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### Evangelism Among Muslims

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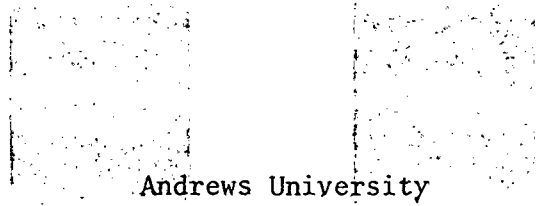
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Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

EVANGELISM AMONG MUSLIMS

A Project Report

Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by

Kenneth S. Oster

June 1975

Approval

*Kenneth S. Oster*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Chapter	Page
MAPS AND CHARTS . . . . .	iv
APPENDICES . . . . .	v
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
I. THE CHRISTIAN WORLD . . . . .	3
The Prophetic-Historic Perspective . . . . .	3
The Traditional Christian Attitude and Approach to Islam . . . . .	14
II. THE MUSLIM WORLD . . . . .	31
The Birth of Islam and the Urgency of Its Message . . . . .	31
The Fantastic and Rapid Spread of Islam . . . . .	36
III. THE ESSENCE OF ISLAM . . . . .	50
Roots of Modern Islam . . . . .	50
Islam After the Reconstruction . . . . .	55
Muslim Theology . . . . .	57
Five Articles of Faith . . . . .	57
Five Pillars of Faith . . . . .	64
Crucial Difficulties of Missions to Muslims . . . . .	67
Cultural Difficulties . . . . .	68
Doctrinal Difficulties . . . . .	73
Problems Connected with the Person of Christ . . . . .	80
IV. THE CHALLENGE TODAY . . . . .	82
Response of the Church Today . . . . .	82
Seventh-day Adventist Work Among Muslims . . . . .	98

Summary of Adventist Position . . . . .	113
Factors of Growth and Non-Growth in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Middle East . . . . .	114
V. MIDDLE EAST UNION PROPOSALS . . . . .	124
Summary of TEAM Productions . . . . .	132
1. Highways to Health and Happiness . . . . .	132
2. Today's Health . . . . .	134
3. "The Straight Way" . . . . .	148
4. <u>Moslem-Oriented Spearhead Evangelistic Sermons</u> . . . . .	150
5. In Search of the Straight Way . . . . .	156
6. <u>Cosmic Perspective of God and Man</u> . . . . .	158
Plans to Implement in Pilot Project in South Persia in 1975	161
Conclusion . . . . .	164
APPENDICES . . . . .	169
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	177
ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND PERIODICALS . . . . .	180

MAPS AND CHARTS

MIDDLE EAST UNION CHURCH GROWTH STATISTICS . . . . .	121
MIDDLE EAST UNION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS Membership Growth Chart . . . . .	122
MIDDLE EAST UNION PERCENTAGE MEMBERSHIP GROWTH BY DECADES . . . . .	123
THE MUSLIM EMPIRE, A. D. 700-1200 . . . . .	40

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A, "GOD" IN ISLAM . . . . . 166

APPENDIX B . . . . . 169

    Highways to Health and Happiness, Table of Contents . . . . . 169

    Today's Faith, Bible Correspondence, Table of Contents . . . . . 170

    "The Straight Way" . . . . . 172

Moslem-Oriented Spearhead Evangelistic Sermons, Table of  
    Contents . . . . . 174

    In Search of the the Straight Way, Table of Contents . . . . . 175

Cosmic Perspective of God and Man, Table of Contents . . . . . 176

## INTRODUCTION

### I. The Issue

The issue to be addressed by this project is specifically the apparent ineffectiveness of evangelization among Muslims of the Middle East as evidenced by thirteen centuries of polarization between Muslims and Christians.

### II. Description of the Project

The project is an analysis and evaluation of existing methods of evangelism and approaches to Muslims as conducted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church with proposals for new and improved methods and approaches emerging from the study.

"Evangelism Among Muslims" in its essence includes three parts: Christianity on the one hand, Islam on the other, and the necessary bridge that connects the two. Chapter I deals with "The Christian World", as it was born and as it was commissioned by Christ; the prophecies that outlined its future; its status at the time when Islam appeared; the "traditional" attitudes of the Christian world at large toward Islam and the approach generally followed by the Church in its dealings with Islam.

Chapter II deals with "The Muslim World" and includes a brief history of the birth and spread of Islam. Emphasis is placed on the message of Islam in its formative stage, and the "raison d'etre" which catapulted it onto the stage of world affairs.

In Chapter III we look into the essence of Islam as it is today. Islam today is not the homogeneous entity it was in A. D. 632 when the



responsibilities of the religio-political state created by the prophet Mohammed were bequeathed upon Abu Bekr, the first Caliph. Though Islam has basically retained a uniformity and unanimity in belief and practice, time and geography have interjected changes that inevitably make inroads into any organization. The inexorable secularization that has permeated religion in general will be taken into account as we try to pinpoint the areas of crucial difficulty in Christian missions to Muslims today.

Chapter IV examines Christianity's response to this great challenge. Some bold steps have been taken by some Christian mission organizations by side-stepping the "traditional" approach. These innovative methods and materials are certainly not yet the rule, but the exceptions; nevertheless they are an honest attempt at finding common ground and making of them some points of reference for a fruitful ministry.

The last chapter explains the step-by-step plans proposed by the Middle East Union TEAM (Thrust for Evangelism Among Muslims), along with a critical study of the theological implications and sequential treatment of materials and methods in not only discipling the responsive Muslims, but also in their indoctrination.

Throughout the manuscript use is made of Pickthall's English explanatory translation of the Koran except where otherwise noted.

## CHAPTER I

### THE CHRISTIAN WORLD

#### The Prophetic-Historic Perspective

The burden of world mission and the evangelization of the non-Christian populations weigh heavily on churchmen today. In this project we are particularly concerned over the problems that have separated two specific, large segments of God's earthly family--the Christians and the Muslims. Often we are so closely and intimately involved with the issue, that we fail to see the proverbial forest for the trees. To get a proper perspective of the problem it may be necessary to move away from the intimacy of the situation and see the cosmic forces at work.

During the thirteen centuries of their coexistence, often with saber-rattling and swordpoints, Muslims and Christians have cast blame on any and all except the real culprit. In Revelation 12:7 we read of a war in heaven! A cosmic view opens before us. Christ and Satan are personally involved. The field of battle is transferred from heaven to earth (Rev. 12:8, 9). Immediately "the inhabitants of the earth" become participants, "for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath" (Rev. 12:12). Man's infidelity, rebellion, and consequent destruction has been the studied aim of Satan. To accomplish this, he, "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4). His satanic majesty has stirred up the thinking of the children of God, aroused every hateful and sinful passion in the

breast of the unwary, engendered misapprehension and hatred in the emotions of one of God's creatures against his fellow-men, and gloated over the war and bloodshed that has resulted.

All this was as Satan would have it, This was what for ages he had been working to secure. His policy is deception from first to last, and his steadfast purpose is to bring woe and wretchedness upon men, to deface and defile the workmanship of God, to mar the divine purposes of benevolence and love, and thus cause grief in heaven. Then by his deceptive arts he blinds the minds of men, and leads them to throw back the blame of his work upon God, as if all this misery were the result of the Creator's plan.<sup>1</sup>

If only we and the Muslims would take a stance somewhat removed from the immediate conflict, and see the real cause of our differences, we would see Satan in his real role. We would place the blame for our misunderstandings on him where it belongs, and, as fellow-believers in the One Creator-God, and brothers of one another, we would in humility and contrition ask for forgiveness, and clasp hands in a bond of brotherhood, faith, and trust.

But more for a clearer understanding of the cosmic war. We glance at the prophecy of Daniel who speaks of the demonic power that was to speak "very great things" (Dan. 7:20), make "war with the saints" (Dan. 7:21), "speak great words against the Most High" (Dan. 7:25), and "think to change times and laws". We see that Satan would so stir men and beguile them that even though taking the name of Christ, many would, in fact be doing the work of "antichrist" (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7). These deluded souls would actually be the "synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 3:9). The Apostle Paul permits us another glimpse of the cosmic war by exposing "the mystery of iniquity" which was already hard at work even in his day, one "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), pp. 284, 285.

power and signs and lying wonders and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish" (2 Thess. 2:7-10).

Through the prophetic gift we are favored with another insight into the backstage goings-on of the cosmic war. Satan instigates individuals to be his ministers who are actually

false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.<sup>1</sup>

With almost superhuman effort we disentangle ourselves from embroilment in the affairs of this life and remove to a point in outer space and watch the unfolding of events on planet Earth. We have seen the war started in heaven, the transference of the field of battle to earth, and Satan's treacherous deceptions among men. He made them angry with one another and we saw him rejoice over the bloodletting that went on among mankind due to the machinations he instigated. Then "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. 4:4, 5). Christ came to set up His spiritual kingdom (the Church), on earth, that through it the world might be brought to a knowledge of Satan's sophistries, God's love, and man's brotherhood, and be saved. Satan did all he could to distort this truth, hide the providence of God and mislead souls.

For the next six centuries Satan battled against the newly established Church. At first he attacked it through his human agents and tried to destroy it by persecution and extermination.<sup>2</sup> Failing to ex-

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<sup>1</sup>2 Cor. 11:13-15.

<sup>2</sup>Rev. 2:10; 6:3, 4.

terminate the Church by barbaric cruelty, he changed his tactics to that of flattery and coddling. The Church was elevated into royal favor when Constantine the Great espoused Christianity and lavished his wealth and attention on it. No doubt it was during this period that Satan managed to enter the Church by stealth<sup>1</sup> and make it his "seat". Those "that hold the doctrine of Balaam" and "the Nicolaitanes" (Rev. 2:14, 15) were prominent in the Church, which condition Christ says "I hate" (Rev. 2:15). Commercialism<sup>2</sup> replaced the original spirit of self-sacrificing love as avaricious leaders bartered it off for the mundane tinsel of popular prestige.

As we continue to view our breathtaking spectacle of the cosmic war, and see how Satan actively transformed the pure Apostolic Church into a Jezebel-ruled community of idolatry, adultery and fornication,<sup>3</sup> we begin to understand why, when Mohammed appeared in the early seventh century, he disdained to identify with "Christians", for their spirituality seemed to have hit rock bottom. It was a picture of "Death", with "Hell" following after,<sup>4</sup> as John the Revelator described the status of Christianity during the Dark Ages.<sup>5</sup>

This then, is the situation, as viewed from our cosmic stance: War in heaven with Christ and Satan as the principle participants. The scene of battle is transferred to planet Earth and all its inhabitants

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<sup>1</sup>Rev. 2:13.

<sup>2</sup>Rev. 6:4, 5.

<sup>3</sup>Rev. 2:18 ff.

<sup>4</sup>Rev. 6:7, 8.

<sup>5</sup>Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary in Ten Volumes, Francis D. Nichol, Ed. (Washington, D. C.; Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958- ), 7:750.

become individually involved. When the "fulness of time" arrived, the Creator, Jesus Christ, effected the incarnation, and established His Church. The Church, then, became the object of Satan's fierce attacks. It did not emerge unscathed, but suffered a dire apostasy--to such an extent, that Satan managed to plant his seat in the Church and give it the appearance of Death! Spirituality was gone, and it exuded a very negative influence.

The New Testament Church teachings on the doctrine of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ have not always been very coherently presented, and certainly not without controversy and misunderstandings. And it has been in these very areas where Islam has taken vital issue with the Christianity that confronted it.

From the cosmic vantage point of prophecy outlined briefly above, we noticed the part Satan would play in corrupting the early Church. Turning to the historian, it is not difficult to trace the steps that led to a distortion of the purity originally instilled within the Church that was founded by Jesus Christ. Though it was a gradual infiltration of pagan customs, the leavening effect received great impetus when Constantine opted for Christianity as the state religion. With the preferred status given to Christianity at that time, we question the conversion of the pagans and wonder if, in fact, it was not the Church that was transformed or converted by the influx of pagans, whose customs and beliefs were brought in with them.<sup>1</sup>

The simple theology of the primitive Christians was gradually corrupted. The pristine monotheism of the Apostolic Church became

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur E. R. Boak, A History of Rome to 565 A. D., 4th Ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1955), p. 502.

clouded by metaphysical subtelties, degraded by popular mythology and confounded with an ever more popular polytheism. The adherents began to frequent the tombs of saints and martyrs in the hope of obtaining, from their powerful intercession, every sort of spiritual, but more especially of temporal benefits. Edward Gibbon states that "the religion of Constantine achieved, in less than a century, the final conquest of the Roman empire: but the victors themselves were insensibly subdued by the arts of their vanquished rivals."<sup>1</sup>

Corruptions and misrepresentations soon became multiplied in regard to the question of the Trinity, Mariolatry, and the divinity of Christ. The Church of the sixth century developed an astoundingly tolerant spirit of adaptation. In A. D. 431 Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, in a famous sermon at Ephesus, applied to Mary many of the terms fondly ascribed by the pagans of Ephesus to their "great goddess" Artemis-- Diana. The Council of Ephesus in that year, over the protest of Nestorius sanctioned for Mary the title "Mother of God". Gradually the tenderest features of Astarte, Cybele, Artemis, Diana, and Isis were all synthesized in the worship of Mary! In this century the Church established the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin into heaven, and assigned it to August 13, the date of ancient festivals of Isis and Artemis. Mary became the patron saint of Constantinople and the imperial family; her picture was carried at the head of every great procession, and was hung in every church and home in Christendom.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. by J. B. Bury (New York: Mcmillan, 1896-1900), Ch. 28, III:215.

<sup>2</sup>William James Durant, The Age of Faith, a history of medieval civilization--Christian, Islamic, and Judaic--from Constantine to Dante, A. D. 325-1300, (New York: Simon and Schuster. 1950), pp. 745, 746.

As we view these glimpses of the situation that developed during the first six centuries of the Christian era, we must bear in mind at all times the cosmic perspective: Christ's position as Saviour of the world and Satan's constant and persistent efforts to obliterate and misrepresent the truth.

As predicted, Satan seemed completely triumphant in paganizing the Church. Superstitious bishops believed in omens and were haunted by fears of the Devil, or their concept of God was that of a jealous, vindictive god who favoured his devotees without troubling about their morality. After replacing the worship of God by a worship of saints, it was but a step to replace the healing saints with the gods and heroes of antiquity. Left to itself the human mind fell back wholly into paganism.<sup>1</sup>

The idolatry so strongly opposed by Mohammed took shape as a result of the incorporation into the Church of pagan beliefs widely practiced. Appellations of "Queen of the World", "Queen of Heaven",<sup>2</sup> "Queen of all Saints", "Queen of hell and of all evil Spirits", "Mother of God and men", etc. indicate a marked affinity to the Roman god Juno, the consort of Jupiter, or Hera, the sister and wife of Zeus. Mary, in like manner, came to be looked upon as both the mother and the spouse of Jesus Christ.

The profanation of the Mother of Jesus as "Mother of God was closely linked to Isis, the mater dolorosa of paganism who was supposed to sympathize with mothers in their sorrows and afflictions. In his prayer, Lucius (Apuleius) says:

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<sup>1</sup>Ferdinand Lot, The End of the Ancient World, Trans. by Philip Leon and Mariette Leon (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1931), p. 392.

<sup>2</sup>Jeremiah 7:18; 8:2.



(Thou) by thy bounty and grace nourishest all the world, and bearest a great affection to the adversities of the miserable as a loving mother. . . . Thou art she that putteth away all storms and dangers from men's life by stretching forth thy right hand. . . and appeasest the great tempests of fortune. . . .

It is, then, only natural that some students have seen her influence as "mother of sorrows" and "mother of Horus", in whom the Greeks saw their grief-stricken Demeter searching for her daughter Persephone raped by Pluto, on the Christian concept of Mary. The motif of mother and child appears in many statuettes which have been found in her ruined shrines on the Seine, Rhine, and Danube, and which the early Christians mistook for the Madonna and Child, and little wonder since it is still difficult to differentiate between the two types.

The epithet "Mother of God" (Theotokos) as applied to Mary seems to have been used at first by Alexandrian theologians at the close of the third century, although it does not appear in any extant writing of that period. It became common in the fourth, being used by Eusebius, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus in Cappadocia and others, Gregory saying that "the man who does not believe Mary was the Theotokos has no part in God."<sup>1</sup>

Pre-Christian Roman cults emerged in the Church with "Christian" names. Diana, the virgin goddess, contributed something to the worship of the Virgin Mary. The Roman Juno, The Greek Hera, the Carthaginian Dea Caelestis, the Egyptian Isis, the Phoenician Astarte, and the Babylonian Mulitta had all been queens of heaven.<sup>2</sup> Egypt had no small part to play in this prostitution of the simple teachings of Christ. The extant figurines of Isis nursing Horus are a striking similarity to familiar representations of the Madonna and Child.<sup>3</sup> Thus it becomes apparent that this heresy of profligate paganism, that of a male god raping a female deity, from which abominable, incestuous union was produced a "son of god" (Matt. 26:54), was conceived in the Canaanite cults

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Woodburn Hyde, Paganism to Christianity in the Roman Empire (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1946), p. 502. (Italics mine).

<sup>2</sup>Gordon J. Laing, Survivals of Roman Religion (New York: Longmans, Green and Co. 1931), pp. 93-95.

<sup>3</sup>Laing, Survivals, pp. 122-133.

of Ras Shamra and Egypt, incubated in Greco-Roman mythology, especially the mystery religions, borne full-stature in the apostate Church, and foisted off onto the non-Christian world as truth.

So wide-spread and general was this concept of the Trinity--a father god, a mother god and a physical biological offspring to make a third, a son god--that the residents of Mecca in central Arabia had installed in their pantheon a Byzantine icon of the virgin so that the "Christian" merchants on the via odorifera, who frequented the entrepot would also have somewhat to worship along with the other pagan merchants.<sup>1</sup> Well might Mohammed, the son of Abdullah (the slave of God), speaking on behalf of God ask, in consternation: "O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say unto mankind: 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides God?'"<sup>2</sup>

Certainly Mohammed was not speaking only to his fellow-countrymen, the pagans of Arabia, when he declared his clarion call La Illaha illa l'Lah (There is no god but God). His burden was not only to the pagans of Arabia, but equally to the already apostatized and spiritually dead "Christians" of Rome and Byzantium. How close he was to the Bible mandate:

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Payne, The Holy Sword (New York: Harper & Row. 1959), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>The Koran, Sura, The Table Spread 5:116. Trans. by Mohammed Marmeduke Pickthall, The Meaning of the Glorious Koran, An Explanatory Translation, A Mentor Religious Classic (New York: The New American Library, 1953).

<sup>3</sup>Exodus 20:3-6.

Franz Cumont looks at the seemingly interminable list of paganisms that were adopted by the Church and claims that Christianity did not stop there. "It took from its opponents their own weapons," he asserts, "and used them; the better elements of paganism were transferred to the new religion."<sup>1</sup>

John William Draper observes that the inhabitants of Italy and Greece were never really alienated from the idolatries of the old times. "At the best," he writes, "they were only Christianized on the surface. With many other mythological practices, they forced image-worship on the clergy."<sup>2</sup>

We cannot escape the picture of sixth century popular Christianity as it was drawn on the canvass of the Middle East. In his History of Dogma, Adolph Harnack writes that the Church, under the leadership of Pope Gregory the Great, presented itself as the most intimate union of Christianity of the first order with a subterranean, thoroughly superstitious, and polytheistic "Christianity". He also traces the direct evolution of the heathen temples, rites and rituals, into the accepted norms of the Christian Church.<sup>3</sup>

A fifth century Manichean had become aware of the wretched condition of the Christianity of his time. It was altogether too apparent to be missed. He accused his contemporaries in these words:

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<sup>1</sup>Franz Cumont, Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co. 1911)xi, Introduction by Grant Showerman.

<sup>2</sup>John William Draper, History of the Intellectual Development of Europe, Revised Ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1898)I:368.

<sup>3</sup>Adolph von Harnack, History of Dogma, Trans. by Neil Buchanan from 3rd German edition, 1896-99 (New York: Roberts Brothers)IV:304, 305.

The sacrifices you (the Christians) change into love-feasts, the idols into martyrs, to whom you pray as they do to their idols. You appease the shades of the departed with wine and food. You keep the same holidays as the Gentiles; for example, the calends and the solstices. In your way of living you have made no change. Plainly you are a mere schism; for the only difference from the original is that you meet separately.<sup>1</sup>

By assuming a cosmic perspective, we will see how Satan had succeeded in corrupting the simple, soul-saving truths of Christ's legacy. Arnold J. Toynbee beautifully entitles one of his books "Civilization on Trial," from which I underscore the following:

As the Muslims saw it, the Prophets of Israel were alright, and Jesus was God's last and greatest prophet before His final messenger Muhammad. The Muslim's quarrel was not with the Prophet Jesus but with the Christian Church, which had captivated Rum (the Byzantine, or Eastern "Roman" Empire) by capitulating to pagan Greek polytheism and idolatry. From this shameful betrayal of the revelation of the One True God, Islam had retrieved the pure religion of Abraham. Between the Christian polytheists on the one side and the Hindu polytheists on the other there again shone the light of monotheism; and in Islam's survival lay the hope of the world.<sup>2</sup>

Mohammed's quarrel was verily not with Christ, as Toynbee declares, but with the type of "Christianity", infested with the worship of idols and the adoration and deification of saints which rankled his very being.

A Muslim writer corroborates this conclusion in positive language. Abdullah Usuf Ali sees very perceptively the steps of degradation taken by the Church. Placing the blame on the "chaos of idolatrous sects", he explains why the inhabitants of Egypt generally welcomed the forces of Islam in A. D. 639.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Faustus' accusation, quoted in Augustine, Reply to Faustus the Manichaean XX. 4, trans. in BPBF, 1st series, Vol. 4, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup>Arnold Toynbee, Civilization on Trial, (New York: Oxford University Press. 1948), 76(Italics mine).

<sup>3</sup>Abdullah Usuf Ali, Appendix 5, in Koran, Vol. 1, pp. 412, 413.

Harnack summarizes the status of Christianity at the birth of Islam thus:

In its external form as a whole this Church is nothing more than a continuation of the history of Greek religion under the alien influences which have affected it. . . . There is no sadder spectacle than this transformation of the Christian religion from a worship of God in spirit and in truth into a worship of God in signs, formulas, and idols. . . . It is the religion of the ancient world tacked on to certain conceptions in the gospel; or, rather, it is the ancient religion with the gospel absorbed into it.<sup>1</sup>

The testimony of history amply verifies the prophetic picture given of the future of the Early Church. Were it not for the latter, one would be tempted to despair, but, included in the prophetic revelation is also the final triumph of the forces of good over the agents of evil. We as "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17) have the privilege, and the responsibility to look into the causes of estrangement between Christendom and Islam, accept blame for our having misrepresented Christ, and determine to bridge the gap in the last hour of history, and find fellowship with our Muslim brothers as they receive a new vision of Christ, for "neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12).

#### The Traditional Christian Attitude and Approach to Islam

Until the last decade or so, and with but few exceptions, the attitude of Christians toward Muslims and Islam has undergone little or no change. Although through the thirteen centuries of their co-existence, the degree of inter-communication between the two houses has

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<sup>1</sup>Adolph Harnack, What Is Christianity?, Trans. Thomas Baily Saunders (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), pp. 236-258.

fluctuated, the general attitude of Christians toward their counterparts has been one of apathy if not outright hostility. The feeling was born under duress, in the heat of battle as the vanquished were forced to shift allegiance from the Byzantine emperors to their new Muslim conquerors.

The basic pattern of Christian polemic against Islam can be traced to John of Damascus, grand-son of the bishop of that city when it fell to the Muslims in A. D. 635 after a six-month siege. Dr. Ghulam Ali Chaudhry, a modern Muslim scholar, writing in a current magazine, claims that John of Damascus was the first to forge the impostor-sensualist image of the prophet of Islam. He points out further, that in the ninth century "fibsters" like St. Nicetus of Byzantium and St. Eulogius of Cordova, circulated trumped up stories about the life of Mohammed, which further distorted his image. It cannot be denied that for the next two hundred years Islam was presented as a religion of "fraud, lust and violence." "But this was only the prelude", continues Dr. Chaudhry,

and the fugue (sic) began when pope Urban II of the Council of Clermont, gave his call for the First Crusade on 27 November 1095 at Paris. . . . Alongside this protracted din of Christian and Muslim arms, the vilification of Islam was carried on with increasing intensity to whip up war hysteria. The person, history and character of the Prophet were attacked with manifest glee and in savage language. From Popes' palaces and kings' courts, from knights' tables and monks' seminaries, streams of hate flowed into the parish church and the marketplace. Never before or since did lies pass current so readily and so widely. The very name of the Prophet came to be a byword for charlatantry, lewdness and strife. . . .

Thus, not only was the Prophet passed down the centuries as an ambitious, warring, salacious hypocrite, but generation after generation was fed on malicious distortions of his words and on wicked constructions put upon his actions.

Voltaire in the early seventeen-forties toed (sic) the same medieval line in his play Mahomet. . . .

Similar, in a general sense, was the position of Gibbon. . . .

Carlyle, in the early eighteen-forties, succeeded where Gibbon had failed. . . . The traditional descriptions of the Prophet as impostor, hypocrite, robber, demoniac, magician and soothsayer were more often discarded. He was now being presented as a gifted leader, a subtle politician and a shrewd statesman who, somehow, was also an

epileptic or self-deluded enthusiast.<sup>1</sup>

William D. Bell,<sup>2</sup> writing in the Evangelical Missions Quarterly regarding the prevailing attitude of Islam to Christian witness, states that "that attitude remains one of implacable opposition".<sup>3</sup> His appraisal of the situation is put in these succinct words: "The church as a whole has never been particularly concerned about the world of Islam; in fact, it has often considered it too hard and has turned away from it."<sup>4</sup>

S. Srisanto, Director of the Lay Training Institute in Malang, in the working papers produced as part of the planning of the Institute testifies to the disinterested attitude of Christian leaders. He writes, "As far as I know there is no special and continuous interest on the part of Christian leaders to maintain a friendly and open relation with the Ulama (Muslim leaders)."<sup>5</sup>

Ample evidence can be cited to substantiate the accuracy of these views which are so predominant even today. (Exceptions will be dealt with in Chapter IV). With this prevailing attitude, it would indeed

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<sup>1</sup>Ghulam Ali Chaudhry, "Crusade-Complex: A Reference to European Literature," Journal of Muslim World League, Mecca, (Jamadi-Uth-Thani 1394, July 1974), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>William D. Bell is executive director for North America of the North Africa Mission, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. He is a graduate of the Western Kentucky State University and Fuller Theological Seminary. He served with NAM in Tunisia and France from 1960 to 1969, being involved in literature distribution and Bible correspondence course ministries among Muslims.

<sup>3</sup>William D. Bell, "Muslim World Still Looks Like Impregnable Fortress", in Tenth Anniversary Issue of Evangelical Missions Quarterly, X: (January, 1974)76.

<sup>4</sup>Bell, "Muslim World", p. 79.

<sup>5</sup>S. Srisanto, "Church Growth and the Cultivation of Positive Christian-Muslim Relations", International Review of Missions, LXIII: (July 1974):356.

be unusual to find much desire on the part of Christians to evangelize the Muslims. There have been some missionaries to Muslims, for sure, even though those lands have been out of bounds in the thinking of most Christians. When an attempt was made, it seemed to be with the intent to "prove" the superiority of Christianity over Islam, of Christ over Mohammed. Hostility marked the encounters and hastened the martyrdom of the missionaries.

Credit is given to Raymund Lull as the first missionary to the Muslims in the annals of the Christian Church. Early in the fourteenth century, with the memory of the infamous Crusades still fresh in the minds of all, and much of Spain still under Muslim rule since its reconquista was still future, Raymund Lull gave his life for the cause of Christ just outside the town of Bugia on the Mediterranean coast of Algeria where he was stoned to death on June 30, 1315.

Born of an illustrious family at Palma in the island of the Majorca of Balearic group in 1235, Raymund lived a profligate life until his conversion in July, 1266, the year after Dante's birth. Only sixteen years before his conversion, St. Francis of Assisi (in 1219), with mad courage went into the Sultan's presence at Damietta and proclaimed the way of salvation, offering to undergo the ordeal of fire to prove the truth of the Gospel. The Dominican general Raimund de Pennaforti (who died in 1273) had devoted himself to missions for the Saracens,<sup>1</sup> but with no success. But these were the exceptions. The only missionary spirit of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was that of the Crusades.<sup>2</sup> They

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<sup>1</sup>"Saracens", corruption of Arabic Sharqiyeen, "easterners".

<sup>2</sup>Crusaders. "The morality of the Middle Ages presents startling



took up the sword and perished with the sword. But "Raymund Lull was raised up as if to prove in one startling case, to which the eyes of all Christendom were turned for many a day, what the Crusades might have become and might have done for the world, had they been fought for the cross with the weapons of Him whose last words from it were forgiveness and peace."<sup>1</sup>

Lull was determined to give his life to the Muslims. Pope Gregory XI condemned and forbade some of Lull's books. Nevertheless, he pressed on with his missionary zeal. His approach and philosophical bias is portrayed in his "Necessaria Demonstratio Articulorum Fidei", a work that contained a formal demonstration of all the Christian doctrines. He considered them of such cogency that the Muslim could not fail to acknowledge its logic and in consequence, embrace the truth. In the introduction to this book he urges "the clergy and the wise men of the laity to examine his arguments against the Saracens in commending the Christian faith."<sup>2</sup>

With such power did this idea take possession of his mind that at last he regarded it in the light of a divine revelation, and, having

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contrasts. Over against each other, and not only in the same land but often in the same individual, we witness sublime faith and degrading superstition, angelic purity and signs of gross sensuality. It was an age of self-denying charity to suffering Christians, and of barbarous cruelty to infidels, Jews, and heretics. . . . When the Crusaders under Godfrey of Bouillon (who refused to wear a crown of gold where his Saviour had worn a crown of thorns) came in sight of Jerusalem, they kissed the earth and advanced on their knees in penitential prayer; but after the capture of the city they massacred seventy thousand Muslims, burned the Jews in their synagogues, and waded in blood to the Holy sepulchre to offer up thanks!" (Samuel, Zwemer, Raymund Lull--First Missionary to the Moslems, (New York & London: Funk and Wagnalls Co. 1902) 8, 9.

<sup>1</sup>Zwemer, Raymund Lull, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Zwemer, Raymund Lull, p. 58.

traced the outline of such a work, he called it the Ars Major sive Generalis,<sup>1</sup> (completed in 1275). This universal system of logic and philosophy was to be the weapon of God against all error, and more especially against the errors of Islam!

Lull used dialectics, the great weapon of his age of scholasticism in the service of the Gospel and for the practical end of converting the Saracens. He further adduces that the strength of Islam in the age of scholasticism was its philosophy. Having thoroughly entered into the spirit of Arabian philosophical writings and seen its errors, there was nothing left for a man of Lull's intellect but to meet these Saracen philosophers on their own ground. Avicenna, Algazali, and Averroes sat on the throne of Muslim learning and ruled Muslim thought. Lull's object was to undermine their influence and so reach the Muslim heart with the message of salvation.<sup>2</sup>

Lull's lifework was threefold: he devised a philosophical or educational system for persuading non-Christians of the truth of Christianity; he established missionary colleges, and he himself went and preached to the Muslims, sealing his witness with martyrdom.

He decided, at the age of fifty-six, to test the power of example. At the end of 1291 or early in 1292 he landed in Tunis, then a metropolis of 125,000. His first step was to invite the Muslim Ulema or literati to a conference, just as did Ziegenbalg in South India and John Wilson at Bombay. He announced that he had studied the arguments on both sides of the question and was willing to submit the evidences for Christianity and for Islam to a fair comparison. After a long, though fruitless dis-

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<sup>1</sup>Zwemer, Raymund Lull, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>Zwemer, Raymund Lull, p. 62.

cussion, Lull advanced the following propositions, which are well calculated to strike the two weak points of Muslim monotheism: lack of love in the being of Allah, and lack of harmony in His attributes.<sup>1</sup>

One Imam pointed out to the Sultan the danger likely to beset the law of Mohammed if such a zealous teacher were allowed freely to expose the errors of Islam, and suggested that Lull be imprisoned and put to death. He was cast into a dungeon, and was only saved from a worse fate by the intercession of a less prejudiced leader. The death sentence was changed to banishment from the country. The indefatigable Lull, however, never rested satisfied with banishment. In 1307 he returned to North Africa, this time, not to Tunis, but Bugia. His methods continued to be strictly polemic. Lull no sooner came to Bugia than he found his way to a public place, stood up boldly, and proclaimed in the Arabic language that Christianity was the only true faith, and expressed his willingness to prove this to the satisfaction of all. Referring to that eventful day, he wrote, "Death has no terrors whatever for a sincere servant of Christ who is laboring to bring souls to a knowledge of the truth".<sup>2</sup>

One of Lull's arguments, given in his controversial books, consists in presenting to the Saracens the Ten Commandments as the perfect law of God, and then showing from their own books that Mohammed violated every one of these divine precepts. Another favorite argument of Lull with Muslims was to portray the seven cardinal virtues and the seven deadly sins, only to show subsequently how bare Islam was of the former and how full of the latter! His zeal landed him in a dungeon and for half a year he remained a close prisoner, befriended only by some mer-

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<sup>1</sup>Zwemer, Raymund Lull, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>Zwemer, Raymund Lull, p. 107.

chants of Genoa and Spain, who took pity on the aged champion of their common faith. Finally he was deported. The people did not want him or his message.

During the next seven years, the bulk of no less than four thousand titles appeared from his prolific pen. These books range over almost the entire gamut of human experience, winning for him the title of "Doctor Illuminatus"<sup>1</sup> given him by his contemporaries. Through all this writing, the logic of his Christian philosophy shone through. This consuming zeal drove Lull to his third missionary journey to North Africa at the age of 79. On the eve of his departure for Bugia he vents his passion in this prayer: "Men are wont to die, O Lord, from old age, the failure of natural warmth and excess of cold; but thus, if it be Thy will, Thy servant would not wish to die; he would prefer to die in the glow of love, even as Thou wast willing to die for him."<sup>2</sup>

Arriving in Bugia on August 14, 1314, the octogenarian missionary dwelt in hiding for ten months, talking and praying with his converts to influence those who were not yet persuaded. At length, weary of seclusion, and longing for martyrdom, he came forth into the open market and presented himself to the people as the same man whom they had once expelled from their town. It was Elijah showing himself to a mob of Jezebels! Lull stood before them and threatened them with divine wrath if they still persisted in their errors. He pleaded with love, but spoke plainly the whole truth. The consequences can be easily anticipated. Filled with fanatic fury at his boldness, and unable to reply to his arguments, the populace seized him, and dragged him out of town, where by the command or at least the connivance, of the king, he was stoned on the

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<sup>1</sup>Zwemer, Raymund Lull, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup>Zwemer, Raymund Lull, p. 134.

thirtieth of June, 1315. He was a master in the art of winning an argument; his zeal knew no bounds!

Another intrepid missionary to the Muslims was Henry Martyn whose dedication to the cause of Christ we can but admire, for he virtually burned out for God. With his brilliant mind, he was able to organize his position, analyze the beliefs of his opponents, and materialize his irrefutable arguments. Though his primary contribution was by pen, his voice was by no means silent. But the tone of his constant contact was, like Lull's polemic, yet unlike his great predecessor, less exacerbating, and more conscious of the futility of direct refutation.

John Sargent, compiler of Martyn's Memoirs states that his work was divided into two parts; the first was principally devoted to an attack on Islam, the second was intended to display the evidences and establish the authority of the Christian faith.<sup>1</sup>

Like the Apostle Paul, who, before the learned Areopagites (Acts 17:17) subjected them to unanswerable challenges, Martyn had produced his proofs, but also like the great apostle to the Gentiles who, from the futility of his argumentations later declared "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2), Martyn also confessed:

I do use the means in a certain way, but frigid reasoning with men of perverse minds seldom brings men to Christ. . . With very little hope that any good will come of it, I am now employed in drawing out the evidences of the truth; but O! that I could converse and reason, and plead with power from on high. How powerless are the best-directed arguments till the Holy Ghost renders them effectual.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John Sargent, A Memoir of Rev. Henry Martyn, From the tenth London Edition (New York: American Tract Society), p. 340.

<sup>2</sup>George Smith, Henry Martyn, Saint and Scholar, First Modern Missionary to the Mohammedans 1781-1812, (London: The Religious Tract Society, 56 Paternoster Row, 1892), pp. 364, 365.

Nevertheless, the general impression Martyn left with his friends and foes was that of an indefatigable controversialist. The Secretary to the British Embassy to Persia, and afterwards himself Minister Plenipotentiary to its Court, Mr. James Morier, has given us a notable sketch of Henry Martyn as a controversialist for Christ, and of the impression that he made on the officials, priests, and people of all classes.<sup>1</sup>

Henry Martyn's body was buried in Tocat, Turkey, but his work did not die with him as happened to be the case with Raymund Lull. A worthy successor was found in the person of a German scholar, C. G. Pfander, D.D. When for some twelve years stationed at Shushy Fort, on the Russian border of Georgia, he frequently visited Bagdad and travelled through Persia by Isfahan and Tehran. In 1836 the intolerant Russian Government expelled all foreign missionaries from its territories, and Dr. Pfander joined the Church Mission at Agra, India. In 1835 he first published at Shushy, in Persian, his famous Mizan ul Haqq (Balance of Truth). This, his greatest of works states the general argument for Christianity and against Islam, was followed by the Miftah ul Asrar (Key to Secrets), in proof of the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity, and by the Tariq ul Hayat (Way of Life), or the nature of sin and the way of salvation, of both of which Hindustani translations appeared.<sup>2</sup>

Christian workers have relied on these books, especially the first one, extensively in their work among Muslims and have depended on the sheer weight of the arguments put forth to convert souls. The dearth of satisfactory results proves, beyond argumentation, the futility of

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Henry Martyn, p. 391

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Henry Martyn, pp. 414, 415.

argumentation and polemics. Conversion is the result of the working of the Holy Spirit on the heart of a sinner. It becomes the Christian missionary to create and develop a milieu of mutual trust and sympathetic understanding, one of reacting respect and reciprocal trust, before the implantation of the seeds of eternal truth. His soul is too precious to squander for the selfish gratification of an argument won. We must be willing to lose the argument, but not the soul, who, when converted will, under the illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit, come to a realization of his ill-founded presuppositions and cherished beliefs.

Any treatment of missions to Muslims would be incomplete without some reference to Samuel Zwemer who was born in Vriesland, Michigan, graduated at Hope College, Holland, Michigan in 1887, and at New Brunswick (New Jersey) Theological Seminary in 1890. Having been ordained to the ministry, he served the Reformed Church until his missionary days to the Muslims began in 1891. He served in Basrah, Bahrain, and other stations in Arabia from 1891 to 1905, and authored several books.<sup>1</sup>

Missionaries came, they labored, they made mistakes, they achieved, they died. It is incumbent on us to profit from their experiences by carefully considering their methods, their failures and successes, and press on by the grace of the Master to greater achievements, and more bountiful harvests "and so much the more as ye see the day ap-

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<sup>1</sup>At the outset it is necessary to emphasize that I have the greatest respect and admiration for Samuel Zwemer and others like him who have persisted and labored year after year, in what has not been the most fruitful field. The very fact that they have labored uncomplainingly through the heat of the day is enough to make me, a newcomer in the Islamo-Christian arena hesitate to say or write anything that could be construed as impingement on their character or work, especially when considering an honored elder contemporary.

proaching" (Heb. 10:25). The accuracy of their doctrines, the strength of their arguments, or the necessity of presenting all the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth is not questioned in this paper. The attitudes we hold, the sequence of presentation and the methods of work however, must be more productive than what has been the case with Lull and Martyn. What do Zwemer's books reveal?

Of the eight or ten of his books consulted, the title that catches one's attention at once is The Cross Above the Crescent.<sup>1</sup> A Muslim--anywhere from Casablanca to Surakarta--at first glance at the book would immediately feel the cutting edge of western so-called superiority. His natural reaction would be to defend his own "above"-ness, and to reject outright any arguments put forth by the author or any like him. Granted that the book was primarily written for missionaries, he could at least have called it "The Cross and the Crescent" and placed both on a common footing for calm consideration. It seems the Apostle Paul had this sort of a situation in mind when he wrote to the Corinthian Church his philosophy of mission:

I have freely and happily become a servant of any and all so that I can win them to Christ. When I am with the Jews I seem as one of them so that they will listen to the Gospel and I can win them to Christ. When I am with Gentiles who follow Jewish customs and ceremonies I don't argue, even though I don't agree, because I want to help them. When with the heathen I agree with them as much as I can, except of course that I must always do what is right as a Christian. And so, by agreeing, I can win their confidence and help them too. When I am with those whose consciences bother them easily, I don't act as though I know it all and don't say they are foolish; the result is that they are willing to let me help them. Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Zwemer, The Cross Above the Crescent (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1941).

<sup>2</sup>1 Cor. 9:19-22, Taylor's translation.



We look inside the covers of Zwemer's book mentioned above and find a conscious effort to offset the attitude of which I speak. He tries to accept part of the blame for the estrangement between the two peoples as he quotes from Goodsell:

"Fundamentally there are three reasons why hitherto so few Moslems have come to share our experience of Christ.

"First, throughout their history they have been rigid and aggressive religionists, the most aggressive and militaristic of all religious people.

"Second, from the very beginning the examples of Christ's way of life which they had before them were so repellent as to widen the breach rather than to bridge it. . .

"Third, the Christian Churches of the world have never seriously undertaken the task of evangelizing Moslem peoples."<sup>1</sup>

Later in the book he justifies at least a little "hurt", by comparing the ordeal to the surgeon's scalpel, whose keen edge hurts to heal. "In these days", he writes, "when Moslems are justly irritated by the political aggressions of Christian powers, or the un-Christian conduct of the so-called representatives of Christianity, we may well emphasize the ministry of friendship, and enter a plea for less of the spirit of controversy and more of the spirit of the Cross."<sup>2</sup>

He further points out the tragedy of travelers or politicians or missionaries who do Christian things in un-Christian ways, or un-Christian things that have been done by Christians "that Christianity has appeared as a bitter foe of our Moslem friends."<sup>3</sup>

Consider the attitude expressed and allusions made to the character of Mohammed. In Islam, A Challenge to Faith,<sup>4</sup> he bluntly states that

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<sup>1</sup>Zwemer, The Cross, pp. 245, 246, quoting Dr. Fred F. Goodsell.

<sup>2</sup>Zwemer, The Cross, p. 248.

<sup>3</sup>Zwemer, The Cross, p. 248.

<sup>4</sup>Zwemer, Islam, A Challenge to Faith, Second Revised Edition (New York: Student Volunteer Movement For Foreign Missions, 1909).

"Mohammed's biography, as given by later writers, is a palpable plagiarism and a parody on the life of our Saviour."<sup>1</sup> He tactlessly calls the venerated prophet of Islam "the Mecca camel driver"<sup>2</sup> whose ethical standard is so low."<sup>3</sup> Though Zwemer admits that Raymund Lull went too far in boldly "preaching that Mohammed had none of the seven cardinal virtues and was guilty of the seven deadly sins", he is quick to add that "it would not be difficult to show that pride, lust, envy and anger were prominent traits of the prophet's character".<sup>4</sup> He then cites Muir, Koelle, and Sprenger to prove this point. The trouble is that these all were dyed-in-the-wool traditionalists when it comes to attitudes towards Islam. There have been very few who dared express the "brotherly" sentiments of which most of them speak. One such exception is Will Durant, whose works, on the other hand were not those of an involved evangelist or missionary to Muslims, but an armchair historian.

Quoting another "authority", Adolph Wuttke, Zwemer maintains that "Islam finds its place in the history of the religious and moral spirit not as a vital organic member, but as violently interrupting the course of this history, and which is to be regarded as an attempt of heathenism to maintain itself erect under an outward monotheistic form against Christianity."<sup>5</sup>

He calls on witnesses as early in the Islamo-Christian confrontation as John of Damascus whom he calls "by far the ablest theologian of the eighth century".<sup>6</sup> Among his less known works is one entitled

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<sup>1</sup>Zwemer, Islam, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup>Zwemer, Islam, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Zwemer, Islam, p. 123.

<sup>4</sup>Zwemer, Islam, p. 123.

<sup>5</sup>Zwemer, Islam, p. 119.

<sup>6</sup>Zwemer, Islam, p. 189.

De Haeresibus, which, among other tractates, contains a dispute between a Muslim and a Christian. Quoting another traditional controversialist, Keller, he says: "This treatise was the armory for all future controversial writings against Islam in the Eastern Church".<sup>1</sup> Zwemer's attitude toward John of Damascus is further evidenced by stating that he (John of Damascus) "admits the truths of Mohammed's teachings, points out its errors and also the blots of Mohammed's character".<sup>2</sup>

Zwemer cites Petrus Venerabilis, a Benedictine monk, an Abbot of Clugny in the twelfth century and first to translate the Koran into a European language (Latin). Of his literary accomplishments, Zwemer further writes:

This early champion of the Church wrote two remarkable books against Mohammedanism which have recently appeared in a German translation. In them he treats at length and with keen insight two main topics, the divine character of the Koran and the question whether Mohammed was a prophet. He shows that the Koran testifies against itself and that we admit the weakness of our Christianity by not defending it against Mohammedan attacks and winning Moslems by our proof of its truth. He carefully distinguishes the true and the false in the teaching of Islam and even points out its pagan,

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<sup>1</sup>Zwemer, Islam, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup>John of Damascus: "One of the principal agents through whom Christian lore and Greek thought at this time found their way into Islam was St. John of Damascus (Joannes Damascenus), surnamed Chrysorrhoeas (golden-tongued), as his earlier Antiochene namesake was surnamed Chrysostom. Although he wrote in Greek, John was not a Greek but a Syrian who spoke Aramaic at home and knew, in addition to both of these languages, Arabic. His grandfather Mansur ibn-Sarjun was the financial administrator of Damascus at the time of its Arab conquest and connived with its bishop in surrendering the town. He kept his position under the Moslems and John's father succeeded to the office. As a young man John was the boon companion of Mu'awiyah's son Yazid and later followed his father in that most important office in the Arab government. This he held until the caliphate of Hisham (724-43), when he retired to a life of asceticism and devotion in the monastery of St. Saba near Jerusalem. Here he died about 748. Among St. John's works is a dialogue with a "Saracen" on the divinity of Christ and the freedom of Human will which is intended to be an apology for Christianity, a manual for the guidance of Christians in their arguments with the Moslems." Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, Second Edition, Revised (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1940), pp. 245, 246.

Lull, Martyn, Pfander, Zwemer and others (not a host, but a pitifully small number) gave of their best--their all--to win Muslims to Christ. We wish their efforts had been more successful. The tragedy is that almost without exception all have followed the traditional dialectic approach of polemics, debate and proof. In order to enhance the appearance of his own religion, each has had to expose the unsavory aspects of the other and to document it with "proofs". The argument may have been won, but not only the soul has been lost, but the life as well. In their zeal to prove the errors of Islam, they have inadvertently condemned themselves and their religion. The Apostle Paul writes in his cryptic manner "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." (Rom. 2:1). The Beloved Disciple declares "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). If Christ came not to condemn, how then dare we presume to do so?

## CHAPTER II

### THE MUSLIM WORLD

#### The Birth of Islam and the Urgency of Its Message

The sad state of affairs in the Christian world which has been described in Chapter I was certainly a misrepresentation of Christ. The iconoclastic controversy and the disputes on the nature of Christ and the Trinity, Mariolatry, mediation of saints, relics, and prayers for the dead had so split up the church by the beginning of the seventh century that North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and the East had all broken away from the mother church, either by excommunication or by their own will.

The virtual polytheism to which the Byzantine Church had fallen heir made nominal Christianity little better than the pagans of Arabia, during the period known by Arab historians as the Jahiliyah days, usually rendered "time of ignorance".<sup>1</sup> It refers to the spiritual condition during the period immediately preceding Islam in which Arabia had no dispensation, no inspired prophet, no revealed book; for the cultured and lettered society as that developed by the South Arabians can hardly be called "ignorance".

The Bedouin of the Jahiliya age had little if any religion. Though divinations by means of drawing arrows was practiced,<sup>2</sup> the pagan

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<sup>1</sup>Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup>See Ezekiel 21:21.

Arabian developed no mythology, no involved theology and no cosmogony comparable to that of the Babylonians.<sup>1</sup> His deity consisted of natural objects such as trees, wells, caves, and stones. The well in the desert with its cleansing, healing, life-giving water very early became an object of worship. Zamzam's holiness, according to Arabian authors, was pre-Islamic and went back to the time it supplied water to Hagar and Ishmael.<sup>2</sup>

Beduoin deities were myriad. The forbidding desert sun compelled the caravans to travel by night and even the shepherds to graze their flocks by moonlight, hence moon-worship gained the ascendancy, in contrast to sun-worship in the more tolerable climates of Canaan and Persia. The urban population of the Hijaz which became the cradle of Islam, developed a worship of the three daughters of Allah, Al-Uzza (Venus, the morning star), Al-Lat (from Ilahah, "the goddess"), and Manah (from maniyah, "allotted", the goddess of fate).<sup>3</sup>

Hubal (from Aramaic for vapour, spirit) evidently the chief deity of the Ka'bah, was represented in human form. The pagan Ka'bah, which housed Hubal and hundreds of other idols, was an unpretentious cubicle (hence the name) of primitive simplicity, serving as a shelter for a black meteorite which was venerated as a fetish. Muslim tradition ascribes credit to Adam for having first built it, and to Abraham and Ishmael for rebuilding it after the Flood.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup>Genesis 21:12-21.

<sup>3</sup>Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 99.

<sup>4</sup>Koran, Sura the Cow 2:118-121.

Allah (allah, al-ilah, the god) was the principle deity of Mecca. Mohammed was the son of Abdullah (the slave of Allah, a member of the Quraysh tribe, direct, lineal descendent of Abraham through Ishmael, and at that time custodian of the sacred precincts of the revered Ka'bah. Other pagan deities such as Nasr (vulture)<sup>1</sup> and Awf (the great bird) bear creature names and suggest totemic origins.

In the face of this almost universal polytheism in Arabia as well as that permeating the Christianity of his day, Mohammed proclaimed fearlessly the belief in One God, in his clarion creed La Ilaha illa l'Lah (There is no god but God). The urgency of his message cannot be gainsaid. It was long overdue. Monotheism, we must emphasize, is a high mountain that must be scaled, not a valley into which man naturally slithers. "No people have been recorded or discovered with an inborn craving or of race-bias making for monotheism, but on the contrary the lower and prevalent popular instinct is always polytheistic" writes Farnell.<sup>2</sup> Two outstanding exceptions of monotheism illuminate the pages of history outside Israel. The first is that of Akhenaten (Ikhnaton), otherwise known as Amenhotep IV of Egypt. The monotheism he instituted at Tel-el-Amarna near Thebes is regarded by some historians as the most remarkable achievement in the history of religion, for due to the will-power of a single man acting in direct opposition to the wishes and emotions of a powerful priesthood, he was able to establish his new religion.

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<sup>1</sup>Koran, Sura Noah 71:23.

<sup>2</sup>Lewis Richard Farnell, The Attributes of God, (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1925)85. Schmidt, in The Origin and Growth of Religion Facts and Theories (trans. H. J. Rose, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1931), on pages 209 and 264, in refutation of this commonly assumed belief, points out the "Supreme Being" concept of many primitive tribes and equates it with a high form of monotheism.

It was a royal Pharaoh of profound vision that could carry through so audacious a revolution; and Professor Breasted rightly regards him as the first recorded idealist in history, but an idealist born "out of due time" and out of all sympathy with the religious bias of his people. Therefore his work prospered only in his lifetime. His monotheism was obliterated immediately after his death; and in his memory he may be said to have suffered a posthumous martyrdom, being only remembered as "the criminal of Akhetaten", his name for the modern Tel-el-Amarna.<sup>1</sup>

The second exceptional emergence of a monotheism of an extraordinary caliber is that of Zarathustra of Iran. If Richard Frye's recent research is correct the first year of the Zoroastrian Era was 588 B. C.,<sup>2</sup> making him a contemporary of the prophet Daniel, who lived past the fall of Babylon in 539 B. C. and into the first years of the reign of Cyrus II the Great. The latter instituted Zoroastrianism as the state religion which was faithfully upheld by Darius I and his successors. The supremacy of Ahuramazda, who was the only god evoked by the Persian royalty, was not challenged until Artaxerxes II (404-359 B. C.), an Archaemenid of another line who was challenged by Cyrus the Lesser, a descendant of Cyrus the Great.<sup>3</sup> Hitherto the unusual monotheism espoused by Cyrus the Great and his successors for almost a century and a half throws light on the exalted position and title attributed to that unique personage by Isaiah the prophet who called him the Messiah, the

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<sup>1</sup>James Henry Breasted, Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt (New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Row, 1959), p. 345.

<sup>2</sup>Richard N. Frye, The Heritage of Persia (New York: World Pub. Co., 1963), p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>Douglas Waterhouse, unpublished manuscript, "Daniel and His Time (623 to 535-33 B. C.)", p. 16.



Lord's "Anointed" (Isa. 45:1), a title shared only by Jesus, the Lord's "Anointed".

Polytheism, not to mention Hedonism that is everywhere, is natural to man, a product of his own natural instincts, and almost universally acclaimed outside the Judeo-Christian-Muslim world. Monotheism, on the other hand, and in contrast, is a revealed truth, not the outcropping of any man's private cogitations. For that matter, any light or information one might have on God, His nature or character or attributes must be had by special revelation. Man, of himself is incapable of finding out the Almighty (Job 11:7). The natural man slides into polytheism as has been demonstrated so clearly throughout the history of the world. Polytheism, no doubt with Satan's promptings and insinuations, is the result of man's natural, sinful inclinations. Even a brief glance at the history of polytheism reveals an almost universal bent toward it. Its vast preponderance in both sacred as well as profane literature (outside the Judeo-Christian-Muslim world) is quite apparent. In the light of this revelation, man--be he Caliph or Bedouin, king or peasant--has no inherent human greatness whatsoever, and thus no humanism to give rise to vain glories. The only greatness admitted by Islam is the lasting one of sanctity, and this belongs to God.

To summarize, the heritage of Abraham, as the Lord Himself testifies (Gen. 18:18, 19), was a pure monotheism unparalleled by any other nation. This faith in One God, sometimes bedimmed, but always there, was passed on from generation to generation through the family of Ishmael, the father of the Arabs, until it emerged again in full bloom with Islam.

The Fantastic and Rapid Spread of Islam

Faith in One God was the message, the central theme and burden of Mohammed's life. For the proclamation of this greatly needed message in a preponderantly polytheistic society the prophet of Islam staked his all. At a crucial moment the battle lines were drawn up. The small band of about 300 poorly armed Muslims was greatly outnumbered by the pagan Meccans. Mohammed had spent the night on his knees praying not only for victory but also for the very survival of Islam. He poured out his heart repeatedly: "Lord, fulfill Thy promise. If this handful of Muslims perishes today, there will be none left to worship Thee."<sup>1</sup>

Under normal circumstances the Battle of Badr in A. D. 624 would have been an insignificant skirmish between two unknown Arab tribes in the desert, but at this one encounter the existence of Islam was at stake. The two-year-old Muslim community was threatened with annihilation by the superior enemy force. The successful outcome of this battle changed the course of world history.

Mohammed, the founder and prophet of Islam was born fatherless circa A. D. 570 and orphaned at an early age. He was nurtured by his grandfather, Abdul Mutalib who died shortly thereafter, then taken to the home of his uncle Abu Talib.

The inherent and acquired godlessness in Arabia disturbed Mohammed. At the age of forty he claimed to have had a vision in which he heard a voice telling him to "recite" God's messages. These "recitations" (Koran) came to be looked upon as sacred instructions from God. The Koran is composed of 114 chapters, or suras, of varying length, arranged

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<sup>1</sup>Fazl Ahmad, Mohammed, the Prophet of Islam, p. 84.

roughly according to length. Noteworthy among many, is the injunction to "overcome evil with good."<sup>1</sup>

It is not claimed that the revelations came down in written form, but in a form of inspiration that provided Mohammed with the words to speak to others. As he gave his messages over a period of time, various people wrote them down as they remembered them. A later secretary, Zaid, under the direction of the Caliph Othman collected all existing recensions and portions recorded on potsherds, stones, camel shoulder blades, leather, and memories of men, to form one volume--the Koran. It contains Islamic legislation and deals with such items as pilgrimage, marriage, and prayer. New Testament stories as well as Old Testament stories appear in several suras. Apocalyptic and eschatological scenes are vivid in description. Disapproval of frivolity, contempt of arrogance, and encouragement of almsgiving as an atonement for sin reflect Nestorian overtones. Jesus is often spoken of as a messenger.

When Mohammed's preaching began in Mecca in A. D. 610, the Quraysh tribal chiefs immediately recognized in his preaching a threat to their traditional way of life, and they began to oppose him. Later on two Arab tribes, Aws and Khazraj, in Yathrib, a city about 300 miles north of Mecca, called Mohammed to arbitrate their differences. He accepted their invitation, and thus found a new home for Islam. Under heavy persecution of his fellow-Meccans, he executed his "flight" from Mecca in the summer of A. D. 622, which event, referred to by the Muslims as the hijra, marks the beginning of the Islamic era. That year became the first year of the Muslim calendar.

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<sup>1</sup>Koran, Sura Cattle 13:22.

Under Mohammed's successful administration Yathrib soon came to be called Madinat-un-Nabi, "The City of the Prophet", or Al Madina, "The City". Relieved of persecution, Islam grew rapidly in this friendly atmosphere. A humble mosque (Arabic masjid, place of worship, passed to English through Old Spanish mesquita) was erected with a thatched roof, where the Muslims would gather for their daily devotions.

It was under these settings that the Meccans, incensed that they had allowed Mohammed to escape their grasp in Mecca, determined to annihilate him and his followers in Medina. With cavalry and camel brigade, they marched northward. Mohammed and the 300 of his faithful devotees, hearing of the imminent attack, prepared for the worst. Battle lines were drawn up at Badr, a village about 20 miles south-west of Medina<sup>1</sup> where the tide turned in their favor.

We must always maintain with steadfast earnestness our confidence in God's overruling providence. God could easily have allowed the meager force of three hundred Muslims to be wiped out by the thousand Meccans who attacked them. Many have considered Islam as a tragedy and a menace. Many have looked upon the advance of their force as a calamity to civilization. Many have wished that God would have forestalled this mighty force when it was still an infant--and He could have--but did not, apparently because it was in His divine providence that Islam should arise and play its role in Heilsgeschichte.

Ellen G. White, in commenting on the setting up and pulling down of world emperors says:

All earthly powers are under the control of the Infinite One. To the mightiest ruler, to the most cruel oppressor, he says, "Hither-

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<sup>1</sup>Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 116.

to shalt thou come, but no further." (Job 38:11). God's power is constantly exercised to counteract the agencies of evil: he is ever at work among men, not for their destruction, but for their correction and preservation.<sup>1</sup>

Not only are events known by God, but in His divine providence, He brings about men and movements to establish His sovereignty and knowledge among the people of the world--and He is no respecter of persons--calling to His cause some whom mortals might, in their pride and arrogance consider the most unlikely and unworthy!

Within a short time, new Muslim victories brought Khosrow Parviz, the Persian emperor, to his knees, and Muslims occupied the territories of the already fragmented Byzantines.

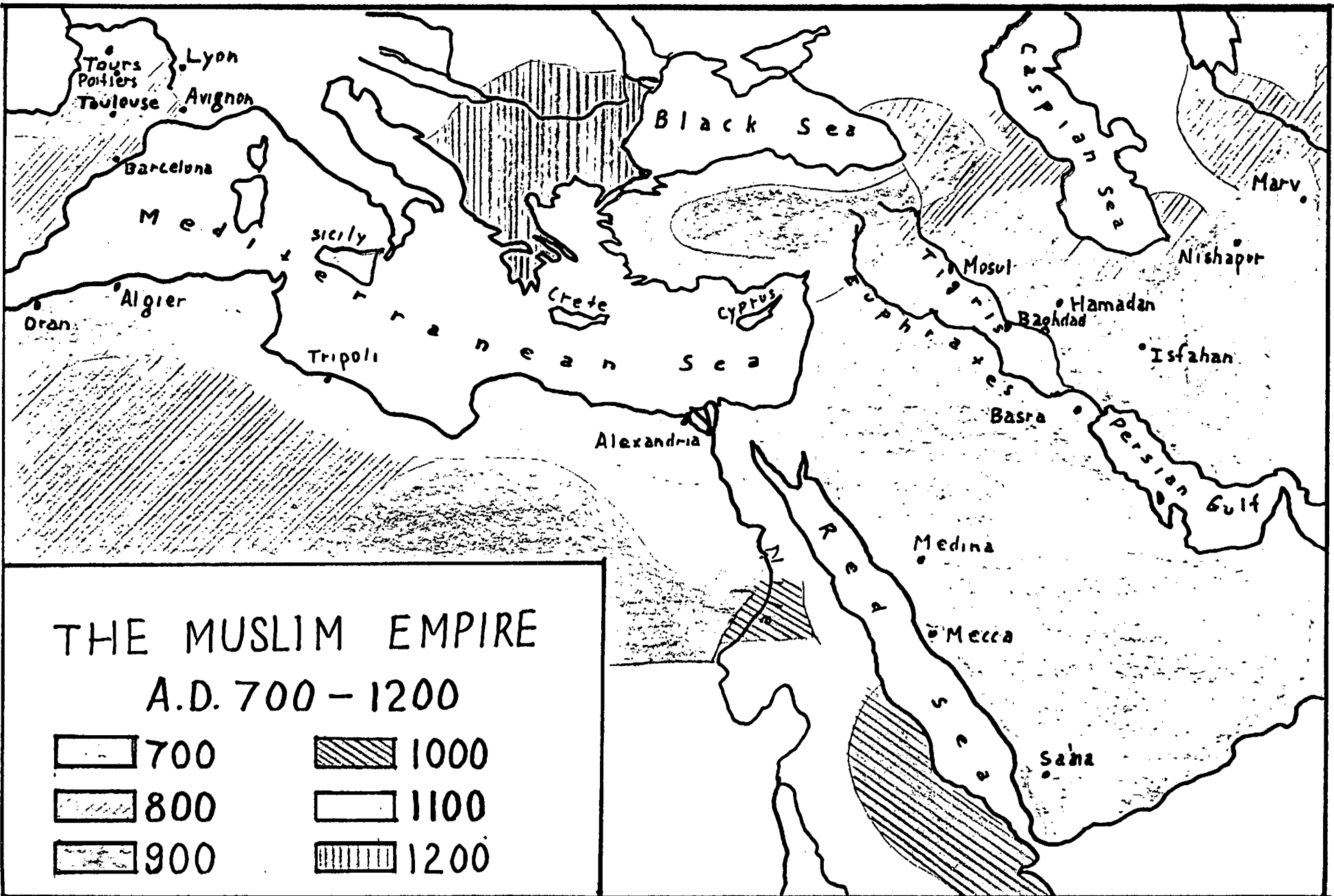
In Arabia the Battle of Badr was but the harbinger of a greater victory as Mohammed negotiated in the Pact of Hudaibiyah for a peaceful entry into Mecca, subsequently destroying all idols and making that city his capital. His creed was proclaimed in a clarion call "La Illaha illa l'Lah" (There is no god but God). This cry against the polytheism of the pagans as well as the apostate Christians was to be sounded for centuries to come. Mohammed's quarrel, as we mentioned in Chapter I, was not with Christ, but with "Christianity", not with those who were "surrendered" to God, but to those who perpetuated heresies.

The dogma of the Incarnation became inextricably involved with the conflicts of the metropolitans, rivalries of ecclesiastical potentates, noisy councils, imperial laws, deprivations, exiles, riots, and schisms. Thus the dismembered "Christian" Empire was easy prey to the lieutenants of Mohammed.<sup>2</sup>



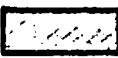
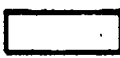


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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1913), p. 694.

<sup>2</sup>Richard Bell, The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment, (Edinburgh University: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd. 1925, 1968), p. 6.



# THE MUSLIM EMPIRE A.D. 700 - 1200

	700		1000
	800		1100
	900		1200

The Church in Syria and Egypt, with embittered feelings toward their European counterparts, who considered them heretical, almost welcomed the benevolent regime of Islam.<sup>1</sup> Bell claims that "the persecution of Christian by Christian, if less bloody, was if anything, more bitter in spirit than the persecution of Christian by Pagan had formerly been."<sup>2</sup>

By the time of his death in A. D. 632, Mohammed had by the sheer force of personality and strong religious conviction brought all of Arabia under the banner of Islam. His successor was Abu Bakr, the first of four Califs to rule the burgeoning State from Medina. At the Yarmuk Gorge in A. D. 636, he utterly defeated the forces of Eastern Roman Emperor Heraclius, who had fought the Persians through Syria and Egypt. This signal victory was rapidly followed by the fall of Damascus and Jerusalem, which meant the total occupation of Syria and Palestine by the Muslims. Islam soon numbered among its adherents multitudes who had been brought up under other faiths. The Persians and the Aramaic and Coptic Christians who adopted Islam soon far outnumbered the Arabs. These all exercised no little influence upon their conquerors.<sup>3</sup> It has been asserted that it was these neophytes who brought into Islam the spirit of partisanship and bigotry to which they themselves had been so long accustomed.<sup>4</sup>

God's providence can be traced in Islam's conquests of these lands. The Muslims were actually welcomed by major portions of the population who had existed under the iron rule of Rome. The testimony of one such is cited by Butler:

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<sup>1</sup>Bell, Origin of Islam, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Bell, Origin of Islam, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Bell, Origin of Islam, p. 189.

<sup>4</sup>Bell, Origin of Islam, p. 190.

The statement of Abu l-Faraj (Bar Hevraeus) gives the judgment of a monophysite of much later date, but probably reflects something of the feelings which prevailed at the time. "When our people complained to Heraclius," he says, "he gave, no answer. Therefore the God of vengeance delivered us out of the hands of Romans by means of the Arabs. Then although our churches were not restored to us since under Arab rule each Christian community retained its actual possessions, still it profited us not a little to be saved from the cruelty of the Romans and their bitter hatred toward us."<sup>1</sup>

Victory had whetted the appetite of the Muslims. Alexandria fell in A. D. 639, not because of the chivalry of the invaders, but because of the treachery of Cyrus, the Patriarch! Finding the Monothelite compromise which Heraclius had negotiated unacceptable to the native Egyptian Church, Cyrus endeavored to procure its acceptance by force, and his tenure of power was marked by a severe persecution directed against the Copts, which sapped still more their allegiance to the Byzantine Empire<sup>2</sup> called Roman by the Arabs, and paved the way for the entry of the Arab Muslims.

Egypt, one of the most ancient lands, was not to be ruled by native Egyptians! Ezekiel, about the year 587 B. C. had boldly predicted that "it shall be the most lowly of the kingdoms, and never again exalt itself above the nations; and I will make them so small that they will never again rule over the nations" (Eze. 29:15). Persians, Greeks, Romans, and Byzantine Greeks had held the scepter over the land of the Pharaohs. Holy Writ still declared that "There shall no longer be a prince in the land of Egypt" (Eze. 30:13). Now Heraclius' prince, Cyrus, the Patriarch, having mistreated the Egyptians,<sup>3</sup> made them ready to turn to the Arabs.

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<sup>1</sup> Bell, Origin of Islam, p. 166, citing B. H., Chron. Eccles. 274 by Butler, Arab Conquest of Egypt, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Bell, Origin of Islam, p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> Webster's Third International Dictionary Unabridged, article,



The Muslim navy under the spiritual zeal of the third Caliph, Othman (A. D. 644-656) subdued Cyprus, brought Carthage under tribute, and attacked Rhodes. The Berbers of North Africa were "converted" and Afghanistan was made a Muslim province. As the coffers of Damascus, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Ctesiphon successively filled to overflowing the Arabs' treasury, Muslim leadership suffered an equal and opposite decline in spirituality.

The nepotistic Caliph Othman made sure he placed his relatives in all important positions. One such was Muawiyeh, who was made governor of Damascus. He founded a dynasty that ruled the Middle East for ninety years with ten caliphs. Muawiyeh seized the Caliphate from Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed, and with his successors launched military expeditions that overthrew, one by one, Cyzicus on the Sea of Marmora, Qayrawan in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, along the North African coast, as gems in their growing empire.

When Uqbah, the conqueror of North Africa, reached the Atlantic he was distressed that he could not go any farther. He is said to have spurred his horse into the sea, raised his hands to heaven and exclaimed: "Almighty God, but for this sea I would have gone into still remoter regions, spreading the glory of Thy name and smiting Thine enemies."<sup>1</sup>

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Copt, p. 503 makes this comment: "An Egyptian of the native race descended from the ancient Egyptians; es; a member of the Coptic church--or original Egyptian dynasty to rule in Egypt was that of the 26th dynasty (700-526 B. C.) founded by Amassess, a Hamitic king from Sais, in the delta area." In Egypt today thousands of the same Hamitic or Coptic people will be seen, but not one has ruled the country. After the Arab conquest, Turks, French and British have ruled for different periods until today the Arabs are again in full control, fulfilling the words of prophecy and demonstrating further evidence of God's marvelous providence.

<sup>1</sup>Payne, The Holy Sword, p. 120.

An obscure Berber freedman called Tariq ibn Ziyad tackled one of the most dramatic conquests. Cueta was his jumping-off place--for just a few miles across the Straits was Spain. He took possession of the Rock of Gibraltar, which has ever since borne his name (Jabal Tariq--"Mountain of Tariq") and then with 7,000 men, mostly Berbers, descended upon the provinces of Algeciras and routed an army of 25,000 under Roderick, the last of the Visigothic kings. Their relentless swords swept on. Cordova fell by a ruse; Malaga surrendered; Elvira was taken by storm; Toledo was entered undefended and remained the center of culture and learning for three centuries.

In the east, Basra, on the lower Tigris, became the launching site for their campaigns into Central Asia. As they made accessions in Uzbekistan, with Bokhara and Samarkand and Tashkent as chief cities, they made contact with Turks who would subsequently play a major role in the Abbasid Caliphate and later take Constantinople which the Caliph Othman had attempted to do three times, but was repulsed by the mysterious "Greek fire".<sup>1</sup>

Sind, in the lower Indus Valley, was Islamized by A. D. 713. Muslim Pakistan (Land of the Pure) today attests to the permanency of the Muslim conquest in that area.

It was in October, 732, a hundred years since Abu Bakr had announced the death of Mohammed, that the army of Abdur-Rahman ibn Abdullah, governor of Spain, made contact with the Franks under the command of Charles of Heristal, called Martel--"The Hammer". In a wood between Tours and Poitiers, the Arab leader was killed, and his men hurried out

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<sup>1</sup>Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 201.

of what threatened to be a bitter cold winter battle. Before this turning point, the Arabs had invaded France and progressed halfway to the English Channel. Even later they took Avignon, advanced on Valence and Lyons, spread through Burgundy, and threatened Paris. Islam had reached its farthest extent in the West.

Mention was made of the fact that Muawiyeh usurped the Caliphate from Ali, son-in-law of Mohammed, and duly elected fourth Caliph. The resultant feud caused the supporters of Ali to revolt against the Omayyads in A. D. 747. The feud continued indefinitely, until Abu-l Abbas was elected Caliph by acclamation in Kufa. He declared his intension to purge the world of the hated Omayyad usurpers. On August 5, 750, Marwan the Second, the last Omayyad Caliph, was slaughtered with every member of his household save one.<sup>1</sup>

Abbas, the exterminator of the Omayyads, transferred the capital to Bagdad where his family met a similar fate almost two hundred years later. Not until then did Islam really begin to internationalize. Having absorbed the culture of the many nations it had conquered, Islam, under the Abbasids, established the capital at Bagdad on the banks of the Tigris. As center of the Muslim world, Bagdad was distinguished alike by its wealth, its luxury, its literary brilliance, its schools of learning, and medical institutions.<sup>2</sup>

Harun-ar-Rashid (A. D. 786-809), of Arabian Nights fame, is, no doubt, the best known Caliph of the Abbasids. His reign ushered in the golden age of Islam, an unrivaled era of literary and scientific advance.

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<sup>1</sup>Hitti, History of the Arabs, pp. 279-287.

<sup>2</sup>Bell, Origin of Islam, p. 312.

Constantinople was soon outdone by Bagdad, with the port of Basra assuming great maritime importance. By A. D. 850 Muslim ships had reached China to trade for silk. A considerable Muslim colony was established in Canton. Trade was carried down the east coast of Africa as far as Madagascar. In the Mediterranean, Muslim shipping vied for first place with that of Venice and Genoa. Enormous quantities of coins minted in Tashkent and Samarkand from A. D. 700 to 1500 are constantly showing up around the Baltic states. A gilt-bronze cross found in an Irish bog bears the inscription Bismillah ("In the name of God") in Arabic characters.<sup>1</sup>

Of the superiority in learning and arts of the Muslim East over Western Europe at this time there can be no question.<sup>2</sup> All branches of learning received great impetus. The first bimaristan (hospital) in Islam was built in Bagdad after the pattern of Gundishapur in southwest Persia. The Persians Ali al Razi, ibn Sina, and others produced learned works in Arabic. Razi's works on medicine were translated into Latin in Vienna in 1565 and later gained him the reputation of being one of the keenest original thinkers and greatest clinicians not only of Islam but of the Middle Ages.<sup>3</sup> Astronomy and mathematics flourished, the Bait al Hikmeh (House of Wisdom) in Bagdad became world famous. Caliph Al Ma'mun's (813-833) astronomers came very close in estimating the exact circumference of the earth, by measuring the length of a terrestrial degree.<sup>4</sup> Imagine

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<sup>1</sup>George E. Kirk, A Short History of the Middle East From the Rise of Islam to Modern Times, Seventh Revised Ed. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1964), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Muslim Spain, under Umayyad Abdur Rahman III (A. D. 912-61) and his rejuvenated dynasty excelled equally--an entire chapter by itself not dealt with in this paper.

<sup>3</sup>Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 366.

<sup>4</sup>Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 375.

this, when Galileo (1546-1742) nearly seven hundred years later in 1632 was tried by the Inquisition and forced to abjure belief in the heliocentric theory of the solar system! Copernicus (d. 1543) is regarded as the founder of modern astronomy for having established the theory that the earth rotates daily on its axis. Western genius has blinded the Westerners to the credit due the Muslims. Intellectual advancement had lost its perspective. It was this kind of religious bigotry that kept Europe so dark in the Middle Ages while the Muslim East reached new heights of intellectual and scientific development. The Jalali Calendar, originated by Omar Khayyam (d. 1123/24), has much greater degree of accuracy than the more familiar Julian Calendar (reformed by Gregory XIII in 1528).

Science flourished under Harun while his contemporary Charlemagne (742-814), with whom he was on friendly terms, was, with his fellow-monarchs in Europe dabbling in the elements of writing their names! History books are replete with graphic accounts of those days--seeming stagnation in "Christian" Europe and the fantastic strides in literature, science, art, medicine, astronomy, navigation, mathematics, jurisprudence, and almost every branch of endeavor in the Muslim East. Beyond the intellectual pursuits, tremendous areas were added to their territorial limits. Turkish mercenaries from the steppes of Central Asia gradually became the masters in the Abbasid Caliphate in Bagdad, and eventually pressed their claims into Asia Minor and became the forerunners of the Ottoman Emperors who in time, threatened Vienna and harassed all of Europe from the North Sea to the Iberian Peninsula! Largely unnoticed by Western churchmen was the part the Ottoman Turk played in the great drama of the Protestant Reformation. The determination of Emperor Charles V, bent on crushing

the Reformation, were thwarted time and again by the military advances of Suleiman the Magnificent. Often as Charles V raised his hand to strike the German princes, he was forced to turn aside the blow.

Again and again the immediate destruction of all who dared to oppose themselves to Rome appeared inevitable, but at the critical moment the armies of the Turk appeared on the eastern frontier. . . and thus, amid the strife and tumult of nations, the Reformation had been left to strengthen and extend.<sup>1</sup>

The ebb and flow of armies, the passage of time, and the changing ideologies of men everywhere have contributed to a misunderstanding and lack of appreciation of Islam by Christians. Despite these sociological factors, for thirteen centuries the Muslims have been echoing the clarion call from the summits of a thousand minarets every day: "La Ilaha illa l'Lah"! (There is no god but God). Though many changes have evolved in various aspects of life and religion, the keynote of monotheism as spelled out in the Koran comes through with brilliance, unequivocal and untarnished. It shines full on the majesty, the greatness, the absolute sovereignty of the One Creator God.

Say, He is God, One  
 God, the Eternal.  
 He begetteth not nor is begotten  
 And there is none equal unto Him.<sup>2</sup>

Considering the muddied waters, stirred up by the interminable controversies for six centuries following the establishment of the Christian Church, the world was in need of a clear, unambiguous, unequivocal and understandable proclamation of the truth about the unity of God, an echo, if you please, of Abraham. Mohammed's was that voice.

Islam has perpetuated up to our own day the Biblical world, which Christianity, once Europeanized, could no longer represent;

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<sup>1</sup>White, Great Controversy, p. 197. <sup>2</sup>Koran, The Heights 7:52.

without Islam, Catholicism would quickly have invaded the whole of the Near East, and this would have involved the destruction of Orthodoxy and the other Eastern Churches and the Romanization--and so the Europeanization--of our world up to the borders of India; the Biblical world would have died. One could say that Islam has had the providential role of halting time--and so of excluding Europe--in the Biblical part of the globe and thus of stabilizing, and at the same time universalizing, the world of Abraham, which was also that of Jesus; Judaism having emigrated and been dispersed, and Christianity having been Romanized, Hellenized and Germanized, God 'repented'--to use the expression from Genesis--of this unilateral development and gave rise to Islam, which He caused to spring forth from the desert, and ambience or background of the original Monotheism.<sup>1</sup>

By accepting truth where truth is, and recognizing in Islam a call to the worship of the One Creator God, and in the Muslim a fellow-believer in Him, the mental attitudes are disposed for a dialogue that leads to understanding and acceptance of that spiritual birthright which he has lost through the heritage of Jacob and Christ. Our dialogue becomes no longer a dichotomy of polemics, but one of mutual respect and love; not one of contention and proof, but of enlightenment and acceptance.

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<sup>1</sup>Frithjof Schuon, Dimensions of Islam, Translated by P. N. Townsend, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. Ruskin House Museum Street, 1969), p. 69.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ESSENCE OF ISLAM TODAY

#### Roots of Modern Islam

The last great Arab Muslim power was that of the Mamluks who ruled the state from Cairo for almost three centuries. The whole dynasty was an anomaly for the Mamluk Caliphs were neither Egyptian nor Arab. The very word means "possessed", for they were a family of slaves--slaves of various races and nationalities forming a military oligarchy in an alien land.<sup>1</sup> Precursor to them was the rugged al-Malik al Nasir al-Sultan Salah-al-Din Yusuf ibn-Ayyub (Saladin) of Crusader fame (1169-93), born of Kurdish parents in the Mesopotamian village of Takrit on the Tigris River in 1138. A descendent of his, Baybars (1260-77) dealt the coup de grace that brought an end to the Crusaders' cause, checked for ever the advance of the Mongol hordes of Hulagu and Tamerlane, and, having spared Egypt from their devastating onslaught, set the stage for the final illustrious age of the Arab Caliphate.

From 1250 to 1517 the Mamluks dominated one of the most turbulent areas of the world. Uncultured and bloodthirsty though they were, they displayed at the same time a keen appreciation of art and architectural design, evidences of which still adorn Cairo to this day. Tragic indeed

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<sup>1</sup>Philip K. Hitti, The Arabs, A Short History, Fifth Edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968), p. 184.



was the dark part of the Mamluk dynasty, bequeathed on innefficient and degenerate heirs, most of them uncultured, many of them illiterate and uncouth.<sup>1</sup>

The demise of the Mamluks was brought about in the sixteenth century by the Ottoman Turks, who had originated in Mongolia, admixed with Iranian tribes in Central Asia and pressed into Asia Minor, where in 1071 under the leadership of Alp Arslan (hero-lion) they overwhelmed Emperor Romanus Diogenes at the decisive battle of Manzikert near Lake Van. They established in Asia Minor the Sultanate of Rum.<sup>2</sup> These Seljuk Turks were gradually displaced and replaced by their Turkic cousins who in the first year of the fourteenth century established the Ottoman kingdom. It was inevitable that Orkhan and his son Osman ('Uthman, Ottoman), after whom the empire came to be named, after conquering the Muslim lands, would orient themselves to the west and expand at the expense of Christian nations.

Rivalry between the Turks and the Mamluks of Egypt was settled in a decisive battle near Aleppo on January 24, 1516. The Ottoman victory was complete. Sultan Selim entered the Syrian metropolis in triumph and soon swept through the Levant into Egypt. Early the following year Cairo fell and Mecca and Medina automatically became a part of the Ottoman Empire. The Egyptian preachers who led the Friday public services invoked God's blessings on Selim, the ruler of a new, non-Arab caliphate!

The Sultan-caliph on the Bosphorus became the most powerful potentate in Islam, having inherited not only the power of Damascus, Bagdad

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<sup>1</sup>Hitti, The Arabs, p. 191

<sup>2</sup>Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 475.

and Cairo, but also the prestige of Byzantium. Germain to our study, and specifically the topic of "Islam Today", is the fact, that with the setting up of the Turkish power in the west, the domination of the Arab world began.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the four centuries of Ottoman domination, beginning with the fall of Cairo in 1517, the whole Arab East was in a state of eclipse. Builders of one of the mightiest and most enduring of Moslem states, the Ottoman Turks conquered not only the Arab lands but the whole territory from the Caucasus to the gates of Vienna, dominated the Mediterranean area from their capital, Constantinople, and for centuries were a major factor in the calculations of Western European statesmen.<sup>2</sup>

Mention has already been made in Chapter II of the part played by Suleiman the Magnificent in harassing Charles V, the avowed enemy of new-born Protestantism. At the crucial moment in history when the Holy Roman Empire was at its strongest in spiritual, moral and military strength under Charles V and Pope Leo X, she should have been able to exterminate heresies. However, in God's divine plan, bold men like Luther and Calvin and others dared to present "heretical" views, as Protestantism began to emerge. At that very time, the Ottoman Empire, under Suleiman the Magnificent was exalted to the height of its magnificence--at a time when he was able and willing to forestall the nefarious attempts of Charles V from his determination to wipe out Protestantism!

Having come to power for such a time as that--to succor the German princes when threatened with annihilation<sup>3</sup>--the Ottoman Empire started on its downward course immediately. The course was long and

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<sup>1</sup>Hitti, The Arabs, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup>Hitti, The Arabs, p. 196.

<sup>3</sup>See Fischer-Galati, Stephen A., Ottoman Imperialism and German Protestantism 1521-1555 (New York: Octagon Books, 1972).

tedious. After the unsuccessful attempt to capture Vienna in 1683, the military role played by Turkey was one of defence rather than offence. The Empire began a steady decline and a shrinkage that was accelerated by internal decay and corruption in the eighteenth century when the European powers began to cast covetous eyes toward the far-flung possessions of the "sick man"!

First among the Arab lands to be detached from the empire was Algeria. It was occupied by the French in 1830. Tunisia came next (1881). By 1912 France, Spain and Italy, the three Latin powers of Southern Europe, had become the overlords of the whole North African territory from Morocco to Libya. The remaining block of the Ottoman possessions in Western Asia, the heartland of Islam, technically remained as parts of the Ottoman Empire until the First World War. It was then that Egypt, which had been occupied by the British since 1882, cut the last tie with Constantinople. The Sharif Husayn of Mecca, a descendant of the Prophet, took advantage of the same opportunity to break (1916) with his Turkish suzerains. He incited other Arabs to rise with him. When Mustafa Kamal Ataturk abolished the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, the Sharif added to himself the title "Caliph of the Muslims".<sup>1</sup>

At this juncture King Abdul Aziz bin Saud, the shrewd and energetic head of the ultraconservative and puritanical Wahhabis of the Nejd drove Husayn from the throne and between 1900 and 1925 carved out of the central desert a kingdom for himself that extended from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea.

Then came the mandates! The Western powers parcelled out the remaining portions of the Turks; Syria and Lebanon (the only area to re-

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<sup>1</sup>Hitti, The Arabs, p. 198.

tain through all these centuries a major Christian population) to France; Palestine, Jordan and Iraq to Great Britain, with special privileges accorded her in Egypt and the Sudan. Even Iran came under strong Russian and British spheres of influence.

Thus it becomes obvious that these lands which had not enjoyed independence, or at best had not had Arab suzerainty since 1517, were for four hundred years subject to the Sublime Porte, then autocratically and indiscriminately (as it appeared to them) all placed under mandatory suppression of imperialistic European colonial Christian powers!

In the reconstruction that followed the expiration of the mandates and the self-hood of all these lands is to be found the essence of Islam today.

Thinking men--idealists, philosophers, and politicians--rose to the challenge of the occasion and bred a new generation of intellectuals. Classical Arabic, study of Arabic literature and research in Islamic history made the Arab more conscious of his past glory and of the cultural achievements and contributions of its citizens. Hitti suggests that "the backward look suggested a forward look". He continues:

Political awakening followed intellectual awakening and the urge for a resuscitated reunited Arab society began for the first time to be strongly and widely felt. Political passivity gave way in favour of political activity.<sup>1</sup>

Before concluding the historical background to current Islamic thought, one more pertinent factor of major significance must be mentioned, the threat of Zionism and the creation of Israel. The birth of the latter in 1948 was viewed by Arabs everywhere as an intrusive and dangerous state. But that very fact became the rallying point as much

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<sup>1</sup>Hitti, The Arabs, p. 202.

as if not more than any other single factor, in drawing the fragmented Arab component parts of the Ottoman Empire into a common bond in closer ties with each other. This urge of common interest and the rising feeling of nationalism culminated in the Arab League whose pact was signed in Cairo in 1945, (even before the creation of the state of Israel), and which is today the central spokesman for the Muslim world.

#### Islam After the Reconstruction

In the reconstruction of Islamic thought it must be remembered that the very fibre of Islam is woven on a loom, the warp of which is religion and the woof, state. There is no room in Islam for the Christian concept of separation of church and state. From its very beginning the two were united. The Caliph was as much the religious leader as he was the head of state. When a Caliphate Delegation from India saw Mustafa Kamal Ataturk in Ankara in 1924 asking him to assume the Caliphate, he replied: "Let all the Muslim countries become independent and let there be a League of Muslim Nations, which could be the Body leading the Umma. You can call the Head of such an organization Caliph if you like."<sup>1</sup> As independence was attained and unity sought, throughout the Middle East, thought leaders circulated their philosophies and conferences were called to redefine the ideologies of Islam.

Basic to the beliefs of Islam has always been an uncompromising faith in one God. Inamullah Khan,<sup>2</sup> epitomizes this concept thus:

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<sup>1</sup>Inamullah Khan, God and Man in Contemporary Islamic Thought, Proceedings of the Philosophy Symposium held at the American University of Beirut, February 6-10, 1967, Edited with an Introduction by Charles Malik (American University of Beirut Centennial Publications, 1972), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Inamullah Khan, Secretary-General, World Muslim Congress, Karachi, Pakistan; editor, The Muslim World and guest speaker at the centennial celebrations of the A. U. B. in Beirut, February, 1967.

When we look at the world today we find it to be the scene of a great ideological battle between God-centered ideologies and God-less cults. It is highly necessary for the followers of God-centered ideologies to understand each other and cooperate in the struggle. "O people with Revealed Scriptures! Let us come together on the concept which is common between us that God is the object of Loyalty," says the Holy Quran.<sup>1</sup>

Inamullah Khan analyzes Islamic belief by asking "What is the meaning of Islam?" Then answers that it means "to be in tune with Allah."<sup>2</sup> Being in tune with God is an ideal, not only for the head of state and government officials but for the rank and file as well. Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with a Master of Laws from Harvard exemplifies this high standard in the active way in which he interprets Islam. As another guest speaker at the above mentioned Centennary Conference at the American University of Beirut, he declared:

Looking from within, the Moslems themselves have to carry the burden and share the blame. Centuries before any contact with the West, a reactionary movement took place, and the elaborate dynamic intellectual stream came to an abrupt standstill after closing the doors of Ijtihad (free investigation). The Shari'a became static and confined to the voluminous traditions of the four schools of thought (Hanafi, Shafie, Maliki, and Hanbali).<sup>3</sup>

Jamaluddin Afghani (1839-97), a Persian statesman is reputedly the first genuine Muslim Modernist. He affirmed that there was nothing in the basic principles of Islam that is incompatible with reason and science. He aroused his contemporaries to develop the medieval content of Islam to meet the needs of a modern society.<sup>4</sup> Islam today is faced

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<sup>1</sup>Inamullah Khan, Contemporary Islam, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Inamullah Khan, Contemporary Islam, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, Contemporary Islam, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup>Fazlur Rahman, Islam, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1968), p. 266.

with secularism and materialism as are also Christian nations. If Islam fails to meet the challenge of spiritual reconstruction, claims Fazlur Rahman, "the only alternative left to them will be some form of secularism, and there is little doubt," he adds, "that this solution is tantamount to changing the very nature of Islam."<sup>1</sup>

### Muslim Theology

The struggle of Islam today in the throes of reconstructing a viable, living, practical religion in the face of overwhelming secularism and materialism, adheres steadfastly to the following five articles of faith as spelled out in the Koran:

#### Five Articles of Faith

It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Scripture and the Prophets.<sup>2</sup>

1. God. Belief in the existence of God, His unity, His absolute power, and in the other essential attributes of an Eternal and Almighty Being, is the most important part of Islam as a religion. This is expressed in the creed "La ilaha illa l'Lah" (there is no god but God). An adjunct to this is:

Say, Hé is God, One  
God, the Eternal.  
He begetteth not nor is begotten,  
And there is none equal to Him.<sup>3</sup>

His creatorship is attested to thus:

Verily your Lord is God who created the heavens and the earth in six days; then He ascended the throne.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fazlur Rahman, Islam, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup>Koran, The Cow 2:177.

<sup>3</sup>Koran, Ikhlas :63.

<sup>4</sup>Koran, The Heights 7:52.

The Koran speaks of God's power, knowledge, will, hearing and sight, word and works. The attributes of God are listed in the traditional 99 names, "Allah" being the hundredth. These are listed in Appendix A.

Many critics have found differences in the Muslim's concept of God with those of the God of the Bible and have exploited these differences all out of proportion. With the hundred and more attributes ascribed to Him by Muslim tradition with which Christian thought coincides, there is ample reason for commonality.

The word "Allah", in the Arabic language, refers no less to the Creator than the Being whom we Anglo-Saxons call "God". "Allah" was the name of the chief pagan deity of the Meccans in the Jahiliyah days. That fact makes Him no less the Creator in Islam than the word "God" in the English language, a derivative of the common Teutonic word for a person or object of religious worship as was applied to all superhuman beings of heathen mythologies before their conversion to Christianity, which term was taken over without change to apply to the one Supreme Being, the Creator.<sup>1</sup>

2. Last Day. Eschatological teachings in Islam abound.<sup>2</sup> Other terms that denote "the Last Day" are the "Resurrection" or "Day of standing up" (The Cow 2:79), "Day of Separation" (The Emissaries 77:14), "Day of Reckoning" (The Believers 40:28), "Day of Awakening" (The Romans 30:56), "Day of Judgment" (The Opening 1:3), "The Encompassing Day" (Hud

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<sup>1</sup>Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1961 Edition, Vol. 10, p. 459, Article: God.

<sup>2</sup>See Wadie Farag, Eschatological Teachings of Islam, (M. A. Thesis, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1949).



1) The sun's rising in the west.

2) The appearance of the Dabbatu l-Arz, or "beast" which shall rise out of the earth, in the temple of Mecca or on Mt. Safa. This beast is a conglomerate beast with parts resembling various creatures such as a bull, a hog, an elephant, a stag, an ostrich, a lion, a tiger, a cat, a ram, a camel, and an ass. It will appear three times and bring with it the rod of Moses and the seal of Solomon. With Moses' rod it will place a mark of "mu'min" (believer) on the believers, and with the seal, a "kafir" (infidel) for those destined for destruction.

3) War with the Romans or Greeks, during which time the Anti-Christ will appear.

4) The coming of al Masih 'd Dajjal, "the false or lying Christ" (Antichrist). He will be identified by the letters KFR, signifying Kafir, (infidel), and will be slain by Jesus, who will encounter him at the gate of Lud.

5) The descent of Jesus on earth for the purpose of killing the Antichrist, reigning forty years before burial at Medinah. Under Him there will be great security and plenty, all hatred and malice being laid aside; when lions and camels, bears and sheep, shall live in peace, and a child shall play with serpents unhurt.

6) War with the Jews.

7) The appearance of Gog and Magog.

8) A smoke which shall fill the whole earth.

9) Three specific lunar eclipses, one to be seen in the east, another in the west, and the third in Arabia.

10) A reign of one hundred years of gross ignorance when Arabs will return to the worship of al-Lat and al-'Uzza and the rest of their

ancient idols.

11) A drying up of the River Euphrates and the discovery in its bed of a vast heap of gold and silver.

12) The demolition of the Ka'bah in Mecca by the Ethiopians.

13) The speaking of beasts and inanimate things.

14) The breaking out of fire in the province of al-Hijaz, or, according to others, in the Yaman.

15) The appearance of a man of the descendants of Kahtan, who shall drive men before him with his staff.

16) The coming of the Mahdi (the Director), who shall fill the earth with righteousness. The Shi'as consider him to be the reincarnation of the twelfth Imam, Mohammed Abu'l Qasem.

17) A wind which shall sweep away the souls of all who have but a grain of faith in their hearts.<sup>1</sup>

The actual Day of Resurrection will be ushered in with a blast of a trumpet; a great earthquake that will ruin the cities and level the mountains; darkening the sun; falling of the stars; drying up of the oceans (Koran, He Frowned 81); destruction of those not favoured by God, the last to die being the Malak 'l-Maut (the angel of death) (1 Cor. 15:26).

Forty years after this, another sounding of the trumpet will be accomplished by the angel Asrafil, who, together with Gabriel and Michael, standing on the Dome of the Rock (As-Sakhr), shall call together all the bones of all mankind to the resurrection, Mohammed himself being the first to rise.

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<sup>1</sup>Condensed from Hughes, A Dictionary of Islam, pp. 539, 540.

The Judgment Day will be a thousand years (Koran, The Prostration 32:4).<sup>1</sup> This general resurrection will be for the righteous as well as for the wicked, distinction being made in their destiny, the former to an eternity of bliss in the garden of Ferdaus (Paradise) wherein flow rivers of water which corrupt not (Koran, Mohammed 47:16, 17), the latter to an-Nar (the fire) of Jahannam (hell) (Koran, al Hijr 15:44), prepared for all who follow Satan, "to dwell therein for ever" (Koran, Repentance 9:69). Man's works will be the criteria in the Judgment. His good works will be placed on the balance that overhangs Paradise, and his evil deeds in the scale that overhangs Hell. The heavier side will be submerged into what lies below and there will be no recourse to appeal nor desire to complain.

3. Angels. Angels are superior beings, created of light, endowed with life, speech and reason; sanctified from carnal desire and anger; and obedient to God's commands. Muslims recognize four archangels, or, Karubiyun (Cherubim), namely Jabrail (Gabriel), the angel of revelation; Asrafil, the angel that will sound the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection; Mikail (Michael), the patron of the Israelites; and Izrail the angel of death.

Every believer is said to be attended by two recording angels, called the Kiramu 'l-katibin, one of whom records the good deeds, and the other the evil. There are also two angels called Munkar and Nakir, who examine all the dead in their graves. The chief angel who has charge of hell is called Malik, and has several subordinates.

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<sup>1</sup>An alternate verse states fifty thousand years for the period of the Day of Judgment; The Ascending Stairway 70:4.

Angels are believed to have intercessory prerogatives (Koran, Counsel 42:3); act as guardians (Koran, Thunder 13:12; The Family of Imran 3:120; Cattle 6:61); uphold the throne of God (Koran, The Reality 69:17); supervise hell (Koran, The Cloaked One 74:30, 31); and exorcise jinn or evil angels who are of a different species.

4. The Scriptures. The "Holy Scripture", "Holy Writing", "Holy Book", or "The Word of God", are all terms generally understood by Muslims to refer to the Koran, but more correctly include all books acknowledged by Mohammed to be divinely inspired writings. The number of sacred books delivered to mankind is said to have been 104; of these, ten were given to Adam, fifty to Seth (a name not mentioned in the Koran), thirty to Enoch, ten to Abraham, the Torah to Moses, the Zaboor to David, the Injil (Gospel) to Jesus, and the Koran to Mohammed. The Muslim further believes that all that is necessary to know of these inspired writings is supposed to have been retained in the Koran.<sup>1</sup>

Though Islam grants special honor to the Scriptures other than the Koran, the belief is widely held that both the Old and New Testaments have been corrupted, especially the parts that deal with outstanding differences in theology and doctrine and those sections that are supposed to have foretold the coming of the prophet of Islam.

5. The Prophets. The Arabic word Nabi for prophet is a cognate of the Hebrew, which Gesenius says means "one who bubbles forth" as a fountain. According to Muslim thought, a Nabi is anyone directly inspired by God, or called by God.

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Patrick Hughes, A Dictionary of Islam, being a cyclopaedia of the doctrines, rites, ceremonies, and customs, together with the technical and theological terms, of the Muhammadan religion, (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 13 Waterloo Place, Pall Mall, S. W. 1885), p. 475.

Mohammed is related to have said (Mishkat, book 24, ch. i. pt. 3) that there were 124,000 prophets, and 315 apostles or messengers, only 28 of whom are mentioned in the Koran. Nine of the latter are entitled Ulu 'l-'Azam, or "possessors of constancy", namely, Noah, Abraham, David, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed. Six are dignified with special titles: Adam, Safiyu 'llah, the Chosen of God; Noah, Nabiyu 'llah, the Prophet of God; Abraham, Khalilu 'llah, the Friend of God; Moses, Kalimu 'llah, the Converser with God; Jesus, Ruhu 'llah, the Spirit of God; and Mohammed, Rasulu 'llah, the Messenger of God.

#### Five Pillars of Faith

There are five obligatory duties incumbent on all Muslims: confession of faith, prayers, alms-giving, fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca.

1. Confession of Faith, Shahada. The verbal audible recitation of the confession of faith is required for acceptance into Islam: "La ilaha illa l'Lah, wa Muhammadu Rasulu-l'Lah" (There is no god but God, and Mohammed is His Messenger). It must be recited, not by rote, but meditatively, purposively, with a full understanding of its meaning and with an assent from the heart. It is of interest to note that the entire Shahada does not appear in the Koran as such. The first and second parts appear repeatedly, but not necessarily as component parts of one testimony. From the earliest dawn of consciousness, every child born to Muslim parents hears the Shahada along with a repetition of Allahu-Akbar (God is most great) in the call to prayer five times a day.

2. Prayer, Salat. The obligatory worship of God consists of five daily prayers preceded by necessary ceremonial ablutions (wuzu'). Although the Koran (The Romans 30:17, 18) expressly mentions only four, the

actual practice of the Prophet was five: before sunrise (fajr), noon (zuhr), late afternoon ('asr), sunset (maghrib), and about two hours later ('isha). Before each of the five prayer services the mu'azan gives the call to prayer, called the azan (adan, and mu'adan, above):

God is most great (four times, called the takbir);  
 I testify that there is no god but God (two times);  
 and I testify that Mohammed is the apostle of God (two times);  
 Come to prayer (two times);  
 Come to prosperity (two times);  
 Prayer is better than sleep (two times before morning prayer only);  
 God is most great (two times);  
 There is no god but God.

In response to these calls to prayer, the prayers are all public and collective, although under necessity individual prayers are repeated. Each service, led by an Imam, is offered facing the Ka'bah (qibla) in Mecca and consists of two or more genuflections (rak'at). Under special circumstances such as illness, journey or war, modification or limited postponement is allowed. On Fridays, instead of the noon prayer, a congregational prayer is offered in the mosque and includes a sermon (khutba). Special congregational prayers are offered in the middle of the morning on the two festival days called 'ids, one immediately following the month of fasting and the other following the pilgrimage. Although not ordained as an obligatory duty, individual devotional prayers, especially during the night are emphasized.<sup>1</sup>

By this requirement of the prayers the Muslim is called, in the midst of his daily duties or on a trip when the bus will stop and all passengers will unite in corporate prayers, to remember that God alone is worthy of worship and to prostrate himself before Him. This is not to be dismissed by the non-Muslim as a meaningless ritual. The psycho-

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<sup>1</sup>Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1966 Edition, article: Islam, Vol. 12, pp. 663, 664.

logical and spiritual significance of the prayers must be obvious to any observer.

3. Alms-giving, Zakat. Being a social obligation, the term "alms-giving", and "performing the worship" are linked together about twenty times in the Koran as a kind of formula describing those who have entered Islam. This ordinance, on the one hand, proves the correctness of private property, for you cannot give if you do not own. This fact is pointed out by some as a usual Islamic argument against Communism.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand it suggests that property is not owned in the correct way unless payment of zakat is made. It serves at the same time to emphasize to the alms-giver that he is not owner, but steward of a portion of God's possessions. The amount given varies for different categories: on grains and fruits it is 10 percent if watered by rain, 5 if watered by irrigation; and 2.5 percent on money is prescribed. Money so obtained is to be spent primarily on the poor and the needy. Besides these legal alms, the giving of charities (sadaqat) is stressed in the Koran and Traditions.

4. Fasting, Saum. The fast is a Koranic injunction (The Cow 2: 183-185) that is to be observed throughout the entire month of Ramadan. It is binding on all adult Muslims of both sexes, save for the aged, sick, pregnant women, nursing mothers and travelers. No food or drink is to pass down the throat from the break of dawn to sunset. Even the swallowing of one's own saliva, or the insertion of medicine in ear or nose or head wound, or an injection, are considered as invalidating the fast. The thoughts of self-discipline and penitence are also prominent.

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<sup>1</sup>James S. Moon and Ian H. Douglas, Introduction to Islam (Lucknow, U. P., India: Henry Martyn Institute), p. 37.

Muslim journals stress the spiritual value of the fast. The universality of the fast is enforced in many countries.

5. Pilgrimage, Hajj. This is the fifth practice incumbent on every Muslim to perform once in a lifetime provided he can support himself during the journey and can also arrange for the provision of his dependents during his absence. The pilgrimage ceremonial begins every year on the seventh and ends on the tenth of the month of Dhu 'l-Hijjah. When the pilgrim is about six miles from the holy city, he enters upon the state of ihram: he casts off, after prayers, his ordinary clothes and puts on two seamless garments, he walks almost barefooted and neither shaves, cuts his hair nor cuts his nails. The principal activity consists of a visit to the Sacred mosque (al-Masjid al Haram); the kissing of the Black Stone (al-Hajar al-Aswad); seven circumambulations of the Ka'bah, three times running and four times slowly; the visit to the sacred stone called Maqam Ibrahim; the ascent of and running between Mt. Safa and Mt. Marwa seven times; the visit to Mt. Arafat; the hearing of a sermon there and spending the night at Muzdalifa; the throwing of stones at the three pillars at Mina and offering sacrifice on the last day of ihram, which is the 'id of sacrifice ('Id al-Adha).<sup>1</sup>

The sense of community is particularly strong when Muslims from all over the world converge at the holy places for the Hajj.

#### Crucial Difficulties in Missions to Muslims

To say that the entire Christian Mission program among Muslims is one of "crucial difficulties" would be facetious, and to single out specific problematic areas would be judgmental, therefore I have categorized

<sup>1</sup>Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 12, p. 664, article: Islam.



the subject into three main areas without necessarily placing them in any preferential sequence. This section of differences or "difficulties" has no place in this paper, for an emphasis on the problems accentuates that which has existed for thirteen centuries, the elimination of which is the very object and purpose of the Middle East Union TEAM (Thrust for Evangelism Among Muslims) of whose activities and suggestions, this is a report. But more of that in Chapter V, which defends an active, positive, non-polemic solution to these "difficulties".

### Cultural Difficulties

Things are not always what they seem to be. The word "Christian" doesn't conjure the same impression in the mind of a Muslim that it does in a Christian. The differentiating characteristic of a "Christian" to the Muslim of Iran is, for instance, the drunkard and the pork eater. To ask a Muslim then, to become a "Christian" is, at the outset, a very reprehensible thing to him! An understanding of the Muslim's concepts are of paramount importance. A willingness on the part of the Christian missionary to adapt and change is equally important.

Many social patterns, customs, or folkways--whatever we choose to call them--are not inherently right or wrong, but they are important because their observance by everybody makes large areas of life predictable. Without them we would not know what to expect of other people or what they might be expecting of us. Furthermore, little would ever get done if we had to decide each time on procedure for these new patterned ways. Such patterns are like traffic laws: it doesn't really matter whether people drive to the left as in Cyprus or to the right as in Lebanon, but it becomes a matter of life and death that all drivers in any given place

follow the same rules.<sup>1</sup>

In the fourth century before Christ, Mencius postulated:

If there were nothing that men desired more than life, would they not use any possible means of preserving it? And if there was nothing men hated more than death, would they not do anything to escape from danger? Yet there are means of preserving one's life which men will not use, ways of avoiding danger which men will not adopt. Thus it appears that men desire something more than life, and hate some things more than death.<sup>2</sup>

"We know that we are passed from death unto life" (1 John 3:14).

We also are assured that we have a message that will bring life to the Muslim. God forbid that through our ethnocentricity and superiority-complex, we fail to recognize the other man's ideas and outlook and endanger his eternal life by our carelessness or calousness. We of course "know" that ours is a better religion and better way of life, but it should be remembered that the Persian or Arab also "knows" the same about himself. Back in the fifth century before Christ, Herodotus said he was sure the Persian king must be mad because no one in his right mind would go about mocking other people's long established customs as Cambyses had done, "For", said Herodotus, "if one were to offer men the choice of all the customs in the world, they would examine the whole number and end up by preferring their own."<sup>3</sup>

The seasoned missionary no less than the new arrival must ever bear in mind the impossibility of changing ingrained social habits, and must be more willing to be changed, than to change. Regarding the dominion of these ingrained mores, Sumner writes:

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<sup>1</sup>Ina Corinne Brown, Understanding Other Cultures (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Brown, Understanding Other Cultures, p. 95.

<sup>3</sup>Brown, Understanding Other Cultures, p. 2.

The most important fact about the mores is their dominion over the individual. Arising he knows not whence or how, they meet his opening mind in earliest childhood, give him his outfit of ideas, faiths, and tastes, and lead him into prescribed mental processes. They bring to him codes of action, standards, and rules of ethics they have a model of the man-as-he-should-be to which they mold him, in spite of himself and without his knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

The missionary is not in a foreign land to change their culture, nor to Americanize the people, or to modernize their ways, but to communicate the gospel of eternal life through Jesus Christ. To do so, the barriers must be eliminated or obviated, and he must take the initiative to be the first to change. It is not easy.

Folk in the homeland often have the concept that the moment a mission appointee boards a plane for a foreign assignment, a magic metamorphosis instantly transforms him into a paragon of virtue. The facts are that even years of blundering and fumbling don't accomplish anything like that. Notice the list of charges against individual missionaries compiles by Carl E. Johnson in "The Unpopular Missionary":

The charges against individual missionaries are numerous. Here are seven of the more serious ones: inability to communicate, unsympathetic attitude, lack of understanding, inability to produce results, failure to identify, lack of cooperation, and desire for segregation.<sup>2</sup>

Since, as Nida points out, body and mind, the physical and psychological are two factors of one person, and that man is indivisibly one,<sup>3</sup> our objective must not divide the man with a dichotomy. It is the man we want to save therefore we must be willing to sacrifice some of our

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<sup>1</sup>Clellan S. Ford, Editor, Cross-Culture Approaches (New Haven: HRAF Press, 1967), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Carl E. Johnson, How in the World? (Old Tappan, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1969), p. 81.

<sup>3</sup>Eugene A. Nida, Religion Across Cultures (New York: Harper & Row, Pub., 1968), p. 5.

"physical", to identify with the Muslim's where we can, in order to bring about a change in the vital "mental" and "religious" allegiances of the lost.

One of the frustrations that comes to the typical American missionary in the Middle East is on the concept of time and appointments. His life-style of a stop-watch in one hand and a bottle of tranquillizers in the other, will immediately cut across the life-style of the Middle Easterner. One can not and should not try to change the Middle East. The missionary must adapt to the situation.

Language is probably as formidable a barrier as any. Language is not merely a means of communication but also a special way of looking at the world and of organizing experience and that pie of experience can be sliced in many different ways.<sup>1</sup> Even when a statement seems to be so obvious that it cannot be misunderstood, it is also easy to sympathize with the innocent patient who wanted to follow his doctor's orders faithfully. On the bottle it was written plainly, "RUB ON THE OUTSIDE". He rubbed the outside of the bottle and drank the contents with something less than desirable results!<sup>2</sup>

Pronunciation of gutturals and unfamiliar sounds present peculiar problems to the new missionary. Some are never able to master the idiosyncrasies of the tongue. The beautiful appeal of Jeremiah 2:13, "Rend your hearts, and not your garments", spoken by an "American" Arabic comes out "Skin your dogs" in stead. On the other hand, the Arab pastor, because he has no "P" sound in his language, changes all the Ps to Bs. One must keep a straight face when he suggests, as he pulls up to the curb

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<sup>1</sup>Brown, Understanding Other Cultures, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Johnson, How in the World? p. 86.

outside the church, "Let us bark outside and go inside and bray".

A given act may be considered good manners in one society, bad manners in a second, and a serious moral offense in a third and what is accepted as ordinary behaviour in one culture may be defined as indecent or obscene in another. By being aware of these cultural differences, and avoiding them, the proclamation of an "unwelcome" gospel can be made more accessible to a prejudiced people. The Apostle Paul gives the secret of his success among so many peoples of diverse customs and cultures in First Corinthians 9:19-21 quoted earlier. Jesus, our great exemplar, the pure, heavenly being dared to cross the barrier of humanity to save humanity. Isaiah 53 shows how He was hated and despised. In Hebrews 12:2 we catch a glimpse of how he endured the ordeal, and despised the accompanying shame, but nevertheless learned how to communicate to the human race. "A remnant shall be saved." He couldn't save everybody-- neither will His representatives. In this time of revolution and cultural transformation, pressure points are so sensitive that the attitude of the missionary will make up for what he is physically unable to adapt.

The compelling nature of the love of God constrains us to identify with those to whom we are sent. Christ said, "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). He completely identified with mankind, with a specific race, language, culture and kind! A high ideal, but nevertheless terribly frustrating, and perhaps it is in our zeal to identify that we tend to over-identify at times and fail to be effective.

For a Christian in a Muslim country the culture barriers do seem difficult, but they can be overcome. The urgency of accomplishing the task at all costs is poignantly stated in "The Asian Student:",

It makes little difference whether the penguins of Antarctica know anything about the squirrels of Rock Creek Park. But it makes all the difference in the world whether the American people understand the crowded millions who inhabit Asia. Your destiny, Asia's destiny, the world's very survival, may depend on such an understanding on your part.<sup>1</sup>

The destiny of the world hangs on our willingness and persistence, our love and attitudes regarding the gospel commission and its literal fulfillment--even in the difficult Muslim lands. Perhaps we are not remiss in stating that the greatest problem in missions to Muslims has been our own attitudes. The acceptance of the Muslim convert and his integration into the Christian fellowship is, I believe the greatest hurdle.

Abraham R. Pourhadi, a former Muslim testifies:

It is not hard to convert Muslims. The question is, What should they do after their conversion? Today the Christian church is not what it used to be in the old days when it accepted Paul, the persecutor, by the witness of a few members. Muslim converts are unwanted among the Christian circle; nothing seems to make them believe that Muslims can become Christians. Despised and hated by their own countrymen, the Muslim converts do not find a better attitude among the members of their newly adopted religion. Sad and dejected, they wonder as to the veracity of their step. The great enemy of souls has widened the gap between Christianity and Islam, but thanks be to God there will ever be men with genuine faith who will not find peace in their hearts until they have bridged the gap by directing the attention of the Iranians to the same Saviour whom their Sages (Wise Men from the East) had gone to adore.<sup>2</sup>

### Doctrinal Difficulties

The solution to every doctrinal difficulty that has come to our attention is discussed in Chapter V as they have been worked out and demonstrated in the field of personal and public evangelism, by the Middle East Union TEAM. Our purpose here is merely to list these crucial differences under eight headings and document their relevance to this study.

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<sup>1</sup>Brown, Understanding Other Cultures, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Abraham R. Pourhadi, "Present Iranian Religious Philosophy and its Relation to Christianity", M. A. Thesis, 1951, p. 76.

1. God. As we have already mentioned, the "Allah" of the Muslim is the same Being as the "God" of the Christian, however, there are differences that one needs to bear in mind. Islam, like Christianity (and Judaism) is strictly monotheistic. Each recognizes only one God (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29; Koran, The Cow 2:255; Cattle 6:103), but each stresses a different aspect of God: Judaism the holiness of God; Christianity the love of God; Islam the omnipotence and greatness of God. In the latter, the free will of God is unhampered and unrestrained by any limitation--human or otherwise--hence, a Muslim's idea of God seems inconsistent to us, for what he believes God wills one day may be reversed the next. This, in fact is the basis of their doctrine of abrogation with regard to verses in the Koran which seem contradictory to us: "Verses which we (God) abrogate or cause them to be forgotten. We bring a better [in its stead] or a similar one. Knowest thou not that God is able to do all things?" (Koran, The Cow 2:100). To a Muslim, anthropomorphisms or likening God to man in any way is blasphemy.

2. Holy Spirit. The Koran (The Bee 16:102) teaches that this expression refers to a medium or an angel through whom truth was brought down, somewhat similar to Hebrews 1:14 ("are they not all ministering spirits?"). In Mohammed Marmeduke Pickthall's The Meaning of the Glorious Koran, he explains the expression in a footnote as being the angel Gabriel. When Christians equate the Holy Spirit with the third person of the God-head, a Muslim puts his fingers in his ears, lest blasphemy enter in his soul. He cannot understand why an angel is put on a level with Allah.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Pourhadi, Iranian Religion, p. 74.

3. Scripture.<sup>1</sup> There is a vast amount of difference among Christians as to inspiration. It is no wonder that the Muslims would also be different. Verbal inspiration of the Koran, however, is a fundamental tenet of Islam. They recognize two kinds or levels of inspiration, wahy zahir (external inspiration) and wahy batin (internal inspiration). The former was the verbal transmission of the literal text of the Koran from the mouth of the angel Gabriel to the ear of the Prophet. Internal inspiration is that which the Prophet obtained by thought and analogical reasoning, just as the Mujtahidun, or enlightened doctors of the law obtain it.<sup>2</sup>

Specific instruction is given in the Koran to the believers:

Believe in God and his messenger and the Scripture which he has revealed unto his messenger, and the scripture which he revealed aforetime. Who ever disbelieves in God and his angels and his scriptures and his messengers and the last day, he verily has wandered far astray.<sup>3</sup>

Despite this seemingly unequivocal command to believe the Scriptures that were revealed aforetime (i.e. the Torah, Zaboor and Injil) of which God declares Himself to be the guardian (Koran, Al-Hijr 15:9), there is the widely held belief that all have been corrupted by the Jews and Christians. The Arabic term tahrif is explained to mean "to change, alter, or turn aside anything from the truth".<sup>4</sup> Muslim controversialists when faced with the "unreconcilable" contents of the Koran vis-a-vis the

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<sup>1</sup>The fact and number of Scriptures have been dealt with under the Five Articles of Faith (p. 63). The doctrine of abrogation was referred to as a prerogative of God, above. Here we deal with inspiration and corruption of Scripture and the question of the Hadith or Traditions.

<sup>2</sup>Hughes, Dictionary of Islam, p. 213.

<sup>3</sup>Koran, Women 4:136.

<sup>4</sup>Hughes, Dictionary of Islam, p. 61.



former Scriptures, charge their forerunners with having corrupted them.

The Hadith (Tradition) is a divine saying, or a tradition that related a revelation from God in the language of the Prophet. An example is quoted from the Mishkat: "Abu Hurairah said, 'The Prophet of God related these words of God, 'The sons of Adam vex me, and abuse the age, whereas I am the AGE itself: In my hands are all events: I have made the day and night.'""<sup>1</sup>

There is much in the life of Mohammed and in the teachings of the Koran that we can accept. The difficulty comes in this Hadith, which is a system of teaching built on "authentic" traditions passed on regarding what Mohammed said or did regarding particular questions-- how he washed his hands, how he combed his hair, his likes and dislikes-- all became important patterns of life for the faithful Muslim. To imitate the Prophet was the highest goal piety could aim at.<sup>2</sup> The acts of the Prophet legitimized them in the lives of his followers. The system of thought that developed as a result was known as the Sunna: the way of life of Mohammed which became the way of life of Islam. The authentic chain of transmission of this Sunna, forms the Hadith, whose accent shifted to a great extent from the revelation of the Book to the person of Mohammed.

Muslim thought leaders recognize this problem, as Fazlur Rahman states:

Unless, therefore, the problem of the Hadith is critically, historically and constructively treated, there seems little prospect of distinguishing the essential from the purely historical. But

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<sup>1</sup>Hughes, Dictionary of Islam, p. 153, 154, quoting Mishkat, book i, ch. i, pt. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ignaz Goldziher, Mohammed and Islam, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917), pp. 3, 22.

it is precisely this task which the 'Ulama' are resolutely refusing to do. They fear that if Hadith is thus exposed to a scientific investigation, the concept of the 'Sunna of the Prophet', the second pillar of Islam besides the Qur'an, will be destroyed and that it would then be impossible to hold on to the Qur'an as well; for that which anchors the Qur'an is the Sunna of the Prophet. Some of the recent Muslim and non-Muslim wholesale and absolute rejections<sup>1</sup> of Hadith and the Prophetic Sunna undoubtedly strengthen these fears.

It cannot be denied that a part of the difficulty in evangelizing Muslims lies in their great dependence on and belief in the Traditions that have far exceeded the Koran in quantity and almost in importance.

4. Satan. The Koran not only mentions Satan, it gives a full description of his fall in Sura The Heights 7:10-17. The Muslim's explanation of the origin of evil is very simple--God is the cause of everything, of evil as well as good. This fatalistic concept, of course, prevents a Muslim from feeling guilt or remorse. The problem of sin, as we know it, then, does not exist in Islam. Therefore, redemption and salvation all have entirely different aspects. That is not to say that "sin" does not exist in Islam, for there is pardonable as well as unpardonable sin in their theology. The most heinous sin--the unpardonable--is shirk, the attributing of a partner or other god to God the Creator!

Verily, God will not forgive the union of other gods with Himself! But other than this will He forgive to whom He pleaseth. And he who uniteth gods with God hath devised a great wickedness.<sup>2</sup>

Because of misrepresentation of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, Christians have been accused of practicing shirk. The Muslim believes in the sinlessness of Christ, but the difficulty arises in his

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<sup>1</sup>Fazlur Rahman, Islam, pp. 310, 311.

<sup>2</sup>Koran, Women 4:51.

belief that all the prophets were sinless. Regarding sin, Bethmann summarizes:

Naturally, as there is no deep conviction of sin in Islam, no feeling of an estrangement between God and man, there is no need for reconciliation, no need for redemption, nor for a Saviour from sin, no need for a complete turn in life, nor for being born again in the likeness of the Spirit. And here lies the deepest gulf which separates Christianity from Islam.<sup>1</sup>

5. Predestination. Taqdir in Arabic, is usually considered to be the sixth of what we have called the Five Articles of Faith. It is the absolute decree of good and evil, and the orthodox believe that whatever has, or shall come to pass in this world, proceeds entirely from the Divine Will, and has been irrevocably fixed and recorded on a preserved tablet by the pen of fate.<sup>2</sup> This does not mean, however, that there is no room for personal accountability (Koran, The Cave 18:28-30; The Thunder 13:18, 20-22), or that the Muslim, in the words of Bethmann, "will fold his hands, settling down to await the raven of Allah to feed him."<sup>3</sup> "Fatalism", he continues, "does not mean inactivity or laziness, as it is often pictured by Western tourists. It is rather an unconcern over the final outcome, an unconcern borne by the keen sense of God's absolute sovereignty and man's complete dependence upon God."<sup>4</sup>

#### 6. State of the Dead.

They ask thee of the Hour: when will it come to port?  
Why (ask they)? What hast thou to tell thereof?

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<sup>1</sup>Erich W. Bethmann, Bridge to Islam (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1950), p. 80.

<sup>2</sup>Hughes, Dictionary of Islam, p. 472.

<sup>3</sup>Bethmann, Bridge to Islam, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup>Bethmann, Bridge to Islam, p. 77.

Unto thy Lord belongeth (knowledge of) the term thereof.  
 Thou art but a warner unto him who feareth it.  
 On the day when they hold it, it will be as if they had but  
 tarried for an evening or the morn thereof.<sup>1</sup>

From the above verses and others on the subject of the state of the dead, it is quite apparent that Mohammed had a clear understanding of the unconsciousness of the soul after death. According to Koranic teachings, there is no intermediate state between the day of death and the day of resurrection. There is no purgatory, no heavenly abode where the soul leads a conscious existence. The moment a person dies, he becomes entirely unconscious and unaware of what is going on in the world; but when the day of resurrection is ushered in with the sound of the trumpet, it will appear to him that he had been separated from his family but a single night. The commentator on the Koran, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, says regarding the state of the dead:

Death is like sleep and may be compared to the evening of life. In sleep we do not know how the time passes. When we wake up from the sleep of death at the resurrection we shall not know whether it was the following moment or the following hour after we slept, but we shall feel that it is morning, for we shall be conscious of all that goes on, as one awakened in the morning.<sup>2</sup>

As for the time of death, the Koran teaches that when an individual reaches the age which God has appointed for him he is overtaken by death, which he can neither put off nor hasten (Koran, The Bee 16:61); and when he dies his Ruh (spirit) ascends to God (Koran, The Ascending Stairways 70:4), a doctrine found in the Bible (Eccl. 12:7). It is of interest to note that both Egyptians and Babylonians were firm believers in the consciousness of the dead and provided food and drink for their

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<sup>1</sup>Koran, Those Who Drag Forth 79:42-56.

<sup>2</sup>Pourhadi, Iranian Religion, pp. 63, 64, quoting Ali.

departed loved one, whereas, Mohammed emphasized the fact that the dead cannot come back to this earth as also reflected in the Bible (Eccl 9:6).

#### 7. Diet and Health.

O ye who believe! Strong drink and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are only an infamy of Satan's handiwork. Leave it aside in order that ye may succeed. Satan seeketh only to cast among you enmity and hatred by means of strong drink and games of chance, and to turn you from remembrance of Allah and from (His) worship. Will ye then have done?<sup>1</sup>

All countries under Muslim rule are officially "dry", in respect of the clear command and admonition of the Prophet. Concerning food also, clear distinction is made between the clean and unclean meats, almost identical with the Biblical injunction in Genesis 9:4 and Leviticus 11.

O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and wholesome in the earth, and follow not the footsteps of the devil. Lo! he is an open enemy for you. . . O ye who believe! Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you, and render thanks to Allah if it is (indeed) He whom ye worship. He hath forbidden you only carrion, and blood, and swineflesh, and that which hath been immolated to (the name of) any other than Allah. But he who is driven by necessity, neither craving nor transgressing, it is no sin for him. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.<sup>2</sup>

Mohammed allowed Muslims to eat foods that were considered lawful to the "People of the Book". No doubt he meant by this both the Jews and the Christians, for he knew that the Jews would not eat blood nor unclean foods, and that the Christians abstained from meats offered to idols, from blood, and from strangled animals (Acts 15:29).

#### Problems Connected with the Person of Christ

To the Buddhist, The Shintoist, the Taoist, and the Hindu, Christ is a stranger. Not so in the case of the Muslim! He considers Christ

<sup>1</sup>Koran, The Table Spread 5:90, 91.

<sup>2</sup>Koran, The Cow 2:168, 172, 173. See also The Table Spread 5:3-5; Cattle 6:118-121; The Bee 16:114-118.

as highly exalted, a "Sign" to the worlds, a spirit from God, the messenger of God, illustrious in this world and in the Next--but otherwise He is considered to be on the same level as any other prophet. Bethmann writes:

By no other religion is Christ's position challenged in such a definite manner as it is in Islam. Therefore, everything depends upon our right representation of Christ. If we are able to represent Christ in His full spiritual power, every other problem will be solved. And here lies the crux of the matter.<sup>1</sup>

The traditional conflict between Christians and Muslims centers in the divinity of Christ (His two natures), His pre-existence, incarnation, Sonship, creatorship and crucifixion and substitutionary sacrifice. The Christian Church for centuries has defended her creed against these attacks. In the course of this undertaking, her champions have tried to find similes, metaphores, and symbols in order to "prove" convincingly the truth of these doctrines, as is evidenced by the references made to John of Damascus, Lull, Martyn and Zwemer in Chapter I. But in spite of this amassing of volumes of proof texts and unanswerable arguments, the Church has failed to make any measurable impact on Islam. No amount of discussion and argument over these points has ever or will ever convince anybody against his will, because the truth of these doctrines does not lie on the intellectual level where it can be reached by the power of reasoning. It lies on the spiritual level to which we find entrance by listening quietly to the Spirit of God, who is willing to reveal Himself to everybody, Muslim and Christian alike.<sup>2</sup>

After all, does not the Apostle Paul recognize that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:18), and that

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<sup>1</sup>Bethmann, Bridge to Islam, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup>Bethmann, Bridge to Islam, p. 250.

preaching itself is "foolishness", nevertheless an instrument ordained by God to save "them that believe" (vs. 21)? Is it any wonder then, that "the things of the Spirit of God" should seem to be "foolishness" (1 Cor. 2:14) and unreasonable to the Muslim? Hence the futility of trying to convert Muslims by reasoning, for we must be the first to recognize that the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Christ were certainly of all things the most unreasonable! When will we accept the vanity of "proof" and "argument", and humbly rely on the Spirit of God to bring conviction, as we as missionaries become ambassadors of God to establish a koinonia, a fellowship of mutual confidence and trust founded on love and respect? But there is at long last a sound of a rustling in the tops of the mulberry trees (2 Sam. 5:24) as different scattered attempts are being made to present Christ and His glorious salvation to our Muslim brethren. This, we shall consider in the next two chapters.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CHALLENGE TODAY

After thirteen and a half centuries of controversial argumentation, Christian organizations have finally bestirred themselves to face the challenge of Islam in more Christlike methods. These stirrings though still few and far between, are nevertheless genuine and sincere attempts to make a breakthrough. Christian leaders have begun to realize that intellectual polemic must be replaced with a different spirit. Muslim-Christian, as well as multi-lateral dialogues have made a good start in Africa, the Middle East, Sri-Lanka and the Far East. The futility of trying to reach Muslims with former methods has given way to the preparation of literature and social outreach and religious education programs specially geared to Muslims. In this chapter we take a refreshing look at this long over-due trend.

#### Response of the Church Today

I start with the scholarly world of North America. Writing to Xerox University Microfilms,<sup>1</sup> the "home of the Brain", I requested information on dissertations dealing with evangelism among Muslims, giving

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<sup>1</sup>Xerox University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106, has a Xerox service called Datrix II. It is a computerized information retrieval system which conducts a computer search to identify the doctoral dissertations written on a particular topic. It claims to be able to produce the most complete and accurate results possible. The Datrix II data base now contains information on well over 430,000 doctoral dissertations--virtually every one accepted by accredited, degree-granting U. S. universities since 1861, plus many of those accepted in Canada. Information on new dissertations is entered into the data base soon after Xerox University Films receives it, so the file is more up-to-date than any printed source.



several alternate possibilities of topics and spellings. Any title that would include any of the following words with their three or four variant spellings would have been spotted by the computer: Evangelism, Muslims, Missions, Dialog, Relations, Approach, Islam, Today, Controversy, Mohammedanism, etc.

The response from Xerox University Microfilm (which included works by all the theological seminaries) was not much of a surprise to me. From among the over 430,000 doctoral dissertations, only three dealt with the subject of our interest. The most recent was "The Structure of Christian-Muslim Relations in Contemporary Iran" by Richard Merrill Schwartz (Ph. D. 1973, Washington University), whose abstract indicated that it was an anthropological study of the relations between the Christians and Muslims of Rezayeh in Azarbaijan Province in northwest Iran as observed by him during his year of residence in that city.

The second was entitled "The Mohammedan World in English Literature, Circa 1580-1642: Illustrated by a Text of 'The Travailes of the Three English Brothers'" by Fuad Sha'ban (Ph. D. 1965, Duke University). Since the subject of this dissertation was limited to the years 1580-1642, I did not read the abstract.

The third dissertation was "Catholic Missions to the Muslims" which I would have been glad to order and study, but the rest of the title was, "to the End of the First Crusade (1100)." This was by Allan Harris Cutler (Ph. D. 1963, University of Southern California).

To be fair to the interest shown in this area of study, I must add that five other titles were submitted, none of which, however, were available in Xeroxed copies: "Muhammadan Mysticism in Sumatra", "The Origin and Evolution of the Mohammedan Teachings and Practices with

Special Reference to the Modernization of Turkey", "Mohammedan Theories of Finance, With an Introduction to Mohammedan Law and a Bibliography", "Muhammedan Law of Marriage and Divorce", and "Comparative Study of Roman Law With Mohammedan Jurisprudence". The first one listed above was written in 1935, and the last one in 1903.

We might not expect the secular state universities to generate much interest in the subject of evangelizing the Muslims, but one would certainly expect the scores of seminaries to have had at least a token offering in that field, but the dearth of dissertations simply displays a tremendous lack of interest among our Bible oriented scholars to have bothered about so remote a problem! Perhaps the oil embargo and the energy crisis will trigger an awakening in us of a consciousness to the timeliness of the Arab and his religion! The Lord has even more drastic ways of awakening our lethargic senses.

I wrote to the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America, a federation of 33 denominations, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox, with a membership of 42 million Christians.<sup>1</sup> One of the four main divisions of this huge amalgum of believers is "Overseas Ministries". Since their task includes more than 80 programs in such fields as evangelism, missions, education and welfare, I had hoped to get some response about their programs for Muslims, but received no reply.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) responded heartily. It was organized in 1948 in Amsterdam, but maintains headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland at present. It is an international organization of some 200 Christian churches, whose members include the major denominations of

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<sup>1</sup>Collier's Encyclopedia, 1972 edition, article: "National Council of Churches".

about 80 countries except the Southern Baptists and the Missouri Synod Lutherans in the United States and the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> Dr. S. J. Samartha, Director, Dialogue with Men of Living Faiths and Ideologies, very graciously referred my letter of inquiry to Dr. Robbins Strong, the Associate Director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, with the request that he send me the necessary information. Dr. Samartha also wrote that they have held dialogues with Muslims on topics mutually agreed to. He adds that Muslims have been involved in multi-lateral meetings where people of other faiths were also participants. He kindly listed the names and addresses of three others who would be in a position to give me information related to my subject, all of whom I wrote to, and received responses from two.

The specific questions directed to Dr. Samartha were: "In what countries do you have a record of the most work being done for Muslims? What have you found to be the most successful approach? How does the indigenous laity respond to work among Muslims? Do you find a ready response and enthusiasm on the part of expatriate (as well as national) workers to take up this work? Do you know of any workers engaged full-time in evangelism among Muslims? What kind of response have you experienced from Muslims, and with what degree of permanent (?) results? What tools and methods have been developed and by whom? What, would you say, is the position of the World Council, on missions to Muslims?"<sup>2</sup>

Hugh E. Thomas, Secretary for Overseas Districts of the Methodist Missionary Society, London, one to whom I was referred by Dr. Samartha,

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<sup>1</sup>Collier's Encyclopedia, 1972 edition, article: "World Council of Churches".

<sup>2</sup>Personal letter to Dr. Stanley J. Samartha, 150, Orde Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland, dated December 4, 1974.

makes the following comment in a personal letter:

Let me perhaps start by your last question: "What would you say, is the position of the World Council on missions to Muslims?". I start with this question, not because there is one, but because this says something about the nature of the WCC. As far as I know there has not been an official WCC statement about missions to Muslims, or Hindus, or Buddhists or Jews. The WCC has made statements about missions in general. However the aim of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism which is part of the WCC is "Its aim is to assist the Christian community in the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by word and deed, to the whole world to the end that all may believe in him and be saved".

The fact that the WCC is not a mission society, does not send missionaries, probably accounts for the fact that it has not made a statement specifically about Muslims. If you were to ask the member churches or their agencies what their policy is you would almost certainly get a whole series of very different statements. I am certain the same would be true if you would ask staff members of the WCC who would also vary greatly. The aim indicated is an official statement and by implication Muslims are part of the "all".

Having said that let me add that CWME (Commission on World Mission and Evangelism) was very much involved in bringing the whole "Islam-in-Africa" programme into being. It was however deliberately placed outside the CWME and thus the WCC for two main reasons. 1). We have shyed off becoming "operational". 2). If it were regarded as WCC programme it would not have been possible to have the participation of conservative groups which are suspicious of anything with the label "WCC". We have continued our interest and still seek support for this programme.

With this introduction let me make a few quite personal comments on your other questions. I think we are all aware that mission to Muslims has been and is one of the most difficult and less "rewarding" (if by this you mean numbers) of any group. This is particularly true of the Muslims' heartland of the Middle East. As far as one can guess such things it will not get any easier in that part of the world, especially for Westerners, in light of the present socio-political situation. My own church, the United Church of Christ (USA), through the work of the old American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions has worked in the Middle East for about 150 years. Although the original intention was mission to Muslims, I am afraid that in terms of establishing churches this has been largely done through proselyting of Orthodox or Roman Catholics. This has been true of most Protestant missions in that area. Muslims have not been "won" except in isolated individual cases. Thus the main emphasis is on schools and medical work.

The major areas where there has been some success among Muslims are in the "peripheral" areas--Indonesia, India, Africa. Indonesia is a special case where political and social factors have played a

major role. In Africa I am uncertain whether there has been much success among established Muslim communities. It seems to be that it is more among marginal groups, basically animist but with overlays of Islam and Christianity. And often it has been a sort of competition between Muslims and Christians as to who will "get them".

I am convinced however that if major advance is to be made it will be not by foreign missionaries with all the funds and ethics that entails, but by indigenous Christians who are neighbours of Muslims and share their concerns and problems. And even then it is the quality of the Christian community life, its service to people and identification with them that will attract rather than preaching, although it is quite clear that at some time the Word must be said. I must say that by and large I do not find the Christian communities in the Middle East very aggressive about evangelism among their Muslim brothers. Probably the historic pattern of separate communities militates against it. I must say that I find more quiet concern about this among many Orthodox than among the Protestant groups. This may be because the former feel that they belong whereas the latter have the psychological handicap of being "adjuncts" of Western groups, dependent upon them.<sup>1</sup>

Another area in which the WCC has taken a leading role has been in the area of dialogue. The Christian-Muslim Dialogue<sup>2</sup> in Lebanon, under the theme "In Search of Understanding and Cooperation", was attended by forty-six members, almost equally divided between the two communities of faith from twenty countries. The four areas of concern on which selected Muslims and Christians were asked to write, and which formed the basis of group and plenary discussions were: 1). Religions, Nations and the Search for World Community, a discussion of how both Christianity and Islam who have a strong sense of universality that transcends national and racial barriers, can relate to the concept of nationhood on the one hand and of world community on the other.

2). Truth, Revelation and Obedience. In any serious dialogue basic questions of faith cannot be avoided. The papers here constitute

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<sup>1</sup>Personal letter by Dr. Robbins Strong, World Council of Churches, 150, Route De Ferney, P. O. Box 66, 1211 Geneva 20, dated 13 Dec., 1974.

<sup>2</sup>Christian-Muslim Dialogue, Papers presented at the Broumana Consultation, 12-18 July, 1972.

not so much a debate on definitions as an attempt to see in what ways the two communities of faith have understood historically revealed truth to be binding for all time and, at the same time, adequate to meet new situations.

3). Community Relations between Christians and Muslims. Problems between people are not exclusively religious. How do Christians and Muslims look at the common problems of minorities, cultural identity, human rights and religious freedom, particularly in practical terms?

4). Prayer and Worship. Papers dealing with this subject touch a delicate and sensitive area which is often ignored in inter-faith meetings or accepted in a very uncritical way. Worship means not just blessing the name of God in private but joining the community of the faithful in the continuity of tradition and prayer. How does the dimension of worship touch our attitudes to each other?

Together these papers make a significant contribution to the understanding of the deeper issues in dialogue.

Towards World Community<sup>1</sup> is described as a genuinely open and free dialogue at the world level between men and women from the major religious traditions. The WCC sponsored this multi-lateral dialogue in April 1974 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Participants included Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Christians and Muslims and was of a much wider range than the by-lateral dialogues with which we are primarily concerned in this paper.

Another Muslim-Christian dialogue under the auspices of the WCC was held at the University of Ghana at Legon, July 17-21, 1974 whose theme was "The Unity of God and the Community of Mankind: Co-operation

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<sup>1</sup>Towards World Community, Resources and Responsibilities for Living Together, Memorandum, Multi-Lateral Dialogue, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 17-25 April (WCC ISBN 2-8254-0469-1), SE/62, Study Encounter X, No. 3, 1974.

of the universe and aspiration for human brotherhood. As for a dialogue on human rights, the Sheikh pointed out that the Koran mentioned the subject 14 centuries before the UN Declaration on Human Rights. The Koranic concept of human equality regardless of race and the emphasis upon peace were part of the "privilege" accorded by God to all men and women, he said. The Minister also spoke of the special affinity of Muslims with Christians since the earliest days of Islam.

The Minister of Justice quoted the Koranic verse that "there is no compulsion in religion" and insisted upon the "liberty of conscience", "charity to neighbours of other faiths" and "equality of human rights for all citizens of an Islamic state regardless of their confession". The motif of peace runs through the lives of Muslims from the very name of their religion, their daily form of greeting, the theme of their regular prayers, their relations with their neighbours in personal and practical terms, and their appeal to the whole of humanity to co-operate with them in building peace.<sup>1</sup>

In a letter to Herman H. Koppelman, Acting Executive Secretary of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, almost the same questions were asked as those that brought the above responses from the WCC. In his reply, Dr. Koppelman indicates that they have ten missionaries involved in Muslim work "full-time", nine of whom were in evangelistic work and one in medical evangelism. He adds that "there are more Indians involved in this work in their country than expatriate missionaries."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Koppelman also indicated that he had kindly duplicated my letter of inquiry

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<sup>1</sup>WCC Communication, Nb 21/74, Geneva Switzerland, Nov. 1 (EPS).

<sup>2</sup>Personal letter from Herman H. Koppelman, Acting Executive Secretary, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 500 North Broadway, Saint Louis, Missouri 63102, dated December 11, 1974.

and sent it to missionaries to Muslims in India, the Philippines, Ghana and Lebanon for front-line response. Robert McAmis, president of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, in response, writes concerning their work for Muslims:

I have been in this work among Muslims since its beginning in 1962. One other missionary has been assigned to work in this area with me since 1965. Our work has been directed toward getting to know the language and culture of the Maranao Muslims among whom we work in the southern island of Mindanao. We have directed our efforts toward person-to-person witnessing as opportunity presented itself. I have been involved in working with the Wycliffe Bible Translators. Most of the New Testament has been translated at this time, but only a few of the books have been published in smaller portions. I recently completed the translation of the book of Genesis which is now available. I also have a weekly radioprogram directed toward a Muslim audience which is carried on six stations in all the Muslim areas of the southern Philippines. We also operate a student center in Marawi City which is used by Muslim students. We have taught courses to Muslim students at various schools in the area. This provides a basis for a positive relationship with the students. We have also been involved in various community development projects in the Muslim area.

In recent years we have begun to have more and more dialogue between Christian and Muslims in the Philippines. I have just returned from the Southeast Asian Muslim Christian Dialogue which was held in Hong Kong January 4-10. This involved Muslims and Christians from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore. It was indeed a rich experience. This dialogue was sponsored by the WCC.

In a letter from Dr. H. E. Thomas, Secretary for Overseas Districts, Methodist Missionary Society, London, he writes in answer to my queries:

I am not sure that I can give you satisfactory answers to all the questions that you pose related to your dissertation subject. The Islam in Africa Project is not, in fact, a mission organization but a project as the title indicates, and is worked through advisers in the areas where it is possible for them to work together with a local committee. They have normally been supported by the mission organizations concerned. Since the project began in Nigeria it is probably fair to say that the most work was done in that country. There is now an adviser in Southern Nigeria, but in Northern Nigeria

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<sup>1</sup>Personal letter from Dr. Robert McAmis, President, The Lutheran Church in the Philippines, P. O. Box 507, Manila, Philippines, dated January 13, 1975.



they have passed that stage and divided the work between several people.

As to the response of indigenous laity, this obviously varies from territory to territory. (Experience up to date besides in Nigeria, Northern and Southern, is in the Cameroun Republic, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Dahomey, Kenya, Ethiopia and Malawi.). . .<sup>1</sup>

One more authority on the subject is Dr. Donald A. McGavran. He asserts that "evangelism among Muslims is a very important subject and one at which hundreds of able missionaries are working."<sup>2</sup> His observation that the questions raised (same as other letters) are much too complex for brief answers, is countered with the suggestion that I take advantage of the special attention to be focussed on the Muslim world at Fuller Theological Seminary during the two quarters beginning in the fall of 1975. At that time discussions there will center on the turnings to Christian Faith among Muslims in Java, and various other places. Cultural similarities between Islam and Christianity will also be dealt with.

There is certainly a rapidly increasing awakening among Christian organizations in regard to fulfilling the Gospel Commission to the Muslim World. We now take a look at some of the printed matter that has been prepared by Evangelical Christians for Muslims. The response to my requests on the part of those who have published this material has been greatly appreciated.

Titles of pamphlets, lessons and books to which my attention has been called, but which, due to being in other languages, out of print, or unavailable for other reasons, are the following:

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<sup>1</sup>Personal letter from Dr. Hugh E. Thomas, Secretary for Overseas Districts, Methodist Missionary Society, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1, 5JR, dated, January 15, 1975.

<sup>2</sup>Personal letter from Dr. Donald A. McGavran, Dean Emeritus, and Senior Professor of Mission, Church Growth and South Asian Studies, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission, Pasadena, California, dated February 3, 1975.

## Bible Correspondence Courses:

"A Reasoning Faith"

"The Promises of God and the Kingdom of God"

One God One Way"

(Urdu courses especially designed for Muslims in India)

Lessons based on St. Matthew

Lessons based on St. Mark

Lessons based on St. Luke

"Promises of God", a special course based on the Bible specially written for Muslims keeping in mind their difficulties and misunderstandings about Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

## Tracts and books:

"Why I Became a Christian--Sultan Mohammed Paul's Testimony"

"Revolution 14"

"Catalogue" of printed matter written especially for Muslims.

## Periodicals:

"Al-Basheer", a quarterly in English.

"Huma", Urdu quarterly with whom a dialogue is maintained, especially the Ulama, who have contributed to the magazine.

## Titles of Works Received:

## Bible Correspondence Courses:

"The Testimony of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms", a course of twelve lessons with Scripture quotations added for easy reference,

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<sup>1</sup>Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies, P. O. Box 153, St. Luke's Compound, Station Road, Hyderabad--500001, A. P. India.

with completion, multiple-choice and true-false type questions interspersed throughout the lessons, making it necessary for the student to mail in the entire six-page lesson each time. The titles of the lessons are:

1. The Beginning
2. The Sin of Man and the Judgment of God
3. The Destruction of the Wicked and the Preservation of the Righteous
4. Abraham: A Man Chosen of God
5. The Promised Son and the Son of the Bondwoman
6. The Chosen Race
7. The Chosen Race Delivered
8. The Chosen Race and the Commandments
9. The Failure of the Chosen Race to Possess the Promised Land
10. Religion and Sinful Mankind
11. God's Remedy for Sinful Mankind
12. The Messiah: The Lord of Hosts

"Jesus the Messiah", a course of twelve lessons on Jesus Christ, handled mechanically much the same as the former course. Titles are:

1. The Messiah the Word
2. Witness to the Messiah's Birth
3. The Messiah and His Ministry
4. The Messiah the Conqueror
5. The Messiah the Teacher
6. The Messiah the Healer
7. The Messiah Transfigured
8. The Messiah Betrayed
9. The Messiah Crucified

10. The Messiah and Prophecy Fulfilled
11. The Messiah Risen
12. The Messiah Ascended and Coming Again.

"The Bible Speaks", a course of twelve lessons. Format changes considerably from the former two courses, with lessons on eight pages, considerable instruction with Scripture references (not quoted) on first six pages. The last page is the test page and is perforated for easy detachment to be mailed in. Titles of lessons are:

1. God Has Spoken
2. Foundations for Faith
3. God is Great
4. The Mystery of the Divine Nature
5. Man and His Need
6. The Perfect Man
7. The Son of God
8. The Death and Resurrection
9. The Mediator
10. The Way of Salvation
11. The Promised Helper.
12. Coming Great Events.<sup>1</sup>

"The Secret of a Happy Life" although designed for the Muslim mind and heart, "is fitting for a person of any faith, as the Koran and the Prophet Mohammed are never mentioned throughout its entire 18 lessons",

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<sup>1</sup>The above three sets of correspondence lessons are all published by "The Peace of God Bible Correspondence Courses" issued by the Fellowship of "HEBRON", Mushirabad Road, Hyderabad - 20, A. P. India.

writes Mrs. Jean Wilhelmsen in the fold-out that accompanied the lessons. The lessons were written by Mrs. Wilhelmsen while serving in Singapore and Malaysia.<sup>1</sup> Lessons are printed on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper, two sides for each lesson. They are sent out two lessons at a time, with a third sheet for the test questions. Occasionally (after lessons 10, 12, and 14) supplemental material is sent to the student in the form of an "Appendix" for those lessons. Titles are:

1. River of Water
2. God our Creator
3. How Much are you Worth?
4. Fool or Sinner?
5. David's Confession
6. God the Merciful One
7. Satan the Destroyer
8. The Dimensions of God
9. The Divine Seed
10. The Divine Son

APPENDIX for Lessons 9 and 10:

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ and  
The Claims of Jesus Christ

11. The Broken-hearted Man
12. The Betrayed Man

APPENDIX for Lessons 11 and 12:

Jesus Christ's Betrayal

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<sup>1</sup>Published by "Mountain Movers Correspondence Courses", by Mrs. Jean Wilhelmsen, the Go Ye Fellowship, Inc. P. O. Box 26193, Los Angeles, California, 90026, U. S. A.

13. The Forsaken Man
14. The Good Shepherd

APPENDIX for Lessons 13 and 14:

The Sufferings and Death of Jesus Christ in  
Prophecy and Fulfillment

15. Living Forever
16. The Fearless Life
17. Prayer
18. Worship.

"Introduction to Islam" is a highly commendable booklet of 88 pages, originally used as a mimeographed correspondence course, designed for Christians in India seeking a better understanding of their Muslim neighbors. In the preface to this work, the authors state:

It assumed the basic Christian commitment of students, but no great previous knowledge of Islam. Its philosophy was that sympathetic understanding of another's faith is the first condition for the communication of the Christian Gospel to him. Hence it aimed to give as objective an account as possible of Islam and its history.<sup>1</sup>

The twelve chapter titles are:

1. Islam and Arabia
2. The Life of Muhammad.
3. The Quran
4. The Classical Period of Islamic History
5. The Five Pillars
6. The Traditions
7. Muslim Law
8. Muslim Doctrine

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<sup>1</sup>James S. Moon and Ian H. Douglas, Introduction to Islam, p. 1.

9. The Sects of Islam
10. Mysticism--The Sufis
11. Islam in India
12. Other Modern Movements in India and Pakistan.<sup>1</sup>

"About God's Mission to Muslims"

"God our Heavenly Father"

"Christians Are Indebted to Muslims", by Shaykh Michael Mansur.<sup>2</sup>

"God is One"<sup>3</sup>

"Id-i-Mubarak" (Blessed Festival)<sup>4</sup>

"Is the Holy Injil Corrupted?"<sup>5</sup>

Seventh-day Adventist Work  
Among Muslims

Though Seventh-day Adventists witnessed their first baptism in the Middle East Union territory almost one hundred years ago,<sup>6</sup> very few of the 3904 who make up the present membership<sup>7</sup> were converted from the

<sup>1</sup>Moon and Douglas, Introduction to Islam, Content page.

<sup>2</sup>This, and the above two are published by the Henry Martyn Institute, P. O. Box 134, Lucknow, U. P. India.

<sup>3</sup>Published by "Promises of God", Post Box 66, Vellore, N. Arcot Dt., S. India, The Concordia Press, Vaniambadi.

<sup>4</sup>Christian Centre, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri Dist., Concordia Press, Vaniambadi.

<sup>5</sup>Available from "Promises of God", Post Box 66, Vellore, N. Arcot, Dt, S, India. Printed and published by Gospel Literature Service, Pant Nagar, Bombay 75, India. The last six are two to four page tracts.

<sup>6</sup>Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, Commentary Reference Series, article; "United Arab Republic" (Washington, D, C.; Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966), X;1363.

<sup>7</sup>Seventh-day Adventist Year Book, 1975 (Washington, D, C.; Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1975), p, 99.

more than 155 million Muslims living in the area. With this in mind I wrote to Dr. Robert H. Pierson, world leader of the Seventh-day Adventists, asking specifically, "Would you kindly give me a general statement on the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with regard to mission work and objectives as relates to the Muslim World?" This question was followed by almost the same series of questions directed to other denominational leaders as quoted above.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Pierson's response regarding the global challenge was as follows:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that the message which it has been assigned to proclaim to the world is a universal message and that the good news which it contains will bring a blessing to all peoples, regardless of their traditional religious alignments.

Seventh-day Adventists, together with followers of Islam, believe in complete submission of themselves to the will of God and with the working out of the divine plan in the individual life. The emphasis that Seventh-day Adventists place on abstinence from intoxicating beverages and vegetarianism is equally unique in linking the two ideologies.

Seventh-day Adventists must devise a more effective method of sharing its mission with the millions of Islam.

Seventh-day Adventists have a philosophy of religion that should provide an effective bridge of understanding with the peoples of the Islamic faith and in bringing our message to them. It seems to me that we should give special emphasis to the points of similarity between our faith and theirs. Examples: Complete submission to the will of God, belief in the Old Testament prophets, emphasis in healthful living, and daily prayers, etc. I would think that western ideas and nomenclatures would perhaps be unpopular in the area of religion among the peoples of Islam. We should explore as to whether our work could be carried on using a name or a title that could tend to link us rather than separate us from the ideology of Islam.

Above all, we should not allow an attitude of defeatism to control our thinking. The fact that little has been accomplished in the past among the followers of Islam should not allow us to think that it cannot be done in the future. We believe that God has a tremendous future for the peoples of Islam in His plan of saving the lost millions

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<sup>1</sup>Page 85.



of this world, and we must do<sup>1</sup> everything in our power to continually press onward with evangelism.

Similar letters of inquiry were written to leaders of three Division fields whose territories have large Muslim populations, the Southern Asia Division, the Euro-Africa Division, and the Far Eastern Division.<sup>2</sup>

Following are three paragraphs from Dr. R. S. Lowry:

I am interested in your thrust for evangelism among Muslims (TEAM). You have certainly done a great deal of work and I think have started along right lines. The first thing that should be done when attacking a non-Christian group, it seems to me, is to prepare literature. Too often we have gone in and attempted to meet the issue with direct evangelism. This has very frequently been our approach here in Southern Asia, and hence not altogether successful.

The fact is that we have had very little success among Muslims in our Division. Most of our converts have been from "other Christians". Here and there, now and then, there has been a genuine Muslim convert. We have had a couple in the last two or three years, and these have, in fact, developed into strong workers. By and large, however, very little impact has been made upon the Muslims. Furthermore, we regret to state that we have not really made a systematic approach in preparing literature specially designed to meet the Muslim mind. Some work has been done by men like Pastor Akbar, but this has been both sporadic and limited. Elder Kenneth Brown, who recently returned to Pakistan, was commencing to take up this sort of responsibility, but this was cut short recently by a tragic accident in his home which killed his wife.

In any case, Brother Oster, I think a more full and complete answer to your question is due you, and I am therefore turning over your letter to our Ministerial Association secretary, Brother W. H. Mattison, to reply to in detail. He has worked in North India among Muslims and has considerable background from which to give you a more complete answer. I trust you will be hearing from him shortly.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Personal letter from Dr. Robert H. Pierson, President, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW, Washington, D. C. 20012, dated January 14, 1975.

<sup>2</sup>Correspondence with and the history of work among Muslims in the Middle East Union will be considered last.

<sup>3</sup>Personal letter from Dr. R. S. Lowry, President, Southern Asia Division of Seventh-day Adventists, 1 Valliammal Road, Vepary, Madras-600007, India, dated January 7, 1975.

Elder W. H. Mattison gives this additional insight into this work:

In the leading out of work for Moslems we can not be counted. The reason being that we do not have 100% Moslems and so our work is mainly for Christians, with Hindus next on the list and I am afraid Moslems last.

What we are doing for Moslems specifically is in the VOP (Voice of Prophecy) courses (Bible Correspondence courses). Mainly in the use of the Ancient Prophets, Health, and Doctrinal Courses in Urdu and Bengali, in which each year we have about 4500 active students and about 3000 graduates.

We are having some results in baptisms but nothing phenomenal, on the average of maybe 20 baptisms a year. Most of these come in through regular efforts held not particularly aimed at Catholics (sic. Moslems). However, many of those who come in became prominent in the Church. For instance, the head of the VOP Urdu school now located in Kashmir is a previous young Maulvi or priest. He came in through an effort held by myself in North India, at which time I preached on the Life of Jesus for three weeks. This seems to be the area that best attracts Moslems.

Another prominent young man is now pioneering our work in Sikkim a new country we have just entered. He is a lab-technician and his wife a nurse and have opened a clinic in this country.

Turning to the large sections of North Africa, we find the situation not much different. Dr. Jean Zurcher writes:

I would be happy if I were able to give you a favorable answer to the good news you have sent me about your evangelistic work among the Moslems which may serve for the dissertation towards your doctorate. Unhappily, the situation in the Moslem territories of our Division is extremely critical. Since the departure of the French population from the North African countries, our work there has almost been wiped out. In Tunisia we have nothing any more; in Algeria, several of the churches are empty, and our medical institution in Algeria has been taken over by the government. In Morocco, we have about forty European members left. They are without a worker and without authorization for getting together. We have no right of existence; but steps are being taken in order to obtain permission for the few members we still have in those countries to assemble. All religious propaganda is strictly forbidden, and as soon as a person is found proselyting, he is expelled from the country.

We are in contact with the General Conference in order to try to find a brother of Arabic origin, who would like to be sent to

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<sup>1</sup>Personal letter from W. H. Mattison, Secretary, Ministerial Association, Southern Asia Division of Seventh-day Adventists, p. O. Box 15, Poona 411001, India, dated January 31, 1975.

those countries as a missionary. Unfortunately until now our efforts in this direction have been unsuccessful. If you could help us in any way, we would be most thankful. A person from Syria or Lebanon might be more successful in North Africa.

In order to understand the present situation of our work in North Africa, I should explain that during the time of colonialism, we seemed to be satisfied to work among the Europeans living in that country. We used to have a prosperous work, but at the time of the Algerian war, a massive emigration to France took place, and all our brethren scattered and settled in France.<sup>1</sup>

From the Far Eastern Division the word is more encouraging.

Writes Elder Paul Eldridge:

I am afraid I will have to confess that there has not been very much done in an official way here in the Far East to follow up on the Islamic Conferences. However, there has been and still continues to be a considerable amount of direct evangelism among the Moslems of Indonesia.

Your questions deserve specific answers, so I have referred them to Elder Clinton Shankel, our Division lay activities secretary. For many years he was president of the West Indonesia Union Mission and so has had first-hand contact with the work that has been done there. I am asking him to write and get some accurate answers to the questions you have raised.<sup>2</sup> When he has this information in hand, he will send it along to you.

Upon receipt of a call for information, Elder Shankel immediately prepared a blank and mailed a copy to all the local mission presidents in whose territories lived large concentrations of Muslims. The questionnaire asked for the same information I had requested: number of workers for Muslims, materials, attitudes, and results, etc. Of the dozen mission presidents responding, nine fill in the spaces with "Nil", or "Not applicable", or "Nothing". One, from the Central Celebes Mission, though checking a "negative attitude" of workers toward work among the Muslims, never-

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<sup>1</sup>Personal letter from Dr. Jean Zurcher, Secretary, Euro-Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists, 3006 Bern, Switzerland.

<sup>2</sup>Personal letter from Elder Paul Eldridge, President, Far Eastern Division of Seventh-day Adventists, 800 Thomson Road, Singapore, 11, Republic of Singapore, dated December 19, 1974.

theless records 29 baptisms from 1967-1974, practically all of whom "remained faithful". From the West Java Mission a "positive" attitude is recorded among the workers, with a record of 30 baptisms in 1973, and 34 in 1974, all of whom "remained faithful". The Central Sumatra Mission reports ten baptisms among Muslims from 1972-1974, all of whom remained "faithful".

The outstanding report comes from the South Sumatra Mission, with five full-time workers assigned to work among Muslims, a list of six published works available, and over 800 baptisms from 1966-1974, all of whom are reported to have "remained faithful".

In a personal letter written by some of these field presidents, the difficulties and cultural barriers are enumerated, while others look hopefully for better days ahead--but those who have an active program in operation for evangelistic work among Muslims report encouragingly.<sup>1</sup>

The picture changes when we come to the heartland of Islam. In 1961 two men were busily engaged in mapping out a new system of research and work among Muslims. Dr. Robert C. Darnell was appointed by the Middle East Division as Secretary of the Religious Research Project, whose task it was to give study to the problems of evangelism among Muslims and organize Islamic Conferences where solutions could be discussed and plans made for an expanded work among Muslims. In order to coordinate these Islamic Conferences in all the six Division fields where large Muslim populations live, Elder R. S. Watts, General Vice President of the General Conference was appointed by the world headquarters Church as Coordinator of Muslim Affairs.

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<sup>1</sup>Personal letter from Elder Clinton Shankel, Lay Activities Secretary, Far Eastern Division, 800 Thomson Road, Singapore, 11, Republic of Singapore, dated February 21, 1975, with enclosures.

The first "Institute of Studies Concerning the Adventist Work Among Islamic People" was held under the chairmanship of Dr. Darnell August 21-24, 1961 at Beirut, Lebanon. Twenty papers were read by national and expatriate workers on the following relevant topics:

1. Jesus in Islam: Robert C. Darnell
2. Quranic Attitude Toward Christianity: Zaki Hannawi
3. Doctrines Held by Islam and Adventists: Chafic Srour
4. Islamic Eschatology: Wadie Farag
5. What Muslims Like and Dislike About Christianity: M. H. Morovati
6. The Muslim World in Prophecy: R. S. Watts
7. The Unity of God: G. D. Keough
8. Jesus the Son of God: G. D. Keough
9. Secularized Muslims: Neal C. Wilson
10. The Renaissance of Islam: Dr. W. H. Lesovsky
11. Muslims and Translation of the Bible: Dr. W. H. Lesovsky
12. The Role of Arabs, Muslims in General in the History of the World:  
Ibrahim Pourhadi
13. The Temperance Work: Anees Haddad
14. Analogies from the Adventist Attitude Towards Catholics: Wayne Olson
15. Lecture Topics: Kenneth Oster
16. Suggested Sequence of Subjects: Kenneth Oster
17. Visiting the Home: Nassif Boutros
18. The Use of the Koran: Wadie Farag
19. Personal Work Among Muslims: Said Tooma
20. When a Muslim Comes to Church: Salim Majeed.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mimeographed Report of the Institute of Studies Concerning The Adventist Work Among Islamic People, Middle East Division of Seventh-day Adventists, August 21-24, 1961, Beirut, Lebanon.

Similar conferences were convened in five other Divisional areas, prior to an Interdivision Islamic Institute to be held in Beirut, Lebanon September 6-19, 1963 with leaders and evangelistic workers representing the entire Muslim world field. Prior to the latter, Dr. Darnell was asked to make an extensive three-month tour of Muslim lands to fulfill a long-standing desire on the part of the Middle East Division to be better acquainted with methods and procedures of work for its special religious groups, and also to be a more informed participant in the Interdivision Islamic Institute. The countries visited outside the Middle East included East and West Pakistan, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, South Philippines, Kenya, Tanganyika, Cameroun, Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Morocco, and Algeria.

In each place facts were gathered concerning Muslim theology and practice, and a study was made of the relationships of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to Islam. Interviews were held with leaders of Islamic thought, Muslims on the street, converts from Islam and Christian workers in association with Muslims. From these the agenda was suggested for the forthcoming Interdivision Institute which was hoped would be helpful in planning the relations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to the religion of Islam. Dr. Darnell's report covered the areas of literature, publishing, medical, welfare, temperance, educational and youth work, correspondence schools, public meetings, mass media and visual aids, Adventists of Muslim background and apostasy, and emphases and attitudes.<sup>1</sup>

The first Interdivision Islamic Institute convened on the campus of Middle East College, in Beirut, Lebanon, from September 6-19, 1963,

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<sup>1</sup>Report of the Islamic Research Tour, January 24 to April 24, 1963, by Robert Darnell, Secretary, Religious Research Project, Middle East Division. Taken from the Table of Contents.

under the chairmanship of Dr. R. C. Darnell, director of religious research in the Middle East Division. The chairman had laid an excellent groundwork for the Institute by mailing out to all the delegates a questionnaire which covered almost all phases of the Islamic work to be discussed at the Institute. All the delegates were invited to make any suggestions and additions to the proposed institute agenda.

The delegates representing the General Conference and six world Divisions met for a period of concentrated study. In the program, provision was made for a daily morning devotional period. The inspiring messages presented at these periods placed the spiritual tone of the Institute on a high level.

Eight hours were devoted to the presentation of papers on Islamics. These studies did much to place Islam in a realistic perspective, making possible an intelligent discussion of the work for which the Institute convened.

Agenda items were all presented in a forthright manner and ample opportunity was provided for a full discussion of all the pros and cons of the subjects under consideration. At the final consecration service, Elder R. S. Watts, General Vice President of the General Conference and coordinator of the Institute, summarized the accomplishments of the Institute under four headings by stating that:

1. We have reached a recognition of the common points of our problem; wherever we meet Muslims, we meet the same difficulties and prejudices.
2. We have been able to formulate a general method of approach.
3. We have a wider scope, and will make a greater impact, through radio, television, etc. on mass media.
4. This Institute has clarified our Adventist attitudes toward Islam, its founder, and his followers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Interdivision Islamic Institute, as reported by Kenneth Oster, Chairman, Committee on Records, pp. 1, 2.

"Our role in the future," Elder Watts continued, "includes:

1) the command (Genesis 12:2, 3); 2) the blessing; and 3) the promise."<sup>1</sup>

It was the consecrated and united determination of the delegates gathered to realize, in obedience to the Lord and Saviour, this threefold commission.

It was hoped that this report of the Institute would engender interest in developing a more fruitful relationship with Muslims under the guidance of God and the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit and that it would prove helpful in providing the tools to accomplish the task.

Following we list the topics in the two sections of the report on Islamics and Suggestions for Strengthening the Work: (omitting Section 1)

Section Two: Islamics:

1. The Practices of Islam: Esaie Pellicer
2. The Hadith: Esaie Pellicer
3. The Ahmadiya: A. M. Akbar
4. The Bible in Muslim Thought: Rifai Burhanuddin
5. Christ in Muslim Thought: Rifai Burhanuddin
6. S. D. A. Doctrines in the Qur'an: Robert Darnell
7. Reinvestigations: E. R. Reynolds, Jr.
8. The "Inspiration" of the Qur'an: Robert Darnell
9. The Role of Islam: Robert Darnell
10. Seventh-day Adventist Attitude Toward Islam: Ralph S. Watts

Section Three: Suggestions for Strengthening the Work:

1. Correspondence School Methods: Kenneth Brown
2. Correspondence School Follow-up: Salim M. Elias

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<sup>1</sup>Interdivision Islamic Institute, as reported by Kenneth Oster, p. 2.



3. Health Education: Robert Darnell
4. Temperance Work; L. C. Miller
5. Welfare Work; Henri Pichot
6. The Youth; Anees Haddad
7. The School: M. H. Morovati
8. The Teacher: Raymond Meyer
9. Literature Principles: G. A. Keough
10. Types of Literature: Esaie Pellicer
11. Writing for Muslims: Rifai Burhanuddin
12. Mass Media: C. P. Sorensen
13. Conducting Public Meetings: P. Sitompul
14. The Public Team: T. M. Ashlock
15. Personal Work: Rifai Burhanuddin
16. The Missionary: Ralph S. Watts
17. Training Workers: R. A. Wilcox
18. Rehabilitation: A. M. Akbar
19. Administrative Responsibility: C. P. Sorensen
20. "Into the Deep": Kenneth Oster.<sup>1</sup>

We wish we could report that during the twelve years which have passed since those Islamic Conferences were convened, that, as an outgrowth of them, the work has gone forward in the development of materials and methods in laboring for Muslims, and that vast numbers of believing Muslims had come to believe also in the saving grace of Jesus Christ. We cannot, except partially for the Middle East. The Church has not been fully ready yet to accept one of the crucial statements that emerged from the

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<sup>1</sup>Interdivision Islamic Institute, September 6-19, 1963, Beirut, Lebanon.

Conference--that Mohammed was a prophet sent from God to accomplish a specific task on earth! This statement created a stir in the higher organizational structures of the Church, and reports of the Conference were withheld from even the workers!

The development of materials and methods, in laboring for Muslims was long delayed. Finally, at the reorganization of the Middle East Division in the 1970 General Conference Session, Dr. Darnell was elected President of the Middle East Union (as one union of the four comprising the new Afro-Mideast Division). From that perspective, Dr. Darnell outlines the philosophy and administrative policy of the work among the Muslims of the Middle East. In the final chapter we will examine carefully the outcome of these policies as they brought forth the Middle East Union TEAM (Thrust for Evangelism Among Muslims). Darnell writes:

You request a statement concerning my administration's position on Adventists and Islam in the Middle East Union. We probably have not defined an administrative position, but I think I can state my own understanding on the subject.

I have approached the matter of working for Muslims in the Middle East as one which requires first of all a knowledge of the activity of the Holy Spirit in these lands so as to put ourselves in the best position to cooperate with the divine agencies and purposes. I observed that the Holy Spirit works within the Islamic community, leading certain persons to adopt a spiritual lifestyle and win victories over the temptations of the world--a course which demands the specific working out of the principles of righteousness in his life through the Holy Spirit and by the merits of Jesus, whether or not he understands the full theology.

Secondly, there is Scriptural guidance as to the work of the Holy Spirit in the Muslim world in Revelation 9:4, where Islam was commanded a special relationship in connection with those who have the seal of God in their foreheads. Islam is being used by the Holy Spirit in some connection to the last day sealing work to obstruct the efforts of the apostasy to command the consciences of men. Further, the last verses of the chapter speak of the failure on the part of the apostasy to repent, thus linking the work of the Holy Spirit in Islam to God's providing the apostasy "space to repent." Then it is also to be observed that the seven trumpets are divided into two groups, the last three being designated as the three woes. According to the prophecy, the

first woe was to hurt, the second woe to partially destroy, and the third woe to completely destroy. Thus there is a link between Islam and the objectives to be accomplished by the return of Jesus. This theology leads one to note that the Holy Spirit works to conserve in Islam the attitudes required for the accomplishment of the objectives set forth in the prophecy.

Thirdly, we have readily observed that while our evangelistic efforts do not secure the attention of the Muslims, much less bring conviction, our health and temperance work produces outstanding successes. This work has been consistently well received by the communities in which it has been done. Muslims have frequently given a spiritual interpretation to our health work, declaring concerning us that we are true believers. It appears that the Holy Spirit has chosen this work for special emphasis within the circumstances of this time and place.

Then, we are convinced that the Holy Spirit works through human agencies according to the principles which govern human relationships. Thus the Lord has given His people much counsel concerning the means of overcoming prejudice and has recommended to us the methods of Jesus. Whatever work we do must be based on a sound understanding of the working of the human mind, both as it is evident in individual relationships and as it can be observed in communal interactions. Then we can reasonably expect that our works are in harmony with the working of the Holy Spirit.

These observations concerning the work of the Holy Spirit lead to several positions from which to approach Islam. Noting, for instance, that persons in Islam benefit from the grace of Christ with little awareness of the means by which it has been provided, we do not need to delay to show spiritual interest and to make appeals to repent and to accept the forgiveness of God. We can unite with Muslims who are concerned about the prevailing spiritual conditions, who try to hold ground against certain doctrines (e.g. spiritism), and who believe that the hour of judgment is upon us in order to conserve and strengthen spiritual things against the materialism and secularism of western culture and the modern age.

While it is not easy for the Muslim to understand our ideas about vicarious atonement and the godhead, these are not the obstacles to cooperation in spiritual objectives. The obstacles stem from the pre-occupation of Christians to denounce Muhammad and the Qur'an. These Christians fail to perceive what is obvious to every concerned Muslim--that it is exactly these two points, Muhammad and the Qur'an, which account for the existence of spiritual ideas, practices, and objectives in Middle East society.

Thus, we approach our work among Muslims from the position that we do not wish to destroy any of their God-centered institutions and traditions. Our goal is to live a spiritual life for ourselves and to be a spiritual influence in the community. Seventh-day Adventists should be known as a part of the progressive forces who seek to restore

faith and righteousness and who guard against the influence of apostasy and worldliness.

Noting, further, that God has chosen Islam to combat the power of the Christian apostasy at the time when He is placing His seal upon His people, we do not expect the centuries-old posture of Islam toward Christianity to crumble prematurely. According to the prophecy of Revelation 9:4, when Islam acts its part in the final drama it will know who are those who have the seal of God in their foreheads. We conclude that the Holy Spirit has not completed the preparation of Islam for its role until He has established the identity of Seventh-day Adventists before the Muslim world. The Qur'anic basis of this identity is that the true believers among the people of the Bible believe in the Last Day, forbid wine, swine's flesh, and gambling, and are people of prayer. We understand that the final movements will be rapid when all is ready. Thus, we approach our work among Muslims from the position that we must make prominent the points which identify us as they are understood by Islam and as they relate to the great testing issues of the final drama. Therefore we are wise to disassociate the name of Seventh-day Adventists with the kind of works which identify the people whose chief interest is their preparation for the final events in earth's history.

Noting on a pragmatic basis the work of the Holy Spirit in our health efforts, we have concluded that the counsels concerning health work are meant for the Middle East. Islamic society has erected effective barriers against Christian missionary work. These barriers are not so great against health reform work and practically non-existent in respect to a commercial health worker. Thus, we approach our work among Muslims from the position that health and temperance work have a special relevancy. This calls for programs concerning the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. Health institutions are required, especially those concerned with preventive medicine such as health education centers and health conditioning centers and those with a commercial character such as food factories, outlets for health foods and publications, and restaurants. Extensive health communication in the name of the Seventh-day Adventist Church should be developed.

Then, noting that the Spirit-appointed methods are those which harmonize with the laws which govern human relations, we find it essential to know and respect Islamic ideas and practices. Thus, we approach our work among Muslims from the position that we must use traditional Islamic materials, communicate in Islamic vocabulary, and introduce our ideas from the area of common ground between us. It is our wish that the Muslim will have confidence in what we have to say and understand us. In the whole context of inter-communal relations, we want Seventh-day Adventists to be the friends of Muslims.

You ask for an appraisal of the TEAM. The creation of the TEAM was our response to the recognition of a special need. There are many problems connected to the Adventist work among Muslims. This makes it one of the most challenging causes to attract the interest of the church. There are social problems, economic problems, political problems, theological problems, communication problems, cultural

problems, church problems, organizational problems, etc. There is a dearth of experimental knowledge from which to analyze these problems because only a few Seventh-day Adventists have cultivated relationships with Muslims at any level. For those who wish to work among Muslims, there are few established guidelines and only meager tools or materials which are themselves relatively untested. The demand for research and experiment can hardly be exaggerated. The misinformation available in the church exceeds the information and produces counter-productive attitudes which stimulate rash moves on one hand or bottle up action on the other. While the existing level of Adventist communication is low, it is nevertheless mostly wasted because it is either contentious or un-understandable. We do not see the likelihood of progress until the church adequately researches the problems and makes the findings available.

Recognizing the need for these studies, the Middle East Union set up the research TEAM. This team has provided some guidelines and produced some materials based upon experimental work. These materials are the first to be prepared in the Middle East for Seventh-day Adventist work among Muslims in particular. The clearest point to emerge from the work of the TEAM is that health education approaches are well suited for introducing Adventists to the Muslim community. Further, the TEAM has demonstrated that respect for Islamic institutions (specifically the mosque, Muhammad, and the Qur'an) is sufficient in a substantial proportion of contacts to erase prejudice and lack of confidence.

The existence of the TEAM, the promotion of its programs, the circulation of its materials, and its support by the Union administration have been factors leading to increased support for Adventist work among Muslims. It is readily recognized that there are church problems related to this work. These problems, of course, are far from solved. In fact, they are probably yet to be adequately recognized and fully understood, but TEAM efforts have led to progress within the church.

The range of church attitudes is wide, and there is always a body of indifference. Therefore, I cannot make a general statement about the attitude of the constituency. The TEAM experience of offering a Sabbath School class at Middle East College illustrates that there exists both support and opposition.<sup>1</sup> I think it is now widely accepted

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<sup>1</sup>The incident referred to here concerns the Sabbath School class I was asked to teach at Middle East College in 1973 by the Sabbath School Council. Since the TEAM had just completed the first two sections of "The Straight Way" Sabbath School Lesson Quarterlies, the suggestion was made and accepted that members of the TEAM conduct a class for Muslim students and any other students who wished to observe and participate, using these quarterlies as a basis of study (see detailed description on page 148). Much effort was put forth to make these classes interesting. Soon it became the most popular class in Sabbath School. The Division President, hearing about them, feared "Muslim" indoctrination, ordered the

throughout the Middle East church constituency that there is a moral inconsistency between the profession of Adventism and the failure to act constructively in the Muslim community. I am of the opinion that as Seventh-day Adventists come to understand Islam better, the problems in the church concerning work among Muslims will be nearer solution. The work of preparing our constituency to receive Muslims faces many complexities, but must be considered in an overall program for work among Muslims, especially in recognition of the principle that the Holy Spirit does not work to bring many into the church before the church is ready to receive them.<sup>1</sup>

#### Summary of Adventist Position

We summarize in a few paragraphs what Seventh-day Adventist leaders are saying in regard to work among Muslims:

Adventists believe they have a universal message, and are indebted to share it with the whole world, the Muslims no less than any other, which concept constrains them to devise effective methods of sharing this message with them. In accomplishing this objective, it is first of all imperative to submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit who also convicts conscientious Muslims and prepares them for the reception of the everlasting gospel.

A platform must be created on which Adventists can stand with Muslims in complete cooperation--that platform is seen as the health-temperance work which identifies Adventists as "true believers" in the eyes of the Muslim, for it is physical pollution that defiles more than doctrinal differences.

Obstacles to this cooperation and harmony stem, again, not from doctrinal differences so much as from preoccupation of Christians to de-

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College President to categorically stop the class and discontinue the TEAM efforts at the College!

<sup>1</sup>Personal letter from Dr. Robert C. Darnell, President, Middle East Union of Seventh-day Adventists, P. O. 11-2020, Beirut, Lebanon, dated December 13, 1974.

nounce Mohammed and the Koran, Islam's two institutions that account for the existence of their spiritual ideas, practices and objectives. With the Muslim's eternal interests at heart, Adventists must not attack these, but accept them for what they are, recognizing that the Holy Spirit works through Muslims to effect a reconciliation between men and God.

Recognizing the fact that God has chosen Islam throughout many centuries to combat the forces of Christian apostasy, we must see in the Muslim an instrument for this purpose. Keeping the salvation of the Muslim uppermost in mind, rather than the winning of an argument, the Christian must work in harmony with the laws of human relations, therefore, Islamic vocabulary and thought, imagery and illustrations must be used in all our dealings with them.

The Middle East Union TEAM was a child of necessity, born to fill a special need. It was given the task to research and experiment. Misinformation on the subject of Islam far exceeds information, in the Adventist Church, hence the magnitude of the problems within the Church related to this work. It is admitted by Church leaders that a moral inconsistency exists between the profession of Adventism and its failure to act constructively. One reason--perhaps the main reason--why the Holy Spirit has not worked to bring many Muslims into the Church has been because the Church is not yet ready to receive them.

Factors of Growth and Non-Growth  
in the Seventh-day Adventist Church  
in the Middle East

Too often we have reflected the unchristian attitude of the Apostle John who saw another casting out devils in Christ's name, and forbade him "because he followeth not with us." Christ's rebuke was: "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us" (Luke 9:50).

Jesus here rebuked the "beloved" disciple for an attitude of rejection of one not of his immediate company. It was a condemnation of pride and intolerance. Preoccupation with one's own importance, and jealousy to maintain it inevitably prevents one's appreciating the good in others, as the outworking of God's grace in the world.

It might be easier to ask the following questions than to answer them, nevertheless those responsible for the energizing and expansion of the church in the Middle East might profit from some careful self-appraisal. Robert C. Worley startles us with these revealing questions:

Is this church organization characterized by trust or mistrust, alienation and polarization or reconciliation and respect for differences, rigidity or openness to new people and new ideas? Does this organization deal with differences honestly, or does it smother, bury, ignore, or treat them as though they were of no consequence? Does this organization deal with crises by retreating to past answers and solutions whether they are relevant or not, or does it accept the challenges posed and attempt to marshal the resources of its members to meet the challenges? Does it encourage all its members to contribute their ideas, energy and commitments in ways that are satisfying to them and their Christian commitments, or does the leadership insist that there are only a selected number of program areas, tasks, and goals to which members must conform if they are to be useful to the organization?<sup>1</sup>

Especially in mission work, the counsel of the indigenous laity must be sought. Power is expandable, that is, if someone gains power, others do not necessarily lose power. Through expanding the amount of power available in an organization, every person gains some.<sup>2</sup>

Complete cooperation among subgroups is essential, where departments and organizations within a church rather than competing for supremacy, wholeheartedly support each other in brotherly love. Often the op-

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<sup>1</sup>Robert C. Worley, Change in the Church, A Source of Hope (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>Amitai Etzioni, The Active Society, pp. 313-381, as cited by Worley, Change in the Church, p. 87.



posite is demonstrated, hence making the entire church sick.

A church must be keenly aware of the receptivity quotient of an area, putting forth greatest effort where the quotient is high--where the Holy Spirit<sup>1</sup> has already prepared the ground (Luke 9:5). This could be called "the principle of strategic location".<sup>2</sup> A general rule connected with this is in the migrant, unsettled, or newly settled areas of larger cities, suburbia, and tribal areas that indicate a high degree or receptivity like southern Sudan where thousands are asking for membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>3</sup>

Lay involvement, or "sweat, toil, tears and blood"<sup>4</sup>, a driving concern for others is basic. E. G. White writes: "The greatest help that can be given our people is to teach them to work for God, and to depend on Him, not on the ministers."<sup>5</sup> Lay involvement must be a prominent part of the Adventist Church.

The recognition of the homogeneity of special groups, and adaptation of our materials and methods to suit them particularly, had to become axiomatic in the work of the Middle East Union TEAM. An active program to discover the gifts in the church, and train, then utilize them accordingly should be adopted by the Church.

Statistics indicate that the "instrument" which is most effective

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<sup>1</sup>Donald A. McGavran, How Churches Grow (New York: Friendship Press, 1973), p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>Alan R. Tippett, Church Growth and the Word of God (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 52.

<sup>3</sup>Afro-Mideast Impact, December, 1973, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>McGavran, How Churches Grow, p. 123.

<sup>5</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols. (Mountain View Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 7:19.

in church growth is the part played by the constituency as friends and relatives. It is sad that careful study was not given earlier to the "clericalization" that began to characterize the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the turn of the century. If we had given heed to the doctrine of "the priesthood of the believers" (1 Peter 2:9) when this took place, we may truly have had a thousand in the field where now we have but one, and the Kingdom of Glory would ere this have been established.

Our "cultural overhang" has stymied our work in the Middle East. Insistence on our part that a Persian, African, or Asian must fit into our Western culture has, without a doubt been a prominent factor of non-growth.<sup>1</sup>

Failure on our part to integrate the new members has driven untold numbers out of the church, once they were in! Our social, ethnic, and cultural cliques have not opened their doors to these newcomers. Man is in desperate need of "community". The Church has not provided it as it should have.

Our Elijah "I-only-am-left" syndrome has reflected a lack of faith. Noah's eight need not remain the extreme minority today. As a church, we have neither thought big nor prepared for large membership increases, hence have not achieved it.

Expending tremendous sums and energy on media that are not reaching the unchurched is an area needing change. We are more deft at appealing to Christians, and have done very little to church the responsive unchurched.

Tippett likens the church to the time of Joshua when they failed to possess what had already been given to them. These regions remained

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<sup>1</sup>McGavran, How Churches Grow, p. 86.

"unpossessed possessions, until harvestors, vinedressers, or fishermen have gathered in their harvests."<sup>1</sup> We have failed to press forward, satisfied with meager accomplishment. The eagerness of administrators and evangelists to give a "good report" regardless of the facts, has stifled a true analysis and evaluation of our status. Figures don't lie, but liars sure do figure, and the way some statistics are made to appear is appalling.

Another factor of non-growth is the training of the ministry and the lack of training of the laity. The church universal, secure in hundreds of thousands of members, is burdened with the care of the existing churches, and in the training of the clergy to care for the existing flocks, to the neglect of an outreach to the unchurched.<sup>2</sup>

Gradualism,<sup>3</sup> the theory that something can be done now, so that growth can occur later, has no doubt deprived us of much growth. True, one cannot eat the fruit of a tree planted but yesterday--but neither should we be indefinite about the harvest and relegate it to a future, unborn generation!

"Imprisoned patterns"<sup>4</sup> have limited our growth to only one or two methods. Young ministers idealize a Richards, a Vandeman, or a Schuler,<sup>5</sup> and fail to break out on their own. The same patterns are followed, regardless of the milieu in which one works. Paul and Barnabas dared to

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<sup>1</sup>Tippett, Church Growth, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>McGavran, How Churches Grow, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup>McGavran, How Churches Grow, pp. 102 ff.

<sup>4</sup>McGavran, How Churches Grow, p. 112.

<sup>5</sup>Some of the well-known evangelists among Adventists.

break up the pattern of their brethren and work among Gentiles. Not all are willing nor bold enough to break the pattern and venture into effective work for Muslims. To break with imprisoning patterns before knowing that the opportunity will certainly yield new churches takes courage, imagination, faith, and reliance on the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

The accompanying membership growth charts of the Middle East Union of Seventh-day Adventists from 1940 to the present, and the graph showing the membership statistics ever since its beginning, indicate a gradual, steady increase in membership for the Union, and non-growth in some of the local fields. The first decade (1930-40) saw a growth of 289 percent in the Union; the second decade a growth of 157 percent and the third decade an increase of 158 percent, which is an average growth of approximately 200 percent every ten years. Comparatively speaking,<sup>2</sup> that figure represents a very gratifying growth record.

Dry statistics, however, reflect a numerically accurate, but grossly inadequate picture that requires some clarification. In the interest of the subject of this paper--Evangelism Among Muslims--it must be pointed out that more than 95 percent of the present constituency throughout the entire Union, is composed of people from the Christian minority groups who make up less than 5 percent of the total population of 155 million. Some of the deficiencies of the Adventist Mission in the Middle East, as summarized above are amply verified by these statistics.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>McGavran, How Churches Grow, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup>See Vergil Gerber, God's Way to Keep a Church Going & Growing, (William Carey Library, South Pasadena, California, A Division of G/L Publications, Glendale, California, 1973).

<sup>3</sup>Information for the three charts that follow, "Middle East Union Church Growth Statistics", "Middle East Union of Seventh-day Adventists

This disparity made it necessary to analyze the Adventist work carefully. The fact that in almost a hundred years of their presence in the Middle East, they have not addressed themselves to the task of evangelizing the Muslims in the heart of the Muslim world, accentuated the urgency of careful self-examination--an examination of objectives, methods, and attitudes. This, in turn, led to intensive research in the field of Islamic thought and extensive experimentation in personal and public evangelistic endeavors in several countries. Chapter V is a report of these activities.

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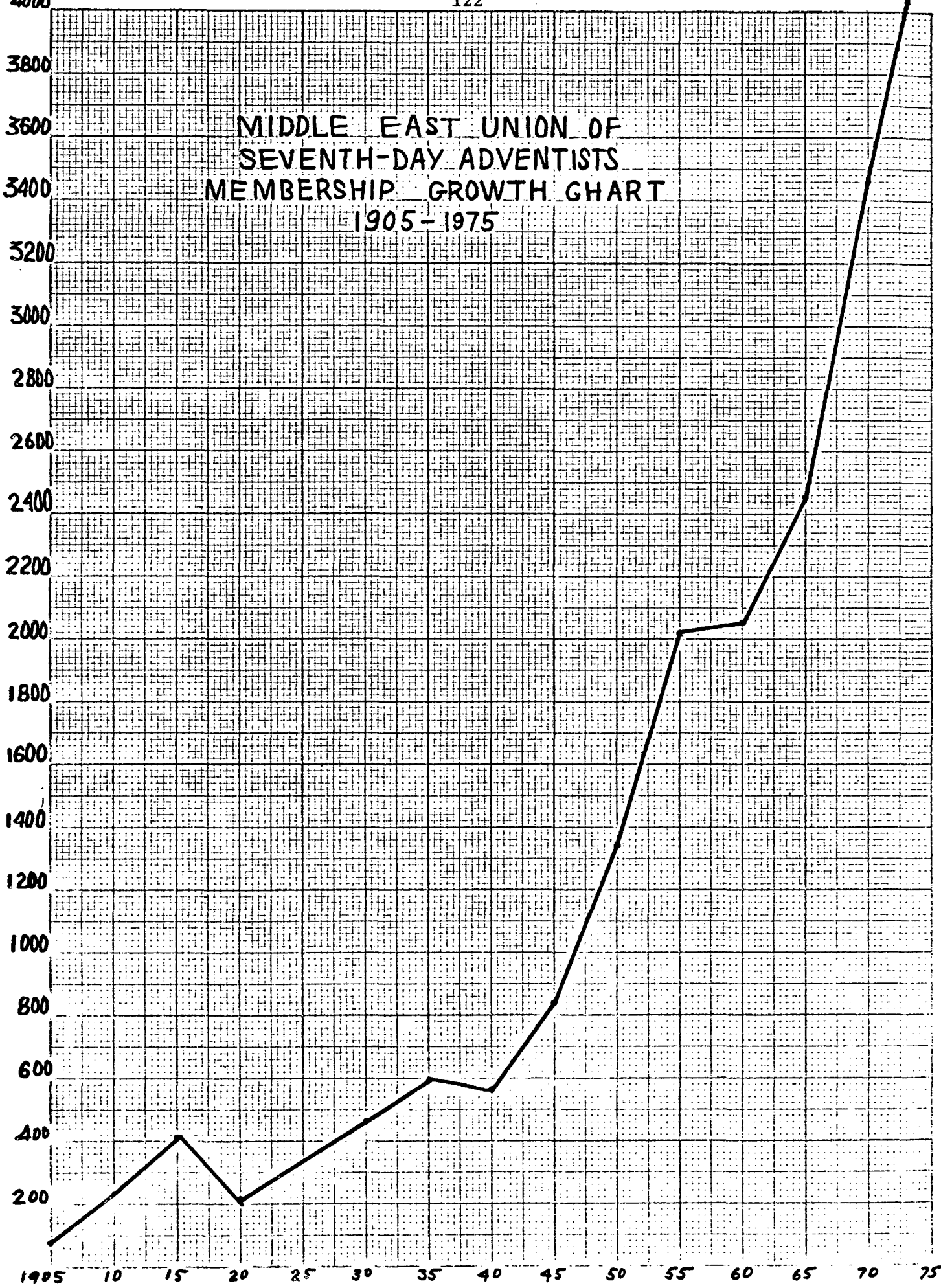
Membership Growth Chart", and "Percentage Membership Growth By Decades", was taken from the Annual Statistical Report of the Seventh-day Adventists (Compiled by the Statistical Secretary of the General Conference of S. D. A., Takoma Park, Washington, D. C. 20012) for the years covered in this survey. There is a slight discrepancy between these and the membership figures given in the Seventh-day Adventist Year Book quoted on page 97 of this paper.

A glance at the itemized statistical chart on page 121, will indicate that the greatest membership growth has taken place in Egypt where the constituency is almost exclusively from the ancient Coptic people. In Cyprus the membership is made up of former members of the Orthodox Church; in Iran, Armenians; in Iraq, indigenous Christians; in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, Orthodox and Catholic; and in Turkey, Armenian and Greek Orthodox. There are more converts from Islam in Iran than in all the rest of the Union combined.

MIDDLE EAST UNION  
 CHURCH GROWTH STATISTICS  
 1903 - 1973

	1903	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73
ADEN												2												
CYPRUS												29	16	28	24	24		15	14	17	15	21		
EGYPT	20	27		41			102	169	170	388	548	820	834	7-0	880	947		1037	1139	1222	1847	2170	2250	2402
IRAN				42	20		134	185	161	205	218	226	235	268	314	295		268	231	231	244	224	215	210
IRAQ					2		26	32	31	63	68	176	195	156	163	173		169	183	170	143	141	153	159
JORDAN							41	58	55	78	77	143	134	167	177	142		151	159	163	185	179		
LEBANON													428	504	523	527		528	553	571	637	649		
LIBYA																38		48	52	51	58			
SUDAN												4				3		3	3	3	3			
SYRIA		17	21		15		96	69	84	36	346	543	150	164	172	176		179	191	193	205	210		
TURKEY	77	47	215	319	179		74	81	81	65	75	67	70	65	61	62		60	58	55	54	54		
EAST MEDITERRANEAN FIELD (Cyprus, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey)																							1160	1196
TOTALS	97	91	236	402	216		473	594	582	835														
											1332													
											2010													
													2062	2205	2378	2452		2525	2651	2745	3461	3719	3850	4040

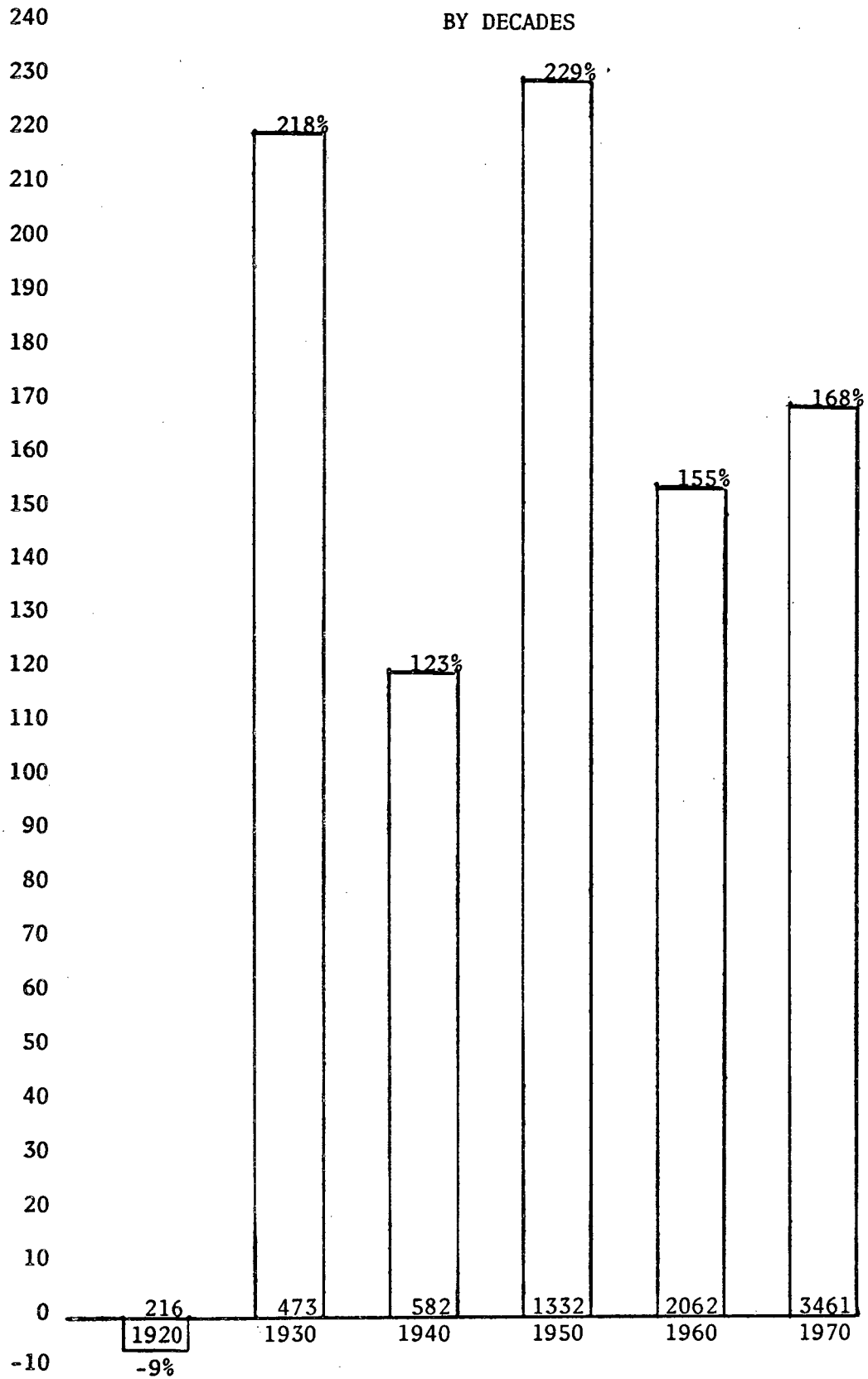
MIDDLE EAST UNION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS MEMBERSHIP GROWTH CHART 1905-1975



PERCENT

## PERCENTAGE MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

BY DECADES





## CHAPTER V

### MIDDLE EAST UNION PROPOSALS

Bearing in mind the objectives, principles and philosophy of Seventh-day Adventists in the Middle East as delineated in Chapter IV, we will consider the extensive program of evangelism developed by the Middle East Union TEAM of which the writer was Director. This program coordinates all aspects of evangelism (public lectures, personal and private Bible study, correspondence courses, radio and television, literature evangelism, public press, and mass media) in a concentrated as well as extended emphasis on the whole man (Physical, mental and spiritual), in a community context. The plan is intended to avoid the traumatic "transplantation" and "rehabilitation" experiences that were taken for granted in former years under dubious "traditional" methods where the family or clan structure of most Muslim communities was attacked, converts made, then subjected to ostracism from their own kin, yet not incorporated nor fully accepted into the winning church, which tenuous situation maintained until in time most of them drifted back into their former communities and companions and resumed their former ways.

As the plan developed, four basic concepts dominated our thinking. First was theological orientation. Through much Bible study, prayer, and what we believe was the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the conviction gripped us strongly that a Christian's attitude towards Islam constitutes a major factor in our relationships with Muslims. These attitudes, developed from the experiences of Saint Peter with Cornelius, the Apostle Paul with

the Philippian jailer, and Christ with the woman of Samaria and others, indicated to us our responsibility to our Muslim brethren. A Muslim's supreme reverence for God, and respect for the institutions (Mohammed, the Koran, and the Mosque) that brought him, the pagan Arab to a worship of the Creator, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit on all honest hearts, constrained us to look upon Islam, its founder and its institutions as points of contact and not of isolation and estrangement.

The second concept was flexibility. It was important that, as a part of the world-wide Advent Movement, we move cautiously and fully in harmony with the policies of the Church. We must be flexible enough to adapt to new approaches to Muslims, and yet maintain strict conformity to the fundamentals of the Church.

The third was practicality. It was necessary that the solutions that we proposed be useable by the men in the field. Our formulas must be workable by the others. Personnel and equipment must be such as will be available to all workers. This is especially the case when a missionary comes in with a truck-load of evangelistic equipment and draws crowds to the meetings, then expects the local worker to continue with practically nothing, when he leaves and carries all his black lights, devices and projectors etc. with him.

The fourth, and most important concept we kept in mind in all our work was the ultimate goal. Every immediate goal must contribute to the ultimate goal of making Paradise a part of our Muslim neighbor's future. With these specifics in mind, the TEAM, a group of five evangelists chosen from widely separated sections of the Union, spent much time counselling with each other, praying and working together in a research-field-experimentation setting.

We entered upon our duties with deliberation and a sense of the enormity of the task that lay ahead. Among the many projects and methods available, the public meeting was recognized as the time-honored medium. The "foolishness of preaching" (1 Cor. 1:21) is still to be our primary medium of indoctrination. One objective was to develop a sequence of study that would lead a Muslim step by step to a full acceptance of Christ as his personal Saviour from sin and to understand and accept all the other fundamental beliefs that lead, by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, to converted lives and Paradise.

Before productive work could begin, we had to make sure of our own attitudes. Much time was spent in researching the historical bases for the gross misunderstandings on the part of both Muslims and Christians. After having established by ample documentation that most of the animosity and dichotomy was a result of ignorance, fear, distrust and prejudice; after being assured of the tremendous contributions made to the West by the Muslim East; after seeing the role the Arabs have played in the preservation and transmission of truth and learning; after having understood the underlying drive of Islam--total submission to the divine will of God, and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and that they are verily children of God as much as ourselves; only then, were we prepared to identify with the Muslim and begin to work constructively.

The production of literature formed a major part of our work. This involved three categories, health, doctrinal, and educational. The health publications had to go beyond the mere physical and include mental and spiritual health. Study was given to the value of penetration tracts, lay activities, public relations, and colporteur work--all of which must contribute to the basic goal of souls saved. Ample time was given to

self-training and experimentation and a continually expanding experience in Islamics. Our work necessitated a thorough study of denominational objectives by the restudy of prophecy. In order to gain a background of contemporary thought--Eastern as well as Western--a sizeable library was built up. Our public work included training sessions for workers and laymen, field schools, radio work, tape cassettes, pictures, television, movies, newspapers, magazines, language classes, youth camps, etc.

It was incumbent on us not only to lead the Muslim to the Church, but also to lead the Church into the Muslim community. The latter was the more difficult, because we insisted on burning our bridges behind us and establishing a meetingplace half-way--not surrendering all, yet forfeiting untenable positions developed traditionally or extra-Biblically. The tearing down of the bridges behind us is based on the message of Revelation 16 and 18. In recognition of the three-fold union through which the "dragon" (Spiritism), the "beast" (Papacy), and the "false prophet" (Apostate Protestantism) are to manifest their activities, we will do all in our power to differentiate ourselves from them. Divine guidance tells us that they are "spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:14). The call today is to "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Rev. 18:4, 5). No symbol, expression, nor connection with this apostate union should be tolerated by us, as we try to save sinners into God's Kingdom.

One glaring void in our program was work for women and children. The Church (as well as the Muslim community) is built on a family structure,

therefore it must make a contribution to the family and community as well as to the individual. In the future expansion of TEAM activities, there must be a greater family orientation.

Efforts were made to contact the Muslim clergy to learn from them as well as to communicate with them. These men chose their occupations because of their love for God. The Christian evangelist can open up a new field of possibilities for their service.

Since the "traditional" attitudes of which we have written are so inextricably woven into the thinking of Christian churchmen in general, it was imperative that all of our experimentation (insofar as possible) be conducted in totally unentered, hence unprejudiced (insofar as possible) areas--places where the population was as close to one hundred percent Muslim as possible. This was not hard to achieve.

Implementation of these objectives was a thrilling experience. Years ago we had the instruction "to make plain natural law, and urge the obedience of it", because that "is the work that accompanies the third angel's message to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord".<sup>1</sup> With all the differences between Muslim and Christian that have been exaggerated through the centuries, we felt the urge to create a platform on which we could stand with our Muslim friends in complete unanimity and work together in complete cooperation. This was the "natural law"--temperance and healthful living--and to urge the obedience to it was an activity in which devout Muslims and educated officials gladly and spontaneously cooperated and participated with us. At the same time this was a work that "accompanies the third angel's message to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord."

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies, Vol. 3, p. 161.

After three years of trial and error (plenty of the latter being eliminated in due process of time), the following procedure was developed. A prospectus was prepared that pictured samples of our advertising and results of our Five Day Plan to Stop Smoking in various large centers. It fell my happy lot to schedule these programs throughout the Union. We first called on the Minister of Health of the country to whom we opened the prospectus and explained briefly the plan, procedure and objectives of the Five Day Plan. We explained to him that we had a doctor-psychologist team available for a given period, and asked if he would be interested in having their services for that week. Invariably the immediate response was positive. Soon after receiving verbal committment, we would take our leave, promising to care for the details by correspondence. Upon arrival in my office, I would write him a letter on International Temperance Association stationery thanking him for his interest in the temperance cause and confirming the mutually accepted date set for the clinic which included, among others, hotel reservations, transportation throughout the week, handbills, newspaper and radio and television announcements, appointments with radio and television, high school and college programs through the Ministry of Education, as well as necessary details in connection with the formal evening program. He was also kindly requested to introduce his guests on the opening night and extend his country's welcome to them and those present. Almost without exception these have been carried out in almost every country of the Middle East. We have been guests of the governments concerned and have received the warmest receptions possible. We have also been urged to return and repeat the clinic on a wider scale than initially attempted.

It is important to note that there is no shift in our position so

far as our public work is concerned. A reputation has been built up for this sort of work and we are happy to repeat the clinic as many times as circumstances permit--in the capital city or provincial towns.

All attendants at the clinic are invited to avail themselves of our free health correspondence course entitled "Highways to Health and Happiness", a course written by a medical doctor in the Middle East with specific local conditions and needs emphasized. The rest of our work is carried out on a low key, person-to-person basis. Our public advertising is all handled by the Ministry of Health--only for the Five Day Plan. All future contacts are made by mail. On our next visit, those who enrolled in the health course are contacted and friendship continued. If possible, a small meeting is called of the correspondence course graduates, and, as circumstances permit, conversation is directed to non-controversial religious topics. These subjects are all written out in sermon form in the book Moslem-Oriented Spearhead Evangelistic Sermons. At the close of the week or ten days' visit, they are invited to enroll in the "Today's Faith" Bible Correspondence course, a series of twenty four lessons specially prepared for Muslims by the TEAM.

On the third visit which might be several months later, the correspondents are invited to a series of meetings (not publicly advertised) in which religious issues and doctrinal discourses are presented. By this time, the joy that has come to them as a result of their victory over tobacco and other body-and-soul-destroying habits has built up a confidence in the messages. Now the group is organized, a leader chosen, and they are left with the first quarter's "Straight Way" Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly. This is the first in a series of four quarterlies that covers all the major doctrines of the Bible and teachings of Jesus. As

cohesive groups are formed of mutually interested individuals, they are given material for daily Bible study and weekly get-togethers to last them a year. Long before the passing of a year they will have studied all the Christian beliefs, not excluding the crucial topics of the divinity of Christ, the Brotherhood of Man, the prophecies, Church finance, state of the dead, predestination, Christian living, forgiveness, and the love of God, etc.

The fourth visit is for encouragement and help where needed. Many questions will have come up which will need answering. The visit will consist of a decision-getting series of inspirational meetings, with the objective of bringing individuals to accept Christ as their personal Saviour. During the visit the group is urged to enroll in the regular Twentieth Century Bible Correspondence Course for private study, along with their group study of the Straight Way lessons already in progress. About this time it would be well to locate a colporteur in the area who could fellowship with them and help to lead out in their meetings.

The fifth visit of the Five-point-plan would be in company with the Field president, with the purpose of conducting a baptismal class and organizing a Company following the baptism of a nucleus who would carry on, as an indigenous company of believers. Total elapsed time for the Five-point-plan could be twenty to thirty months, allowing five or six months between each visit.

The following items are what we consider minimum requirements for carrying on successful evangelistic work among Muslims in unentered areas in the Five-point-plan, in addition to equipment and materials for the Five Day Plan to Stop Smoking clinic:

1. The health correspondence course. This was prepared by Dr.



Herschel Lamp, Medical Secretary of the Middle East Division of Seventh-day Adventists at the time, entitled, "Highways to Health and Happiness".

2. Doctrinal Bible correspondence course. This was prepared by Elder Harley Bresee, entitled "Today's Faith".

3. Series of Sabbath School lesson quarterlies, prepared by Pastor Manuk Benzatyan of Turkey, entitled "The Straight Way".

4. Book of sermons to be used informally or otherwise by the worker, prepared by Dr. Jack Bohannon, entitled, "Moslem-Oriented Spearhead Evangelistic Sermons".

5. Literature for free distribution in the form of a series of tracts, prepared by Pastor Salim Majeed Ilias, entitled "In Search of the Straight Way", a series of thirty tracts based on the opening Sura of the Koran, the Fatiha.

6. A full-message book to ground and expand one's Christian experience, written by Kenneth Oster, entitled, "Cosmic Perspective of God and Man".<sup>1</sup>

#### Summary of TEAM Productions

Our objective here is to look at each of the six major TEAM productions and see how each fulfills its intended use. We will refer to case situations and cite testimonials of Muslim and Christian leaders regarding these works.

1. "Highways to Health and Happiness."

Though the manuscript for this 21 lesson series was completed by

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<sup>1</sup>In the following section we present a brief summary of these six TEAM publications. Appendix B contains the "Table of Contents" of each of these works. The entire set of six are available at the James White Memorial Library at Andrews University, or can be had upon request from the Middle East Union TEAM, P. O. Box 11-2020, Beirut, Lebanon.

Dr. Herschel Lamp, before the organization of the TEAM and hence is not exactly a TEAM production, the lessons were first printed by the TEAM and used as an integral first-step follow-up for the Five Day Plan to Stop Smoking. Following his victory over the body-and-soul-destroying tobacco habit, every individual is urged to enroll in this health correspondence course (available now in Arabic, Persian and Turkish).

Our motive in this course is threefold: a) to strengthen the student's willpower in his determination to abstain from tobacco and alcohol; b) to give him valuable information on other health measures which will lead to better health, better happiness and, as a result a greater capacity to understand and worship God (since, according to the Eastern adage a wholesome mind can exist in a wholesome body); and c) to let the student and prospective candidate for Paradise realize that true Biblical Christianity represents a "clean" life, unpolluted by poisonous herbs, unclean foods and tainted breath. A realization of these points is one of the most thrilling experiences for a devout Muslim, and opens the door for further investigation.

In trying to appraise the value of the TEAM work, we can but thank God for what measure of success has been achieved. Only as we present specific cases and testimonials will we be able to depict a portion of the influence these plans have had.

One of the early public contacts that we made was in the Turkish Sector of Cyprus. Making the appointment was providential. Crossing through the "Green Line" barricade from the Greek Sector to the Turkish Sector several times, making contact with the right man, and finalizing on the details before the Five Day Plan began were all evidences of God's guidance. Among the attendants on the very first night was a Muslim

clergyman who was also the editor of the Turkish newspaper Nizam in Nicosia. In his report of the Five Day Plan which he printed verbatim daily, a quarter of the first page carried, just before the large-type title, a preamble "Fourteen Hundred Years After Islam, Christian Minorities also Understand the Harmful Effects of Smoking and Drinking and Have Started to Battle Against Them."<sup>1</sup> The editor's comments on the Five Day Plan were:

Among the conferences that the Youth, Sport, Village and People's Education Department has given, the most successful and most beneficial one was given last week in Nicosia. By the cooperation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the International Temperance Association these conferences are being conducted around the world. Their objective is to help the smokers and drinkers to stop these habits. . . . Our attention was drawn especially to points of religion. The speakers always mentioned that those who would like to leave these habits cannot do it in their own power but they need a spiritual power from above. To hear such religious words from the Western speakers was indeed satisfying. How we wish that our political and enlightened people can hold this truth.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. "Today's Faith."

These lessons were in preparation over a period of many years, an outgrowth of much experience in public evangelism and private study. Several full-scale public evangelistic efforts were held in the Beirut Adventist Center where daily meetings of three or more weeks' duration were held especially for Muslims. Favorite topics were printed up into attractive tract form. Some of the most appreciated by the Muslims were "Priceless Treasures", "Palestine, Prophecy and the Seed of Abraham", "Jerusalem in Prophecy", "Jesus, Son of Mary", "Brotherhood", and "Day of Accounting". As the topics presented in these meetings and tracts

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<sup>1</sup>Editor, Nizam (Nicosia, Cyprus, Friday, 24 March, 1972), translated by Manuk Benzatyan from Turkish.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

were developed and improved, they were finally reduced to more or less uniform length and format, and printed in the form in which they appear now. The test papers were all made in the same format and printed on air-form-style paper which required folding and mailing, after having merely checked correct answers, similar to the attractive health course.

The liberal use of quotations from the Koran has been questioned by some. After reading a single lesson, however, it becomes obvious that never once has the Koran been used to prove a single point of doctrine or principle. The advisability for its use is evidenced in the results. Never have we been criticized by Muslims for its use, nor for the way we have used the Koran. To point out to the Muslim unobtrusively that there are innumerable points of harmony between the Koran and the Bible, between Islam and Christianity cements the bond of brotherhood the more firmly. Truth, we must remember, is from God. All truth is from God. It has been transmitted to us through various channels. We must be honest with ourselves as well as with Muslims--truth is still truth--regardless of the channel of its transmission. We do no violence to Scripture, nor to principle by asserting that we believe every word of truth in the Koran to be from God, for God is the Source of all truth!

At the outset we must call attention to the lack of "arguments" and "proof texts" that have been so prominent in Christian polemics, one of the very aspects of the "traditional" method we take issue with so strongly. This lack will be noticed in all of these works, and many readers will feel like urging a particularly good text or illustration to clinch certain ideas--but we have rejected all such and have substituted in their place, a warmth of feeling that will be acceptable to the Muslim, as we depend on the Holy Spirit to convict and convert.

We consider each of the 24 lessons separately:

1. CHANCE OR CHOICE? As mentioned before, the subject of predestination is often listed as a sixth article of faith (page 78). In this first lesson the subject is presented in a logical way, presenting the permanency and unchanging characteristics of God as a basis of trust in Him, and at the same time emphasizing the power of human will with which God endowed man. Two verses are quoted from the Koran:

Lo, Allah changeth not the condition of folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts. (Koran, The Thunder 13:11).

There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error. (Koran, The Cow 2:256).

The right direction is made plain because men have minds to reason and choose with. Therefore, there is no force in religion. God promises rich rewards to all who choose to follow the straight path, it is claimed. Galatians 6:7 is quoted, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The lesson closes with the appeal:

God has predestined that those who break His laws shall pay the penalty and those who choose His way shall enjoy eternal life and the reward of faithful servants. To those who study the Holy Books and follow God's word, it is enough to know they can choose the better way. That alone says God is merciful.

2. PRICELESS TREASURES. This lesson on the Bible is introduced with the archeological discoveries of Tutankamen's tomb with all its riches, and the Dead Sea Scrolls by Mohammed Adh-Dhib. It is asserted that one who believes in God believes all His Holy Books, including the "Reminder", the "Guardian", and the "Criterion" (Koran, Al Hijr 15:9; The Prophets 21:48), because "there is naught that can change His Word" (Koran, Cattle 6:116). Several texts from both the Old and New Testa-

ments are quoted to indicate the central truths of Islam regarding the unity (Matt. 4:10; Ex. 20:3, 4; Ps. 18:31; 1 Cor. 8:4), use of alcohol (1 Cor. 6:10; Prov. 23:29, 30; Prov. 23:31, 32), unclean meats (Lev. 11:7, 8), and the Judgment (Eccl. 12:14).

All that is said is non-controversial and wholly acceptable by Muslims. It is designed to let the Muslim know that the Bible does teach the very things in which he believes.

3. PROPHECY, PALESTINE, AND THE SEED OF ABRAHAM. A subject so vitally connected with the desire and aspirations of the displaced and dispossessed Palestinian and indirectly all Arabs is of prime importance. A review of the promises made to Abraham and his seed, forfeiture of that inheritance by the Israelites, and the ultimate fulfillment of the promise in its spiritual aspect provides an excellent appeal for the Muslim to live as his father Abraham, a faithful, holy, submitted (Islam) life. Here also there is surprising similarity and correlation between the Bible and the Koran.

4. JERUSALEM IN PROPHECY. This is a continuation of the last lesson, with an appropriate explanation of Daniel 9:25, which speaks, not only of the restoration of Jerusalem after the return from the captivity, but also of the coming of the "Messiah" and His baptism in A. D. 27. This lesson introduces the purpose of the First Advent, the Jews' rejection of Christ, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and the glorious vistas of the New Jerusalem, the "City of Peace" in the ancient language of Abraham, through whom the final appeal is made for renewed consecration and total "submission" (Islam) to the God of Abraham.

5. WORLD EMPIRES FORETOLD. The age-encompassing prophecy of Daniel 7 is introduced, with emphasis on the coming apostasy (Dan. 7:7) during the Roman period and the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom. The appeal, of course, is for preparedness for that kingdom.

6. OUR DAY IN PROPHECY. The prophetic chapters of the gospel (Matt. 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21) are dealt with in this lesson. It is interesting to note that this is the first lesson in which no reference is made to the Koran. It is our plan to start where the Muslim is and step by step lead him to a full understanding of the Bible. Light, under an open mind, will dispell darkness, but if the doors and windows to the mind are closed tightly whether from ignorance or prejudice, there is little hope of light ever entering. It is our job to allay fears, remove the prejudices of centuries, and let the light bring about its natural effect.

7. JESUS, SON OF MARY, is one of the most liked (by Muslims) and greatly appreciated of all the lessons! Whereas the very mention of "Jesus, Son of God" immediately turns off the Muslim, this lesson that deals with the same subject is highly accepted. In the first place, Jesus is referred to in the Koran as the "Son of Mary", (Koran, Family of 'Imran 3:40). His Virgin-birth (Koran, The Prophets 21:91), title of "Word" (Koran, Family of 'Imran 3:45), and the fact that the "Word" created all things by saying "Be" (3:47) is pertinent to understanding who Christ is. The chain of thought continues: Jesus was to be like Moses (Deut. 18:18), yet unlike Moses, Jesus would be sinless (Koran, The Story 28:16, 33), One "illustrious in the world, and in the Hereafter, and one of those brought near unto God" (Koran, The Table Spread 5:110;

The Criterion 25:3) is inferred and very similar to Ps. 33:6, 9 in thought. Several referrences to Christ's humanity as well as to His miracle-working power set the stage for a better understanding of His saving power.

8. BROTHERHOOD. This is another lesson that has received high praise from Muslims. The main line of thought starts with the opening words of the Lord's prayer, "Our Father" (Matt. 6:9). The question is asked, "Is it possible that the true Injil could contain the prayer 'Our Father which art in heaven. . .'? Is it possible that Christ could have taught the people to pray like this?" The Muslim, of course is repelled by the thought of either "Son of God" or "Father of man" idea. But the "unity" of God is immediately repeated (Mark 12:29-31), the carnal aspect of Christ's sonship refuted and the parallelism pointed out with the Koran that speaks of the brotherhood of believers (Koran, The Private Apartments 49:10). The spiritual aspects of this relationship are emphasized, with the One on whom their belief is based--not a carnal father, but One, God, whom we are to remember "as ye remember your fathers or with a more lively remembrance" (Koran, The Cow 2:200). With God as a spiritual Father, "the believers are naught else than brothers" (Koran, The Private Apartments 49:10). This relationship becomes meaningful in the added light from Christ's talk with Nicodemus in John 3 and the fact that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). Therefore, to the age-old question that Muslims have thrown at Christians, Was Christ the son of God (small"s")? the answer is both "No" and "Yes" (if with capital S). This lesson clarifies the issue without controversy or heated debate--and the Muslims appreciate it, as has been demonstrated time and again.



9. DAY OF ACCOUNTING. The scene of Belshazzar's feast opens the lesson, "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting" (Dan. 5:27). The Judgment is a subject with which Muslims find much agreement. The thrust of this lesson, is on the mediatorship of Christ, the way provided for guaranteeing a perfect record in that day of accounting.

10. THE CROSS, a subject that cuts directly across Muslim theology, for the Hadith states variously that God loved Jesus far too much to let Him die on the cross, that Barabbas died on the cross and Jesus was caught up to heaven, that another, an anonymous soul was crucified, not Jesus, etc. The Apostle Paul must have had the future Muslims in mind (homiletically, not exegetically), when he said that the cross of Christ was "unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks (Gentiles) foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:23), for truly, without the aid of the Holy Spirit it is indeed incomprehensible (1 Cor. 2:14).

The lesson starts with the condemnation of the Jews for saying "we slew the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, Allah's messenger" (Koran, Women 4:157). The interesting thing is that the same verse continues with the declaration that "They slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them." The truth of this statement is confirmed over and over again in the gospel, illustrations being given from Luke 4:28-30 (when the inhabitants of Nazareth tried to kill Jesus, but couldn't because "he passing through the midst of them went his way"); and John 18:31 (when the Jews themselves admitted to Pilate that it was not lawful for them to put a man to death); Matt. 26:52, 53 (when the mob who came to arrest Him were reminded, along with Peter, that ten legions of angels awaited His command); John 19:10, 11 (when Pilate was given the assurance that he had no power at all, except it were given him from above).

In fact, the Koran testifies to the death of Jesus. "Allah said: O Jesus: Lo! I am gathering thee (causing thee to die)" (Koran, Family of 'Imran 3:55); "Peace on me the day I was born and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive" (Koran, Mary 19:33, 34).

From these verses, the student's thoughts are abruptly taken to their own Id al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice), which commemorates the tremendous sacrifice of Abraham in offering up his son--Ishmael, as the Muslim believes--but the issue is not who the son was, neither is there salvation in the sacrifice of the son of Abraham, but the faith of the father and the fact of the act. At that crucial moment, God delivered the son "with a tremendous sacrifice" (Koran, Those Who Set the Ranks 37:107). Right here, then is the heart of the issue. Abraham, spotted the ram and sacrificed it--but was that ram the "tremendous sacrifice" that saved his son? Abraham had a thousand flocks and would have gladly given every ram in the stead of his dearly beloved son! Away with the thought--a mere animal could never be called, in contrast to the life of his own flesh and blood, "a tremendous sacrifice". God the Holy One (Al Quddus), the Reckoner (Al Hasib) and the Avenger (AlMunloquim), because He is also the Just One (Al 'Adil) and the Life Giver (Al Muhyee), and the Merciful (Al Rahman), He would provide the sacrifice--a "tremendous Sacrifice", identified by John the Baptist as the "lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The lesson then closes with choice glimpses of that Lamb taken from Isaiah 53:6-8.

11. THE WAY PROVIDED is a follow-up of the previous lesson. It is the plan of salvation as veiled under the symbolisms of the sanctuary service, the daily sacrifice, the officiating priests, the day of atone-

ment, and their cosmic counterparts in the life of Christ.

12. 2300 DAYS. The cleansing of the sanctuary predicted in Daniel 8:14 which is none other than the investigative phase of the judgment which began in 1844 is explained in simple steps with understandable graphs and helpful charts. This is tied in with the judgment hour message of Revelation 14:6 and the call for a recognition and worship of the Creator-God, the God of the Muslim and the Christian, the God of all mankind. God's memorial of creation is the Sabbath. Man's allegiance and "submission" (Islam) to God will be measured by the degree to which man places his will on the side of right.

13. THE LAW OF GOD (Standard of Right and Wrong). This lesson is a natural outgrowth of the former lesson. If man's allegiance to God is to be measured by the degree to which man submits his will (Islam) to God, there must be a code of right and wrong which God has given whereby man must and can be measured. If there is a heaven to gain and a hell to shun, there must be a difference in the lives of those who are saved and those who are not, or in the life of an individual before and after he is saved, or converted. This change is in relation to being in harmony or disharmony with the divine will of God whose will is reflected in His commands that regulate the behaviour of the believers, or points out their "whole duty" (Eccl. 12:13). The "Straight Way", guidance unto which the "submitted" (Islam) prays so fervently in the Fatiha, is none other than that pointed out in the guidelines of the decalogue. This law points one in the direction of the narrow way (Matt. 7:13, 14) which is the "Straight Way" of the Koran. One's search for satisfaction is realized, when, by the grace of God, he can claim complete submission and

conformity to God's will, a high goal beautifully spelled out in the Torah, the Injil and the Koran. This lesson quotes all ten commandments from the above three sources.

14. THE REMEMBRANCE. This lesson is God's answer to atheistic Communism and materialistic Modernism, the diabolic forces making such inroads on the religious world today. It is a call to remember God, to fear God and to give Him glory--to worship Him who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water (Rev. 14:6). The Bible is not alone in sounding this call. The Koran likewise urges: "God is He who created the heavens and earth and that which is between them in six days, then seated Himself upon the throne. . . Will you not then remember?" (Koran, Prostration 32:4). The fourth of the ten commandments starts out "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. . ." (Ex. 20:8-11). In a way the Koran seems to put it even stronger than does the Bible. It pronounces a strange indictment on those who broke the Sabbath: "And ye know of those of you who broke the Sabbath, how we said unto them: be ye apes, despised and hated" (Koran, The Cow 2:65). Whether prophetic or not, it is coincidental that about the time the Seventh-day Adventist Church began preaching the fear of God and urging the worship of the Creator by honoring His command to remember the seventh-day as a memorial of creation (Rev. 14:6), Darwin began to promulgate his theory of evolution! As if referring to that, the text cited above seems to say, "Those of you who don't have intelligence to worship God, to obey His laws, to believe that He is your Creator, go ahead and be monkeys. Believe that you came from the primates and apes. Be ruled by animal passions".

Believers in the Straight Way are urged to return to a worship of the Creator-God, an honoring of His commands, a heritage descended

from the holy prophets, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, all of whom "remembered" the Sabbath day and kept it holy.

15. THE GREAT APOSTASY. The health lessons and these lessons thus far will certainly have served to differentiate between pork users, alcoholics, and Sabbath breakers. In this lesson, further evidence is given of the underlying spiritual significance in the principle of loyalty and allegiance to God and a lack of it. It deals directly with the period of 1260 years of Papal supremacy A. D. 538-1798, and the resulting apostasy in Christendom. The rise of Islam during the early part of this period and its role in its opposition to Rome is mentioned. The spread of Islam and how it fulfills Revelation 9, its role during the formative period of the Protestant Reformation, and finally the decline of the Ottoman Turk, are placed in juxtaposition. The great apostasy, arrested Protestantism, and the decline of spiritualism in Islam bring us today to a call for renewed investigation of the messages of the prophets and an earnest appeal for an awakened and revived submission to God.

16. THE RESURRECTION. To understand the resurrection one must understand the state of the dead, concerning which there is such widespread confusion in Islam as well as Christianity. The first lie that was ever uttered--by Satan--was a direct contradiction to what God had told Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:17; 3:4). Strange as it is, large numbers of people have preferred to believe Satan's lie, despite numerous prophetic utterances to the contrary. Satan's point in wanting people to believe that they do not die, but change their level or sphere of living at death is for the purpose of getting people to believe that they can go ahead and live reprobate lives here--that after death they will have another chance to

repent and be saved. Thus he knows that he will be more successful in destroying souls. The urgency of the subject is very obvious: Now is the time to repent. The two resurrections are plainly defined (John 5: 28, 29; 1 Thess. 4:16-18), and the effect upon the two groups, the righteous and the wicked. In this lesson the final utter eradication of evil and the wicked is assured. The eternal destruction, not suffering, of the wicked brings one to an appreciation of a loving and merciful God.

18. 1000 YEARS OF PEACE. It will be noticed that the Koran is practically never referred to any more. By this time confidence has been built up in the Bible and the lessons are presented with little difference from what they would be for Christians. Here the main events marking the beginning of the millennium, the condition of the earth, and the occupation of the saints during the millennium, and the main events that mark its close are outlined, with many Scriptural quotes on the realities and pleasures of the earth made new.

19. HEAVEN. Perhaps this is a subject where Islam is at greater variance with the Biblical teachings as any. But here again, our point is not to refute the Koran, but to augment or supplement and overwhelm the Muslim with a concept of heaven so far beyond his present ideas of Paradise, that the reality of eternal life in a holy state in the presence of a loving God and the perfectly harmonious society of holy beings will excite his highest ambitions and activate his most noble aspirations. Making no reference to Koranic concepts, the scores of Scriptural references are blended together in a beautiful description of heaven as testified to by eye-witnesses (the Bible prophets in vision). The appeal is one of the most irresistible.

20. HEALTH AND HAPPINESS. Although our students will already have completed the first course on "Highways to Health and Happiness", this lesson serves as a review, and also to impress upon their minds that physical wellbeing is as much a part of good religion as is spiritual wellbeing (3 John 2). All aspects of healthful living are touched on, beginning with alcohol, clean and unclean meats, abstinence from blood, fat, poisonous herbs (tobacco and narcotics), Bible suggestions for a positive diet, mental health, guilt-free conscience, devil-free souls, use of natural remedies, water, rest, exercise, fresh air and most important, living trust in God.

21. MIRACLES AND PARABLES OF JESUS. In this lesson the student is brought face to face with the Jesus of the Jericho Road, beside the pool of Bethesda, in the multitude and in the one-man audience, as lessons of eternal value are unfolded to many for the first time. The drawing power of Jesus' love and attention to the individual is allowed to tug at the heartstrings of the Muslim who has heard Jesus' name all his life, but has really never met Him nor become acquainted with Him.

22. PRAYER. This subject has been discussed under the second pillar of faith (page 64). The Muslim believes in prayer and engages in prayer perhaps more assiduously than most of his Christian counterparts, but there is a certain stiltifying of ceremonial ritual prayer that lacks the personal, heart-felt communion in the name of the loving, living Christ. The lesson includes several references to prayer and examples of spontaneous prayer from both the Old and New Testaments, and emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit in intercessory prayer (Rom. 8:26).

23. STEWARDSHIP. In Islam, Zakat, the third pillar of faith (page 66) is closely associated with the principles of stewardship dealt with in this lesson. There are, of course, differences. The proprietorship of God is common to both, but the recipient in the case of Islam is the poor, whereas the Biblical concept of stewardship includes the poor as well as the wealthy--all are to give a tenth of their increase in acknowledgment of God's ownership. Besides the tithes, free-will offerings "according as God hath prospered" (1 Cor. 16:2; Deut. 16:17) are to be given. The promised blessings (Mal. 3:8-10) are as sure as any of God's promises.

24. IS GOD PARTICULAR? To bind off this second series of lessons a strong appeal is made for a decision to comply, by the aid and guidance of the Holy Spirit, with the will of God as expressed so plainly in Scripture. Man is so prone to go down the road that "seemeth right unto a man" even though "the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 16:25). The story of Eve eating the forbidden fruit is cited to emphasize the need of absolute and unequivocal conformity to God's dictates, for God certainly is particular, and no amount of rationalization or argumentation will enhance a wayward inclination. The lesson closes with the personal appeal found in Isaiah 55:6-9, "Seek the Lord while He may be found. . ."

Just a word about the test papers for all the lessons. They are all uniform in format and arrangement. Only the one sheet, in air-form-style, is to be answered, folded and mailed in. All the answers are indicated merely by checking the correct space in the parentheses in the right margin; making it easy for the teacher to correct large numbers in a minimum amount of time by checking them with a master list. Ample op-



portunity is given for students to ask questions, each of which is handled prayerfully and thoughtfully.

### 3. "The Straight Way".

The title given to this series of lessons is a familiar expression to all Muslims, as the opening Sura of the Koran, in which the Muslim prays, "Lead us into the Straight Way", so similar to Christ's injunction, "Lead us not into temptation, . . ." (Matt. 6:13).

The sign of the azimuth which appears on the cover of these lessons was chosen to appear on our masthead and publications because of its Arabic derivation, and spiritual significance.<sup>1</sup> The main arrow points upwards to God, and in the four corners are inscribed the four areas of human interest fostered by TEAM publications: Spiritual, Educational, Social, and Physical (clockwise, starting with the upper left).

The preparation of these lessons took the cooperation of all the TEAM members. We wanted to make it a full-message series of lessons. Not only fifty two, but a couple of hundred titles and topics were written down on cards and after days of prayerful consideration and juggling back and forth and combining of subjects, all were included in a consecutive sequence that carries the reader from Eden Lost to Eden Restored through "The Straight Way", though that Way becomes narrow and hard at times.

The quarterlies are designed to be used as study guides by individuals, on a daily schedule for one year. Groups will be organized, and a leader chosen who will lead out in the discussion of these weekly lessons as they gather from Sabbath to Sabbath. It is also highly advisable that all pastors use these quarterlies in their Sabbath School classes for vi-

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<sup>1</sup>Azimuth: as-sumut, pl of as-samt, the way, direction.

siting Muslims. In fact, in the Biennial Session of the Middle East Union Committee, with General Conference and Afro-Mideast Division representation present, along with delegates from throughout the Union, action was taken that these quarterlies be supplied to all the churches for use in the Pastor's Class with Muslim visitors.<sup>1</sup>

Rather than dealing with each of the 52 lessons, we will briefly describe the content of each quarterly:

First Quarter: At the Crossroads of Truth, starts at the beginning, using ontological evidence of the starry universe and its perfect harmony and dependable movement to lead man's mind to the Creator (Ps. 19:1-4). The message of the stars rivets our attention on the unmoveable, eternal Creator, who had a purpose in creating mankind. Man, using his free-will, chose to disobey and sin, thus bringing disharmony into God's universe. The origin of sin is thus described, and God's built-in plan of salvation. The story of Abraham, and the inclusion of all who believe in the everlasting covenant, and the examples of Joseph, Moses and Job as they related to the covenant are discussed.

Second Quarter: Keeping Step With the Stalwarts is actually a series of lessons from the lives of Old Testament prophets, and their prophetic messages for our own day. This quarterly leads the student in principles of right living as taught by Moses, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elishah and Daniel. The important prophecies of the latter bring the student to the birth of Jesus and the anointing of the Messiah in A. D. 27 according to the precise prediction of Daniel 8 and 9.

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<sup>1</sup>Middle East Union Committee action taken November 21, 1973, page 239.

Third Quarter: The Kingdom of Grace begins with the angels' announcement of Christ's birth and carries us through the stories of His life and teachings, His predictions and the establishment of the Early Church, the crises through which it went during the first six centuries until the appearance of Islam in the early seventh century.

Fourth Quarter: Even Unto the End, takes the student in stride through the history of the church to the end of time. The believer's responsibilities in regard to God's amazing grace and preparation for eternity are stressed. No apology is made for repeating some of the same subjects dealt with in "Today's Faith" series. They provide a needed review as well as another look from another angle of the most important aspects of Christian living.

#### 4. Moslem-Oriented Spearhead Evangelistic Sermons

This book of sermons is different from any which we have seen before. The obvious reason is that the sermons are directed to an audience for which Christians in general and Adventists in particular have not usually prepared sermons. The Muslim audience is approached through those ideas with which it is most familiar. It is not expected that a Christian will feel perfectly comfortable with these sermons, for his ideas and backgrounds differ from those of the Muslims.

The sermons have been tested upon audiences from widely differing national, cultural, and sectarian backgrounds. In the course of preparation and presentation the TEAM members compared their experiences and the responses of their audiences in order to select the most effective materials.

A foremost objective has been to secure a hearing, for traditional Christian preaching has more often closed the minds of Muslim audiences

than it has attracted their interest. Traditional Christian preaching has generally failed to show respect for Muslim beliefs and institutions. We consider this lack of respect to be inconsistent with the true spirit of Christianity. The main feature of these sermons which has been effective in minimizing debate, hostility, and prejudice is the respectful approach to Islamic ideas, and an honorable attitude toward their institutions.

These sermons have been presented publicly as spearhead meetings, with the intention of demonstrating to Muslims that Seventh-day Adventists are truly "believers" and that their message is one which the times demand. It is not expected that these sermons will make Seventh-day Adventists out of Muslims; the range of subjects and detail of presentation is not adequate. The TEAM has obtained through these sermons a valuable response. The listeners have recognized that Seventh-day Adventists, because of their knowledge, spirituality, and open minded respect for truth, can help them walk in the Straight Way.

Dr. R. C. Darnell, president of the Middle East Union writes in the Foreword to the book:

The Middle East Union is grateful to the TEAM for their pioneer work in preparing these sermons. We trust that as the sermons are offered to other workers, they will prove a means of adding blessing to their ministry for the peoples of the Muslim world.<sup>1</sup>

Following is a critique of the book by Erich Bethmann, author of Bridge to Islam, and former missionary to the Middle East:

I want to thank you for your letter of February 15 and the material which arrived around the end of March. Please, do excuse the delay in answering, but the material is too important for giving it merely a casual treatment. I was occupied at that time with some other mat-

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<sup>1</sup>Robert C. Darnell, Moslem-Oriented Spearhead Evangelistic Sermons (Beirut, Lebanon: Middle East Press, 1972), Foreword.

ter and only during the last two weeks I found sufficient time to read it carefully, and I read every word of it.

First of all, I wish to congratulate you and your team for this achievement and its completely fresh and new approach. Perhaps, as born Adventists, you might not even be fully aware, how startling this approach is. For me, a born Lutheran, the Adventist type of exegesis of the Scriptures, here a bit and there a bit, was absolutely fascinating. We were never directed or accustomed to read the Scriptures in that way, but only chapter-wise. Here, you are introducing now this method to the reading and interpretation of the Qur'an. It must be absolutely startling to Muslim listeners who are accustomed to the recitation of the Qur'an but not to a thematic study. I must admit, I myself was astonished, that so many parallels with Biblical thought can be found. And for a Muslim to see and realize that so many ideas of his Qur'an were expressed in the Torah, Zabbur and Ingil previously will, hopefully, give him more confidence in the truthfulness of the previous Scriptures and awaken in him a desire to study them more intimately and intensely.

I also found the constant emphasis that religious truth must be understood spiritually most refreshing. It cannot be emphasized too often, as the average Muslim is hardly acquainted, or even aware of the concept of spiritual truth.

Our Adventist way of Bible exegesis or Bible study, as we prefer to call it, has, of course, also its drawbacks and dangers. We are apt to pick all the relevant verses for proving particular doctrinal points and leave aside, overlook or never look at all at other parts of the Scriptures. Officially we stand for verbal inspiration, but many parts we treat like dry straw and confronted with a good many spots in the historical books of the O. T. we would be hard put to defend verbal inspiration.

In these lectures the compiler deftly circumvented one point of difference by calling the writers of the Scriptures, "God's penmen and not God's pen." This, of course, is the cardinal point of difference between the Christian and the Muslim concept of inspiration. In these lectures and lessons the Qur'anic verses are used on the same level as the Biblical verses, implying equal status. In other words, the Qur'an is treated as an authentic continuation of divine revelation. That is the impression I do receive and a deduction a Muslim quite naturally would make. So far so good.

Sooner or later, however, you will be confronted with Qur'anic verses which, with the best of intentions, it will be extremely difficult to harmonize with the spirit of the Gospel. The Qur'an does not only contain some hope for the sinner, but it is a rigid code of life, a civil code, in many respects stricter than the O. T. We, in fact, lift only the "health" regulations from the O. T. and leave many of the others, which likewise have nothing to do with the ten commandments or the ceremonial law, blissfully dormant. For a Muslim it is not so easy to get away with a similar treatment of the Qur'an,

because the distinction is made between religious ordinances and civil law, nor is there any ceremonial law, which has found its fulfillment. Furthermore for the Muslim Muhammad is not the penman of God, but the faucet through which the "Reading" flowed, the "Reading" from the original copy preserved in heaven.

I really don't have a good answer to the problem. In a way, I am very happy to see the Qur'an used the way you are doing it, it will open a totally new dimension to their understanding, yet, on the other hand, you are also in danger to maneuver yourself into a very difficult impasse.

Perhaps, and that is just a suggestion, the way out of it is: not merely using the Qur'anic verses as a proof of spiritual truth expounded already in the Bible, but having them stand alone in their own right of spiritual meaning and interpretation, and then, when the awareness of this aspect of the Qur'an has sunk in, to lead to the much deeper awareness of spiritual things in the Gospel. The link would be the frequent endorsements of the previous books by the Qur'an. That still does not solve the main problem, but, at least, it does not close the door as a complete or, an implied complete identification, does.

In general, I think the lectures are well structured and thought through. Some of their weaker points are in their historical statements, f. k. that the Papacy was at its height at the time of Muhammad's appearance, which was definitely not the case. The papacy had barely emerged from the ravages of the northern invaders; Eastern Christianity was much stronger at that time.

From a psychological point of view, I would not play up Rev. 9 and its explanation. It always appeared to me a rather weak explanation. But for a Muslim having his movement presented as a great smoke coming from a bottomless pit and as a swarm of locusts is not exactly endearing nor enticing, particularly, as there seems to be no other purpose to it except wrecking vengeance upon fallen believers, no mitigating circumstances, no higher aim, no permanent force for good. That almost negates the value of all the positive quotations having been made. If someone should open the subject of Rev. 9, I would say, some expounders see the fulfillment of this chapter in the Arabs and the Turks.

Being on the topic of psychological effects; the only thing which I have against the book is its title. "Spearhead Evangelistic Sermons". I understand the idea very well and can feel the enthusiasm which lies behind it. In a way, they are spearhead sermons pioneering a new approach, but why so bellicose, so crusader-like? If I would be the one to whom these sermons are directed, I would not exactly cherish to see myself pierced and gored by spears. Why not: Christian Muslim Pathfinder Sermons or Gateway Sermons for Muslims and Christians, or something of that sort.

The real surprise of the lectures was the one which dealt with the happenings on the Cross, and the unique interpretation of Sura 4.157.... "Yet they did not slay him, neither crucified him, it only appeared so unto them". By shifting the accent from the actual fact of the crucifixion to "their assumption of having done it", while in fact they had no power to do it, opens up new avenues of thought. Accepting that explanation, the Biblical story of course, has to be streamlined with it too. Fascinating as this interpretation is, and probably it can stand, it still does not do away with the many verses in the Q., in which Jesus is definitely and explicitly described as one of the prophets, on equal footing with them, despite being "illustrious" in this world and the next.

We have to beware that we do not fall in the trap, considering Jesus but the greatest of the prophets. Sometimes the lectures are coasting dangerously close to Arianism. On page 6 in "Proof from outer space" the lesson says, for instance, not as a quotation from the Q., but in the straight text: "We know that Jesus was also a great prophet of righteousness, that he was one of those who taught the straight way." And a few lines further down; "all the prophets from Adam to Jesus kept the sabbath." These are perilous shoals.

Personally, I always found that Jchn 1.1 provides the strongest presentation of the divinity of Christ. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Nobody knows God or can know God! God has to reveal Himself! If He does not reveal Himself, all of man's ideas, imaginations, hallucinations about God are of exactly the same value. If one man thinks, God is a pebble, another, God is a crocodile and again another, that He is a universal principle or a multi-armed, dancing Shiva, they are all of equal merit, they are all man's thoughts. If God does not reveal Himself, He has none to blame but Himself, if man has such multiple ideas about him.

When two men meet, they look at each other, probably try to measure each other from the outer appearance, but they do not know each other, they do not know what goes on in their minds. Only when they start to formulate their thoughts into words they begin to know each other. The word is the necessary life producing medium between man and man. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. God revealed Himself through the Word, made Himself known through the Word. Now, the Word is a curious thing. It goes forth from the speaker, it assumes a life of its own. How often have we not spoken a word and the next moment we wished, not to have said it, we wished to retract it, but it had gone forth, and now it lives by itself, but still identified with us, a part of us. That is the deeper inner relationship between God and the Word. And to make Himself even more explicit and unmistakably clear, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

And then I close and say; this my friends is the relationship between God and Christ as we Christians understand it. And I have yet

to find any intelligent and educated Muslim who was not deeply thoughtful after this type of presentation.

It is true, Christ cannot be comprehended by intellect and logic alone. He somehow has to enter into our very being, mind, intellect, will, emotion and all, to change us, to be reborn and redirected. But it seems so important to me, that we do not erect intellectual and emotional roadblocks, but rather are trying to make the crooked straight and the rough places plain, and the Lord will enter and do the converting.<sup>1</sup>

The dangers and suggestions pointed out by Mr. Bethmann are greatly appreciated, and will certainly be taken into consideration in future reprints of this book.

Our response to his objections to the use of the Koran on what appears to be put on an equal basis with the Bible is already dealt with on page 135 of this paper.

The danger he points out in paragraph six of his letter that sooner or later we will be confronted with Koranic verses that are not in harmony with the spirit of the Gospel, is one of which we are not unaware. The differences between Islam and Christianity, between the Koran and the Bible are too pronounced to be overlooked or obviated. Realizing this fact at the outset, the TEAM concluded that the advantages of the use of parallel texts was worth the risk of this danger.

Bethmann's comments on the use of the word "Spearhead" in the title (paragraph 11) is well taken. There was certainly no intentional design in reminding anyone of the crusades. "Pathfinder", "Gateway" or "Introductory" would certainly be more acceptable.

His remarks regarding our use of Sura 4:157 about the Jews and Christ's crucifixion, and the proximity of our statements about Christ's

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<sup>1</sup>Personal letter to Dr. Robert Darnell from Erich W. Bethmann, 1830 R Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20009, dated May 7, 1973, used by his permission.



prophethood to Arianism are noted. Attention is called to Luke 1:76; 7:46; 13:33; 24:19; John 4:19; 7:40 and others for a Scriptural basis of Christ's prophetic office. Many of those texts refer to non-Christians' statements regarding Christ. Here, we too are trying to look at Christ with the non-Christian Muslim's viewpoint in mind, while not forfeiting Scriptural authority.

Bethmann's suggested approach to Muslims is valid and warrants serious consideration. We value greatly the suggestions this veteran missionary and scholar has made.

##### 5. "In Search of the Straight Way".

These tracts come from a rich background of a life-time of ministry of an Arab among Arabs. Pastor Salim Majeed Elias fully identifies with his people as he writes from the viewpoint of a Muslim. He brings his fellow-Arabs into a close walk with Christ, by leading them step by step from the Christ of the Koran to the Christ of the Gospel, two Personalities almost identical in many instances, yet at opposite ends of the spiritual spectrum when it comes to the salvific aspects of His life.

These manuscripts, in mimeographed form were circulated rather extensively among both Muslims and Christians in order to receive some feed-back. Suggestions have been made and implemented. One said "I believe an angel of the Lord must have been standing by the side of the one writing these." Another from the Southern Hemisphere: "Here is excellent material that will be most valuable to those of us working with Muslims. Certainly there is a great need for these tracts in our area."

In these tracts, more than in any other, we use Muslim expressions and terminology. They have been made to reflect a Muslim's own thinking.

Many controversial points are dealt with thoroughly, yet not from an antagonistic point of view, but from the position of a Muslim protagonist, one who accepts the Koran and believes Islam to be the true religion.

No accusations are made, no "authority" is questioned or undermined.

These are treated with the greatest of respect and honor. Beginning where the Muslim is, the author leads him on, step by step to a full appreciation of Jesus Christ for all He is.

The burden of the Fatiha is: "Ehdina as'serat al mustaqim" (lead us to the Straight path). In pursuing this genuine prayer for guidance, the reader's attention is directed to a parallel verse just across the page, in the very first two verses of the next Sura, The Cow. And here he finds the answer to his quest for guidance. It is: "This is a Scripture whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who ward off (evil)" (The Cow 2:2). There must be guidance in the Koran,--not for everybody, but only for those who act piously, giving a description of these in the following verses. According to the Koran, the believer is one who believes in the Koran and the books that come before the Koran. The reader is led into a careful and spiritual study of the Koran with renewed interest. His avid study leads him through page after page of the Koran until he comes to the verse that says, "He hath sent down to thee the Book with the truth, confirming what was before it, and He sent down the Torah and the Evangel aforetime as guidance for the people, and He sent down the "Furqan" (Koran, Family of 'Imran 3:1-4). With this and several other verses, the author takes the Koran for what it says and establishes faith and confidence in the books the Koran speaks of so highly.

In tract number 4 he continues, "So long as the Sender is One and His mind changes not nor alters, it follows that His message is one."

The emphasis naturally is transferred next to the Messenger (Koran, The Cow 2:285) who is no different from other Messengers bearing the same Message! What, then, is the mission of the Messenger of Islam? (tract 6). That of an Evangelist, a bringer of good tidings (The Cloud 33:45; The Criterion 25:56). What is the good tidings? Life, everlasting life (tract 7). This was made possible by a "tremendous sacrifice" (Those Who Set the Ranks 37:107), not a mere ram, but one of infinitely greater value. What was that "tremendous sacrifice" (tract 8)? He reviews the long list of all the world's good and great, but each comes short somewhere, somehow. All, that is, except the only valid sacrifice, the 'aya (sign, Mary 19:21), the 'ojooba or the mo'jiza (wonderful, miracle) (tract 9), all indications pointing to Jesus, whose wonderful life and miraculous record are reviewed in the second section, which is a more Biblically slanted study of the Miracle of Miracles--Jesus Christ.

In this brief summary of the steps taken in these tracts we have but followed, like a treasure hunt, the directions of the Koran from one treasure to another until led to the Pearl of great price. We have followed a path outlined in the Koran, a path nevertheless, not normally followed by the Muslims. We have received some of the most wholesome and enthusiastic responses from Muslims as well as Christians regarding these tracts, not one as yet having objected to the way in which the material is handled.

#### 6. Cosmic Perspective of God and Man.

This too, is a new book. The subject matter has never appeared in print that we are aware of, except that it too, is the oldest story ever told, the story of God's love for man and His plan to save man from

his fallen condition and re-instate him in Paradise. It reflects the same attitudes that appear in this paper, but, of course, from the viewpoint of the Muslim, "Cosmic Perspective" is written for Muslims. The Table of Contents indicates that it is a systematic theology, couched in the milieu of Islamic thought and expression. The Middle East Union Committee requested a member of the TEAM to write a full-message book to be used as the missionary book of the year, to be printed and distributed widely among Muslims. This book was the result.

The book is divided into four sections, the first of which is "A Cosmic Perspective of the Prophetic History of the World". Taking into account the initial exclamation of the mu'azzan in his call to prayer, "Allahu Akbar" (God is most great), we concur fully with the Muslim's belief in the greatness of God and His absolute sovereignty. With the distractions of natural and man-made catastrophes, and a wholesale apostasy in the religious world, we are invited to obtain a cosmic view of what is going on. From that vantage point we are able to see the machinations of Satan who stirs up the people of the world against each other until their heated passion breaks out in hatred and bloodshed on a global scale. The reader is reassured that God verily is most great and is truly in control of the world and will not permit men and demons to pass a certain fore-ordained limit.

The cosmic viewpoint is maintained throughout the entire book, in an endeavor to see the principle participants in the great controversy between right and wrong, between God and Satan, and how man can take an active, positive stand on the side of God, and avoid being surreptitiously embroiled on the side of the enemy of righteousness.

In chapter two is depicted Satan's warfare through the ages, be-

ginning with the war in and his expulsion from heaven, his tempting of our first parents and the tide of evil which ensued. Chapter 3 covers the apostasy of the Christian Church as prophesied in Revelation 2, and 3, establishing the fact that it didn't take God by surprise, but that in it all was a divine purpose. Chapters 4 to 6 is God's response to the great apostasy--the advent of Mohammed, and how Islam fulfilled God's plan in preserving truth and stemming or "containing" the apostasy within continental Europe.

Section two: "Cosmic Perspective of Man's Place in the World" turns the attention of the reader from the greatness of God to man and his response to that great truth. To know that God is great and yet to continue in sin and willful violation of His directives is folly. The believer's responsibility, therefore, is to attain and maintain physical fitness by following the principles of healthful living and temperance; develop, under God, a sound mind, exercise enlightened judgment in his free choice; learn his absolute dependence on God for every breath, and give God glory for life; and follow the "Straight Way" in undeviating uprightness, integrity and honesty. Though it is Satan's purpose to obliterate man's keen sense of identity with these ideals, God has given us the Holy Books to guide us.

In Section three, "Cosmic Perspective of the Great Controversy", we come to grips with the great themes of salvation: the penalty of sin, necessity of sacrifice and the provision that was made by God in cosmic eternity for saving man by Jesus Christ. The various aspects of who Jesus is, His life and miracles, His vicarious sacrifice and death, His gift of justification and our debt to remember Him are vital steps in the "Straight Way".

The final section is "A Cosmic Perspective of the Future". The prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, and our Lord's disclosures of the last day events in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 are explained in detail. The book closes with a cosmic view of God's final treatment of the sin problem--destruction and obliteration of unrighteousness and those who persist in harboring it in their lives, and the glorious glimpses given us of earth made new.

Plans to Implement in Pilot  
Project in South Persia in 1975

Taking into consideration the one major factor of non-growth mentioned above, failure of churches to integrate into their fellowship the Muslim converts, the Middle East Union Committee requested the Iran Field two years ago to release two of the southern provinces of Iran for the use of the TEAM. These are considered "unentered" areas, the only kind of place in which the TEAM is authorized to work. These two provinces, along with the unentered countries along the western shore of the Persian Gulf, Bahrain, Qatar, The United Arab Emirates, Muscat and Oman, as well as Saudi Arabia, Hadhramaut, and the two Yemens, are all a part of our parish.

During the last three years we have been making forays into these countries, conducting, at the invitation of each government concerned, stop smoking clinics. It has been our objective to establish a reputation for this work which will be our public image. By following through with what we call our five step plan of evangelism in unentered Muslim countries, described in detail above (page 129 ff), it is hoped to establish companies around the Persian Gulf which will eventually be the nucleus of a "Gulf Mission" with a preponderant charter membership of

former Muslims, thus not solving, but side-stepping the problem of cultural disparity in the Middle East Union described above.

What is one to do when he reads Roland Allen's impassioned appeal to follow Paul's methods in stead of our own;<sup>1</sup> Msgr. Ivan Illich of Cuernavaca, Mexico, who actively crusades for the withdrawal of all North American "volunteer armies" from Latin America, including missionaries;<sup>2</sup> Kosuke Koyama, who vehemently suggests the dismantling of the whole system of the mission boards;<sup>3</sup> Emerito P. Nacpil, who declares that "The most missionary service a missionary under the present system can do today to Asia is to go home!"<sup>4</sup> John G. Gatu, African leader from Kenya and perhaps the most outspoken proponent of revolutionary changes in mission who declares "Missionare sollten abgezogen werden. Punkt."<sup>5</sup> and many others who cry out "Missionary, go home!" With the responsibility of opening up new work in the aforementioned areas, I naturally feel greatly concerned about "how" to do it.

Recognizing the tremendous financial burden the Church has placed on any local church, as David Lin mentions<sup>6</sup> in his report on the China

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<sup>1</sup>Roland Allen, Missionary Methods; St. Paul's or Ours? (New York: Henry Whitehead, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1913).

<sup>2</sup>David Scott, "What is a Missionary?" in Missionary Service in Asia Today, A Report on a Consultation Held by the Asia Methodist Advisory Committee February 18-23, 1971, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup>Kosuke Koyama, "What Makes a Missionary?" in Missionary Service, p. 74.

<sup>4</sup>Emerito P. Nacpil, "Whom Does the Missionary Serve and What Does He Do?" in Missionary Service, p. 79.

<sup>5</sup>John G. Gatu, "Missionare sollten abgezogen werden. Punkt." in Keine Einbahnstratsen, Von der Westmission zur Weltmission, (Evang. Missionsverlag Stuttgart, Verlag der Ev.-Luth. Mission Erlanger. 1973)85.

<sup>6</sup>David Lin, Unpublished manuscript, "Report on China".

Division, my first choice for method would be that of self-supporting work. In 1966 I had the opportunity of accepting a non-governmental business concern's invitation to represent their firm in the Middle East. In a private conference with the General Conference president, I suggested this opportunity and the possibility of going to Afghanistan. He advised me against accepting the position. I followed his advice.

The next best would be to go to an unentered field with salary, but request no equipment or operating budget whatever. My plan would be to foster the already existing friendship with some Muslim clergy and try to use a mosque, at their invitation, in which to do public work--maintaining a strong health evangelism front. Our temperance secretary in Iran has given a health talk in a mosque, and a prominent citizen in Damascus urged us to present a series of talks in the Omayyad Mosque in that famous city. So the idea is not an impossibility. When, and only when influential Muslims of means become interested, would I ask them to finance the erection of a place of worship--a masjed (place of worship). In a spirit of collegiality, they would be expected to carry the burden of administration while I gave more and more of my time to assistants who would lead out in local work as they develop skill and experience. The influential citizens mentioned above would be prominent people in a tribe, or a large village or in the provincial capitol, who would be in a position to lead a large number of people with him.

I have not spelled out in detail any plans, but have stated a principle based on much reading and prayer. Putting it into effect will challenge my every nerve, for long ago I already returned "PR" with the determination that I would never set foot in the Middle East again--but since then the Lord has led me into some of the most thrilling experiences



of my entire thirty years' ministry. These experiences seem to promise to be the beginning of a new day in the Middle East. O that I might have my ear and heart in tune with His voice telling me the way that I should go when I turn to the right hand or to the left (Isa. 30:21).

### Conclusion

In conclusion we take another look at the issue to which we have addressed ourselves in this paper: the apparent ineffectiveness of evangelization among Muslims of the Middle East. Libraries throughout the land are full of hundreds, yes, thousands of volumes on Islamics, on Mission, on Evangelism. But works that deal with the direct evangelization of our Muslim brethren, of acquainting them with the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, rather than "proving" a doctrinal point--these are few and far between. In this paper we have endeavored to fill this gap at least partially.

In Chapter I we witnessed the sad state of Christianity as it deteriorated during the first seven centuries which rendered it impotent to have a beneficial effect on the Arab world at the birth of Islam. Chapter II was a description of the Muslim World, the object of evangelism. Chapter III continued a study of Islam, bringing us up to date, exposing present day concepts and concerns in the Muslim World. In Chapter IV we began to review existing methods of evangelism and approaches to Muslims, first by Evangelical Christians, and then the attempts as well as the weaknesses in the Adventist Church in this task. In this last chapter we have explained the step-by-step procedures proposed by the Middle East Union TEAM, and looked at each of its major productions carefully with a view to implementing these methods and materials in hitherto unentered

Muslim fields.

We humbly confess that no claim is made that this is the only way to do evangelistic work. We do not have all the answers. Time and place vary and the personality and temperament of the workers as well as the people will call for great adaptation and above all a total dependence on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead in an ever expanding, ever challenging work. There is no mathematical precision to these plans that will culminate in predetermined results. They are, on the other hand some methods and materials, long overdue, which, with God-inspired attitudes may open up unheard-of evangelistic thrills among God's people.

APPENDIX A

"GOD" IN ISLAM

GOD. The name of the Creator of the Universe in the Koran is Allah, which is the title given to the Supreme Being by Muslims of every race and language.

Allah is supposed to be derived from ilah, a deity or god, with the addition of the definite article al--Al-ilah, "the God"--or, according to some authorities, it is from lah, i.e. Al-lah, "the secret one." But Abu Hanifah says that just as the essence of God is unchangeable, so is His name, and that Allah has ever been the name of the Eternal Being. (See Ghiyasu 'l-Lughah.)

Allah may be an Arabic rendering of the Hebrew אל el, and the unused root אל ul, "to be strong," or from אל al, the singular form of אל al. It is expressed in Persian and Hindustani by the word Khuda, خدا derived from the Persian Khud, self; the self-existing one.

Another word very frequently used for the Almighty in the Koran is Rabb, رب, which is generally translated in English versions of the Koran, "Lord". It seems to stand in the relative position of the Jehovah of the Old Testament and the Kurios of the New Testament. The word is understood by Muslims to mean "the sustainer", but it is probably derived from the Hebrew רב rabbah, "a stronghold," or from its root rab, which, according to Gesenius, means "a multitude," or anything of size or importance.

The title Allah is called the Ismu 'z-Zat, or, the essential name of God, all other titles, including Rabb, being considered Asma'u 's-Sifat, or "attributes" of the Divine Being. These attributes are called al Asma'u 'l-husna, or the "excellent names." The expression occurs in the Koran (Sura 7:179), "But God's are excellent names, call on Him thereby." This verse is commented upon in the Traditions, and Abu Hurairah says that Muhammad said, "Verily, there are ninety-nine names of God, and whoever recites them shall enter into Paradise."

In the same tradition these names (or attributes) are given as follows;--

1. Ar-Rahman . . . . . The Merciful
2. Ar-Rahim . . . . . The Compassionate
3. Al-Malik . . . . . The King
4. Al-Quddus . . . . . The Holy
5. As-Salam . . . . . The Peace

6.	<u>Al-Mu'min</u>	The Faithful
7.	<u>Al-Muhaimin</u>	The Protector
8.	<u>Al-'Aziz</u>	The Mighty
9.	<u>Al-Jabbar</u>	The Repairer
10.	<u>Al-Mutakabbir</u>	The Great
11.	<u>Al-Khaliq</u>	The Creator
12.	<u>Al-Bari</u>	The Maker
13.	<u>Al-Musawwir</u>	The Fashioner
14.	<u>Al-Ghaffar</u>	The Forgiver
15.	<u>Al-Qahhar</u>	The Dominant
16.	<u>Al-Wahhab</u>	The Bestower
17.	<u>Ar-Razzaq</u>	The Provider
18.	<u>Al-Fattah</u>	The Opener
19.	<u>Al-'Alim</u>	The Knower
20.	<u>Al-Qabiz</u>	The Restrainer
21.	<u>Al-Basit</u>	The Spreader
22.	<u>Al-Khafiz</u>	The Abaser
23.	<u>Ar-Rafi'</u>	The Exalter
24.	<u>Al-Mu'izz</u>	The Honourer
25.	<u>Al-Muzil</u>	The Destroyer
26.	<u>As-Sami'</u>	The Hearer
27.	<u>Al-Basir</u>	The Seer
28.	<u>Al-Hakim</u>	The Ruler
29.	<u>Al-'Adl</u>	The Just
30.	<u>Al-Latif</u>	The Subtle
31.	<u>Al-Khabir</u>	The Aware
32.	<u>Al-Halim</u>	The Clement
33.	<u>Al-'Azim</u>	The Grand
34.	<u>Al-Ghafur</u>	The Forgiver
35.	<u>Ash-Shakur</u>	The Greatful
36.	<u>Al-'Ali</u>	The Exalted
37.	<u>Al-Kabir</u>	The Great
38.	<u>Al-Hafiz</u>	The Guardian
39.	<u>Al-Muqit</u>	The Strengthenener
40.	<u>Al-Hasib</u>	The Reckoner
41.	<u>Al-Jalil</u>	The Majestic
42.	<u>Al-Karim</u>	The Generous
43.	<u>Ar-Raqib</u>	The Watcher
44.	<u>Al-Mujib</u>	The Approver
45.	<u>Al-Wasi'</u>	The Comprehensive
46.	<u>Al-Hakim</u>	The Wise
47.	<u>Al-Wadud</u>	The Loving
48.	<u>Al-Majeed</u>	The Glorious
49.	<u>Al-Bais</u>	The Raiser
50.	<u>Ash-Shahid</u>	The Witness
51.	<u>Al-Haqq</u>	The Truth
52.	<u>Al-Wakil</u>	The Advocate
53.	<u>Al-Qawi</u>	The Strong
54.	<u>Al-Matin</u>	The Firm
55.	<u>Al-Wali</u>	The Patron
56.	<u>Al-Hamid</u>	The Laudable
57.	<u>Al-Muhsib</u>	The Counter
58.	<u>Al-Mubdi</u>	The Beginner

59.	<u>Al-Murid</u>	The Restorer
60.	<u>Al-Muhyi</u>	The Quickener
61.	<u>Al-Mumit</u>	The Killer
62.	<u>Al-Haiy</u>	The Living
63.	<u>Al-Qaiym</u>	The Subsisting
64.	<u>Al-Wajid</u>	The Finder
65.	<u>Al-Majid</u>	The Glorious
66.	<u>Al-Wahid</u>	The One
67.	<u>As-Samad</u>	The Eternal
68.	<u>Al-Qadir</u>	The Powerful
69.	<u>Al-Muqtadir</u>	The Prevailing
70.	<u>Al-Muqaddim</u>	The Bringer Forward
71.	<u>Al-Mu'akkhkir</u>	The Deferrer
72.	<u>Al-Awwal</u>	The First
73.	<u>Al-Akhir</u>	The Last
74.	<u>Az-Zahir</u>	The Evident
75.	<u>Al-Batin</u>	The Hidden
76.	<u>Al-Wali</u>	The Governor
77.	<u>Al-Muta'ali</u>	The Exalted
78.	<u>Al-Barr</u>	The Righteous
79.	<u>At-Tauwab</u>	The Acceptor of Repentance
80.	<u>Al-Muntaqim</u>	The Avenger
81.	<u>Al-'Afuw</u>	The Pardoner
82.	<u>Ar-Ra'uf</u>	The Kind
83.	<u>Maliku'l-Mulk</u>	The Ruler of the Kingdom
84.	<u>Zu 'l-Jalali wa'l Ikram</u>	The Lord of Majesty and Liberality
85.	<u>Al-Muqsit</u>	The Equitable
86.	<u>Al-Jami'</u>	The Collector
87.	<u>Al-Ghani</u>	The Independent
88.	<u>Al-Mughni</u>	The Enricher
89.	<u>Al-Mu'ti</u>	The Giver
90.	<u>Al-Mani'</u>	The Withholder
91.	<u>Az-Zarr</u>	The Distresser
92.	<u>AnpNafi'</u>	The Profiter
93.	<u>An-Nur</u>	The Light
94.	<u>Al-Hadi</u>	The Guide
95.	<u>Al-Badi'</u>	The Incomparable
96.	<u>Al-Baqi</u>	The Enduring
97.	<u>Al-Waris</u>	The Inheritor
98.	<u>Ar-Rashid</u>	The Director
99.	<u>As-Sabur</u>	The Patient

The list either begins or closes with Allah, thus completing the number of one hundred names, which are usually recited on a rosary in the ceremony of Zikr, as well as at all leisure moments, by devout Muslims.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Patrick Hughes, B. D., M. R. A. S., A Dictionary of Islam Being A cyclopaedia of the doctrines, rites, ceremonies, and customs, together with the technical and theological terms, of the Muhammadan religion. (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 12, Waterloo Place, Pall Mall, S. W. 1885)141.

## APPENDIX B

### HIGHWAYS TO HEALTH AND HAPPINESS Table of Contents

1. Ant Kills an Elephant (germs)
2. What? Simple or Acute Cough (coughs and causes)
3. Spreading Sickness by Hand, Water, Food, and Flies
4. Parasites
5. How to Buy (what foods to buy to contribute to your health)
6. Building the Body with Protein
7. Search for Missing Part (vitamins and minerals)
8. Balanced Diet (four main groups of food)
9. Weight Control (plus the dangers of overweight)
10. What to Drink (water, fruit juice, etc. in lieu of coffee, tea, etc.)
11. The Killing Leaf (tobacco)
12. Trap of Disasters (alcohol)
13. When the Days Become Numbered (cancer)
14. Take Care of Your Stomach (how to eat and when)
15. Medicine or Dangerous Drugs
16. Wonderful Pump (the heart)
17. Sparkling Eyes and Shining Smile (care of the eyes and teeth)
18. Sentimental Waves (emotions)
19. Sick Mind (the sickness of the mind)
20. Sound Mind (how to have a healthy mind)
21. Summary

## TODAY'S FAITH

## Bible Correspondence Course

## Table of Contents

1. Chance or Choice?
2. Priceless Treasures
3. Palestine, Prophecy and the Seed of Abraham
4. Jerusalem in Prophecy
5. World Empires Foretold
6. Our Day in Prophecy
7. Jesus, Son of Mary
8. Brotherhood
9. Day of Accounting
10. The Cross
11. The Way Provided
12. 2300 Days, Investigative Judgment
13. The Law of God (With a chart quoting the Ten Commandments from the Torah, Injil, and Koran.)
14. Remembrance
15. The Great Apostasy
16. The Last Day
17. The Resurrection
18. 1000 Years of Peace
19. Heaven
20. Health and Happiness
21. Miracles and Parables of Jesus
22. Prayer

23. Stewardship

24. Is God Particular?



## THE STRAIGHT WAY

## Self Study Guide to the Study of the Bible

## First Quarter; At the Crossroads of Truth

1. The Star-lit Path
2. The Purpose of Our Existence
3. How Did Sin Enter a Perfect World?
4. Did the Angels Originate Sin?
5. The Two Ways
6. What Can I Understand About God?
7. The Last Day on Earth
8. The Friend of God
9. The Everlasting Covenant
10. The Test of Faith
11. Joseph--The True
12. Moses--Who Talked With God
13. Job--Who Saw Beyond the Tomb

## Second Quarter: Keeping Step With the Stalwarts

14. Egypt Versus God
15. Sinai and the Law of God
16. The House of God
17. David--Shepherd, King, Prophet
18. Solomon--The Wisest King Who Ever Lived
19. Elijah--The Weather Prophet
20. Elisha and Naaman the Syrian
21. Isaiah and Messianic Prophecies
22. Daniel--The Prophet
23. Daniel--Archaeology and Bible Historicity
24. Daniel--Prophecy and Bible Inspiration
25. Prophecy Lights the Future
26. 2300-Year Prophecy: The Messiah

## Third Quarter: The Kingdom of Grace

27. Good Tidings to All People
28. The Ministry of Jesus
29. Can Man Conquer Death?
30. The New Birth
31. Brotherhood
32. Signs of the Last Days
33. Crucifixion and Atonement of Christ
34. New Testament and the Gospels
35. The Early Church
36. The Believers' Home
37. The Secret of the Godhead
38. Church Apostasy
39. Islam in Prophecy

## Fourth Quarter; Even Unto the End

40. Church in the Wilderness
41. The Protestant Reformation
42. The Investigative Judgment
43. Present World Conditions
44. Worship
45. Government and Politics
46. The Three Angels' Messages
47. Discipleship
48. The Spirit of Prophecy
49. The Second Coming of Christ
50. The Last Day on Earth
51. The Thousand Year Prophecy
52. Eden Restored

## MOSLEM-ORIENTED SPEARHEAD EVANGELISTIC SERMONS

## Table of Contents

1. Intercepted Voices From Outer Space . . . . . (Astronomy)
2. Organic Evolution or Divine Creation? . . . . . (Creation)
3. High Treason Against History's Greatest Government . . . . . (Sin)
4. How to Cut Your Medical Expenses in Half! . . . . . (Health)
5. That Hidden Power in Your Mind . . . . . (Mind & Will)
6. The Criterion (Furghan) in Your Life . . . . . (The Law)
7. Formula For Peace in the World . . . . . (Peace and War)
8. Torah, Psalms, Injil and Koran . . . . .(Inspired Writings)
9. Heirs of the Covenant of Abraham . . . . . (Everlasting Covenant)
10. The Stones Cry Out . . . . . (Archeology)
11. Can the Space Age Conquer Death? . . . . . (Death)
12. The Signature of God in the Holy Books . . . . . (Prophecy I)
13. Dead Men Do Tell Tales . . . . . (Prophecy II)
14. Proof From Outer Space Allows Only One God . . . . . (Sabbath)
15. Who Is Jesus? . . . . .(Christology)
16. Does Your Brother Claim the Same Father?. . . . . (Conversion)
17. What Happened at the Cross? . . . . . (Atonement)
18. God's Last Message to a Doomed World . . . . . (Judgment-Hour)
19. How Near is the End of the World? . . . . . (Signs of the Times)

## IN SEARCH OF THE STRAIGHT WAY

## Table of Contents

## Section I.

1. The Fatiha
2. "Lead Us"
3. Unchangeable
4. The Message
5. The Mission of Our Great Messenger--"Witness, Evangelist, Warner"
6. The Mission of Our Faithful Messenger--"Evangelist" (Mobashsher)
7. Evangelist Par Excellence
8. In Search of the Tremendous Sacrifice
9. The Tremendous Sacrifice
10. The Mission of Our Faithful Messenger--Warner

## Section II.

11. Preparation for Zero Hour (Expecting the Miracle)
12. The Zero Hour (The Miracle Occurs)
13. The Personality of the One of the Hour (The Miracle Personality)
14. The Character of the One of the Hour (The Miracle Words)
15. The Accomplishments of the One of the Hour (The Miracles of the Miraculous)
16. The Characteristics of the One of the Hour (The Miracle Life of the Miraculous Messenger)
17. The Problem of Problems Solved (The Tremendous Sacrifice)
18. The Strangest Event in History (The Miracle of a Second Life)
19. The Ascension (The Miracle Returns Home)
20. The Hour of Return (The Return of the Master of the Hour)

## Section III.

(This Section still in preparation).

COSMIC PERSPECTIVE OF  
GOD AND MAN

Table of Contents

SECTION ONE: COSMIC PERSPECTIVE OF PROPHETIC HISTORY

Title	Chapter	Page	Topic
Sovereignty of God	1	1	Allah Akbar, God is Most Great
Treason Against God	2	6	Satan's Warfare Through the Ages
Foreknowledge of God	3	15	History of God's People, Apostasy
Mission for God	4	23	Mohammed and Islam, Fulfilled Prophecy
Plan of God	5	32	Middle East Preserves Truth
Protection of God	6	48	Legacy of the Middle East

SECTION TWO: COSMIC PERSPECTIVE OF MAN'S PLACE IN THE WORLD

Fitness of Man	7	67	Health Reform, Temperance
Position of Man	8	79	Sound Mind, Free Choice, Will Power
Stewardship of Man	9	85	Man's Dependence on God
Heart of Man	10	91	Uprightness, Integrity, Honesty
Surrender of Man	11	97	Obedience, Sign of Belief, Law
Enemy of Man	12	109	Satan, Origin of Evil
Message to Man	13	118	Torah, Zaboor, Injil, Koran

SECTION THREE: COSMIC PERSPECTIVE OF THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

Promise of God	14	129	Substitutionary Sacrifice
Word of God	15	139	Who Is Jesus?
Love of God	16	147	Life and Miracles of Jesus
Design of God	17	165	What Actually Happened on the Cross?
Righteousness of God	18	178	Justification by Faith
Judgment of God	19	187	Judgment
Life From God	20	197	State of the Dead
Remembrance of God	21	209	Sabbath

SECTION FOUR: COSMIC PERSPECTIVE OF THE FUTURE

Omniscience of God	22	220	Prophecy of Daniel II
Vindication of God	23	233	Second Advent of Christ
Day of God	24	247	Last Day Events, End of Time
Victory of God	25	259	Merciful Destruction of the Wicked
Dwellingplace of God	26	269	Resurrection, Heaven, Earth Made New.

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Nizam. Nicosia, Cyprus: Friday, 24 March, 1972.



## VITA

Born September 7, 1921 in Hood River, Oregon where my parents, Elder and Mrs. F. F. Oster, pioneer Seventh-day Adventist missionaries to Iran were furloughing, I went to Iran at the age of a few months, spent my childhood and youth there, receiving all my formal education at home where my mother saw me through ten grades of schooling.

My Junior year was another furlough year, spent at Emmanuel Missionary College Academy. The next year my parents returned to Iran and I transferred to Indiana Academy where I graduated in 1938.

Back to Emmanuel Missionary College, I finished my ministerial training and received a B. A. degree in religion and history in 1944 and interned in the Indiana Conference for one year before enrolling in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Washington, D. C. as a mission appointee with plans to do evangelistic work in the land of my youth.

In 1946 we were in Iran doing translation work and preparing the Voice of Prophecy Bible correspondence lessons in Farsee. For the next several years, in addition to directing the Voice of Prophecy work I was asked to take over the Sabbath School, Temperance and Lay Activities departments of the Iran Mission, and later the acting leadership of the Mission.

On furlough in 1959, I received my M. A. from Andrews University, School of Graduate Studies with a major in religion. Upon return to the Middle East in 1960 I was asked to be acting head of the Bible Department

of Middle East College, Beirut, Lebanon, and Pastor of the College Park Church.

In 1963 I was asked to be Principal of the Iran Training School, where also I taught all the Bible classes for two years, and carried out active evangelistic campaigns during the summers, all in the local vernacular, Farsee.

Next furlough, 1965 was on PR basis, again at Andrews University where I finished the requirements for the B. D. (M. Div.) degree in 1968 while teaching Bible at Battle Creek Academy. For two years I was District Leader of District Four (Central Michigan) of the Michigan Conference when we were called back to the Middle East at the reorganization of the area as a part of the Afro-Mideast Division. From 1971 to the present I have been the Director of the Middle East Union TEAM (Thrust for Evangelism Among Muslims) during which time I have had the rewarding experience of participating with four other evangelists as colleagues in preparing the materials dealt with in my Project Report. This has taken me to virtually every country of the Middle East in public work, where we put into experimental practice the propositions made in my Report.

Plans for our immediate future call for the members of the TEAM to scatter and engage in more direct personal and public evangelism than was possible when doing our intensive research of the last three years. We are scheduled to locate in the southern part of Iran, in a totally "unentered", one hundred percent Muslim community, with the objective of starting up new work in several centers around the Persian Gulf, with the hope that in time a new "Gulf Mission" will be organized, made up of former Muslim converts.

Kenneth Oster

June, 1975