abdullah was ready to give his gift. Everybody longed to know how much it would be.

He took out of his pocket a large wallet, full of high denomination notes. He looked them through, thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars.

(Back in the taxi I like to take out my own wallet and joke about the fact that actually the money inside it is rather less but

nevertheless a little acting does not go amiss.)

Finally, Hadji took from his wallet notes totaling \$10,000, but of course there was still quite a lot of money left in his wallet, and he retained his white Rolls Royce and other cars and estates and his big house. But he gave \$10,000. Everybody was pleased.

'We shall find this money most helpful, Hadji. We are deeply touched by your piety and by your generosity,' said the Imam.

Everybody smiled. Hadji, too, beamed his delight at the way his money had been so graciously and happily received. With a sense of self-satisfaction Hadji stood up and said, 'Well, I must be going now. I wish you all a very good evening,

—Please turn to page 21

MARTIN GOLDSMITH is a lecturer and tutor at, and international representative of All Nations Christian College in Hertfordshire, England. He is a graduate of Oxford University. With his wife, Elizabeth, he served from 1960-1970 in pioneer evangelism in Singapore and South Thailand, working in lay training and with the Reformed Churches of Indonesia. He pastored a Presbyterian church in Malaysia before returning to Singapore where he trained new missionaries in Asian culture and language. He is author of several books: *What in the World is God Doing?* (Monarch: n.d.); *What About Other Faiths* (Hodder & Staughton: n.d.), *Islam & Christian Witness* (OM: n.d.) and is co-author, with his wife, of *Your Guide to Guidance* (Intervarsity Press: 1982).



SOUTH ASIA: Vegetables, Fish, and Messianic Mosques

BY SHAH ALI
with J. Dudley Woodberry

My Muslim father tried to kill me with a sword when I became a follower of Jesus after comparing the Qu'ran and the Bible. He interpreted my decision as a rejection not only of my faith, but of my family and culture, as well. Historically Christians were largely converts from the Hindu community and had incorporated Hindu words and Western forms into their worship.

In trying to express my faith, I encountered two sets of problems. First, as indicated, Christianity seemed *foreign*. Secondly, attempts by Christians to meet the tremendous human need in the region had frequently led to the attraction of opportunistic, shallow converts and the consequent resentment of the Muslim majority.

CHRISTIAN FAITH IN MUSLIM DRESS

I was able to start dealing with the foreignness of Christianity when a missionary hired me to translate the New Testament using Muslim rather than Hindu vocabulary and calling it by its Muslim name, the *Injil Sharif* ("Noble Gospel"). Thousands of *Injils* were bought, mostly by Muslims, who now accepted this as the "Gospel" of which the Qu'ran spoke. This approach may be supported not only pragmatically by the amazing results but, more importantly, theologically as well. Unlike the Hindu scriptures, the Qu'ran shares a lot of material with the Bible. In fact, most Muslim theological terms were borrowed from Jews and Christians.¹

Subsequently, a graduate of Fuller's School of World Mission

asked me to train twenty-five couples to live in villages and do agricultural development. Only one couple was from a Muslim background. All the others had problems. Muslims would exchange visits with them but would not eat their food until they began to shower in the morning, hence were ceremonially clean by

"When villages have decided to follow Christ, the people continued to use the mosque for worship of God but now through Christ."

Muslim law after sleeping with their spouses.

The Christian couples were called angels because they were so kind, honest, and self-sacrificing, and they prayed to God. However, they were not considered truly religious because they did not perform the Muslim ritual prayer five times a day. Thereafter, we only employed couples who followed Jesus from a Muslim background, and we developed a ritual prayer that retained all the forms and content that Muslims and Christians share but substituted Bible passages for Qu'ranic ones. Little adaptation was necessary, because early Islam

borrowed so heavily from Jewish and Christian practice in the formulation of their "pillars" of religious observance (the confession of faith, ritual prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage).²

Our Muslim neighbors defined "Christianity" as "a foreign religion of infidels"; so we often referred to ourselves as "Muslims" (literally, "submitters" to God). The necessity of submitting to God is certainly Christian (see James 4:7), and Jesus' disciples call themselves "Muslims" according to the Qu'ran (5:111).³

When villages have decided to follow Christ, the people continued to use the mosque for worship of God but now through Christ. Where possible, the former leaders of mosque prayers (*imams*) are trained to continue their role as spiritual leaders.

PERSUASION, POWER, AND PEOPLE

God used other means as well as contextualization to bring Muslims to faith in Christ. On several occasions I have had public discussions with Muslim teachers (*malvis*) and have been able to show that, contrary to popular belief, the Qu'ran does not name Muhammad as an intercessor. Rather, it states that on the judgment day "intercession will not avail, except [that of] him to whom the Merciful will give permission, and of whose speech He approves" (5:109 Egyptian ed./108 Fluegel ed.). But the *Injil* ("Gospel"), which is from God according to the Qu'ran (5:47/51), not only states that God approves of Jesus (e.g., Mt. 3:17) but that he is the *only* intercessor (1 Tim. 2:5).

God has also shown his power through answered prayer — the recovery of a three-year-old girl who, the doctors said, would die in a few hours; the sending of rain and the stopping of flooding; and the appearance of an unknown man to stop a crowd bent on killing an *imam* who followed Christ.

A conscious effort has been made to foster the movement of groups rather than just individuals

to Christ. People have only been baptized if the head of the family was baptized. Effort was made to see that leaders understood the message. A Muslim mystic (Sufi) sheikh, upon learning that the veil of the temple had been rent from top to bottom, threw down his Muslim cap, followed Christ, and brought his followers with him.

Since illiteracy is high, the Bible and training materials are recorded on cassettes, and inexpensive cassette players are made available to the villagers.

There has been persecution. Our training center was closed down. A court case was made against me and three fellow workers. Likewise, there has been friction between the leaders and misunderstanding by other Christian groups. But the movement of people to Christ continues. Most new believers remain in independent Messianic mosques, but some contextualized congregations have joined the major denomination, while still other individuals are absorbed into the traditional, Hindu-background church.

TOWARD RESPONSIBLE SELF-HELP

Besides trying to express our faith in meaningful cultural forms, we have been trying to meet the tremendous human need around us. We want to proclaim the Kingdom and demonstrate its values. Trying to do both presents certain problems. First, there is the problem of using human need for evangelistic purposes — of manipulating people and attracting the insincere. Consequently, we help all the villagers despite their religious affiliation and give no financial help to Jesus mosques or their *imams*.

Secondly, the former colonizer-colonized dependency easily gets transferred to donor-recipient dependency. Thirdly, even the distribution of donated food from abroad may only help in the city, because of the difficulty of distribution, while giving little incentive to the peasants to produce more

because of the artificially reduced price. Fourthly, the introduction of technology may only help those with the skills or the finances to make use of it, while the poorest can just watch the gap between the have and have-nots widen.

To deal with these problems we have followed such common development practices as loaning planting seed to be replaced at harvest time and providing pumps that are paid for from increased productivity. Now, however, we are adapting a program developed in Southeast Asia which should express wholistic Christian concern, deal with the problems outlined, and ensure that the

"... when colleagues and I visited a Southeast Asian country recently, a whole Muslim village began to follow Jesus."

indigenous church remains self-supporting.

The program is training national workers in contextualized church planting and an integrated fish and vegetable cultivation system. The workers are, in turn, sent to needy districts where they are responsible for training local farmers in the easily transferable technology so that they can become self-sufficient. Increased population means less land is available for cultivation, and a poor transportation infrastructure means food must be produced near its consumption.

The intensive food production system was developed elsewhere. In that system, fish ponds are dug and the excavated dirt used for raised vegetable plots. Excess stems and leaves from the vegetables are used to feed the fish, and the waste from the fish is used as fertilizer for the vegetables.

These food production centers are within walking distance of regional urban centers for daily sales and provide space for training of regional farmers and leaders of the Jesus mosques.

The concept of Messianic mosques and completed Muslims (following the model of Messianic synagogues and completed Jews) still causes considerable misunderstanding among other Christians. The combining of evangelism and humanitarian ministries by the same people also raises concerns among those who feel Christian agencies should only focus on one or the other. Nevertheless, the models we are developing have been used by God in the raising up of many new disciples and expressing his concern for total persons with physical and spiritual needs. Likewise the Messianic Muslim movement has spilled over into a neighboring country through the normal visiting of relatives; when colleagues and I visited a Southeast Asian country recently, a whole Muslim village began to follow Jesus. ■

SHAH ALI is the pseudonym of a follower of Christ from a Muslim family in South Asia. His identity is being concealed — currently, there is persecution of Christians in his country. He translated the New Testament into his national language using Muslim terms and is training leaders of Messianic mosques.

ENDNOTES

¹ See Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qu'ran* (Oriental Institute, 1938).

² For the details of this argument see J. D. Woodberry, "Contextualization Among Muslims: Reusing Common Pillars," *The Word Among Us*, ed. Dean S. Gilliland (Word Publishers, 1989), 282-312.

³ In this context, however, they demonstrated their submission by believing in God and his apostle (apparently Muhammad, who had not been born).

THE MIDDLE EAST: Crescent, Cross and Plowshare

—from page 5

between the rich and the poor brought on by industrialization. The *changing role of women* has also led to the erosion of some traditional family values.

As Karl Marx and Max Weber recognized years ago, people in crisis turn to religion. This has been particularly true among the masses who look for a simple answer to their trauma. In their view, God must have rejected them because they have rejected him and his way. The answer, then, is a return to the fundamentals of their faith.

The second root of the resurgence is the *opportunity for response* from independence and petrodollars. Following World War I, most Muslim lands were colonies or protectorates under non-Muslim control; opportunities for resurgence were limited. Since World War II, most Muslim lands have won independence, so there is greater freedom for expression. Since Islam in its traditional understanding is a total way of life, including politics, it has naturally provided a major ingredient in the self-understanding of the Muslim peoples as they have formulated the ideologies of their new nations and reacted against secular Western influences. Their increased self-respect also found a religious expression.

Another factor has been oil. Particularly since the early 1970s with its dramatic increase in oil prices, billions of petrodollars have flowed freely into Muslim countries, giving them not only additional self-respect, but also the opportunity to build mosques and other Islamic institutions and support the same in other countries. Major sources of these funds were countries with fundamentalist governments — Saudi Arabia with a more moderate form, and

Libya with a more radical form. Both countries naturally supported fundamentalist causes.

Religious resurgence, especially of a fundamentalist type, has occurred repeatedly in Islamic history at times of crisis, and contemporary Muslim fundamentalists see their roots firmly in these *historic models*. They have reprinted and read the works of such precursors as Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (780-855 A.D.) and Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328 A.D.). Revivals have been evident roughly every century.

The nature of the response to trauma has been influenced by the nature of the crises and the

“As Karl Marx and Max Weber recognized years ago, people in crisis turn to religion.”

leaders. Ibn Hanbal only had internal threats, so he fostered local disturbances. Sanusi (1787-1859) began as a preacher, but faced the external threat of the Italians, and so ended leading a *jihad* against them. Although contemporary reformers trace their roots to the historical models, the present resurgence is more severe and extensive because the technology of imperialism has been far more traumatic.

Local factors have greatly influenced the form of the resurgence in each segment of the Muslim world. In the Middle East, there are parallels between different areas as well. For instance, in Arab (largely Sunni) Egypt and Persian (largely Shi'ite) Iran, the obstacle to resurgence was represented by a ruler — King

Farouk and the Shah, respectively. In both cases, the fundamentalists joined with the more secular forces to oust the ruler. Once successful in their initial effort, however, they turned on each other. In Egypt, the more secular forces won out, whereas in Iran, the fundamentalist forces assumed control. A struggle continued in both: in Egypt, the fundamentalists have gained increasing influence in the last decade, while in Iran, the more pragmatic forces have increased their power since Khomeini's death.

The Middle East is too diverse for generalizations to fit all countries. Yet, certain trends are observable. In the 1960s, for instance, there were many experiments in socialism in the Arab world. In the 1970s and 1980s, Islamic themes became increasingly important. Even in the Middle Eastern areas where Islam is not dominant, there has still been a resurgence. Islam, especially Shi'ite Islam, has been a significant motivation in the Lebanese Civil War. Muslim leaders, likewise, have played a major role in the Intifada in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

Only the outlines of a Christian response to the Islamic revival can be given here. Certainly, following the model of our Lord, our first response is to be *incarnational, listening and empathizing* — “rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep.” In the traumas we have noted and the opportunities which independence and new wealth have brought, there is room for both.

Second, the varieties of Muslims we have seen require that we not stereotype Muslims but *vary our responses* according to their felt needs. Third, the crisis which colonialism has caused — including what is viewed as our economic imperialism — calls for

repentance, as does the suffering which our role in the Palestine problem has fostered. These, fourth, call for us to echo the prophets in *striving for justice, reconciliation, and care for the poor and displaced*.

The growth of secularism, materialism, and immorality worldwide call us, fifth, to *join with the Muslim revival in fighting common enemies*. The population explosion, urbanization, and economic crises have been seen to contribute to the trauma behind the Islamic resurgence, but, sixth, they also provide opportunities for Christians to become involved in *development* and offer cups of cold water in Christ's name.

The historic precedents of people turning to faith in times of crisis shows, seventh, the importance of *timing* in offering Christian answers when people are needy and receptive. The varieties of local circumstances contributing to the resurgence have often been associated with injustice, at times with conflicting justices. Even as they call Christians to strive for justice, they highlight, eighth, the need for the *Christian gospel of forgiveness and the transformation of human nature*.

THE PLOWSHARE: THE PEACE PROCESS

The aftermath of the Cold War and Operation Desert Storm have provided new opportunities for peace in the Middle East. Without a second superpower, the Middle East is no longer the game board to play out rivalries, and the Gulf War underlined the importance of working on solutions for the region's interrelated problems. The most important problem is the Israel/Palestine issue.

Almost forty years ago, I first stood outside the wall of the Old City of Jerusalem and gazed at the form of a skull in the side of the hill called Gordon's Calvary, where some believe Jesus was crucified. Barbed wire lay there like a rusty crown of thorns. As I stood there, my mind wandered

back to the One who said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.”

Nowhere is peace more necessary, for the Palestine problem is a root of almost every political crisis in the area, from the now quiescent Lebanese Civil War, to terrorist attacks on civilians. Furthermore, nothing in recent history has had a greater impact

“...the Palestine problem is a root of almost every political crisis in the area...”

on Muslim attitudes toward Christianity. Since Muslims relate religion and politics more closely than do most Western Christians, they have trouble believing a gospel of justice and love when so-called Christian nations are helping deny justice to them. On the other hand, for centuries Christians blamed Jews for the events of Calvary, and the anti-semitism and Holocaust which led to the flood of Jewish refugees into lands where Arabs lived was caused by many who called themselves Christians (or were perceived as such by Jews and Muslims). For me, the quest for peace in Palestine is a personal one. I have worked with Jews on a ship which had previously been used to take Jewish refugees illegally to Palestine after the horrors of the Holocaust. It was named after a Jewish girl who had been killed in an ambush as British soldiers tried to enforce immigration restrictions. I have stayed with a Jewish family in the place of their son who had to serve in the army. I have seen first-hand

the hopelessness in the faces of Palestinians crowded into refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan. I have lived with Palestinian Arabs who lost their ancestral home near Tel Aviv and expect to lose their more recent home in the occupied West Bank, because they are working in Jordan. The *Jordan Times* and the Arabic newspaper *al-Ra'i* quoted the New York *Herald Tribune*, which said evangelical Christians support the Israeli government in the establishment of Jewish settlements in the Arab West Bank. My hosts attended the Evangelical Church.

RELIGIOUS ROOTS

In order to understand the roots of the problem and form a Christian response, we must recognize that pious Jews, Muslims, and Christians look at history and current events through different glasses. Jews view them through the Hebrew Scriptures, Muslims through the Qu'ran, and Christians through the New Testament.

The significance of our different perspectives is evident when we look at our common ancestor Abraham. In each case, we see ourselves as being his true descendants and consequently as the people to receive God's special blessing.

Jews focus on God's promise to Abraham, “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you” (Gen 12:2), and they see themselves through Isaac as the recipients of that blessing. Muslims also view themselves as the true followers of Abraham through his son Ishmael. Abraham, they believe, was a Muslim, and the son he was willing to sacrifice most Muslims think was Ishmael. Christians, however, see themselves as the true “children of Abraham” (Gal. 3:7, 29) through Jesus Christ. They are heirs of the promises made to the Jews (Eph. 3:6), while many of the Jews have been cut off because of their unbelief (Rom. 11:17-28; Mt. 3:7-9). Thus, Christians are the new Israel (Rom. 9:6-8; Gal. 6:16).

Turning from our common ancestor Abraham to the formative leaders for each of our faiths, we ask: What was their view of the Kingdom that God wants to be established? Here we need only note that Moses' and Muhammad's views were very similar — so, are a root of the Palestine problem. Both saw the Kingdom as having an earthly expression where religion and politics overlap. Moses was a political and religious leader who led his people to the promised land to set up an earthly government. Likewise, Muhammad was a political and religious leader who began to build an earthly government in Medina. Both believed use of force was legitimate in establishing, expanding, and maintaining that kingdom.

Conversely, Jesus envisioned the Kingdom in a way that could ease the tensions in Palestine. He told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36) — that is, it does not take its origin from this world and is certainly not a kingdom in the sense that the world understands kingdoms. After the Feeding of the Five Thousand, he refused that kind of kingship. His kingdom was within and could exist under various political systems. Although God's kingly rule applied to every area of life, including the political, he said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." Thus, one can have different responsibilities in each area.

Finally, although there are images of war used in relation to the final judgment of God (Rev. 19:15, 21), Jesus made it plain that his disciples were not fighting because he did not have an earthly kingdom in mind (John 18:36). We must not forget, however, that during the Crusades, Christians ignored this and used force to gain Jerusalem; so, despite our Lord's position against the use of military force to build

the Kingdom of God, Muslim Arabs have a different experience with Christians.

The Jews look at Moses, who heard the echo of God's call to Abraham to possess the land of Canaan (Gen. 17:8; Exod. 6:4, 8). So important was that land to their sense of identity that during the exile they cried, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Ps. 137:4). Through the years the hope of return has been kept alive by the words "next year in Jerusalem" in the yearly Passover liturgy.

The Qu'ran shares many of the biblical characters associated with Jerusalem and tells how

"Jerusalem is viewed by Muslims as the world's third holiest city."

Muhammad made a night journey there, which religious tradition has elaborated to include an ascent to heaven. Today, the faithful even identify what they believe is a resultant footprint on the Dome of the Rock, the site of the former temple. Consequently, Jerusalem is viewed by Muslims as the world's third holiest city. Because of this, the late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia said his greatest wish was to pray in Jerusalem before he died. The oil embargo, which led to the skyrocketing of oil prices, was originally called a holy war when military and diplomatic means had failed to keep or regain East Jerusalem.

Christians can have a different perspective, however, based on the teaching of Jesus. When the woman of Samaria

asked him whether or not one had to worship in Jerusalem, he said that this would not be necessary, for God is a spirit (John 4:21, 24) and so can be worshipped anywhere.

Although space does not permit a discussion of biblical prophecy here, it should give pause to consider that the New Testament does not describe a future for Israel in Palestine. In fact, the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon in 539 B.C. is understood as the fulfillment of the prophecies of Jeremiah (2 Chron. 36:22; Ez. 1:1), and John understands the fulfillment of Ezekiel's new Jerusalem and new temple to be "a new heaven and a new earth" at the second coming of Christ (Rev. 21:1-22:6).

EVENTS LEADING TO CONFLICT

Having looked at the roots of the problem through the glasses of Jews, Muslims, and Christians, we need to look at more recent events as seen by Jews, Arabs (largely Muslim), and the so-called "Christian" West.

The first Zionist Congress met in 1897 to promote Jewish immigration to Israel and to acquire legal rights for Jews. By the outbreak of World War I, twelve percent of Palestine's population was Jewish.

During the war, an agreement was made between Sharif Husain of Mecca and McMahon of England that the Arabs would revolt against the Turks in exchange for British recognition of their independence. Subsequently, the Sykes-Picot agreement was made, dividing much of the Arab land after the war between British and French protectorates. Still later, the Balfour Declaration was also made; it stated that Britain would look with favor upon the creation of a national home for the Jewish people which should not interfere with the rights of the local inhabitants. After the war, the League of Nations adopted the Sykes-Picot agreement with

modifications. The result of these various agreements was that the Jews expected support for a Jewish state in Palestine. Conversely, the Arabs expected independence, but came to realize they could not trust the West; they would have to take things into their own hands — a lesson lying behind the militant activities of some Palestinians today.

Jewish immigration continued — and increased — after World War II, when the extent of Nazi atrocities against the Jews was revealed. Jews renewed their resolve to build their own state in an effort to make sure such horror would never happen again. The West's response was one of sympathy toward and support of the Jewish immigration into Palestine. The Arab response was to protest that they had not committed the atrocities they were accused of. Why should they have to lose their land? Nevertheless, Jewish immigrants continued to pour into Palestine with resulting unrest.

In 1947, a U.N. Special Commission for Palestine proposed the formation of two Palestinian states, with fifty-two percent of the land going to the Jews and forty-eight percent to the Arabs. The Arabs rejected this proposal, arguing that the Jews comprised only one-third of the population and owned only seven percent of the land. Fighting followed. When an armistice was declared in 1949, Israel controlled eighty percent of the land, and there were three-quarters of a million Arab refugees — a number which has grown steadily.

Three wars have followed. That of 1967 was most significant. Starting as an Israeli preemptive attack against Egyptian planes poised on runways, this conflict resulted in the Israeli acquisition of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the Golan Heights after Syria and Jordan joined the fighting. Many Americans have supported Israel on humanitarian grounds because of the persecu-

tion Jews had experienced. Many politicians have done so for political reasons or to have a strong ally in the Middle East. Many Christians saw the creation and growth of the State of Israel as a fulfillment of prophecy. Yet Arabs have been denied self-rule in lands where their ancestors have lived for centuries.

The present negotiations present an opportunity to work

"Even if one believes God intends to restore the Jewish nation in Palestine, one still does not have the right to support injustice."

toward secure boundaries and recognition for Israel on the one hand, and self-rule and a homeland for as many Palestinians as possible on the other.

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

As we seek to understand what our response as Christians should be, we might echo the Jewish question which lies at the root of the problem: How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? First, we should sing it *sadly* when we realize how much injustice we have supported and how our well-intended efforts may be rejected. Second, we must *listen* to the other voices — the Jewish call for security arising from centuries of persecution and the Palestinian cry for justice and self rule in a land of their own.

Third, *the lead voices must be local*. We cannot impose a solution, but third parties can be helpful, and Americans are the

players with enough leverage to move the parties to negotiate. Fourth, we need *new words*. We must learn from the past, but cannot build the future on the old responses which have led to the present stalemate.

Fifth, we need *biblical words* — words about justice (see Micah 6:8). As we look to the Bible, we need to appreciate that different branches of the church have understood the prophetic passages differently. The Reformed tradition has generally understood that the prophecies concerning the return of Israel to the land were fulfilled at the return from the exile or in the establishment of the kingdom by Christ, or will be fulfilled in the heavenly Jerusalem with the new Israel.

Even dispensational Christians need to focus on what the prophets said *to* Israel about justice (where there is no disagreement) and not just on what they believe God said *about* Israel (where there is difference of interpretation). Even if one believes God intends to restore the Jewish nation in Palestine, one still does not have the right to support injustice. For example, God chose Jacob over Esau, but Jacob wasn't given the right to lie and steal. God can accomplish his purposes without our supporting injustice.

Finally, we must sing the song in *harmony*. In 2 Corinthians 5:19 we read "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself . . . and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation." Though the emphasis in this verse may be on reconciliation with God, it includes the human dimension as well. As well as seeking to bring harmony through interdependence, we will have to work for recognized boundaries — and perhaps for demilitarized zones, arms limitation, and peace-keeping forces.

The hardest problem to settle will be that of Jerusalem — a name which includes *salem*, meaning peace. Jew and Muslim alike express their hope for this peace when they use their cognate

greetings *shalom* and *salam*. May we strive to facilitate this hope as we await the Prince of Peace.

THE CROSS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR WITNESS

Any planning for Christian witness in the Middle East should consider a number of contexts: what has been inherited from the past, changes brought about by the Gulf War and the collapse of the Communist bloc, anticipated future trends, and what God is blessing elsewhere in the Muslim world.

INHERITANCE FROM THE PAST

The past brings much baggage, including a sensitivity to what has been considered "imperialism" by Western churches and Western governments. On the other hand, it also brings a great deal of good will from the sacrificial establishment of Christian and humanitarian educational and medical institutions by Westerners. Churches, mostly ancient, have maintained a Christian presence though the surrounding culture which has militated against outreach. Though often lacking in vision, some young people in particular have received increased vision from local Bible studies or by spending summers in Europe where there is freedom to witness openly to Muslims. Christians are allowed to worship in most Muslim countries, although the restrictions are severe in Saudi Arabia. There are, however, restrictions in many countries against Muslims becoming Christians; some have been imprisoned, and in a few cases, killed for their faith.

In addition to the local churches, there are many church and parachurch mission organizations with a desire to work with Muslims. Any plans for witness should be worked out in consultation and, to the extent possible, partnership with other Christians in the area. The Middle East

Council of Churches headquartered in Cyprus represents both ancient and mainline churches and has had a liaison for evangelical groups. Interdev has tried to create networks between evangelical groups to avoid competition and overlap in ministries, whether in media, medicine, or relief and development.

CHANGES FROM THE GULF WAR

The Gulf crisis has created both problems and opportunities. On the one hand, it exacerbated old sensitivities — to Western interference in the Middle East, to what was called the "Eighth Crusade," and to foreign support of the "haves" against the "have-nots."

On the other hand, it facilitated bonding between the West

"... the Church will need to give attention to issues of justice and peace, as well as relief and development for refugees and those ravaged by war."

and restricted access Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. It created opportunities for Christian relief and development among refugees and those left destitute by the war, such as Kurds and Asians from Iraq and Kuwait. The West has earned some respect for its resoluteness in war, subsequent rapid removal of troops, and attention to the Middle East peace process. Not only have

military personnel and Western churches gotten a new vision for the area, but there are now new tentmaking opportunities to rebuild what was destroyed.

CHANGES FROM THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM

The collapse of the Communist bloc eliminated the super-power rivalry which contended against resolving problems in the region. Many Central Asian Muslims are ethnically related to Middle Easterners. On the one hand, there has been, at least for a time, greater freedom for direct evangelism or for Christian students or business persons to reside among them. And many have shown spiritual hunger after years of religious restrictions. On the other hand, some of the former Soviet republics are leaning toward becoming Islamic republics with restrictions on proselytism.

ANTICIPATED FUTURE TRENDS

So that the Church in its mission is not continually in a reactionary mode, it must anticipate probable continued or future trends. These include, first, *continued ethnic, religious, social, and political unrest*. Consequently, the Church will need to give attention to issues of justice and peace, as well as relief and development for refugees and those ravaged by war. Such activities will require mobility to meet arising needs.

Second, we can anticipate *continued secularization with a concurrent fundamentalist reaction in society*. The Church will need to meet a spectrum of felt needs, including the disillusionment which often results from both trends. Third, *urbanization will continue*. During the transitional period when rural dwellers move to the city, they have greater felt needs and receptivity to new ideas. Sometimes, however, they will turn to militant Islamic funda-

mentalism if they become disillusioned with their new urban experiences. Fourth, *we can expect a widening gap between the rich who have the skills and resources to profit from industrialization and the poor who do not*. This phenomenon will continue to necessitate wholistic ministries in development.

Fifth, *new technologies will open many media opportunities* such as satellite television programming. Sixth, with increasing state control of medical, educational, and social services, *Christians must develop small, flexible clinic-type services which can meet the needs of those falling between the cracks*. Finally, with progress beyond anti-colonial sentiment, *Westerners will need to be available for cooperative and supportive roles*.

WHAT GOD IS BLESSING ELSEWHERE

Certain factors are evident in areas in the Muslim world which are experiencing rapid church growth. The first is contextualization — that is, the utilization of culturally familiar forms of expression for Bible translation, communication, and worship style. Church growth in South Asia increased dramatically when "Muslim" words and forms of worship were utilized. Secondly, emphasis on leaders in West Africa has facilitated group conversions rather than the isolation which results when individuals alone are evangelized.

Wholistic ministries of relief and development after natural catastrophies in South Asia and war in the Middle East have facilitated many finding physical and spiritual life. The power of God, evidenced by answered prayer for the sick and demonized in Africa, has resulted in church growth, especially when balanced by teaching on the role of suffering in Christian maturation. Finally, a seminary and Bible school in Indonesia requires all students to plant a church of

newly baptized members in order to graduate. The results are gratifying.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

Cooperative models have developed during the Gulf War and in its wake. When refugees flooded into Jordan from Kuwait and Iraq, the first to meet them with food, blankets, and Scripture were the local Jordanian Christians. As their resources were already overtaxed, Western Christian relief agencies coordinated their efforts with them. Since the war, a Christian and Mission-

"Church growth in South Asia increased dramatically when 'Muslim' words and forms of worship were utilized."

ary Alliance-related church in Beirut has worked with the Evangelical (Presbyterian/Reformed) Church in Baghdad, distributing food, medicine, and Scripture with support from Western Christian agencies. In like manner, a number of Fuller Seminary graduates have been able to work through secular and Christian agencies ministering among the Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran.

Other Fuller graduates are working as tentmakers or "non-residential missionaries"; that is, focusing efforts on a restricted access country from a center outside with a natural connection with that country. National Christians are increasing their vision and acquiring evangelistic experience and encouragement by joining youth organizations like Operation Mobilization and Youth With a Mission for summer

missions in Europe. There they witness to Middle Easterners in a more free environment than that of traditionally Muslim countries. These models utilize the gifts and resources of nationals and expatriates in cooperation and have been blessed by God.

In the small museum at the Cairo airport is a lamp crowned by a cross within a crescent. It probably dates from the final days of the Crusades when swords in the shapes of crescents and crosses were starting to be beaten into plowshares. At the end of what has been called the "Eighth Crusade," this lamp can again symbolize the need to hold the cross in the midst of the crescent of the Muslim Middle East in such a way that it creates beauty and gives light. ■

ENDNOTES

¹Children of Gebelawi, trans. of Awlad Haratina by Philip Stewart. (Heinemann, 1981).

²John J. Donahue and John L. Esposito, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 9-54; Donahue, "Islam and the Search for Identity in the Arab World," *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. Esposito (Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 48-61.

³For a discussion of these crises in the Arab world see H. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (Syracuse University Press, 1985), pp. 25-32.

AFRICA: Turning of the Tide

—from page 7

had been denied, Christians set fire to Muslim properties around the city. When I asked one of our Nigerian students if this was a biblical kind of reaction, he replied, "We have turned our cheeks again and again. Islam understands only the Old Testament."

This is the year that nine years of military rule will give way to civil government in Nigeria. There is some indication of the way the winds are blowing. In December, elections at the state level were held. Among the thirty states, sixteen newly-elected governors were Christians. While this is only a bare majority, it shows clearly where the trend is moving. Many are saying this nation will go on to elect a Christian president later in the year. Should this happen, millions of Christians in Nigeria will say it was by the power of God and the gospel that history has been reversed; few will be able to argue otherwise. ■

THE WEST: African American Muslims

—from page 9

the Christian African American community must not underestimate the Islamic challenge.

What all Islamic groups operating among African Americans have had in common is the use of the Qur'an and a call to turn to Islamic teachings and practice — the confession of faith in God and Muhammad's prophethood, prayer five times a day, almsgiving, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and pilgrimage to Mecca.

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO ISLAM

Because African American Christians have only had peripheral participation in missions, they have little biblical understanding of what it means to engage in mission among peoples of other

"... we fail to grasp how the Islamic influence has been contextualized among the African American community."

faiths. It is my perception that the African American church needs to develop its response to Islam based on four central understandings if it is to be faithful to God's missional calling:

1. A re-evaluation of history giving greater attention to Africa and Islam;
2. A Christian education which shows the role of Africans in biblical revelation and the church;
3. An incarnational identification with the African American community and its concerns;
4. An empowered and effective mission.

A RE-EVALUATION OF HISTORY

An historical understanding of Islam and its influence in world history is needed. Christians must be aware of the arguments given by Ivan Van Sertima in his 1976 study, *The African Presence in Ancient America: They Came Before Columbus*. African American Muslims are aware of this history and utilize it strongly as a missiological strategy. Yet the African American Christian is usually ignorant in these matters, and usually does not know how to respond. Unfortunately, Christians today tend to dismiss the universal appeal of Islam, and do little to help Christians interact with Islamic teachings.

As a result, we fail to grasp how the Islamic influence has been contextualized among the African American community. After identifying with African American concerns, local Islam has become more orthodox. It supported black supremacy and separatism and then the major branch became more inclusivist. Many are confused. It is precisely at this point of "confusion" that Christians should be able and willing to present a broad understanding of African American religious history. Christians in Europe and America and Muslims in Africa supported slavery and need to repent for this.

AN AFRO-CENTRIC CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Secondly, an Afro-centric Christian education is required. African Americans are in the process of rethinking and reclaiming their African identification as indicated in their growing self-identification as "African Americans."

An Afro-centric educational perspective notes that the God of the Bible has created African American women and men in God's image. They, like all of humankind, have fallen, but also

have been redeemed in Christ. It views God as working with and through the African American culture, not against it, and utilizing it and its people for God's greater redemptive purposes. The emphasis of this education would include socializing and cultivating the Christian mind to acknowledge the people of African descent within the Bible and early Christian history and their contributions. Too often, African American school children have heard of the ancient powerful Islamic kingdoms of western Africa (Ghana, Mali, Songhay), of the great king Mansa-Musa who reigned from 1312-1337, and of Timbuktu, one of the greatest learning centers in the world; but few contributions of the African Christian world, such as in the Sudan, Ethiopia, and Egypt, are known. The church needs to rethink its historical patterns of Christian education.

The result would be a more relevant and effective ministry. This education needs to look not only at African religious history but also at the role of the African church in the present world. For example, with the Church's decline in Europe and its rapid expansion in Africa and other southern regions, the numerical center of the Church has shifted to these regions. Any Christian education that does not reflect this is out of date.

THE NEED FOR AN INCARNATIONAL MINISTRY

This third concern is related to the need of the Church to be in the community, representing the compassionate, healing, prophetic, and saving power of God meeting human felt needs. Too often, Christian congregations located in communities with many African Americans do not identify with or relate to the needs of the people in that community.

As a result, local people tend to view the Church as being irrelevant, or lacking integrity. An incarnational ministry must take the African American culture seriously, along with any local conditions of poverty and oppression. Historically, the Christian faith has stood in solidarity with people, sharing in their sufferings and providing hope and a prophetic vision. This must continue today.

"An Afro-centric educational perspective notes that the God of the Bible has created African American women and men in God's image."

AN EMPOWERED AND EFFECTIVE MISSION AMONG MUSLIMS

Finally, the Church must add to the above concerns the transforming power of the Spirit of God through their lives. The previous three challenges show the relevance of the Church to African Americans, but it is the power which the early disciples were told to wait for in Jerusalem which ultimately can transform the community so that there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, African or other kind of American, but we are all one in Christ. ■

SOUTHEAST ASIA: Parable in Muslim Dress

—from page 11

and the blessing of God be upon you.'

And so he left in his white Rolls Royce and drove home.

Usman ben Umar's Gift

It happened the next day that Usman ben Umar was walking past the mosque.

'Oh, do you know Usman ben Umar?'

'No.'

'Oh, let me introduce you to him. Well, perhaps you don't want to be introduced to him, because Usman was rather poor and not a very pious man.'

In fact, during Ramadan, some people were a little suspicious of what went on behind his curtain. Was he eating and drinking during the month of fasting behind that curtain? He was not known for being at mosque, even on a Friday, and his life was not altogether respectable. Over the years he slipped increasingly into poverty, and his clothes reflected his bad financial situation. They were rather ragged and had lost what color they originally had. In fact, they looked rather dirty. Usman was walking past the mosque that day, deep in reflective thought.

He realized that his life had not been pleasing to God. Indeed, he realized that his poverty was perhaps the judgment of God upon his lack of religious deeds. He felt the time had come to get right with God again, and he wanted to express his gratitude to God. Although he was poor and his clothes were ragged, things could have been a lot worse. His family were healthy. His wife was still kind to him, and his children were good people. The judgment of God could have been much worse. It was also perhaps God's goodness to him that

he had come to realize his need to get right with God again.

And so he said to himself, 'Oh, I wish I could give God a gift. He has been so patient, so forgiving, so good to me. What could I give him?' He searched in the folds of his clothing to see whether he did have any money there he could give to God in the mosque.

'Yes, there is a coin here. Oh, dear, it is only a one-cent piece. Is that worth giving to God? And that's all the money I have. If I give that away, there will be no breakfast nor lunch nor supper. What shall I do? Shall I give that one piece of money?'

But then he decided, 'Well, it's all I have, and God has been so good to me.'

So he slipped into the mosque. Nobody else seemed to be around at that time of day. Unnoticed, he went to the little box where money can be given and slipped his one-cent piece into the box. He felt happy about it. He was so pleased to be able to give something to God. Like Hadji Abdullah, he, too left the mosque feeling satisfied.

Well, what happens at the end of the story? We have asked the question, "Which of those two gifts pleased God more?" I find that reactions vary. Some are so materialistic that their minds revolved only around the huge sum of money — what I could do with \$10,000! I would buy myself this or that. How generous of that Hadji. I wish we had a Hadji like that who would give to us. We could use \$10,000.

Materialistic people will have enjoyed the story and may perhaps come back another time and ask for another story. It is always good to have more entertainment. Meanwhile, perhaps the Holy Spirit will have worked in their hearts and minds and made them more open to realize the spiritual significance of the story.

When I first was involved in Muslim evangelism, we used to hold open-air services in public

places, and on a couple of occasions we were stoned by a Muslim mob. The people who stoned us were very much like those materialistic Malays who dreamed of the glories of \$10,000. But now, by means of stories, they like me. They enjoy my stories. They have had a good time, and perhaps they will return for another story. I feel this is more comfortable than being stoned.

However, I also found that there were other people who would come back to me and say that they realized that this story had spiritual significance and that somehow they couldn't get it out of their minds. Some would confess that they only performed their religious works whether giving or prayer because of social pressure. The motives of their heart were not right. And this is a

"What I am saying is not un-Islamic. God looks for the intention of our heart..."

Muslim doctrine, the doctrine of *nijyah*, the doctrine of intention. What I am saying is not un-Islamic. God looks for the intention of our heart more than the actual sum of money.

Some would come back and ask how they could get their hearts right with God. My response was usually to tell them that nobody but Jesus Christ could change the heart. That is my personal experience. They, of course, are Muslims. They must try to find the answer within Islam. I don't believe that Islam has adequate answers to such questions, but it is only fair and right that they should seek first within their own religion for the answers. So I would urge them to go to their imam and

ask him these questions. It is my practice to find out what sort of answer the imam would give and then warn my Malay hearers not to be put off by glib or trite responses.

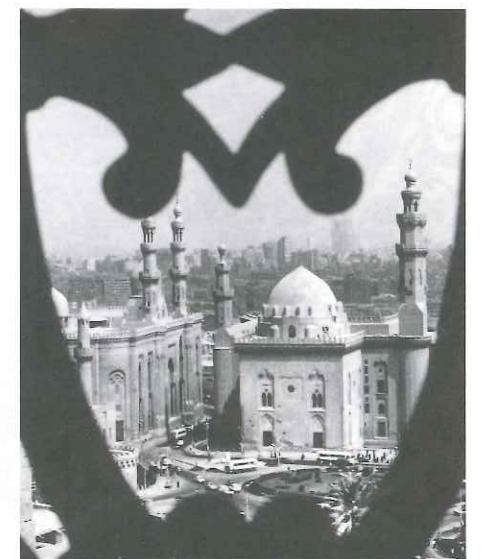
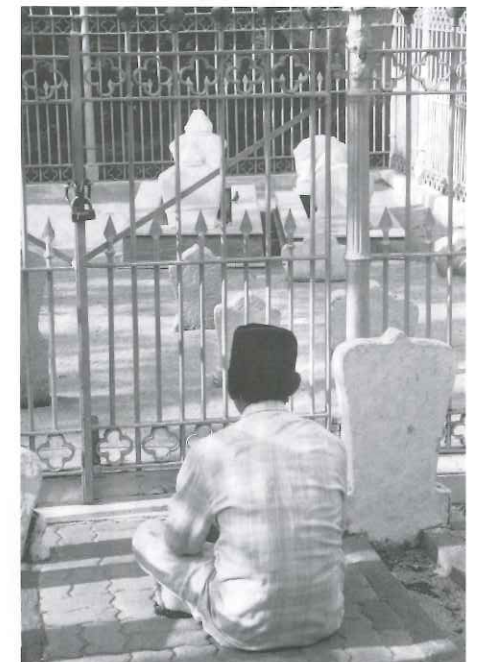
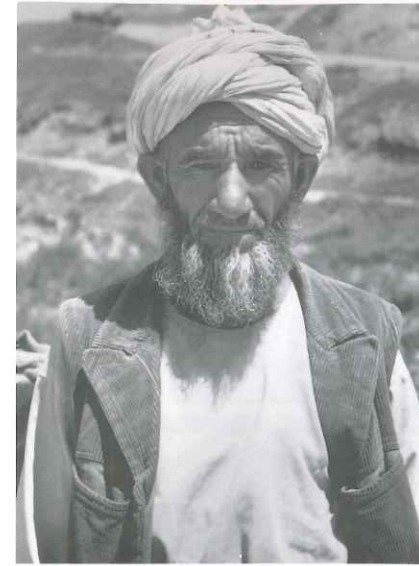
Some never came back to me after that. They went to their imam, and presumably they found themselves satisfied with the answers. Others, however, came back and said they had not found satisfactory answers from the imam. I would respond that I was not free to tell them how I had found the answer by the transforming work of Christ, but they could write to a certain address in Singapore where there is religious freedom, and they can get a New Testament and answers to their questions. ■

PHOTOGRAPHS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

1. A Pathan, who lives on the Pakistan-Afghan border.
2. Two children from the central Afghan hills.
3. A Islamic mosque in America's heartland—Toledo, Ohio, juxtaposed with a family farm.
4. A pilgrim paying homage at a saint's grave in East Java.
5. A mosque on stilts in Zamboanga, Phillippines. The entire village is on stilts, standing in between 10-20 feet of sea water.
6. A mosque in downtown Cairo, Egypt.

Front Cover: The so-called "Friday" or Jami'a Mosque in Herat, Afghanistan. The large pot in the foreground is used for ritual ablutions, or cleansings.

Back Cover: *The Lord's Prayer* in Arabic





الاصالة الربانية

حقوق الطبع محفوظة مركز البحوث والدراسات
١٤٢٣