

EDITORIAL

Silencing the Ignorance of the Foolish by Doing Good

15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. 16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. 17 Honour everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the emperor. 1 Peter 2:15-17 (ESV)

On July 3rd, 2013, I had the remarkable privilege of being in the heart of Cairo, only a few minutes' walk away from Tahrir Square. On that historic day, after the Egyptian people took to the streets in the millions, they took back the 'revolution' that they believed the Muslim Brotherhood had stolen from them a year earlier. During my 10-day visit to Cairo, I had the privilege of talking with six Egyptian and other Arab Christian leaders while they were living through the massive and uncertain transitions in their beloved homeland. I was deeply impressed with their strong sense of hope and optimism, and even excitement, for the future of the country and region, even as levels of violence and persecution were sharply rising.

Now, six months later, the future of Egypt is still far from clear even though just this past week 38% of the electorate ratified the vastly improved re-written constitution. In neighbouring Syria, the eventual outcome of the tragic three-year long conflict is completely unpredictable. Today, January 22nd, representatives from the warring factions meet in Geneva for Peace Talks.

This afternoon I heard news from a Canadian colleague who is transitioning from her life in very unstable Yemen to a regional ministry based in Europe. An American colleague who lived in Yemen for decades is now seeking to re-start his life in the United States, since life in Sana'a had become untenable for him and his family as daily chaos and persecution mounted. Conflicts, transitions, shifting alliances and geo-political power plays are re-shaping the entire North Africa Middle Eastern (NAME) region. How are we who are called to serve the peoples of NAME to live and serve and minister in times of tumultuous change?

The three main articles in this issue deal with the rising influence of Islamism (in Indonesia and the US) along with the turmoil in the Arab world. Conditions for ministry in several Arab countries are both the worst I have ever known and also the best. As I talked with both Egyptians and expatriates living in Egypt this summer, most were full of stories of increased openness and curiosity about the Gospel. Even though two of the Bible Society's bookshops were ransacked by mobs in 2013, a record number of Bibles were distributed in 2013!

Taking our cue from the Apostle Peter (above), may God give you all grace, wherever in the Muslim world you live, that through your godly lives, Muslims, and especially the more extremist among them, will be silenced as they see God at work in your lives during these trying times.

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Notes and News from the Editor

Excellent Resource on the Insider Movement Controversies Available from Bridging the Divide

Over the past three years both associate SEEDBED editor L.D. Waterman and I have been actively involved in ongoing efforts to clarify key issues and build relational bridges among practitioners around the world who do not see eye-to-eye on appropriate approaches to contextualization. This network, called *Bridging the Divide* (BtD), now consists of more than a hundred workers, mission leaders and missiologists from numerous ministry organizations, including a growing number of believers from an Islamic background. In June 2011, 2012 and 2013, we held small consultations at Houghton College, in Western NY, USA. Our fourth consultation is slated to be held late in June 2014 in West Asia.

The BtD Network recently launched a website. To read a range of articles and a to see the vision and purpose of BtD, please visit www.btdnetwork.org.

I want especially to draw your attention to a great resource that can help you understand and enter into the kinds of dialogues that we have been having within the BtD Network these past few years. Last year I was privileged to serve as a co-editor to a special edition of the *Evangelical Review of Theology* (ERT – To subscribe, go here: www.paternosterperiodicals.com/evangelical-review-of-theology) that was *entirely* devoted to the issues being discussed within BtD. The articles are written or co-written by members of the BtD network along with a few non-BtD scholar-practitioners who participated in discussions with BtD members. In an act of great generosity, the ERT gave BtD permission to post this entire issue of the ERT on our website. (Click here: www.btdnetwork.org/collaborations/.)

The lead article is by SEEDBED associate editor, L.D. Waterman. The titles are:

1. Insider Movements: Current Issues in Discussion – L.D. Waterman
2. Does the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 Support Insider Movement Practices?
3. The Ethics of Qur'an Interpretation in Muslim Evangelism and Insider Movements
4. Muslim Idiom Translations in Bangladesh
5. The Philosophy Behind the 2008 Arabic Translation *The True Meaning of the Gospel of the Messiah*
6. Beyond the C-Spectrum? A Search for New Models

Apology for Infrequent Seedbed Production & Changes for 2014

Though there is really no solid reason to give for only publishing one issue of Seedbed in both 2012 and 2013, I do apologize. As God gives grace, the goal is to begin publishing *three* issues a year, as of 2014. We hope to do two issues devoted to Muslim ministry issues. A third, 'special issue' will focus on non-Muslim ministry contexts, and each year the non-Muslim ministry issue will be produced by a different guest editor.