

‘Faithful are the wounds of a friend’

by Roland Clarke

Sent from Canada, Roland has been working with SIM in South Africa sharing the Gospel with Muslims for 28 years.

Since 9/11 a never-ending series of terror attacks coupled with violent feuding within the Ummah are exposing Islam’s real face thus showing it to be untrue and unpeaceful. On the other hand, we live in a postmodern age that advocates tolerance and ‘sensitivity’ towards other cultures, especially to Muslims. Criticism of Islam is muted, indeed, strongly suppressed. This mind-set has affected Christians, making us more timid and hindering us from applying basic Biblical principles such as Proverbs 9:8 & 27:6.

I recently published an article online showing how ‘Wounds from a sincere friend are better than kisses from an enemy.’ (Prov. 27:6; cf. 9:8) Until recently I assumed this verse applies only to fellow Christians but now I realize there is more to it.

The article, *Wounds from a sincere friend* recounts two stories which show that giving an unsaved friend a loving rebuke can expose darkness and draw him to the light of Jesus. In both cases, a Muslim friend accepts correction and the friendship was dramatically strengthened!

The article ends with two illustrations from Scripture, showing how Paul and Jesus graciously, yet firmly, critiqued two different false religions as recorded in John 4:18, 22 & Acts 17. Notice, Paul’s sermon did not **just** use commonalities as a way of bridging to his audience, he **also firmly refuted** their idolatry.

In a similar way, Jesus not only showed a gracious attitude to the Samaritan woman by affirming certain commonalities, he told her unpleasant truths, which in effect, wounded her feelings. It is important for us to empathize with her sense of ethnocentric, religious pride. We ought to ask, ‘How would this woman have felt when Jesus said, *‘You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.*’ Not only so, consider how, a few moments earlier, Jesus had exposed the Samaritan woman’s moral bankruptcy, (re five male partners) albeit with gentleness (cf. 2 Tim. 2:24-26).

Are you and I willing to rebuke and potentially wound a friend like Jesus did, as a step towards healing? If you wish to read the full article you can read it here: http://www.answering-islam.org/authors/clarke/wounds_friend.html