

MARTIN'S RESPONSE TO BERT DE RUITER

By Dale Martin

It would appear that de Ruiter and I are in agreement on a number of points in this discussion and certainly on the primary conclusion that authentically multicultural Christian communities are vital for providing a much-needed gateway into our societies. He also acknowledges the presence of a small minority of radical Islamists in Europe and the vulnerability of second and third generation Muslim immigrants to being recruited by them. Although I do welcome his perspectives on this important topic, I must take issue with some of his points and the manner of his characterization. First, my article was not about radical Islam and it certainly was not focused upon the dark spot of radical Islam from 'the outset.' Outside of a brief mention in the introduction, I think you would need to read two or three pages into the article before you would find the next mention of radical Islam, which was a quote from a moderate Muslim. The article begins by characterizing the Diaspora of Muslims in the United States as 'a mosaic' and having a number of identities and ethnic makeups. So I find this assertion completely misplaced.

The main point of the article was to compare the factors which are potential barriers to assimilation in the North American and European contexts and which seem to indicate that the second and third generation Muslim immigrants in Europe are more vulnerable to being recruited by Islamic fundamentalists due to a greater degree of marginalization in society. In my mind the main focus and concern of the article was on assimilation of the second and third generation Muslims into our societies. I would therefore disagree that the article lacked balance and I must say that I was astounded that because of such a brief text that I could be so quickly characterized as one of the many Evangelicals who 'often look for the dark spots and seem to ignore the bright spots.' I also found the Chrysostom quote at the end offensive. I have Muslim friends and acquaintances from all across the spectrum of Islam including several fundamentalists. My Muslim neighbor might actually describe himself as a Muslim culturally but more of an agnostic. I believe my view of Muslims to be positive and balanced. They are warm, generous, hospitable, curious, hard-working, religious people seeking after God but bound by a religious system that does not lead them all the way to salvation.

I would consider it naïve to pin our hopes on moderate or conservative Islam to reign in those who are at the most extreme end

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of the spectrum. I have often asked Imams when doing mosque visits whether they would categorize themselves as a moderate or conservative. Quite a few times I have heard them say in response, 'There is only one kind of Islam.' Whether we like it or not the real guardians of the Islam that is closest to what is in the texts of the Qur'an and Hadiths are the fundamentalists. History demonstrates that moderate Islam or tolerant versions of Islam are temporary. Sooner or later, there is a reform movement bringing the community of faith back to the purest expression of Qur'anic Islam. Whether our dear Muslim friends are moderate, conservative, fundamentalist, or nominal matters little in the end. None of those versions of Islam can save them, only Jesus.

THROUGH THEIR OWN EYES: UNDERSTANDING MUSLIM WOMEN IN THE WEST

By Elsie Maxwell

Elsie has lived in London, England, since the early 1980s, following many years living and working in Tunisia, where she did her PhD in African English literature and Islamics. She taught Islamics for many years at the London School of Theology and was involved in ministry and training with OM and AWM ministry teams in London, as well as being very active at All Souls Church, Langham Place. She continues a diverse ministry in her very active retirement in London.

When you look at Muslim women in the west, what do you see? We westerners tends to see the growth in the number of women wearing the hijab scarf or the number of completely veiled Muslim women. What does the Muslim woman see as she looks at the same landscape? In this article I will let some Muslim women speak for themselves by giving you a review of selected books and articles they have recently written. In the end, I will summarise the main issues, changes or features as Muslim women see them.

1. A Statistical View of Muslim Migrants in the UK

Dr. Serena Hussain completed her doctorate, 'A Statistical Mapping of Muslims in Britain' at the University of Bristol in 2005; it was the first PhD to be supported by the Muslim Council of Britain. She uses the quantitative data of the 2001 census, which clearly shows the growth of British Muslims since the 1960s, and the subsequent changes that occurred.¹

Hussain's comments on the background of the people and highlights the following issues: (1) She identifies the first group of migrants, coming from 1945 to the 1970s, as migrant workers from areas of poverty who accepted undesirable employment for financial gain. (2) Hussain cites two events that led to Muslim immigration into the UK: the 1947 partition of India and the building of the