

EDITORIAL

Israel, Jews and Muslims *and* Church Planting among Muslims

Every Christian ministering to Muslims will, sooner or later, come to understand how Muslims view Jews and the modern nation-state of Israel. This will involve listening to the *Muslim narratives* about the Jews and how they stole the land from the Palestinians and now unjustly oppress the former rightful owners of the land that they occupy. Properly wrestling with this topic involves both sorting out what has happened in the past 100 years (and the past 2,000 years) and accurately interpreting what that history means to Jews, Muslims and Christians—this is NO easy task! This may also lead to a re-examination of one's biblical perspectives on the Jews and Israel. Such re-examination often leads to a profound shift in understanding.

This SEEDBED makes a modest attempt to reflect on the meaning of the people of Israel and the connection the modern nation-state of Israel has to the Scriptures which speak so much about the Jews and the people of Israel. I commend Mike Kuhn's lead article to you. He tackles the question of the *identity* of the People of God. Mike writes with the experience of someone who lived some 20 years in the Arab world and knows Muslim perspectives on Israel. He is also a careful theologian and student of the Bible. Many Christians will not find Mike's argument compelling, as the two impassioned critics of Mike's article illustrate.

Over the past two years I have attempted to better understand the history of the Crusades that tried to liberate the Holy Land from centuries of Saracen oppression and increasing violence against Christian pilgrims. I have come to see how it is that contemporary Muslims, and Islamists in particular, have re-interpreted the history of the Crusades. Their reinterpretation is one of the driving forces fuelling Islamist rage against Western 'Christian crusading armies'. It is essential that we understand history, and particularly, the last 1500 years of relations between Christianity and Islam. I encourage you to read through the entire first part of the issue. Three of the books reviewed in Part 3 also deal with this topic. I trust that you will find insights to help you minister to Muslims in the shadow of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Part 2 also contains a wealth of insights and wisdom and challenge!

I welcome many new readers to this first SEEDBED published by Pioneers. I look forward to serving you as we seek to make SEEDBED valuable and relevant to your ministry wherever you are ministering to Muslims. Please do write and suggest topics that you would like to be dealt with in this journal, or write letters to the editor in response to what you read here.

Serving with you,

Don Little, Editor (seedbed.editor@sent.com)