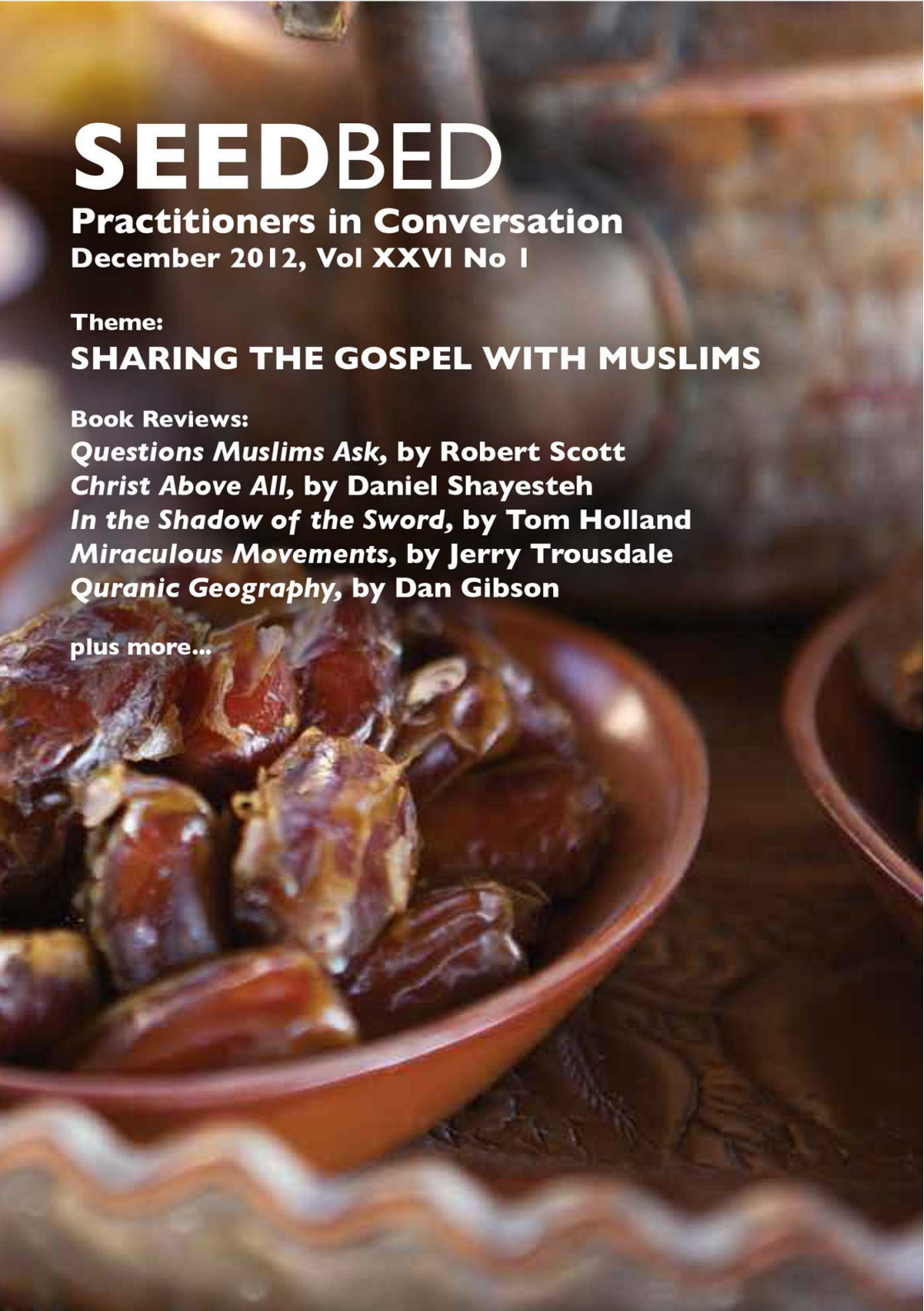




SEEDBED

Practitioners in Conversation

December 2012, Vol XXVI No 1

Theme:

SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH MUSLIMS

Book Reviews:

Questions Muslims Ask, by Robert Scott

Christ Above All, by Daniel Shayesteh

In the Shadow of the Sword, by Tom Holland

Miraculous Movements, by Jerry Trousdale

Quranic Geography, by Dan Gibson

plus more...

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Editorial: Back to Basics: Sharing the Gospel with Muslims.....	3
Letter to Editor regarding CPMs	4
Response by Associate editor L.D. Waterman.....	5

Part 1: Sharing the Gospel with Muslims

Beyond Drinking Tea by Joy Loewen.....	7
Discoveries on the Way to Discovery Groups by L.D. Waterman.....	18
Middle Eastern Evangelists talk about Sharing the Gospel with Muslims by Gail Schlosser	30
Dreams and Visions: An Historical Assessment of a Current Phenomenon among Muslims by Rick Kronk.....	37

Part 2: Book Reviews:

<i>Questions Muslims Ask: What Christians Actually Do [and Don't] Believe</i> by Robert Scott.....	50
<i>Christ Above All: Conversational Evangelism with Peoples of Other Faiths</i> by Daniel Shayesteh.....	52
<i>Reaching the Heart and Mind of Muslims</i> by Matthew Stone.....	56
<i>Toward Respectful Understanding and Witness among Muslims</i> edited by Evelyne A. Reisacher.....	58
<i>In the Shadow of the Sword: The Battle for Global Empire and the End of the Ancient World</i> by Tom Holland.....	61
<i>Qur'anic Geography</i> by Dan Gibson	64
<i>Miraculous Movements</i> by Jerry Trousedale.....	69
<i>Insider Movements: Biblically Incredible or Incredibly Brilliant?</i> by Jeff Morton.....	73
<i>The Future of the Global Church</i> by Patrick Johnstone.....	77
<i>What is the Mission of the Church?</i> by Kevin DeYoung & Greg Gilbert.....	80

SEEDBED

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EDITORIAL

Back to Basics – Sharing the Gospel with Muslims

In your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. 1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)

A recent conversation that I had with *Steve ties the well-known verse above with the theme of this Seedbed—sharing the gospel with Muslims. He had recently resumed his commitment to spending time in the Word and in prayer daily. He excitedly shared with me that since resuming his daily disciplines a few weeks prior, he had discovered a renewed passion to share Jesus with whomever he met. He then told of three opportunities he had just had to share Christ. Steve experienced at least part of what Peter is talking about above—when we consecrate Christ as Lord and keep him central in our hearts and minds, we are far more eager to explain him to others when opportunity arises.

When was the last time you took the opportunity to share the reason for your hope with a Muslim? One of the very simple yet profound realities about church planting is that it normally *begins with evangelism*. Until we have someone interested in the gospel, someone who wants to learn more about Christ—about the truth about God as it is revealed to us in the Scriptures, we cannot plant any churches! For reasons that are sometimes difficult to comprehend, it has often been the case in our ministry teams that we have plenty of servants, and would-be teachers and disciplers, but very few gifted and eager evangelists.

This issue of Seedbed is focused on evangelism. Joy takes us on the journey from initial contact with Muslims into profound spiritual conversations that can lead to their salvation. L.D. Waterman describes the various ways of making contact and starting conversations about the gospel that are such an exciting part of the Watson approach to CPM. Many who have gone through the CPM training testify that it has given them a renewed eagerness and capacity in evangelism. In Gail's write-up of a conversation I recently had with some gifted Arabic-speaking evangelists, we learn from colleagues who are gifted in and very excited about sharing their faith. In Kronk's assessment of the impact of dreams and visions, we are reminded that Christ himself has often already revealed himself to the Muslims we may meet and often our task is to help them along with the next steps in *their journey to faith*.

Our hope is that this issue (including four reviews of books on witnessing) will both inform you and inspire you to continue looking for every opportunity to share the reason for your hope—the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

May we all know the joy of having a heart to share Christ, and the ability to do so with ever increasing anointing and grace.

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

Letter to the Editor with Response by L.D. Waterman

Dear Don,

Thank you for the recent issue of Seedbed (Dec 2011, Volume XXV (2) on CPMs), which I have quickly devoured from beginning to end. I especially liked the way you structured it as a dialogue – an article pro-CPM, with two questioning and a response, then the reverse, then a great article by a North African describing his ministry approach in his own culture. (I also enjoyed the book reviews, and may be purchasing a couple of books soon.) One can certainly feel the wisdom of the Proverb that one person sounds correct, until you hear the other side – we learn a lot in sharpening one another. It was interesting to compare a bit of a cold feel from CPM (with the official weekly studies, required performance, and not being allowed to interact with sub-groups – somehow artificial and Western), with the great warmth and life of the North African's very relational approach.

In comparing the pro and con on CPM, I have a few comments. First, I note that while it is hard to find much wrong with an approach using the Word and trusting the Spirit (who is present in believers who are given different gifts, making up the body), I do not find many examples of it being used in the Gospels or in Acts. It is not an approach born out of exegesis of Jesus' and the apostles' methodology. This doesn't mean it's bad, it is just that, like with any approach, we should consider its strengths and weaknesses—see how it could be improved, compare it against other approaches, and consider for which contexts it might be best suited.

I do wonder if the CPM approaches are not better suited for places where there is high receptivity to Christ and the Bible rather than great opposition. Of course I'd really like to see some approaches that are built out of an exegesis of Jesus' and the apostle's methodology – what they modelled and taught as they went two by two, proclaiming and healing, teaching and exhorting.

Of course, our situation now is different, certainly with respect to proclamation – most of us are not Jews and there are very few synagogues in the region open to hearing about the Christ and with god-fearers in attendance. Furthermore, in Muslim lands open proclamation in public is not generally possible. Approaches based in homes, places of work, marketplace or recreation are possibilities – not that location is the key - especially if they can apply some of what Jesus, the apostles, and other believers did as they shared the gospel (and eventually the whole counsel of God) with others.

Secondly, I find it hard to understand the logic of why a week of training is needed if a local who I train or whom my trainee trains only needs a couple of hours using the approach. Why is there such a huge difference?

Thirdly, I notice that I am thinking of the CPM approach as an approach to

evangelism – which is where most of us in this region are struggling. (We also struggle with discipleship, although we might think we know something about that in theory; but we long for more to believe in and follow Christ.) Of course CPM is mixing evangelism and discipleship, and starts out with mostly unbelievers doing things we usually think of believers doing (like evangelism and discipleship training). Certainly, this particular way of using not-yet-believers is one of its distinctives, and one of its controversial elements. That being said, a holistic ministry approach of making disciples that combines or transitions birthing and nurturing elements does seem to have advantages.

Thank you again for an excellent issue.

William

**Associate Editor, L.D. Waterman,
responds to William's letter and clarifies...**

Dear William,

Thank you for your thoughtful response to the last issue of Seedbed, which focused on pros and cons of the Discovery approach to CPM. When you write 'I do not find many examples of it being used in the Gospels or in Acts,' I presume you're referring specifically to the Discovery Group approach to proclamation, since numerous other aspects of the approach (such as proclamation to groups rather than individuals and looking for persons of peace) are clearly found in the Gospels and Acts. Notably, some of the approaches you wrote that you'd 'really like to see ... that are built out of an exegesis of Jesus' and the apostle's methodology' are in fact significant elements of the Discovery model. For example, the training explicitly encourages going out 'two by two, proclaiming and healing.' Perhaps if you have an opportunity to attend a training event in the Discovery model you would like it better than you think.

Concerning specifically the facilitated discovery approach to proclamation, you are right that 'just that like with any approach we should consider its strengths and weaknesses...and consider what context it might be best suited for.' It is just one tool, as are friendship evangelism, street preaching, tracts, electronic broadcast media and altar calls. Ironically, though, contrary to your wondering 'if the CPM approaches are not better-suited for places where there is high receptivity to Christ and the Bible rather than great opposition,' one of the counterintuitive CPM principles is 'Expect the hardest places to yield the greatest results.' The truth of this principle is illustrated numerous times, for example, in Jerry Trousedale's book *Miraculous Movements*. (See my review of this book in this Seedbed.) As workers in various parts of the world over the past decade have heard about CPMs and said 'It won't work in our kind of context,' God has time and again been pleased to do what some of his children were saying couldn't be done.

About your statement, 'I find it hard to understand the logic of why a week training is needed, if a local who I train, or who my trainee trains, only needs a couple of hours using the approach': this is apparently a misunderstanding. The First Steps Discovery CPM training is intentionally designed to be reproduced with anyone, in essentially the same basic form (ten lessons) in which it is first presented (with an oral version now being fine-tuned for oral learners). There's not a different standard for near-culture or local workers. You are right that cross-cultural workers from every culture carry significant 'baggage.' Those within a Muslim culture, who initially come to faith and are disciplined through the Discovery approach, would have a maturing process much *longer* than one week, but less of their equipping would need to be unlearning some bad habits of 'Constantinian' Christianity.

Again, thank you for your careful consideration of the issues under discussion and your thoughtful interaction with them.'

L.D. Waterman

PART I: SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH MUSLIMS

Beyond Drinking Tea: Moving from Chit-chat to Soul Talk with Muslims

by Joy Loewen

Joy, along with her husband Ed, have been involved in ministry to Muslims for more than 20 years—first in Pakistan and then in Canada. Joy wrote the highly recommended book: Woman to Woman: Sharing Jesus with a Muslim Friend (2010). Check out her excellent blog: <http://joyloewen.blogspot.com>.

As Dunya prepared tea, my eyes surveyed the living room. Her interior decorating really shows an artistic flare. I noticed that the large beautiful wall-hanging carpet of the Ka'aba was no longer in its place. It had been removed and another picture hung. As I waited, I quietly prayed for our visit to be productive. She graciously served me tea and fruit. We chatted about her children and her busy life as a soccer mom. Our conversation turned to fashions, hairstyles, and the recent party she had attended. Dunya loves the things of the world and her husband indulges her expensive tastes, trying hard to make her happy and satisfied. A second cup of tea was drunk. I longed for our conversation to move into deeper issues. However, it seldom does on our visits, and I often leave disappointed. How I wish to speed things up and get beyond drinking tea and having just a social visit. There is much more I want to talk about than fashions and food. I long to talk about eternal issues of the soul.

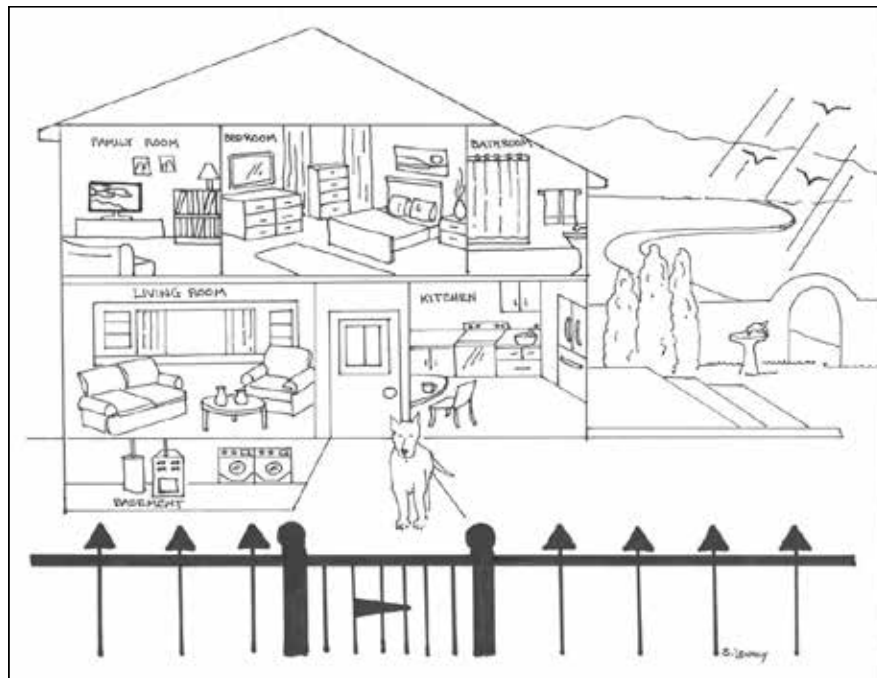
Perhaps you can identify with my experience with Dunya. You have drunk your fair share of tea or coffee, too, as you have been faithfully ministering to Muslim women or men. However, you feel like all you are doing is drinking cup after cup of tea with your Muslim friend and nothing is moving ahead spiritually. You desire so much to go beyond drinking tea and having social chitchat. The good news is that we can go beyond drinking tea, but it takes time.

Symbolic House

To move beyond drinking tea will take us on a unique journey. This journey beyond can be seen as similar to moving through our Muslim friend's house. The house is a symbol of her life; each different room serves a unique purpose in ministering to her. We need her permission to move from room to room. We can expect a lengthy journey when going beyond drinking tea, but it does not always prove to be so. Sometimes the Lord works quickly and bypasses the normal time-consuming route, but generally speaking, the Holy Spirit takes his time revealing the Good News of

Jesus Christ to our Muslim friend.¹

What might we encounter on this journey through the symbolic house of her life? Some of the stages will be; getting acquainted, participating in joyful events, hearing sad stories, encountering crises and disasters, and occasionally participating in the spiritual birth and growth of our friend. Come join me in exploring what this journey of going beyond drinking tea can look like.



The Gate

The first thing we encounter in evangelism among Muslim women is the gate. We aren't sure we can gain entrance into their lives. The symbolic house of her life is protected by a fence and locked gate. I met Sadia, a woman from Libya and newcomer to Canada, at her friend's house. Though professionally skilled, she had not started employment yet. Sadia spent most of the evening just watching me while her friend

1. Even though this article is written primarily to give Christian women a picture of evangelism with Muslim women, men can also identify. All the names used are pseudonyms, but the stories are based on experiences I have had during my twenty-five years of ministry among Muslim women in Canada. Some of the stories are composites of a few individuals.

and I chatted away. The observation with no interaction made me uncomfortable, and I was cognizant that she was sizing me up. Sadia and I were strangers to each other. Finally, after being carefully observed during the whole visit, I was surprised when Sadia requested my phone number! We exchanged phone numbers, and a short time later, I gave her a phone call. When I took the initiative to visit her, I wondered what I would encounter.

When we come to the symbolic gate of a Muslim's life we may be confronted with fear, suspicion, prejudice, misconceptions, ignorance, guardedness – or perhaps we will encounter openness, friendliness and curiosity. It is only by prayer and God's power that the gate will open into her life. By the authority and power of Jesus, the guard on duty (which is Satan, *not* Sadia) is removed and the gate is opened. I am reassured by Revelation 3:7b that says, '...He opens doors and no one can shut them; he shuts doors, and no one can open them.' We are not the one who opens or shuts the gates. It is God Himself. We simply follow Him around and go where He goes.

When I made the initial visit to Sadia's house, I found there was no doorbell. After knocking repeatedly on both her front and back doors and getting no response, I resorted to tapping on a window. There was still no response. Finally, as I stood shivering in the cold outside her house, I called her on the phone. At this point, I would have loved to have been offered a cup of warm mint tea. I could hear her phone ring inside and her husband answered. At last, the door was opened. It seemed so symbolic of how difficult and long it can take to see the spiritual doors of our friends' lives open to allow us entrance. In Sadia's case, I immediately observed shyness, fear, anxiety, stress and a measure of curiosity in her. She was new to our country and had only conversed with Muslims. She had never been in a church, seen a Bible or met a Christian. She didn't know that the English name of *Isa al Masih* is Jesus Christ nor what the English word *church* meant. She had never been exposed to life outside of her country before. She would have been aware of the verse of the verse in the Qur'an that says, 'Believers, take neither the Jews nor the Christians for your friends. They are friends with one another. Whoever of you seeks their friendship shall become one of their number. God does not guide the wrongdoers' (Surah 5:51). I was so excited to be able to gain entrance into the gated house of Sadia's life, yet she was still reserved, cautious but curious. I felt a strong mysterious heartbeat of love for Sadia even before I arrived at the gate, but her love for me had not yet begun. We were strangers who had just met. We hadn't even enjoyed a cup of tea together.

Standing waiting at the gate is not easy. Sometimes the gate is opened wide for further visits – or just for one time. With Sadia, it was open for about two years and then suddenly banged shut. I don't know why. Though I can guess, I have given up analyzing why this sometimes happens. I have discovered over the years in ministry that my analysis is usually incorrect. Reluctantly and sadly, I moved on to the next

gated house, disappointed but thanking God for the two valuable years I got to know Sadia. I cried because I had grown to love Sadia dearly. God is not finished with her. Sometimes the gate reopens after years have passed. I heard Sadia's gate bang shut and the dreaded bolt being locked. Access to her was over. God alone opens and shuts doors, and he has his reasons if a door should shut. There are times I wonder if the primary purpose of the gate being opened into her life was simply to teach me more about evangelism among Muslim women. My understanding expanded immensely. I learned so much from Sadia, but soon I found myself walking away from her gate, through another opened gate, and right into Fatima's kitchen.

Kitchen

It was such a happy moment when I walked through the gate into Fatima's life and into her kitchen. Everything seemed surreal because I hadn't been very acquainted with a conservative Saudi woman up to that point. Like Sadia, she was cautious but curious while I was overflowing with excitement. We would drink tea and chat about cultural things like fashions and her *niqab*, discuss exotic recipes and taste samples of food, and look at many photos of her children and scenic sights on her laptop. Once she showed me her wedding pictures on her laptop. They were most interesting, but I kept waiting to see what she looked like as a Saudi bride. I never did see such a picture. It was the first time I saw wedding pictures where the bride was absent. I had lots to learn as we became acquainted with each other. There were many fascinating new cultural things to absorb, but eventually our talk felt trivial, partly due to her limited English and my almost non-existent Arabic. A language barrier certainly slows the development of a relationship. Nevertheless, Fatima and I, once strangers, had now become acquaintances.

We could stay a long time in the kitchen drinking cup after cup of tea. Taking this time is necessary to connect and develop a trusting relationship with a Muslim woman and learn about her culture. It is the first stage of showing the love of Jesus to her. Showing a genuine interest in her life and in her culture breaks barriers down. It is not wasted time.

Unfortunately, Christians often don't get past the kitchen. It's not always easy to know how to move to the next room, and either party can lose interest. We question whether we should continue a relationship with a woman if it goes no further than cultural talk, and especially if it goes on at this level for years. We really want to move to the living room and go deeper. With Fatima, I wondered if I should try to take the initiative to move that direction or wait for her to take that step. I prayed earnestly for direction and listened to the voice of the Holy Spirit. All my directions

come from Him. I made a few efforts, but it became clear that she preferred just to drink tea and talk about recipes and fashions. There have been other Muslim women, however, who have let me in their gate, chatted in their kitchen for some time, then allowed me to move with them into the living room.

Living Room

I love being in the living room, where it feels comfortable and there is little stress. There have been many Muslim women who have led me into the living rooms of their lives. It is in this room we begin talking about our extended families, communities, places of worship and religious books and practices. Occasionally non-threatening religious conversations open up. They will bring up objections to the Trinity and deity of Jesus or say that the Bible has been changed. I try to answer them briefly at this stage. More can be elaborated on later when a true spiritual hunger is more evident. I always desire to communicate my love for God and the Scriptures. In the meantime, a friendship develops.

In this stage, we will be invited to women's parties, baby showers, and other joyful fun times. We will be introduced to belly dancing and lots of laughter and high spirits, and have intricate henna designs drawn on our hands. We are warmly hugged or kissed when we arrive and leave. A sisterly closeness starts to develop. Each woman extends hospitality to the other. It is fun to relate to the children of these women and cuddle their adorable babies. In the living room, we may discover that our new friend needs practical help conversing in English, learning how to drive, preparing for her citizenship test, or being taken to an appointment. We are delighted to be of practical help, and she appreciates it. It is in the living room that we discover our Muslim friend is just like us – a human being. She has a story, longings, needs, desires and fears, and is surprisingly easy to love. We are no longer strangers or acquaintances but have become friends. We could stay in this room forever – it is fun and there are no significant stresses – but deep down we know there must be more to discover.

Bedroom

Occasionally I come to the symbolic bedroom of a woman's life, the place where I find her soul sleeping. Naheed's soul seems to get sleepy every time we visit. I can't do much about it. No matter how much I try to instigate spiritual discussions with Naheed, she shuts down and begins to get that sleepy look. We drink tea together but usually do not go beyond that. Seldom are there any spiritual questions. There is little curiosity or interest. She is content, satisfied and secure with Islam because her life is going smoothly overall. I always know when it is time to leave. I have to let her sleep until she has had enough.

One time, however, it was different. Naheed was a student living on the university's campus, and a flood developed at midnight in her residence. It was wintertime

and she needed a place to sleep. Naheed came to stay with us for the next few days until it was safe to return to her residence. I found her soul unusually awake during these days. Every night she wanted to hear something from ‘the Book’, as she called the Bible. I seize every opportunity when I find Naheed spiritually awake. But most of the time I just have to wait, pray, and watch until she awakens.

Family Room

Conversations become more personal when we enter the family room of a woman’s life. I entered this level with Tahareh from Iran. By God’s power, the gate had been opened and I was led into the kitchen. For a long time she shared mostly about cultural things and we drank lots of tea. Then she walked out of the kitchen and motioned for me to join her in the living room. I really started enjoying Tahareh, as we became friends. She initially needed help with conversational English, so we had weekly visits, which helped develop a strong relationship. I didn’t catch any

I found myself doing a lot of listening. I had moved from being a stranger to an acquaintance, then a friend, and now a confidante. That progression of our relationship did not happen overnight. It had taken considerable commitment, investment and intercession.

hint of trouble in her life until we moved to the family room, where she started sharing about her struggles and problems within her marriage – but not deeply. I had a sense she was holding back her whole story. She still needed to know if I would really understand her and if she could trust me not to spread information to her community. I found myself doing a lot of listening.

I had moved from being a stranger to an acquaintance, then a friend, and now a confidante. That progression of our relationship did not happen overnight. It had taken considerable commitment, investment and intercession.

We can see that each room has a progressive level of engaging with our Muslim friends. We cannot speed up the process, although we can try to steer things into a God-talk direction. It is in the family room that we probably will get a chance to pray for our friends or read relevant Scriptures and start sharing about a strong and living Saviour. Many enjoy viewing the Jesus DVD at this point. Over the years, I discovered that I had often given the Jesus DVD or a Bible to my acquaintances prematurely. I have learned to wait longer. If given too soon, it will not speak as powerfully.

Our love grows deeper in compassion and mercy for our Muslim friends in the family room. We could stay here a long time simply giving a listening ear. It is in this room that I become honest, transparent and vulnerable with her as she shares of herself. I no longer let myself appear untouched by trouble but a fellow pilgrim in this life on earth, one who is also acquainted with suffering and sorrow. It took many years for me to learn to disclose my sinful nature and shame issues, the mistakes I’ve made and the hurts I’ve experienced. I wrongly assumed that a Muslim friend would reject me if I shared transparently. Then a significant shift took place in me. Instead

of projecting an image of strength, I noticed that the more transparent I was the more it freed her to be the same. When I share some of my failings, she is initially shocked, but also relieved, and she is very interested in what I have to say. At this stage, we are not drinking as much tea as before. The formalities have been lessened. We are starting to go beyond drinking tea.

Bathroom

Karima was a graduate student in whom I invested over a period of ten years. She had acquired her PhD but found it difficult to assimilate and cope with teaching in a university in the West, so she moved to the Middle East. God had opened the gate into Karima's life. I spent some time in the kitchen, living room and family room with her. Then I faced many uncomfortable conversations with her that turned volatile, confusing and overwhelming for me. Karima talked angrily about the Crusades, Israel and the plight of the Palestinians. She obviously resented America, past colonization, and present-day superpowers interfering around the world. American drone attacks especially made her livid. 'Muslims aren't safe anywhere!' she would fume. At one time, I warned her that she would self-destruct if she didn't stop obsessing over them.

At this stage, my love was tested, and I was tempted to walk away from Karima. There was no longer an appetite to drink tea. It had grown cold. I had entered the bathroom, feeling I was being contaminated by Karima's unbridled rage. I only wanted to be washed clean from those negative conversations. I didn't feel at ease talking about politics or justice issues and didn't know how to respond. I hate to admit it, but it felt like she had become an enemy.

Perhaps you have entered this room and you want to run far away. If the Muslim with whom you are building a relationship is obsessed with these subjects, you may have to leave them for a while, get some space and come back if the Spirit leads. Not everyone enters this particular room, but if it does happen, the experience can be so unpleasant that it can terminate our relationship. At this point, we know we are getting very close to the basement, and we're not sure we want to go any further. It is at this point we may wish to return to the most pleasant room, the living room, where it is fun and not so serious – and drink more tea.

Basement

A finished and decorated basement can be a nice room to visit, but if improvements have not been made, the basement is not an enjoyable place to be. When engaging with our Muslim friends, we will find ourselves entering the symbolic unfinished and unfurnished basement of their lives. I have found myself entering the basement lives of Amal, Aida, Jamila, Farahea, Sahar, Fatuma and a host of other dear Muslim friends. Their gates had been opened. We had shared our cultural distinctives and

exchanged recipes, drunk a lot of tea together, enjoyed fun times together, and gotten to know about each other's families and communities. Practical help had been offered and Scripture read; we had prayed together and had some significant spiritual discussions. We had moved from being strangers to acquaintances to friends, and now I had become a confidante. The women were gradually opening up to me and our relationships were strong and trusting. However, I sensed each was keeping a lot inside of her, and now it became obvious that each was moving towards the basement, where even she was afraid to go.

The cold and dimly lit basement doesn't seem like such a welcoming place. However, Jesus goes to the basement before us. He is there waiting, so we are not alone. Here the women begin to pour out their deep-seated fears, gender brokenness, stress,

We may never have witnessed an oppressed person before. Our heads spin from hearing about crises, imminent disasters, and even domestic violence and we wonder if we need to recommend a women's shelter, legal action or possible separation or divorce. We don't know what to advise. It is new territory for us to walk through.

guilt, shame and helplessness. We may discover our friend is into folk Islamic activity, seeking to manage her fears with deception, because Allah is unknown to her and she doesn't know if he loves her or not. Folk Islamic beliefs and activity might be unfamiliar to us and give us discomfort. We may never have witnessed an oppressed person before. Our heads spin from hearing about crises, imminent disasters, and even domestic violence and we wonder if we

need to recommend a women's shelter, legal action or possible separation or divorce. We don't know what to advise. It is new territory for us to walk through. Our friend may be facing the possibility of sharing her husband with a second wife, emotional or sexual abuse, depression, suicidal tendencies, or addiction to porn, whether it be in her husband's life, in hers, or in their life together. We are not experienced enough to discern whether it is mental illness or demonic. She may have a severe victim mentality, and we feel we are talking in circles.

We've gone well beyond drinking tea. This is no longer a social activity. We have forgotten that there is tea in front of us at all. Her family is broken. She is broken. It is like a war zone at home. A son could be in a gang or in jail and she might want us to accompany her to juvenile court hearings. Perhaps she is damaged from war, a kidnapping or the disappearance of her husband and she is full of anger and revenge. It is all too much for us to cope with. It appears that sin or sickness is running wild. And we can't figure out what is mental sickness and what is sin or whether it is both! We are not counsellors or social workers. Nevertheless, we are bearers of the Light. We can't carry others' sin, sorrow or sickness. If we try, the pain and sorrow will lodge itself in us and we will carry things much too heavy for us to bear. However, we *can* listen to them carefully and compassionately, and then transfer their burdens upon our sin-bearer, Jesus Christ. We will talk much about the cross in the

basement. We will turn our eyes upon Jesus and look in His wonderful face. We will talk about a living Saviour who can conquer every mountain and forgive every sin because of his resurrection, the one who is making us more and more whole every day until the time comes when we will be made whole in every way.

When found in the basement, we would like to either fix everything or run back to a safer room and drink tea. Everything is so messy, exhausting and complicated in the basement, and she seems stuck and unable to change or understand. Some women need information; some need confrontation, and some need to be rocked and soothed like a baby – but each needs a strong Saviour. We could stay in the basement forever listening to the same story over and over. But we know that we want to go out to the deck to get a breath of fresh air! We enter into a deeper level of intercession than we have ever experienced before. We are introduced to the meaning of spiritual battle. We reflect on the journey we have taken from being strangers to acquaintances, friends, then confidantes, and now we feel like we have become mothers who are in labour and giving birth. The labour is long and strenuous. At some point, she will stir up the courage to voice scary questions about Mohammed and the Qur'an. Objections and arguments will return. We so much wish we could skip this difficult part, but we must walk through this for her to find life and victory. It will take her some time to understand who Jesus really is, the work accomplished on the cross and the empty grave, to understand sin and be convicted of it and to take steps of faith to call upon Jesus, the Saviour. Some, but not all, will finally arrive at that place, and we will find ourselves walking out of the basement and on to the glorious light of the deck. That is where we are now headed. A baby has been born and we are rejoicing! Hallelujah!

Deck

Now I can breathe more relaxed. What a relief to get out of the basement and sit on the deck! When I first met Jannah, I never imagined she would be the type who would come out onto the deck. She looked like she wanted to stay enclosed and confined inside her familiar house. But God is full of surprises. He drew her to Himself even before I stood at the gate. I had no idea she had been waiting for someone to approach her gate, come into her house and drink tea with her. I spent considerable time in her kitchen and moved quickly through the living room and family room once solid trust had been built. I never did enter the bathroom or the bedroom of her life. However, we did spend a long time in the basement. A big dark cloud of self-inflicted condemnation sat heavily on her and would not lift. It was a stronghold that caused spiritual oppression.

Jannah has a debilitating disease and she interpreted it as a sure sign from Allah that either he was punishing her or she was being tested. She condemned herself as bad and unworthy and was convinced everyone else thought so, too. It bothered her for at least a year to see her neighbours sitting on their balcony across from her

building. She was convinced they were watching her and could tell she had a disability. Surely that meant they were condemning her as having done something bad. It took a long time to teach her that this was a lie and a strategy from Satan. We wrestled through many lies she had been brought up to believe. Over and over, I gave her new information from the Bible. Working between the language of her Bible and my English Bible was a huge challenge. Many words and concepts were difficult for her to comprehend because of the language barrier. Sometimes I confronted the lies head on and rebuked them. Other times I rocked and soothed her like a distressed baby. Never had I imagined that someone could be so bound by oppression, lies and condemnation. As we worked through her struggles, she desperately desired to go out to the deck and made a few feeble attempts to do so. At this stage, she didn't even think about offering me tea.

Finally, Jannah left the cold, dark basement and embraced the Light and Truth of Jesus Christ. Now she victoriously walked out on to the deck. She was completely enthralled with the fresh, gentle breeze of the Holy Spirit on the deck. We had truly gone beyond drinking tea and chitchatting. We were now drinking of the peace, comfort, freedom and healing found in Jesus. We sat there together soaking up the sunshine of the glory of Christ. Our prayer and Bible-reading times were precious. She still wrestled with the fact that her husband was not in agreement with her becoming a Christian. 'I remember, Joy, the time you told me that an Afghan lady told you that her body belonged to her husband but her soul belonged to God', Jannah relayed to me. Somehow, that kind of compartmentalization helped Jannah sort out the difficult challenges.

Out on the deck, Jannah and I were now sisters in Jesus. Amazing!

Gardens

What an arduous journey it will be for our Muslim friends as we move with them through the kitchen, living room, family room, the bathroom and then the basement. Nevertheless, when we come out on the deck it will be worth all the time and effort. And the journey does not end even with the joy of the deck. There are still better places to go!

Jannah is enjoying the private flower garden near her deck. But over the wall is a public garden that she has never seen – fellowship with others. That is where I long to take her, but I have to wait until she is ready or her husband will either allow her or join us. I do not want Jannah to become dependent on me. She needs the fellowship of other sisters in Christ, and they are waiting for her. In the meantime, most of her fellowship and teaching come from me.

Baby Christians need to move from the deck to the public garden where more growth will take place, but this doesn't always happen easily. It proved easier for Rania to

visit the public garden; she didn't have Jannah's restrictions. Today Rania loves the worship, singing and the preaching from her pastor. She was baptised on a day of victory and celebration. Rania and I drink from another cup now – the Cup of Communion. It is what truly unites us. We will always drink tea together, but we have gone far beyond that now. There are things she doesn't understand in the public garden because everything is so new, but she feels loved and she is making friends. I have to supplement her teaching, as there are many issues not addressed for Rania in the public garden. An ethnic fellowship would be beneficial for Rania to join, but in its absence, she must make major adjustments to fit in with western Christians. She is doing amazingly well; not all women from Muslim backgrounds successfully navigate the foreign garden. Rania and I still sit on her deck, just her and me, to pray and read the Word. What a joy to hear her pray for me now and share her own insights from the Word. I begin to dream that maybe one day we can actually minister together!

Today Rania loves the worship, singing and the preaching from her pastor. She was baptised on a day of victory and celebration. Rania and I drink from another cup now – the Cup of Communion. It is what truly unites us. We will always drink tea together, but we have gone far beyond that now.

Over the past three decades, I have walked through these symbolic rooms many times in my relationships with Muslim women. It has not always been possible to move from room to room. I have made mistakes, felt inadequate, been overwhelmed, wanted to quit and run out of my own love – only to discover God's unlimited reservoir of love that I can be filled with. I have enjoyed the process and been thrilled with the opportunities to share God's love with Muslims. So, enjoy that first cup of tea with your Muslim friend. And one day you might find you are drinking together from another uniting Cup!

Discoveries on the Way to Discovery Groups

by L.D. Waterman

Waterman (pseudonym) pastored for ten years in the US before moving to work among Muslims in Southeast Asia, where he has served for the last nineteen years. He is a Pioneers Area Leader.

In the last issue of Seedbed, we saw lively interaction on the subject of Exponential Disciple-Making—the ‘Discovery Model’ approach to launching church planting movements. Among the key elements in the approach are ‘living out loud’ as a spiritual person, casting a net widely for those people in whom God is already doing something uniquely positive (a ‘person of peace’ or POP) and aiming to win families (the *oikos*² or group of reference of the POP) through a process of chronological Bible study (Discovery Groups). These groups are designed to become house fellowships as together they come to understand who Jesus is and what it means to follow him.

We can read stories about the amazing fruit being produced by God through this approach in publications like *Miraculous Movements* by Jerry Trousdale or recent articles in *Mission Frontiers* (for example, in the July-August 2012 and September-October 2012 issues). But some of us may wonder, ‘What does the fruit of the Discovery model look like for those who are not yet seeing church planting movements come out of implementing this approach?’

I recently conducted a small survey of those who have been through a one-week training in the Discovery approach to catalyzing church planting movements, or CPMs. I asked them about the impact that the training has had on them (see more on the survey below). For many, the Discovery approach has given a fresh spiritual energy and clarity of purpose in ministry. One said, ‘There has been an incredible impact on my relationship with God. That relationship seems to grow ever sweeter and joyful. And I sense that He is giving more and more of His eyes to see people around and His compassion as I pass them or interact with them and more of a burden for their salvation.’ Another explained, ‘For a long time I talked about service as if it was something that I did; I felt responsible for speaking to cause other people to change their way of thinking. It has been a release to search for leaders that he has already prepared. This simple truth has released me from guilt and a sense of failure.’

Some respondents to the survey testify of how the Discovery approach has touched their family, with one saying it has ‘increased our hospitality and opened our home for more visitors.’ Another wrote, ‘We spend our time differently. A trip to the store is an opportunity to find someone whose heart has been prepared. We pray more because we have something specific to ask for.’

2. NT Greek, usually translated ‘household’ or ‘house,’ found in texts such as Matthew 10:12-14 and Luke 9:4; 10:5,7. In NT times, this usually included the extended family and workers. In modern contexts, this term is sometimes applied to a person’s sphere of close relational influence.

Stories abound of how this approach has positively influenced workers' ministries. Participants have named benefits including:

- increased boldness and directness
- a stronger dedication to remain in their community
- renewed purpose and desire to implement CPM whole heartedly
- renewed hope
- lessened pressure
- a better focus and a better way to do ministry.

After the training, one house church leader changed the focus of his ministry to obedience and becoming a disciple. He has not only trained his own church but is already training the leaders in a second house church in the Discovery approach to CPM. Another survey respondent said,

I am much more likely to start spiritual conversations with new contacts. I've used the cousin focus principles on several occasions and have seen doors remain open for further relationship and dialogue. In the past, I often was led down dead-end trails by answering questions the traditional way, resulting in closed doors. Since applying these principles I cannot say I've found a POP or brought anyone to faith, yet I can say that I've never had the door closed outright either.

One other respondent shared,

The thing that has most affected me has been the freedom of what it means to 'live out loud'. I've had a difficult and discouraging time before trying to fit into a 'box' of evangelistic methods, especially trying to share the whole gospel all at once with someone I hardly know. However, walking with the Spirit, doing *Shema*³ and seeking POPs brings a lot of freedom from sticking to a prescribed method.

One of the key elements of the Discovery model is finding a POP (person of peace). Without a POP, there is no Discovery Group.⁴ Thus, finding a POP is a primary activity for those seeking to catalyze a CPM using the Discovery model. This seeking for a POP may be the worker's primary activity for months or even years.

As an example, take the well-documented movement among the Bhojpuri of North India (Watson and Watson 2009, ¶697-700)¶. What some readers might

3. *Shema* is the first Hebrew word in Deut. 6:4. It means 'hear and obey'. *Shema* statements and actions show that we are spiritual people who love God and obey Him.

4. An effective Discovery *Bible Study* could be done by believers, and there could be various forms of one-on-one discipleship studies without a person of peace. But we're defining a Discovery Group as 'a group of *two or more pre-believers* that has been gathered by a POP (or an interested seeker) and is working through a list of Bible stories chronologically, leading them to become obedient disciples of Christ'.

not have heard is that David Watson looked for a POP for a number of years before actually finding one. He has written, "The mission organization I worked for threatened to fire me each year during my annual review. "You're not doing your job," they said. "Give me time," I said. "We're trying something new. Trust

me." And for some reason, they did. All of a sudden, we saw eight churches planted in one year' (698).

To get some idea of the approaches being used and the response to those approaches, two surveys were done among workers who had attended one-week training in the Discovery CPM approach. One survey was conducted verbally at an area retreat among workers in a specific part of the Middle East. The other survey was conducted through email and sent to those who work among Muslims in a wide variety of places around the globe.

What are workers doing to look for People of Peace? What seems effective and what seems ineffective? To get some idea of the approaches being used and the response to those approaches, two surveys were done among workers who had attended one-week training in the Discovery CPM approach. One survey was conducted verbally at an area retreat among workers in a specific part of the Middle East. The other survey was conducted through email and sent to those who work among Muslims in a wide variety of places around the globe.

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The original list of activities was entitled 'Top 10 Steps for Finding POPs,' but counting subdivisions and sub-subdivisions, the actual number of items in the survey was twenty-five. The survey included instructions to 'mark any approach you have used and any approach you do not plan to use again.' Very few respondents reported receiving negative responses when using any of these approaches. Those few will be noted in the comments below.

The results of each survey were tabulated and ranked according to the frequency with which they were used. The first column in the table below contains data from seventeen respondents working in the Middle East (ME); the second column contains data from thirty-one respondents working among Muslims around the world. The results of the two surveys are on the next page.

A few observations are worth making about the results of these surveys. In both surveys, all respondents have included *Shema* statements and actions as a part of their everyday life. While some shema-type activities may have been a part of workers' lifestyle prior to the training, many have reported a new attitude and more intentionality and frequency in 'salting' their everyday conversations and interactions with verbal and visual evidence that they are a spiritual person. For some, this has been a significant shift from prior efforts to maintain an almost secular persona for security reasons.

Approaches Used in Starting Conversations

ME	World	Approach
100%	100%	Use <i>Sbema</i>
100%	97%	Use self-descriptions other than 'Christian'
88%	55%	When meeting someone, ask about the meaning of their name
82%	55%	Share the story of how you came to faith
76%	74%	Use stories of the prophets or parables of Jesus (<i>Isa</i>)
76%	81%	Figure out ways to 'be a blessing' – e.g., community health, teaching, sharing, inviting, etc. – not necessarily 'spiritual things' but helping with felt needs, being a good neighbour, etc.
65%	58%	Respond to, 'All religions are the same, yes?'
59%	61%	Ask, 'Have you ever had a dream you believe came from God?'
59%	29%	Take prayer trips (near or far) to pray for resistant areas through prayer walking <i>and</i> use the 'Can I pray for you?' tool
59%	84%	Use a prayer of blessing
59%	68%	Use the truth about Jesus that is in the Qur'an
59%	26%	Share a story of a healing
47%	61%	Join a coaching or accountability group focused on the Discovery CPM approach
41%	52%	Simply and courageously, ask the question: 'Instead of us talking about our opinions, how about we study together the Holy Books that God has given us?' (or variation of it)
35%	23%	Share a story of good fellowship
29%	26%	Share a story of an experience of grace
29%	19%	Share a story of worship
18%	19%	Share a story of resolved conflict
12%	13%	Use the sentence, 'There's just something I need to say!'
12%	6%	Follow up contacts from radio, TV, internet, and other mass media ministry
12%	29%	Share story of some other miracle
12%	23%	Host an English club where the texts are Bible stories
6%	74%	Get to know neighbours, networks and clubs to find POPs
6%	55%	Go to places where spiritual people hang out – mosques, graves, religious schools, banyan trees, shaman's homes, etc. – to meet people who are spiritually seeking
0%	58%	Start a Discovery Group with your team and/or national partners then challenge each member of the group to find a group to do the same with people they know

In both surveys, all or almost all respondents have used **self-descriptions other than ‘Christian’** in their interaction with focus people. Out of all respondents, only one has chosen not to continue the practice. One worker reported:

This has been something our team has been experimenting with since moving to our city in January. In June, while my wife and her teammate were prayer walking, a woman riding an electric scooter stopped abruptly to ask about our children. She was shocked that we had four kids (most families here only have one or two) and that my wife considered them to be a blessing from Allah. This conversation ensued:

‘Do you have faith? Are you a Muslim?’ came the excited reply.

‘I follow Isa al-Masih.’ [Note, he didn’t say, ‘No, I am a Christian]

‘Who is Jesus the Messiah?’

My wife then blurted out, ‘He’s God’s Son!’

We don’t often go there on first meetings, but she felt led to say that by the Spirit. The woman’s response was total curiosity: ‘I want to know more about that!’ They exchanged numbers and she has been coming over to our house (with her nephew) at least once a week ever since. She has also since been having dreams (which are about our family). We are praying that they will be about Jesus too!

A significant number in both surveys (59% and 68%, respectively) have used **‘the truth about Jesus that is in the Qur’an’**. A trainee of one respondent shared this testimony:

In one village, we met a man who was known in the community to have power to heal and give physical strength. As we talked with him, he said, ‘There’s only one disease that has no cure. That’s death, because no one can be freed from death.’

So we asked him to give us a Qur’an so we could show him this man. We turned to Ali Imran (3) 49 and showed him that Isa Al-Masih can raise the dead. After discussing these verses about the greatness of Isa, we asked what he thought of these verses. He was dumbfounded. So we asked if he would like to know more about who Isa really is, and he said ‘Absolutely!’ So we prayed and ended that visit.

We answered that we know a man who can ‘cure’ and overcome death. He said, ‘That’s impossible!’ So we asked if would like us to introduce him to this man. He eagerly said, ‘Yes!’ So we asked him to give us a Qur’an so we could show him this man. We turned to Ali Imran (3) 49 and showed him that *Isa Al-Masih* can raise the dead. After discussing these verses about the greatness of Isa, we asked what he thought of these verses. He was dumbfounded. So we asked if he would

like to know more about who Isa really is, and he said ‘Absolutely!’ So we prayed and ended that visit. Ten days later, we visited him again. We do not know yet if he is a person of peace, but I love this man and am praying that the Lord will save

him and his family.

A higher percentage of respondents in the Middle East (88% as opposed to 55%) have **asked someone their name and its meaning**, perhaps because in that context a higher percentage of people's names would likely have a spiritual meaning. Here is a sample from West Asia:

While buying rotisserie chicken for dinner, I learned that the seller's name is Abdullah. "That means "servant of God," I said. He went on to recommend I become a Muslim so that I could have 70 million local Muslims as brothers. I replied that I have God as my Father and that is more important. The conversation didn't go any further, but he and his employees now know that there is a Christian in town. They've probably never met one before.

In a story from SE Asia, asking about the meaning of peoples' names apparently didn't open a door, but the (national) worker still created an effective 'window' of opportunity. Here is his story:

Alhamdulillah, after Idul Fitri I returned to a village that I had been to before, arriving just after the magrib prayer time in early evening, I entered a little coffee shop and drank coffee while resting after my tiring trip. There were three men in the coffee shop and a woman tending the shop.

After getting to know each other a bit, I directed the conversation to spiritual things and they were quite interested, because they were obedient followers of their religion. First, I asked the meaning of each of their names. Then I asked them, 'Do you know of someone whose name came from God?' None of them had an answer, and they were very interested to know. However, the conversation didn't continue because they all had to go to a village event. But before leaving, they invited me to come again to their village, and they pointed out where each of their houses was. Please pray that I can visit them once a week and share the word of the Lord with these men who seem very open.

A large percentage of workers in both surveys have used a **prayer of blessing** as a door opener. A worker in Asia reported:

I went to visit a person who had just started a factory. When he talked about the struggles he is facing with different responsibilities, I shared about start-up of our factory years ago, and that it was not my struggle or hard work that make is happen, but it was God's grace and mercy. I then prayed for God's blessing on his factory. That week he told me that he downloaded a Bible in [his local language adaptation] from the internet. I asked him to bring his circle of influence together, but he has not done so yet.

This testimony comes from a Muslim-focused worker in Europe:

I talked to the teller at my bank about her job. She was not happy. So I told

her I'd pray for her that it would be better in some way. Later I ran into her at another branch. She had a new job and remembered I had prayed for her. She asked me to continue praying for her. We are in dialogue and I gave her a NT with a few passages marked regarding some personal issues.

Many workers in both surveys (76% and 81%, respectively) have figured out **ways to be a blessing, serving felt needs of the focus group**. One sample account is this:

We have experienced many scenarios where community health is a great help in planting churches. Last week we were able to visit an example of this in a very far-flung island chain that is completely unreached. There, the church planters are using the basic dental health training we provided them last spring to reach out to their community. Now that they have established a dental health and nursing outreach they say, 'the very people who didn't trust us at first are the ones who call on us for healing and prayer in their homes (when they are sick)!'. The community health outreach seems to build trust with the community and helps the church planters gain acceptance. In our experience, community-level disease is something that is easy to address with basic education and prevention, but has huge felt impact. People see health changes immediately and this demonstrates God's power to them. They become more open to us. When incorporated into a church-planting strategy it seems the potential for transformation, physically and spiritually, is tremendous.

A significantly higher percent of respondents in the Middle East (59%, compared to 29% globally) have taken **prayer trips (near or far) to pray for resistant areas** and asked 'Can I pray for you?' One respondent in SE Asia shared:

We took an extended 'fishing trip' of three nights and four days. On the first day, the three young guys with me on the trip felt led to stop and play soccer with some local kids at a simple park associated with supposed ancient ruins of a kingdom that once existed in the area. While I looked on, I got into conversation with some local people. As we were having a very typical discussion about agriculture in their area, one of the men asked us a completely unrelated question, 'Can you help people who have stress?' (Stress is often a term

This led to being ushered to a nearby home where a 17-year-old boy was inside a wooden cage, an effort to protect him and others from the dangerous and out-of-control behaviour he had manifested for the previous two days. This led to us spending the evening and next morning praying with the boy and the family and bringing the news about Jesus as the one who alone can defeat Satan and his influences.

used for mental, emotional and/or demonic problems). This led to being ushered to a nearby home where a 17-year-old boy was inside a wooden cage, an effort to protect him and others from the dangerous and out-of-control behaviour he had manifested for the previous two days. This led to us spending the evening and next morning praying with the boy and the family and bringing the news about Jesus as the one who alone can

defeat Satan and his influences. Last week we visited the community again, and though the boy had been out and 'well' for a few weeks, he was again back in the wooden cage. We did not have time to pray as needed and look to return soon for more extended prayer and sharing that this captive might be set free through Christ.

From Europe comes this report:

Recently when my wife and I were out walking and praying, we met a man working at an isolated location and he asked what we were doing. I said we were out praying for this city and its people, that God would bless them. He appreciated that and we talked about spiritual things for fifteen minutes. Then, in answer to prayer, I ran into him at a restaurant a few days ago, and he invited me to return and talk some more.

Roughly the same percentage of respondents (59% and 61%) have asked focus people, **'Have you ever had a dream you believe came from God?'** One worker shared this story:

While on home assignment, I was with a guy who wanted to serve in North Africa. So I said, 'Let's go find some Muslims to witness to!' He thought I was crazy. We went to a carpet store, and the tall man working there did not look very friendly. I asked where he was from and he said, 'Iran.' I said, 'I like to talk to immigrants about their journey.' I asked a few general questions then said, 'I also like to ask about dreams. I've heard that many people have had dreams they feel came from God.' He looked at me as if he wanted to kill me, then he invited me to come to the back of the store.

He said, 'Eighteen years ago when I first came to America, I had a dream that I haven't told anybody about since then. I was in high school and my sister was in elementary school, and I was really into Christmas trees. I thought they were just so beautiful. So I asked my parents if we could get one. They said, "No! That's a Christian thing. We're Muslims!" But my sister really liked Christmas trees too. So one day I went out and bought a Christmas tree for my sister. I bought lights and decorated it beautifully. When my sister home from school, she thought it was so cool! My parents didn't have the heart to make me take it down.

'One night I was just staring at the lights and I fell asleep. I had a vision of a star above the tree that seemed to be calling me. It came closer and closer, and I saw it was the face of a man; then I realized it was Jesus. I woke up and ran up and told my parents, who said it was all nonsense.'

'But I wanted to know more about this. So the next day I went out into the city to try to find some Christians. The first place I found was a Roman Catholic church. The priest there asked if I knew the meaning of the dream. I said, 'No.' The priest said, 'It means you need to become a Catholic.' I was horrified! I ran

out of the church, and never mentioned that dream to anyone again until just now when you asked about it.’

I then shared some of the good news with the man, but by that point, he had become a secular person and was no longer interested in the gospel. His secret dream was a God-given door opener, but the gospel answer arrived fifteen years too late.

Of all the approaches in the survey, the least popular was using the sentence, **‘There’s just something I need to say!’** A very low percentage of respondents (12% and 13%, respectively) have ever tried the approach, and in the global survey, half of those who tried it would not use it again. Readers may draw their own inferences about possible reasons for this (cultural or otherwise) and implications for use or non-use of this approach.

It may be noteworthy that one respondent noted five different approaches that he would not use again (more than half of the total such approaches in the global survey), and of those five, two contained a supernatural element: sharing a story of a healing or a story of some other miracle. This person is serving in a more secularized European context where the supernatural may be more an obstacle than a door opener. He comments, ‘I would not say that I will never use them again, but I do think that the other ones work better in my context.’

A moderate number of respondents (47% and 61%, respectively) have been in a **coaching/accountability group**. One worker shared: ‘I think we really have this with our local CPM focused team. We share a high level of commitment to do all these things, and to teach and model them to others. It’s been great to model it for those we are casting vision with, and for our local co-worker to be encouraged by our attempts.’

One approach has been notably more widely used in other parts of the world than in the Middle East, namely **getting to know neighbours, networks, clubs, etc.** In the global survey, 74% had done this, whereas in the Middle East only 6% had! A respondent in Asia wrote:

Thanks to Google maps, I was able to find my way to a gym tucked away in an alley in the Muslim district. It’s run by a coach who’s a bit of a legend – a 60-year-old maintenance man at the mosque, turned certified fitness instructor. I’ve met many other people there at the gym, and had several conversations that have resulted from *shema* statements or simply quoting Scripture. I’m praising the Lord for such an enjoyable way to meet and converse with men of all ages in our community.

Another shared,

When we first moved to our island of 1.5 million, we strongly sensed the Lord

leading us to drive a circle around the island, stopping at the local small stores and coffee shops to look for a community of peace. As we drove into a vibrant island village scene, we stopped at three different shops; the third was a small seaside coffee shop and beach. We felt the Lord lead us to sit down and drink a hot tea with the only worker there. Slowly people in the community began sitting down to join in the discussion and meet these curious foreigners – none had ever ventured into this area. We introduced ourselves as Americans who had newly moved to this island and wanted to live in a tightly knit community like this instead of an exclusive housing development. They were instantly very open with us and proud to show us around and help us find housing.

We felt the Lord lead us to sit down and drink a hot tea with the only worker there. Slowly people in the community began sitting down to join in the discussion and meet these curious foreigners – none had ever ventured into this area. We introduced ourselves as Americans who had newly moved to this island and wanted to live in a tightly knit community like this instead of an exclusive housing development. They were instantly very open with us and proud to show us around and help us find housing.

In minutes, we were being led around by our man of peace, Ryan, a 30-year-old soccer-loving construction worker and leader in the community, who instantly hit it off with my husband. Before long, we were sitting with the mayor who was inviting us to purchase land from a newly cleared hill – ‘God’s Land’, they call it. Over the past year, our relationships in the community have grown and we’ve had many opportunities to share truth and statements about God with people in the village. Our land overlooks the heart of the village and the imam’s house, and the slow building process has afforded us a significant amount of time to sow seeds and build relationships there. We are using all local labour for our home and the villagers are quite proud that we are in this together. Our home is not yet built physically, but our spiritual and relational foundations are already firmly laid.

One respondent wrote from Northwest China:

I have found a neat way to meet men (and hopefully, POPs). A few months ago, I started cycling to the mountains every Saturday morning at 7 a.m. I noticed groups of cyclists that mainly contained men and every Saturday I saw at least 50-100 men cycling up the road to the mountain.

Every time I would go, I would meet a different group of men and found that the men who were cycling were essentially an *oikos*. [One] great thing about this *oikos* was that it was inclusive to everyone who was on a bicycle. I also found the demographic (graduated from university and typically working) matched my own quite well... and each Saturday I get to talk to these men for over an hour at a time (sometimes 3 hours). To put this in perspective, it is really difficult to meet Muslim men in our city, especially those not currently in university. For

the time being, I am going to spend the majority of my time praying and attempting to minister to this cycling *oikos*.

I have made some great contacts (Muslim men) from this avenue and am praying that God will naturally expand my contact within this group to those in whom he is working and are seeking and that he would give me wisdom and boldness to be able to disciple them to follow Christ.

In each group, roughly half of respondents have asked the question: **‘Instead of us talking about our opinions, how about we study together the Holy Books that God has given us?’** In addition, one global respondent who has not yet tried it commented, ‘I like this one, and would like to try it.’ Comments such as this one reflect the value of ongoing discussion among workers, asking ‘What have you tried? What has been effective or ineffective in your context?’ Certainly we all need to be led by the creative Spirit of God, and one of the ways the Spirit can guide us is through observation of what God is doing in other places in order to reach groups with a similar worldview and outlook in our area.

Another moderately used approach (12% and 23%, respectively) with some negative evaluation was to **host an English club where the texts are Bible stories**. Out of seven global respondents who have tried this approach, two of them (23% of that total) would not use this approach again. However, one respondent had a positive enough experience with this approach to share a story: ‘After regular ESL classes, we held Bible ESL where a passage is discussed in a modified Discovery Bible Study (DBS) format with ‘I will...’ at the end. Several women wanted to reproduce it in their dorm and our summer teamers and female team member did so. It went well and we hope to resume now that summer is over.’

A notable difference can be seen in the application of the last approach: **Start a Discovery Group with your team and /or national partners, based on Lesson 9**, and then challenge each member of the group to find a group to do the same with people they know. No workers in the Middle East survey had tried this approach, whereas more than half (58%) of global respondents had. A reason for this wide difference is not readily apparent, at least to this writer. One respondent commented: ‘We have started a house fellowship in DBS format but have not YET challenged ourselves to go reproduce it with others.’

The survey also received one write-in suggestion. This respondent liked one approach well enough to add it in, even though write-ins had not been requested: **‘I just read a Bible verse to people sitting on their bench in front of their homes** and ask what they think about it.’ Clearly, this would only work in a context where people commonly sit in front of their homes and welcome interaction with passers-by, but it would be interesting to see what response this approach would bring in other such contexts.

In all these stories and discussions of approaches, we can see the good news

being proclaimed in both word and deed. We can give thanks to the Lord for the variety of ways that connections are being made and light is being carried into the darkness. Clearly the path to a Discovery Group and ultimately toward a church planting movement is neither passive waiting nor applying a ‘cookie cutter’ approach nor frantic human effort. Rather it is a persistent sowing of seed—looking for those in whom the Spirit of God is working and asking God to open the doors of salvation for them and their household.

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Middle Eastern Evangelists Talk about Sharing the Gospel with Muslims

Transcribed and written by Gail Schlosser

Gail has worked with Muslims in the US and in the UK for almost 20 years. She completed her Doctor of Missiology at Fuller under Dudley Woodberry in June, 2012. She is now preparing to move to and minister in a Middle Eastern country in early 2013.

In the autumn of 2012 Seedbed editor Don Little had the privilege of visiting with two brothers and a sister from a Middle Eastern country now ministering together in London. Two of them (the couple Henry and Nina*) are from a Christian background while John* is a believer from a Muslim background. In their wide-ranging conversation, which Don recorded on his iPod with their permission, they shared with Don their motivations, their challenges and their joys in sharing the gospel with Muslims. Listen in as they discuss some of what they have learned in their many years of talking with Muslim about the Gospel.

Don: What counsel would you give to someone just getting started talking to Muslims about Jesus—perhaps someone who has studied the Qur'an and learned something about Islam, but has not had many conversations. Are there one or two key things you want to tell them to start with?

John: I advise people to learn all sorts of methods. I think they should know about the Qur'an. That helps us to understand how Muslims think and it helps us communicate well. I have my preferred ways of sharing, but I'm also familiar with many other approaches. I know what my goals are. For example, I know the Camel method, but I don't use it fully. If I'm in a situation where something from it will be helpful, I'll use it. It will help me as a bridge. I'm not systematic in how I share.

Nina: Last week John taught us how to maintain control of the conversation when conversing with Muslims.

Henry: For example, if a Muslim asks you a question you need to ask him *what he thinks* the answer to that question might be...

Nina: ...and when he answers the question, you'll know his thinking behind the question or the subject. And I learned from John that I don't need to defend my faith. I need to explain it not defend it.

Don: Can you explain the difference between defending the faith and explaining the faith?

John: There is nothing in the Bible about defending the Bible. In 1 Peter 3:15 it says to 'Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.' It talks about good news, not about some-

thing that's wrong. Muslims often want to talk about the Bible being corrupted. We have nothing wrong in the Bible and gospel that we have to defend; there is only the hope that we have the chance to explain. Why do we have this hope? Why are we different? I can talk about this good news. If someone comes along and says there's something wrong with the Bible, he needs to prove it first. And to prove it, he needs to show me that he's qualified to do this.

Don: So when he says negative things about the Bible, do you stop him?

John: In my culture, we like to laugh and tease and have fun, so I try to get them laughing and get them to lose their point in a nice way! I say to them, 'This is my faith, this is my Bible, this is my book, this is the most important thing in my life.

When you say my book is not correct, it's like saying to me my father is not my father.'

I tell them if they come to me with any verse in Qur'an that says clearly that the Torah or Injil has been changed or corrupted, I will become a Muslim. Then I tell them no one has been able to convince me yet! I just want them to think about it. Sometimes I say, 'You

know, the other day I was reading in your corrupted Qur'an something about...' and they get angry with me right away! So I say to them, 'You've said the same thing about my book for the last fourteen centuries and I haven't gotten angry!'

I hit back in a way—you know we come from a shame/honour culture and I embrace that. I do it like this, gently, to stop it. We have to establish respect; it's easy to tell them everything, but I want to be friends. I don't start weak, I start strong and then I go gentle. I never give them any reason to think that I'm afraid or worried about faith conversations.

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Don: Any other suggestions for a beginner?

Henry: I tell people you can't learn how to swim unless you get in the water! You need to just get out there and talk to people. For me when I started to speak with people I had no help; there was no one to give me any advice. I was from the country and when I went to the capital, no one could even understand my accent. However, God gave me ways to speak to people and gave me special words of knowledge and unique insights into individuals' lives.

Nina: I use any and all methods to share with Muslims. I studied very well to be ready for the questions they ask. Some Australian Christians once came to our capital city and they met an American woman who converted to Islam after marrying a Muslim. They talked for ten minutes and when I asked them what they talked about, they said the woman told them why she converted to Islam, why she

didn't believe in the Trinity, etc. I asked them 'What did you say to her?' They said, 'Nothing; we just listened because we didn't want to disturb her.' I said that in this culture you have to be on the offensive—to talk about Jesus, not just listen to them talk about Muhammad.

Don: In your culture you can challenge people?

Nina: Don't be afraid to be bold; it may feel rude, but in our country, they don't understand otherwise. You need to be strong. At a place like Speakers' Corner, we need to be bold and 'fight' and explain our faith. In other places in London, we have to be gentler, of course.

Don: Is there a helpful insight that God has given you to enable you to speak with Muslims more boldly or more effectively?

Henry: I think it's very important to LOVE Muslims when you're sharing with them. They can feel it. I don't share with Muslims because I want to be a hero or want to earn points to get to heaven, but because I love them. I don't need anything from them. I just go to the people in love.

Nina: I think that it's important to establish openness and trust. When people are open and trusting, they can accept what we have to say. Then we can have a fruitful conversation.

Henry: Sometimes if I have a good friend I tell him, 'I will listen to you about your beliefs and after that I will tell you about mine.' We do that and I learn important things about him. Also, I pray with him before we depart, even if he's not willing to accept Christ just I tell him I want to pray for him.

Nina: Sometimes I explain my faith to people with whom I have long-term relationships. Last year a co-worker had a problem with his back and was going to have a risky surgery. I didn't know him very well, but I said to him that I know he's in pain and that I believe in Jesus. He said 'I believe in Jesus as a prophet' and I said, 'He is more than a prophet! He can heal you.' He said, 'Yes, all the prophets can heal.' I told him that Jesus is a special doctor; no one can heal like him. I told him I'd pray for his healing and he said thank you. A week later I found out he never had the operation because had been healed! I said to him, 'Muhammad I'm so happy! I know Jesus healed you because I prayed for you!' Since then we are very good friends. He is a fanatical Muslim and usually doesn't speak with women, but he speaks with me!

Don: How do you begin conversations with people?

Nina: I always pray before I speak. Then God gives me the strategy on the spot. Then I just greet them. Here in London I say I've just come from (her country) and ask them if they know Arabic. And so they get interested. When I feel in

my heart that she's a 'sheep' not a 'wolf,' I try everything to keep her in the conversation.

In an outreach in Greece during the Olympics (in 2004), I met a woman on the bus. She was sitting behind me and I could tell by her outfit that she was from my country. I didn't know how to start a conversation with her directly, so I called out to my co-worker, in Arabic, 'No one told us where the good shopping is around here!' The woman recognized my Arabic and asked me if we were from the same country. I said 'Yes! Can you tell us where the best shopping is?' Not only did she tell us—she took us there herself. So, every encounter is different. Sometimes there is no strategy!

Henry: One day on the bus someone called out to me-- I did not remember him at all but he told me that the previous year I'd given him a JESUS film and that after watching it he received Christ. Another time I was on a crowded bus and God told me that if the man on the seat got up and the woman next to me sat in it I was to give her a Bible. He got up, she sat down and I gave her the Bible. She started reading it right away and said to me, "Thank you! I wanted this Bible a long time ago but could never find it!"

Sometimes when I'm on a bus, I speak into my phone, as if I'm having a conversation with someone, and tell the whole gospel message. Then when I close the phone, someone near me will ask about it. Sometimes I'll just talk to the Christian friend I'm with about the gospel when we are together in public and many people come up to ask us questions.

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At times people initiate with us. There have been times when I've been afraid to speak to people so I ask God that they would start speaking with me. And they do.

One day I was sitting at home... God said to me, 'Go to church now.' I said to God, 'It's closed now!' He said, 'GO NOW!' So I went and it was closed. God said, 'Go walk along the river.' I went and saw a woman there. God said to me 'I brought you from home to speak with this woman.' I went over to her and asked if she was a Christian. She got angry and started shouting at me. However, the Holy Spirit said to me to stay near her and pray.

Eventually she called me back over. God gave me a specific word for her. I told her 'You came from your home to destroy your life, didn't you?' and she started to cry. She said she was a Christian but that she had just decided that day that either she would convert to Islam or she would commit suicide. After speaking

with her, she accepted Christ. I took her home and met her family—her mother and her husband and her son all accepted Christ that day. They were traditional Christians, but not believers. The whole family came to Christ.

Later on, I asked God why he told me to go to the church. Why didn't he tell me to go to the river directly? God told me 'If I'd told you to go to the river first you wouldn't have gone. Because you love the church I knew you'd obey me, and from there I could direct you to the river!'

We need to listen to the Spirit and speak into people's lives. We need to listen.

One day in my country, I was praying with our team and God told us to go to the train station; that we would meet someone called Ahmed. So we went and I was led to a man sitting on a bench. I went up to him and asked, 'Is your name Ahmed?' He said no, but the Holy Spirit said to me that his name IS Ahmed, so I said to him, 'Your name is Ahmed' and I began to speak to him prophetic words about his past and his future. I said everything God wanted me to say to him and then I walked away. Soon after he came running after me and asked, 'How do you know all this about me?' and I shared the gospel with him.

Don: How do you respond to the typical Muslim objections/misunderstandings? Do you have a certain way you respond, or does it depend on the individual?

John: Of course there are standard answers—but sometimes God gives us a unique answer for a particular person.

Henry: It is important to study how to answer their common objections.

Don: Can you give us examples of answers that are convincing or helpful to people?

Nina: When we talk about the qualifications of a prophet, I ask my Muslim friends how they prove Muhammad came from God. I say that Jesus backed up his claims with his miracles, with his words. I ask them if Muhammad performed miracles or spoke words of wisdom and knowledge. Was his behaviour from God? I ask them to prove to me that Muhammad was the last prophet and that he came from God. Most times, they just say they believe it but can't prove it.

Don: You've been talking to Muslims about the gospel for many years now. Have you observed any changes in the way Muslims respond to you now, since the events of 9/11 and other world events involving Muslims?

Henry: Yes—before *we* were on the defensive as Christians. Now *Muslims* are defensive. They are embarrassed about much of what has happened in the world since then.

Nina: I think the proud spirit of Islam is broken. When we first came to the UK, I

met an Algerian man who wouldn't even have tea with us because it was *haram*. He swore he wouldn't even go back to Algeria before the Queen of England became a Muslim!

But now some Muslims are embarrassed by what their leaders say. There was a controversy over an Egyptian mufti who said in a fatwa that a Muslim woman should breastfeed a man to enable them to be in each other's company.

Don: What's the value of using the Qur'an when talking with Muslims?

Nina: When I use the Qur'an, I feel like I'm using a common language between us. I try to use what the Qur'an says about Jesus to steer the conversation to Him. That will lead me to talk about the foundation of the Christian message, about the Bible. It's a tool to build the first bridge.

John: I don't like to use any method that would compromise my faith. Using Islam or the Qur'an as a bridge is fine. But it is not my main focus. I focus on Jesus, not the Qur'an because for me it is not valid. I usually ask a Muslim, 'Do you know Jesus?' If they say yes, I ask more specifically, 'Do you know about him or know HIM?' They usually say they know him. So I say, 'OK, I'll give you ten minutes to tell me everything you know about Jesus and then I let them speak. This usually lasts for a minute or two because they don't really know Jesus!

So then I ask, 'Can I tell you what I know about him?' If they say yes, I share everything we agree about first. They usually love to disagree, so I start with things about which we agree.

Don: What are the things you agree on?

John: Everything but the crucifixion and resurrection. We agree on all his miracles and his powers and abilities; his teaching and his lifestyle and—I can even accept the Jesus spoke when he was in the cradle—he's God so he can do it! I don't talk about his nature or his divinity at first. A Muslim doesn't know these things so I don't start there. I can speak for two hours about Jesus Christ without disagreeing. Muslims love stories, so I connect everything to my life, his life, reality, and ultimately to God. During that time, I pray and ask God to open his mind and heart. I keep saying interesting stuff so he's intrigued. I allow God to work. I talk, but I let God work.

I know a strong Muslim at Speakers' Corner. One day he found me and called me over. He's well known, so lots of people gathered around. He said, 'You know brother, I have a problem with the book of Genesis.' I asked him what it was. He said, 'God told the serpent he would crawl on the ground and will eat from the sand. When I read this I was confused, so I started studying serpents but I found out that serpents don't eat sand.' Which is not true; serpents eat sand. So I said 'And?' He said, 'I came to the conclusion that this serpent must

be a Christian serpent.' Of course, he's making fun of me and everyone's laughing, so I laughed too and I played along. I told him that since this story made me doubt my faith I started studying other religions to find the real God. So when I studied about Islam, I found that his prophet travelled from Medina to Jerusalem on the back of a mule with two wings coming out of his hips and it took him there in less than one second. I told him this was confusing, so I decided to study mules. I found out that mules don't fly! So I concluded that this mule must be a Muslim mule. Then I said, 'So when you compare a serpent crawling on the sand with a prophet riding a flying mule with wings coming out of his hips—No, I think Christianity is true. I'll become a Christian.' And I walked away...

Henry: We have no problem using the Qur'an. For me, sometimes I use certain verses from it—for instance, the verse about Jesus being 'the word of God.' I ask my friend to imagine that I make a promise to meet them tomorrow at noon. They come to meet me but I'm not there. Then after a few days they see me and say, 'You said you'd meet me!'

I tell him, 'Me? I didn't tell you, it was just my word, not me.' They will say to me, 'You are crazy! You and your word are the same thing!' That's when I tell them that's what it means for Jesus to be the Word of God. God's Word and God are one in the same.

We use Qur'an first to establish the relationship and open the conversation with Muslims. In the end we have to use the Bible; it is the truth. You can't go halfway.

Dreams and Visions: An Historical Assessment of a Current Missiologi- cal Phenomenon among Muslims

by Rick Kronk

Rick (ThM, 1993) currently resides in southern Germany with his wife and family. He has spent the last 20 years fulfilling two passions: announcing the Good News to Muslim friends and neighbours and assisting the Church in understanding and responding to Islam. As a Bible teacher and avid interpreter of current events, Rick is frequently called upon to provide a biblical perspective on social, political and religious issues affecting relations between Islam and the West. In addition to his writing and speaking, Rick is engaged in developing curriculum for church leadership in the emerging Muslim-convert church as well as for workers among Muslims worldwide.

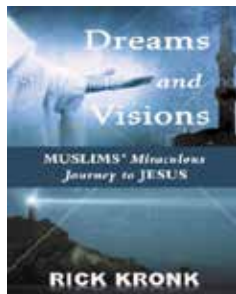
Rick has recently published a book on this topic. To order your copy, go to www.amazon.com, www.amazon.co.uk, www.barnesandnoble.com, or directly from the publisher in Europe at www.evangelistamedia.com. Cost: \$14.99 or 11 £, plus shipping and handling.

Dreams and Visions are back

The remarkable 'More Than Dreams' project of CBN, which was completed in the early 2000's and produced a website and multi-language DVD, did a wonderful job of recording stories of Muslim conversion from different regions of the world.

⁵ The stories were fascinating and the film production was a credit to the craft of movie making. But more importantly, the retelling of these stories illustrated how an all but hidden world of dreams and visions has been rediscovered. A quick internet search will generate hundreds of links to stories of dreams and visions and their impact on the lives of men and women worldwide. One result of the increased investment in mission efforts to Muslims over the last 30 years is that the Western Church has come face-to-face with this little-understood phenomenon. Furthermore, the proliferation of mission accounts of these supernatural experiences is causing the Church to ask serious questions about its own worldview and understanding of Scripture.

The Church in the West has struggled to recognize and appreciate what has been an operative part of cultures in the East and in Muslim cultures in particular. A look back at the history of the Western church will be instructive in helping us finding answers to such questions.



5. See www.morethandreams.com for access to the downloadable stories.

When Dreams and Visions were Common

Even a casual reading of the Bible reveals that dreams and visions played leading roles in the lives of many characters throughout biblical history. Starting with the life of Abraham, we find numerous incidents in which God gave instruction and warning by means of an audible voice that was heard even though nothing and no one was seen. In keeping with the Biblical pattern, whether it be God's call to Abraham to leave his place of residence (Genesis 12) or the later call to sacrifice his son Isaac (Genesis 22), Abraham received and believed these divine messages without doubt or argument, and acted accordingly.

Following Abraham, dreams and visions continued to play significant roles at key times in the lives of Jacob (Genesis 31) and Joseph. For Joseph, dreams and visions seemed to be of particular divine use and shaped not only his own personal family life (Genesis 37) but also the history of the Hebrews and that of the Egyptians (Genesis 40, 41). After Joseph, dreams and visions appeared as tools of divine instruction and call for those in positions of authority over the Jewish nation. Thus Gideon received divine counsel through a dream for his battle with the Midianites (Judges 7) and King Solomon was interrogated (1 Kings 3) and later encouraged by God (1 Kings 9) in dreams that confirmed divine provision and blessing.

Though the writings of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Obadiah, Nahum, and Habakkuk all include dream/vision accounts, it is in the life of Daniel that dreams and visions take centre stage. Three times Daniel was called upon to interpret the dreams and visions of others (chapter 2, 4 and 5). In chapter 7, we

When we move to the New Testament, we find dreams and visions present on the pages of the Gospels. After nearly 400 years of divine silence, God again began to speak. Matthew and Luke both recorded dream and vision encounters that accompanied the birth of Jesus: to Mary (Luke 1) and Joseph (Matthew 1), to the shepherds (Luke 2) and to the wise men (Matthew 2).

read that Daniel was treated to an extraordinary glimpse of coming world kingdoms. In the closing chapters (8 – 10), Daniel put words to fantastic visions of a future day.

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(Luke 1) and Joseph (Matthew 1), to the shepherds (Luke 2) and to the wise men (Matthew 2). Each of the synoptic Gospel writers (Matthew 3, Mark 1, Luke 3) recorded God's pronouncement 'You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' at the advent of Jesus' public ministry. Finally, Matthew (27) recorded the dream warning sent to Pilate's wife, prior to the judgment of Jesus and subsequent condemnation and crucifixion.

Even as the story of faith continues across the pages of the New Testament, we

read how dreams and visions recurred in the lives of the Apostles and in particular Paul and Peter. In Acts 2, we see Peter explaining how in the last days, God will visit His people with dreams and visions. Chapter 9 records how Saul heard God speak audibly on the road to Damascus. In chapters 10 & 11 Peter experienced divine visionary intervention—a thrice-repeated event that resulted in the conversion of Cornelius and his household. In Acts 16, Paul received his call to Macedonia through a dream. Finally, in Acts 19 we read that he was encouraged to stay in Corinth and preach the gospel in a dream. The final book of the New Testament, the Revelation of John, is a glorious and complex portrayal of a divine vision.

As the New Testament came to a close and the life of the Church struggled against persecution from without and heresy and strife from within, Church leaders sought to collect the apostolic writings to form a coherent whole upon which the history and doctrine of the faith could stand. Finally recognized as the canon of Scripture at the Synod of Hippo (393 AD) and confirmed at the Council of Carthage (397 AD) and Trent (1564 AD), the accepted Old and New Testament writings were considered a complete compilation of the message of God to humanity. Yet God continued to speak.

Extant writings from the first few centuries of the church show that dreams and visions figured prominently in the lives of the saints and Fathers of the Church. According to Kelsey, ‘for the first 500-600 years of Christianity it was thought to be perfectly natural for a Christian to have a supernatural encounter with Jesus. According to the theology of the day, such an encounter was the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit’ (Kelsey 1978, 22). Furthermore, he notes that virtually every Church Father, from Justin Martyr to Origen, from Cyprian and Augustine believed that dreams and visions were a valid means of personal revelation (Kelsey 1976, 167). Augustine heard what he thought to be the voice of a child singing a song (when there was no child nearby), the words of which – ‘pick it up and read’ – led to his conversion.

Philosophy Gains the Upper Hand

As the Church stumbled over the next several hundred years with the decline of the West throughout the course of the Middle Ages, and later faced confrontation from a growing and expanding Islamic foe, questions associated with maintaining the purity of the faith became prominent. Efforts to resolve doctrinal questions and maintain a common expression of the faith were highlighted in Church councils, which were convened as often as deemed necessary, from the earliest at Nicea (325 AD) to the latest of the 21 ecumenical councils of the Roman Catholic Church, Vatican II (1962-1965). From these councils important doctrinal conclusions were often explicitly detailed in published creeds such as the Nicene Creed, which, among other things, took a stand against the teachings of Arius by affirming and upholding the eternal nature of the Son of God.

Throughout this era of the early Church and until the invention of the printing press (1440 AD) and the release of the Gutenberg edition of the Bible just a few years later, copies of the Scriptures were relatively few and those that existed were the fruit of a painstakingly long process of hand copying. Few outside of royal or ecclesiastical circles could read and the sole means of retaining and transmitting the faith rested with the Church. The Church believed itself to be the representative and mouthpiece of God on earth and as a result looked unfavourably on those who opposed its teaching or who claimed to receive a direct message from God (bypassing the Church altogether) via a dream or vision. The case of Joan of Arc is one notable example.

Despite the biblical accounts and the history of supernatural encounters, the belief in a God who still speaks was eventually smothered by the influence of Thomas Aquinas' philosophy of knowledge. The illustrious philosopher, Aristotle, made his mark on Greek thought in the 4th century BC. His extant works include essays that treat dreams.⁶ For Aristotle, dreams were nothing more than the result of natural forces. There appeared to be little coherence between the supposed importance of the dream or vision, and the social class of the recipient: a coherence, which he maintained, would have been there if dreams and visions were indeed sent from the gods. For Aristotle rationality ruled supreme, and dreams and visions – whatever message they claimed to bring – needed to submit to the analysis of reason (Gallop 1990).

Though scholastic and philosophical works on dreams and visions continued to surface throughout the Middle Ages, it was not until the 13th century that Thomas Aquinas developed a theological system that placed a boundary between the supernatural and the rational. In short, Aquinas reached back to the philosophical framework of Aristotle and concluded that though

Fundamentally however, Aquinas' use of Aristotelian thought reinforced the conclusion that knowledge could really only be perceived through the five senses and reason. With this as the foundation for his theology, no real room was left for dreams and visions, or for any supernatural experience.

dreams and visions were possible vehicles for divine communication (he was a Biblicist after all) they were nevertheless suspect and should be considered only with great care, since the images and messages conveyed by them could just as well be demonic or natural in origin. Fundamentally however, Aquinas' use of Aristotelian thought reinforced the conclusion that knowl-

edge could really only be perceived through the five senses and reason. With this as the foundation for his theology, no real room was left for dreams and visions, or for any supernatural experience.

In *Escape from Reason*, Francis Schaeffer provides a helpful summary of the effect of Aquinas' thought on Western civilization. For Schaeffer, the influence trickled down from philosophy (through men such as Kant, Hegel and Kierkegaard) to af-

6. See Aristotle: 'On Sleep and Waking', 'On Dreams' and 'On Prophecy in Sleep.'

fect art, music, general culture and finally theology itself (Schaeffer 1993, 234). By the time theology was thus infected, Aquinas' conclusions regarding the nature of humanity had sown the seeds that gave rise to natural theology whose conclusions could be derived from empirical evaluations and analytical exercises without recourse to the Scriptures. With the arrival of the nineteenth century, the influence of the previous two centuries of Enlightenment thinking with its materialistic and humanistic components propelled the thought of Aquinas to the forefront of Roman Catholic theology. By embracing such a worldview, strangely enough, the Church found itself in a position to represent a supernatural reality to a congregation who no longer had hope of any access to it. Kelsey notes,

The Christian philosophies of the past three hundred years have overlooked the fact that God wants to encounter men and women and that they can actually know God. A division arose between the Church (who did not want authority questioned) and the secular world because the Church refused to tolerate, let alone encourage, the part of scientific thought that allowed humans to discover that the earth revolves around the sun.

The Church's intolerance of this inquiring spirit forced scientific thought to develop on a completely secular level and to become antireligious to the point of maintaining that human beings have no Godly spirit. This narrow-minded attitude eventually caused thinking Christians to adopt secular thought exclusively and become convinced that God could be known only through reason and not through experience. As a result of this type of thought, people came to believe that while God worked in World happenings, He could not be experienced personally (Kelsey 1978, 7-8).

The Return of Dreams and Visions to the West

One effect of the rise of humanism was the genesis of an insatiable appetite to discover. If man was indeed the epitome of natural existence and the master of his fate, then the pursuit of knowledge was essential to the realization of human destiny. With this in mind, the 18th and 19th centuries saw advances in medicine (germ theory, pasteurization) and technology (industrial use of electricity and the steam engines, telephone, and so on) which propelled humanity forward by great leaps. As significant as these and other achievements turned out to be for the progress of Western civilization, scientific discovery was not limited to the physical sciences. One name in particular stands out from this period as being pivotal in understanding the function of the human mind and emotional aspect of humanity: the Austrian neurologist and psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939). Interestingly, Freud also unlocked the door that led to the recovery of dreams and visions as valid instruments for accessing knowledge. One of Freud's key works, entitled "The Interpretation of Dreams"

(first published in 1913), was a summary of his findings relative to the phenomenon of dreams and visions experienced by patients under his care. In this book, Freud set out to demonstrate that the interpretation of dreams and visions was instrumental to the proper treatment of neurosis and psychosis. Though dreams and visions for Freud were due to natural causes, his analysis of the meaning and purpose of dreams resulted in a reintroduction of the integrity of dreams to the West. That he did so from the perspective of medicine, even psychology, has given dreams a certain social respectability, which has grown with the improved perception of psychology throughout the 20th century.

Another prominent scientist of the late 19th and early 20th century, Carl Jung, adjusted Freud's definition of the meaning and purpose of dreams. In contrast to Freud, Jung concluded that all dreams fit into the following categories: 1) Dreams of external stimulus, 2) Dreams of projected honour or dishonour, 3) Dreams of hidden personal conflict, 4) Dreams of hidden wishes, 5) Dreams of the future and 6) Dreams of warning (Jung 1950, 102-6).

As such, Jung disagreed with Freud's belief that dreams were 'a mere facade, behind which something has been carefully hidden' (Jung, 30). With this assertion, Jung suggested the possibility that some dreams have an outside source both in their content as well as in their occurrence, which may in many instances, be divine. In so doing, he aligned himself with the prevailing opinion of the early Church Fathers, that dreams were a means of divine encounter. Though he considered himself incompetent to correctly apply the metaphysical and philosophical considerations and implications of his observations (1, 2), he clearly acknowledged that there was more to dreams and their interpretations than a collective consideration of internal conflict.

Interestingly, it is through the vehicle of neurology and psychiatry that dreams and visions made a return to legitimacy in Western civilization. Though the Church struggled with the underlying philosophy, conclusions and treatment at times offered by the practitioners of such science, their efforts to understand humans from the inside has opened up a glimpse of the supernatural and helped remove the lid from a closed-box worldview, outside of which nothing exists.

An Unusual Discovery

Lilias Trotter (1853 - 1928) was a British artist and a missionary for over 38 years to the Muslims of Algeria. After serving God in England for a time with the YWCA, she went with her own funding to Algeria to serve God there. In 1888, she founded the Algiers Mission Band, which was incorporated into Arab World Ministries in the 1960's. In addition to a number of books, which she wrote and beautifully illustrated, including *Parables of the Cross*, *Parables of the Christ Life*, and a book for Sufi Muslims *The Way of the Sevenfold Secret*, Lilias Trotter kept a journal of her work in Algeria.

Some fifty years after Trotter's initial departure to North Africa, another British missionary, Constance Padwick, compiled a commentary on the Trotter diaries. In a 1939 article entitled 'Dreams and Vision: Some Notes from a Diary' (Padwick, 205-216), Padwick categorizes the accounts of dreams and visions that Trotter recorded throughout her career in Algeria. Padwick distinguished four types of dream/vision events:

1. Moral Warning – example: Pilate's wife (Matthew 27:19)
2. Guidance – example: Joseph/Mary's departure into Egypt (Matthew 2:13)
3. Encouragement – example: God's encouragement of Paul during the shipwreck (Acts 27:24)
4. The Presence (of God/Christ) – example: Stephen's stoning (Acts 7:56)

What can be observed from the Trotter diaries, despite the confusion over the supernatural that plagued European society and the Church, is a conviction that God speaks through dreams and visions, and he does so without respect to gender or social status. The Trotter diaries recount literally dozens of first-hand stories of men and women who encountered Christ. In some cases, these supernatural encounters led these Muslim men and women to faith in Christ; in other cases, the dream or vision served to confirm a young believer and encourage obedience in the face of opposition and doubt.

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It is likely that Padwick's analysis of the Trotter diaries constituted the first extended treatment of dreams and visions in the missionary community. No doubt others had encountered similar experiences, but little exists that shows the attention to detail and analysis that Padwick offered in her attempts not only to preserve the experiences of Lilius Trotter but also to make sense of them missiologically.

Dreams and Visions – Divine Access to the Heart of Islam

According to the recorded history and traditions of his life, Muhammad had at least two angelic visions in which he was instructed to recite the words conveyed by the angelic being, Gabriel (Bell 1934, 149). These incidents, exceptional as they were in that no other similar vision experiences are recorded throughout the remainder of Muhammad's life (Gilchrist 1986, 100), served as the inception of the Qur'an and the birth of the Islamic faith. Sura 53:1-15 records the initial vision event as follows,

By the Star when it goes down, your Companion is neither astray nor being misled, nor does he say (aught) of (his own) desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him: He was taught by one mighty in Power, endued with

Wisdom: for he appeared (in stately form) while he was in the highest part of the horizon: Then he approached and came closer, and it was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer; So did (Allah) convey the inspiration to His Servant (Conveyed) what He (meant) to convey. The (Prophet's) (mind and) heart in no way falsified that which he saw. Will ye then dispute with him concerning what he saw? For indeed he saw him at a second descent, Near the Lote-tree of the utmost boundary. Near it is the Garden of Abode. (Yusuf Ali, 1990)

Because this incident marks the beginnings of Islam it is highly regarded by Muslims. The theological conclusions, which resulted from this supernatural encounter, have become foundational to the Islamic faith. They include issues of man's relationship to God, the means and nature of revelation, and the mark or identity of a prophet.

Of particular interest is the nature of revelation that resulted in the Qur'an. According to *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*:

...the theory of the revelation of the Koran is particularly complex. The Koran was revealed or descended in its entirety in one night, the 'Night of Destiny', into the soul of the Prophet (Muhammad), which is itself that night. Thereupon it became manifest through him, in segments, sometimes entire surahs, as particular circumstances and requirements in the world and the Prophet's life called them forth. The Prophet said that this manifestation of the Koran came in two ways: 'Sometimes Gabriel reveals to me as one man to another, and that is easy; but at other times it is like the ringing of bell penetrating my very heart, rending me, and that way is the most painful'. (Glassé 1991, 335)

Thus, revelation and its common vehicle, dreams and visions, are inseparably united in the worldview of Islam which, since its rather abrupt beginnings, has continued to benefit from supernatural (of heavenly or demonic origin, without distinction) guidance gleaned from such phenomena. In a worldview that embraces the

perspective that 'faith is conviction through direct experience, and not the result of a process of reason' (Glassé 1991, 231), dreams and visions play a significant role in informing and defining religious meaning. In contrast to Western thought which has historically given little credence to the unconscious, Muslims are fully aware of and engaged in a daily experience that is not only open to, but depends upon supernatural encounters such as occur in dreams and visions.

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Dreams are central to the cosmological outlook of ordinary Muslims from founder to followers, dreams form part of the total paradigm within which Muslims live and move, touch and are touched, meet and are met. They are not optional; they are a meaningful component of life. (Musk 1988, 164)

The Arabic language makes use of multiple terms to refer to the revelatory process carried by dreams and visions though it is apparent that distinction between the types and/or means of the revelatory process is not as important as the event itself. Despite the fact that dreams and visions appear to be unique types of experiences differentiated by the state of sleep of the dreamer, the Arabic terms used to describe such do not often provide a clear distinction.⁷

Throughout the Muslim world, dreams serve a variety of societal functions. For instance, among the Tausag of the Philippines, medicine men begin their medical practice through dreams in which they are visited by *shayatin* (devils). In Afghan Turkestan, the *bakhshi* (doctor) will spend the night sleeping in the house of a patient. The dream received during the night becomes the key to diagnosing the patient's illness and defining the appropriate treatment. The Kabyles of Algeria put food on the graves of deceased relatives if they dream of them, in an effort to communicate with them. In Pakistan, the shrines of dead saints are established as the direct result of dreams, especially as the details of such are revealed in the dreams of recognized holy men (Musk 1990, 186-187).

If dreams and visions are so popular among Muslims and serve as a primary means of revelation, how are they to be understood in terms of Muslim theology? In answer to this question, one must look to Islamic literature on the subject, which helps to explain the separation of the generally monolithic orthodoxy of Islam from its popular and culturally varied expressions of the faith. The former is referred to as 'formal' or 'official' Islam, whereas the latter is known as 'popular' or 'folk' Islam.

Formal Islam embodies the official doctrines and practice of the Islamic faith that are accepted across the Muslim world. Included are such things as the Five Pillars (Es-

7. The Arabic words commonly used to refer to these experiences do not provide for explicit categories. For instance, the word 'ru'ya' literally means 'vision'. However, Surah 48:27 states, 'God has already fulfilled in truth the dream [vision, 'ar-ru'ya] for His Prophet. . . ' Here the term may mean either 'vision' or, most likely, a 'prophetic dream' indicating God's provision or activity on behalf of the Prophet before the events occurred in reality. A second Arabic term used in this context is 'tanzil'. Though the word literally means, 'a sending down [from Heaven], its implicit reference to the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad, endows it with a much broader meaning suggestive of the dream and vision revelatory event. The third common Arabic term used in reference to dreams and visions is 'al-Wahy.' This word denotes 'inspiration from God', and, like the term 'tanzil', is suggestive of not only the content of revelation, but of the means and process as well. (*The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* 1991, S.v. 'Ru'ya,' 339, 'tanzil,' 397, 'al-Wahy,' 416)

posito 1988), the recognized festivals, and reverence and study of the Qur'an. Formal Islam holds to and presents God as the Creator who is functionally removed from his creation – what some might call deistic. By virtue of its dependence on the Qur'an as the primary text of doctrinal instruction, formal Islam deals with the universal issues of life, such as origins, destiny and the true meaning of life. Finally, formal Islam is what is taught in the Qur'an schools and centres of religious training that prepare men for roles as Imams and Islamic scholars and teachers across the Muslim world.

In contrast, popular, or folk Islam, encompasses the myriad colloquial beliefs and practices of Muslims which, in addition to the Five Pillars and other formal aspects of the faith, are intended to give meaning and counsel in the daily course of life (Esposito 1988, 90-95). Because God is understood to be far off and uninvolved in the immediate affairs of men, folk Islam draws upon local beliefs and practices to respond to pressing daily needs and provide answers to the challenges and fears of living in a hostile world. Unlike the commonly held beliefs and practices that fall under formal Islam, the beliefs and practices of folk Islam are not codified and taught in formal settings. They are instead handed down from generation to generation and, as such, vary widely from region to region and even from family to family across the Muslim world.

Responding to this Communication Challenge

Because science and its methodology have become so significant to the Western mind in defining reality and managing the drama of life, Westerners are predisposed to think and act in terms of a strong dichotomy between sacred and secular. As a result, the Western mind more readily accepts as true that which is repeatable and verifiable and mistrusts that which is not. The Muslim, on the other hand, more readily accepts as true that which he or she can experience. Thus, when a Western Christian approaches a Muslim

whose worldview is dominated by folk Islam, an inherent worldview gap often has to be bridged in order for real communication to take place.

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What is a Christian to do? How can we make ourselves understood to our Muslim friends? What is involved in appropriate communication that effectively bridges the worldview gap between the two? On the one hand, Scripture makes it clear that because of the fall, humanity is under the curse of sin and blinded by Satan so that left to himself he cannot

understand the gospel apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. II Corinthians 4:3-4 makes it very clear that, '...if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbe-

lieving so that they might not see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.' Yet God has ordained that the gospel should be preached by people to other people so that they might hear and be saved. Romans 10: 14-15, asks,

How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, *'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!'*

The answer to the questions Paul raises here is that, left to themselves humans will not and cannot hear or believe without the Holy Spirit of God making use of a preacher: one of us.

This then leads us to the next question: if God has ordained to make use of people as his mouthpieces for the Gospel, how can we present ourselves as the most useful vessels possible to communicate such a message? First, the Christian must understand the essentials of communication. Communication consists, in its simplest form, of three components: the source (who is communicating), the coded message (what is being communicated), and the respondent (the one(s) who receive the message) (Hesselgrave 1991, 41). Once we understand this, our task is to formulate the message that we wish to communicate accurately; with appropriate content, making use of appropriate means, and having in mind the intended audience. Second, the Christian must accept the fact that there are built-in obstacles to understanding the message. Though the evangelistic task is fundamentally one of communication, which is 'an elemental human activity', this fundamental evangelistic task also encounters 'a fundamental human problem' (Hesselgrave, 91), which is the reality of differing worldviews.

The Western Christian who intends to communicate the gospel to Muslims, for example, is automatically confronted with additional challenges in preparing an effective message, which are not just cross-cultural in nature, but cross-worldview. These include such things as competing understandings of truth, differing meanings of shared terms, and undefined concepts. The reality is that if we fail to grasp and respond effectively to these challenges, we cannot be sure that what we intend to communicate will be understood (Muller 2001, 33-34). Nevertheless, accurate communication requires that the sender deliver the message in such a way and by such means that the receiver is able, without adapting to the sender, to understand the message as intended by the sender. To do this, the sender must make use of forms, symbols and language drawn from the worldview of the receiver that adequately conveys the message so that what is understood reflects what was intended. Ultimately, this work is accomplished by the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8). However,

humanly speaking, if the Western Christian is to truly communicate, he or she must encode the message in language and symbols which, when transmitted to a Muslim audience, are rightly received and decoded with the intended meaning (Hesselgrave, 41).

In other words, the Christian whose aim is to communicate the gospel to Muslims must understand both the Muslim's worldview and his own. In so doing, he or she must then grasp that the Muslim worldview and biblical worldview are in conflict to the extent that at some level and with regard to certain affirmations (e.g. the identity and role of Jesus Christ), to embrace one is to deny the other. Yet the Western Christian must also realize that a Muslim, to the extent that he or she has escaped Aristotelian influence (the notion that reality can only be known through sensory perception and reason), will be more receptive to experiential phenomena - such as dreams and visions - than he is. As a result, effective communication to this Muslim must take into consideration the role of experiential phenomena.

Despite such challenges to effective communication and formidable worldview differences in communicating the gospel to Muslims, a Christian is not operating within a vacuum. The Scriptures provide the content of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4), the parameters of gospel communication and appropriate behaviour of gospel witness. Furthermore, both Old and New Testaments provide examples of dream and vision experiences that are of divine origin that had a strong influence on the life of the dreamer.

Conclusion

We Christians are to follow the example of Christ in his living (Eph. 5:1) and the example of Paul in his preaching (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9). In so doing, we are free to utilize everything the Scripture authorizes in order to communicate effectively. We therefore need to try to understand the worldviews from which we come and into which we go so as to identify where each of these overlap with the biblical worldview. We can then utilize that overlap as an avenue of communication for the gospel. Thus, we can seize the opportunity provided by the openness many Muslims have to dreams and visions. We can anticipate that God may use this phenomenon as a means by which an encounter with Christ takes place. With this in mind, we can freely engage our Muslim friends in discussions about dreams and visions that each of us may have experienced or heard about. We can explain those dream and vision elements that point to biblical realities and gospel truth.

The increased evangelistic efforts among Muslims over the last thirty years has brought to light the way that God is using dreams and visions to bring many Muslims to faith in Christ. We realize that not all dreams are revelatory. Some, perhaps even the majority, are simply the products of normal physiological functions as noted

by Freud and Jung. However, the biblical, historical and experiential data suggests that God may choose to communicate through dreams. Moreover, given the Islamic worldview, dreams and visions may be used by God to prepare an individual to 'hear' the gospel message and respond to it. These may open the way that leads to life for many who seemed beyond the reach of traditional gospel approaches. Any Christians who are in contact with Muslims would do well to investigate this divine vehicle of supernatural encounter.

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PART 2: BOOK REVIEWS

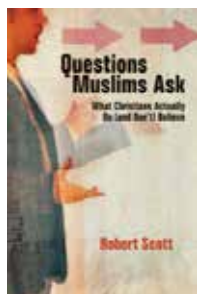
Questions Muslims Ask: What Christians Actually Do (and Don't) Believe

By Robert Scott

Published in the UK by IVP, 2011 as

Dear Abdullah – Eight questions Muslim people ask about Christianity

This book has a distinct flavour that sets it apart from the flood of Christian books on Islam that has almost inundated the market in recent years. It begins with the author's intention that this book be read by both interested Christians and curious Muslims. What an enquiring, open-minded Muslim would make of the book I am not sure. To explain one of the consequences of this objective let me digress.



A year ago, Interserve (UK) released an equipping DVD based upon Steve Bell's book, 'Friendship First', which bears the same title. (An excellent tool!) Its subtitle is, 'Ordinary Christians discussing **good news** with ordinary Muslims'. One of the course's six sessions has an assignment in which participants are invited to write a 1,000 word outline explaining the gospel to a Muslim. The purpose of the homework is to encourage people to use words, phrases and ideas that would be readily comprehensible, theologically and culturally, to the Muslim hearer. In many places, Robert's book reads like a polished and much more erudite version of several assignments lovingly proffered by course students.

His use of the phrase Jesus the Messiah to describe Christ, Rescuer as a synonym for Saviour, and eternal rest for eternal life are examples. The limited feedback from the local 'Friendship First' alumni is that they have found such language accessible to their Muslim friends.

The second distinctive would be that Robert draws extensively not only on his personal interactions with Muslims and believers from Muslim backgrounds (BMBs) but from the 'approach' called, 'Meetings for Better Understanding'.⁸ These non-polemical, non-confrontational meetings provide the opportunity for Christians to learn more about Islam and how ordinary Muslims practice their religion but they also challenge Christians to explain Christian essentials in user-friendly language.

The third distinctive is that there are some new insightful nuggets in communicating the gospel to Muslims, which come through seeing the Scriptures through Muslim objections. For example, I have never come across the proposed parallel

8. *Meetings for Better Understanding*, a book explaining this approach, is available at www.cepbookstore.com.[†]

between the ‘unlettered’ Muhammad and the carpenter from Nazareth when dealing with the Muslim-claimed ‘miracle’ of the Qur’an (144-145).

The fourth distinctive is that some of the chapter titles are arresting. What do I mean? Rather than using traditional Christian phrasing for the predictable Muslim objections to Christian truths Robert uses unexpected expressions, e.g., ‘What sort of God can be born as a baby?’ It is illustrative of the author’s desire to attract the attention of a potential Muslim reader while retaining his focus on the person and character of God. The seasoned reader is very aware that Muslims have very little to say or write about God (look around a Muslim bookshop). This book reminds us that in our ‘good news’ sharing we need to keep returning to the God who has made himself known throughout Biblical history and is active today. Robert is strong on Covenant and the God who makes himself known personally. (Chapter 1)

So what are you getting?

Eight, 20-page chapters keep the reader thirsty for more. At the end of each chapter Robert summarizes the chapter in three bulleted ‘Key Points’ and offers six bulleted questions, three ‘For followers of Jesus the Messiah’ and three ‘For Muslim friends’. The questions would be particularly good to use in a mixed Christian-Muslim study group.

Robert is unequivocal about his Christian faith and the authority of Scripture (17-18). In a section on methodology he writes, ‘I also shied away from using the Qur’an too much because it isn’t “my” book’ (18). Where he quotes Qur’anic verses and associated Muslim commentary his inferences remind us of interpretive chinks in the Qur’anic text but break no new ground, e.g., Surah 5:43-46 on the authority of the Old and New Testaments (136).

Robert looks at some other areas that are sometimes omitted in our exchanges with Muslims. Chapter 2 is entitled, ‘Don’t Christians Only Do Sundays?’ and looks at 24/7 Christianity. Chapter 6 is entitled, ‘Where Does Christianity End and Western Culture Begin?’ and considers how knowing Jesus the Messiah transforms attitudes to food, clothes etc. He writes in a later chapter, ‘that Islam seems often tied to one culture and one time’ (145).

In addition to addressing ‘The Big Four’ (p. 13) – Jesus did not die on a cross; Jesus is neither the Son of God nor divine; the Trinity is wrong; the Bible is corrupt – Robert looks at some other areas that are sometimes omitted in our exchanges with Muslims. Chapter 2 is entitled, ‘Don’t Christians Only Do Sundays?’ and looks at 24/7 Christianity. Chapter 6 is entitled, ‘Where Does Christianity End and Western Culture Begin?’ and considers how knowing Jesus the Messiah transforms attitudes to food, clothes etc. He writes in a later chapter, ‘that Islam seems often tied to one culture and one time’ (145).

Chapter 4 on the divinity of Jesus and the crucifixion is particularly help-

ful, for example, quoting Mark Beaumont's quote of the ninth century Christian theologian, Abu Ra'ita, 'It wasn't a case of God taking a son to himself, but rather that the eternal Word or Son took "flesh" to himself' (83).

In unpacking and explaining the Trinity in Chapter 5, Robert has some lovely turns of phrase like, 'Biblical monotheism is not about mathematics but uniqueness, incomparability and depth' (92). His discussion on the implications for the individual and community of Islamic 'Tawhid' (radical 'oneness') over and against the rich relational nature of a Triune God is perceptive and refreshing.

Chapter 8 (the final chapter) affirms the necessity of the Holy Spirit to open eyes, underlines the certain assurance that faith in Jesus the Messiah confers, and gives some signs of hope where new communities of BMBs are flourishing, e.g. the growing number of Iranian believers.

Any reservations? There is some repetition of themes and cross-referencing, which can be a little frustrating, but otherwise the writing is lucid and uplifting.

I recommend this book because it glorifies our Triune God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It reminded me of the Trinity's 'deep unity' that surpasses anything that sterile radical monotheism can offer the human condition – body and soul. We are reminded that 'truth' and not methodology is what presents Christ authentically to Muslims and that the message of Scripture fits with the world we experience (132).

Read this book for your soul alone and you will be blessed.

Reviewed by Keith Fraser-Smith

Muslims of the Arab world have been Keith's focus for more than 40 years. He has served in a variety of leadership roles with AWM in Media, the Middle East, Arabian Peninsula, Globalization and UK ministry and is now leading a local CPM team in the UK. Among his many interests is his pleasure in writing book reviews.

Christ Above All: Conversational Evangelism with People of Other Faiths

by Daniel Shayesteh

Sydney, Australia: Talesh Books, 2003 & 2010, 239 pages

Dr. Daniel Shayesteh (PhD in Philosophy) has written a refreshing and encouraging book that does a *great job* of explaining how to have effective conversations about truth, God and the Gospel, with men and women of all of the major faiths and ideologies

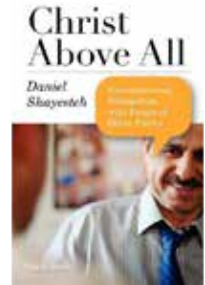
that are ‘out there’. Shayesteh’s own pilgrimage to faith in Christ from Islam,⁹ led him, an Iranian, to do his doctoral studies in philosophy (in Turkey), in which he studied the philosophies and worldviews of major world religions. He is very well equipped to speak with authority and confidence in declaring that Christ is truly *above all* other competing belief systems.

In this relatively short book, Shayesteh has done a masterful job of concisely summing up the core teachings of the world’s major ideologies (except Animism). He devotes a relatively short chapter to each in turn: Communism, Secular Humanism, the New Age, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, Islam and Christianity. Shayesteh is refreshingly direct in expressing his conviction that we must seek to *convert* people from all other belief systems to the only true one—Christianity. His response to the arrival of so many immigrants from the major world religions into the West is very frank: ‘It is the conviction of this writer that western Christians... must convert these immigrants or be converted by them’ (vii). He has written this book because he has found that Christians are typically not up to the challenge of defending and explaining Christian truth to all peoples. Shayesteh is convinced that skilled use of natural reasoning can enable Christians to expose the weaknesses in all other worldviews, and convince people of the truth in Christ, so that they can be saved through him (ix). Listen to him express his strong confidence and conviction:

It is the contention of this writer that *the Christian faith is relevant to all of life and has every explanation for everything in all dimensions of life*. On the other hand, non-Christian religions and philosophies have deep problems in their explanations of life and reality. If we can point out what these problems are and present a biblical answer, it is possible that many will be enlightened....

It is imperative that we understand the problems with non-Christian worldviews and prepare ourselves to counter them with *attractive and irrefutable reasoning from the Bible* so that they can receive the message of Christ with their mind, heart and soul and in the understanding of it to rejoice in it. (vii, *emphasis added*)

One of the most interesting aspects of his argument is his apparent conviction that non-Christians have the *capacity* to understand the truth and to decide whether they will believe it or not: ‘God has ordained that through biblical understanding and reasoning we can be winners of souls for his kingdom’ (ix). Shayesteh is confident that if non-believers were shown the superiority of Christ in comparison to their own



9. Shayesteh tells the powerful story of his conversion in *The House I Left Behind: A Journey from Islam to Christ* (Talesh Books, 2012). I heard him tell his story to a conference for BMBS in September 2012. The story is very compelling and gives one more context to appreciate this particular book.

gods, they would surely give their hearts to Christ (x). Reading between the lines, I do not think that Shayesteh is discounting the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing people to Christ. Rather, he is stressing that the Holy Spirit can use reason and truth to open the eyes of people to the Gospel. He wants us to use our God given ability to explain Christian faith to non-believers in compelling ways.

Following this stunningly positive and confident preface, Shayesteh goes on in his first chapter to argue that all people need to have *intelligent reasons* for everything they believe and for choosing whom they follow. He reminds us that biblical Christianity is the only world faith that continually calls its adherents to examine their own beliefs deeply and be sure that they know and are obeying the truth. Listen to Shayesteh explain this:

If people discover that their philosophy or their god is against freedom, unity and peace, they will be challenged and motivated to search for the truth. Eventually they will believe in Christ.

We can be confident that there are clear and rational reasons for our faith in Christ and we make sure we are equipped to defend it against all other beliefs and religions.... We need to challenge the followers of all beliefs and philosophies that have rejected reason and believe in the randomness of evolution or in dictatorship. They need to understand that intellectual honesty and integrity stands against all philosophies that make no distinction between right and wrong.

We Christians are better able than the followers of other beliefs to answer questions of life because our faith offers certainty to people's hearts and through reason is proved true and superior to other faiths or philosophies. (15)

Following his two opening chapters, Shayesteh spends more than a third of the book presenting and engaging with nine belief systems (listed above). In each chapter he concisely presents the core of the belief system, and then has a lengthier section in which he poses a series of questions of the belief systems and explains why the answers that each belief system gives to these questions are unsatisfactory. In his discussion of Islam, he focuses much attention on the Islamic reality/teaching that Allah inspires Sin. He charges Islam with teaching that Allah has evil purposes in creation. Listen to him explain this perspective:

Though Muslims believe in the uniqueness, purity and holiness of Allah, the statements in the Qur'an about the inspiration of sin in humankind and Satan by Allah prove the opposite.

Why does Allah blame people for their rebellion, if he himself has desired and created them to be rebellious (a sinner)? Why would a god, if he is merciful, treat the righteous in the same manner as the unrighteous? If the mercy of Allah does not protect a righteous Muslim from the horror of hell, *what else may be concluded but that Allah's mercy is tyranny?* (89, 90 emphasis added)

I found that the third and forth sections of the book offer much help for us as we engage Muslims in conversations about truth and the Gospel. In part three, Shayesteh proposes that there are *three key questions* that can and must be asked of every belief system: (1) What is sin and where does it come from? (2) What is human destiny? (3) Is the true God just? He devotes a chapter to each of these questions in turn in chapters 12 – 14.

In the fourth part, he presents examples/models of evangelistic conversations with a communist, a New Ager and a Muslim (chaps 15-17). Chapter 17, ‘Dialoguing with a Muslim’ is full of great insight. This chapter alone makes the book worth buying and reading. Shayesteh structures the chapter with a question or a comment from a Muslim, followed by Shayesteh’s analysis and explanation of the meaning of the Muslim’s comment, and then his reply to the comment. He begins the dialogue (which at 42 pages in length is his longest chapter) with a ‘hypothetical’ invitation from a Muslim (an Imam) for Shayesteh to become a Muslim. Both his explanations of the Muslim’s words, and his own responses, offer considerable insight into how Muslims think and misunderstand Christian doctrines and Scripture. Here is just one example of the way he explains Muslim thinking:

Ali is confusing himself... His lack of knowledge has caused him to be trapped in the misinformation Muslim scholars have spread everywhere in order to dissuade their followers from reading the Bible or listening to Christians. I asked him to focus on the first step and respond to my questions, but he has refused to do so. He may do this again and again, but I will not give up and need to remind and encourage him to continually focus on the main issues... You need to pray always and ask God for the guidance of God and for his special touch. (18-2)

Shayesteh concludes his book with a fascinating presentation of the Trinity as vital for salvation. This chapter, ‘No Salvation without the Trinity’, confronts head on the Muslim objection to the Trinity and suggests that it is only the God of the Bible who can provide both salvation and satisfactory answers to all questions of significance. The understanding of God taught by all other belief systems utterly fails to satisfy or save any sinner.

Even though Shayesteh has been a believer in Christ for several decades, his book brims with the strong and excited confidence in God’s awesome truth that is more typical of new believers. He is *profoundly* convinced that Christ is the only possible answer that satisfies humanity’s greatest needs and longings. If, as you live among and talk to Muslims repeatedly and have become discouraged that you get nowhere in conversations with them, I warmly encourage you to read *Christ Above All*. God may use it to renew your enthusiasm for the gospel and the excitement and privilege we have in talking to people about Christ.

Reviewed by Don Little

Reaching the Heart and Mind of Muslims

by Matthew Stone

Self-published in the USA in 2012, 95 pages, ISBN 97814675371315

(If you cannot find the book, write to me (seedbed.editor@sent.com) and I will put you directly in touch with the author who is willing to sell the book at cost for \$15.

Though he does not identify himself or give any background information about himself, the author of this little book on approaches to sharing our faith with Muslims has a background that gives him a unique perspective on his topic. Matthew Stone is Caucasian American, with Jewish heritage, who converted to Islam while doing his doctorate in philosophy. He spent a number of years as the leading American preacher/apologist for Islam before being led to faith in Christ through friendship with some caring professors in a Christian college. Stone has doctorates in both philosophy and psychology, and he serves as a therapist and pastor. He has been on both sides of the experience of seeking to urge someone to leave their faith and confess a different one. It is thus instructive that he begins by suggesting that his ‘model’ is the ‘Indiana Jones’ model—‘I’m making this up as I go.’ Stone repeatedly stresses that every Muslim and every situation is different, so one has to adapt one’s approach to the person with whom one is talking.

This first edition shows many signs of being a rush job (which the author told me it was) and it clearly needs a good editor and a re-publication (which I understand is in the works). Nevertheless, Stone offers a great deal of wisdom for our witness without really giving us a ‘method’. He conveys more a general attitude and heart for Muslims than a ‘model’ for an effective means of sharing the Gospel. Here are some of his most valuable points of discussion.

Since Muslims are people and are all different, every approach to a Muslim is a fresh encounter that has to be undertaken with an open and loving heart, ready to listen to and understand the person with whom you are in discussion. Thus bringing a ‘method’ to such relational conversations is inappropriate. ‘My goal is to explore the ways in which we interact with Muslims and the pitfalls in doing so and to think seriously about how we can do it lovingly and respectfully’ (6).

Stone uses both his philosophical and psychological training in the counsel he offers. As a philosopher, he offers some helpful and penetrating analyses of the kinds of unhelpful and faulty arguments that Muslims and Christians use in their ‘evangelistic’ conversations and materials. He suggests a number of valuable tips to help us use more compelling arguments. At the same time, as a psychologist and Christian counsellor, he offers some wise insights into how people respond to others, and how to communicate one’s love and respect for those with whom one is

talking. To illustrate, here are some of his recommendations: (1) know what you are talking about (2) be fair (3) build bridges (4) touch the emotions (5) use stories and (6) and be timely.

A helpful discussion that I have not encountered before is Stone's description and analysis of bad arguments that both Christians and Muslims use (Chap 3), and his discussion of how Muslims try to use poor science in defence of the Qur'an (Chap 5).

In Chapters 6-7 Stone discusses five different approaches to Muslim ministry and then presents and analyzes the contrasting approaches of Carl Medearis and Georges Houssney, and observes that despite their differences, both approaches are very relational. He then suggests that we can learn a lot from the way Jesus interacted with people in the Gospels, and in effect, follow the 'Jesus model' for reaching Muslims with Christ's love.

Stone suggests that there are two groups of Muslims living in the West who ought to receive special attention from Christians: refugees and Western converts to Islam. Both are in vulnerable situations and can benefit from Christians reaching out in love to them. This is the first time I have seen anyone encouraging us to reach out to Western converts to Islam. This is a good word and comes, I suspect, from his experience and intimate acquaintance with Western converts to Islam. He reminds us that the conversion process often has a long phase of ambiguity and uncertainty, and that it can be quite stressful. A Christian lovingly caring for and listening to a convert to Islam can provide them with needed support that also reminds them of the love that Christians have in their midst.

Stone concludes with two brief chapters in which he gives counsel on examining our own attitudes and advises on how to develop healthy attitudes towards Muslims whom we are seeking to reach. He finishes with a helpful list of warnings about what *not* to say to Muslims, and an appeal for humility in our attitude toward them.

This little book is a quick read containing much practical wisdom. Stone has a great sense of humour and his writing is filled with wit. It is written primarily for those encountering Muslims in the West, but has plenty of gems for anyone loving and talking with Muslims anywhere.

Reviewed by Don Little

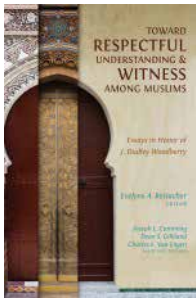
As a philosopher, he offers some helpful and penetrating analyses of the kinds of unhelpful and faulty arguments that Muslims and Christians use in their 'evangelistic' conversations and materials. He suggests a number of valuable tips to help us use more compelling arguments. At the same time, as a psychologist and Christian counsellor, he offers some wise insights into how people respond to others, and how to communicate one's love and respect for those with whom one is talking.

Toward Respectful Understanding & Witness among Muslims: Essays in Honor of J. Dudley Woodberry

Evelyne A. Reisacher, editor.

Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2012, 325 pages

Dudley Woodberry merits to be called the reigning-dean of Islamic studies among Protestant missiologists and Reisacher's collection of essays (this *Festschrift*) in his honour will help establish this status. The Germans coined the term *Festschrift* in 1898 to celebrate a retiring scholar by requesting his colleagues and disciples to write essays in his/her honour. We have very few *Festschriften* in Islamic missiology. The Australian Peter Riddell dedicated one for Anthony H. Johns (1997). The late Kenneth Cragg received one in 2003 and the Jewish linguist, G. Levi Della Vida edited one for Scottish historian of Islam, Sir H.A.R. Gibb (1965) – under whom Woodberry studied in Harvard. Not even Samuel Zwemer or Christy Wilson received this honour.



Those who have neither worked nor studied with Woodberry may well ask, 'Had I studied under him what influence might he have had on my own Islamic missiology?' Evelyne Reisacher, the *Festschrift*'s editor and one of the current scholars on Islam at Fuller, could well argue: 'You may well learn to listen to Muslims as graciously as Woodberry, study Islam as diligently as he does and witness to them as respectfully as he.' This *Festschrift* makes her case through the essays of many.¹⁰ This book, however, is not a tame

work. These essays invite us to revisit many hot button issues through a Woodberrian-honouring lens. Allow me to offer you appetisers from this feast.

First, Woodberry's colleague, Dean Gilliland, offers a biographical portrait of Dudley, his indefatigable colleague and Fuller's erudite 'gentleman scholar'. His portrait deserves a hearty toast and leaves the question: will most of his disciples work as hard and travel as much as Dudley? If he is their model, expect a great outpouring of research, especially in Folk Islam.

Then from Lebanon, Woodberry's former student and current director of the Institute of Middle East Studies at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary, Martin Accad, pleads for a heart-felt *kerygmatic* approach. Accad models his approach on the diplomatic debating style of Nestorian Patriarch Timothy (d. 823)—one which promotes a most generous portrait of Muhammad, the Qur'an and Muslims—something which Woodberry and H.A.R. Gibb strongly encourage. Accad recognises that his *kerygmatic* appeal is contrary to the historic style of the eminent Syrian father, St. John of Damascus (d. 749) and divergent from the most successful Arabic evangelist to Muslims in our generation,

10. Fuller Seminary also recently published a *Festschrift* in honor of Edmund Gibbs in November 2012, entitled *The Gospel after Christendom: New Voices, New Cultures, New Expressions*.

the retired Egyptian Coptic priest, Father Zakaria Boutros (p. 34).

Jonathan Culver, who wrote his thesis *"Ishmael in Christian-Muslim Relations"* at Fuller (2001), surveys the Scriptural promises to Ishmael. Culver's essay is almost identical to the writings of Tony Maloof, the current Director of the MA in Islamic Studies Program at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, who wrote his doctorate on *Ishmael in Biblical History* (1998). Culver circumnavigates all the distressing promises on Ishmael—other than reclassifying them as mere metaphors of a 'Bedouin lifestyle' (Amazing! Was the prophecy over Ishmael that he would be God's 'Marlboro Man' on a donkey?). Maalouf wrestles with this far deeper in his exegesis of Genesis 16, Ps. 122 and Galatians 4, although neither of them convincingly enough to overturn twenty centuries of established exegesis. If Culver represents Woodberry's ethos, we do well to expect Biblical exegetes who think outside of the historic hermeneutical paradigm.

David Johnston, visiting scholar of Religious Studies, University of Pennsylvania, is a scholar whose high esteem for Muslims has us listening to 'in-house Shari'a debates'. Johnston focuses on Iranian Rumi scholar Abdolkarim Soroush (University of Maryland), Egyptian scholar Tariq Ramadan (Oxford), and al-Hudaybi, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood leader and Sayd Qutb's colleague. (That Soroush is a self-declared Neo-Mu'tazilite, that Tariq Ramadan is a highly controversial academic voice and that the Egyptian Islamic Brotherhood is a political chameleon, all should beg caution.) Johnston, however, sees these three voices as offering an 'ethical' alternative to the extremism of Qutbists and Salafists. How Johnston blends these 'in-house shari'a debates' with Christian conversations with Muslims was unclear from this text. Is it possible that he—and Woodberry—would encourage such investigative academic journalism deep within 'moderate' Muslim ranks? His essay would then be an example.

Johnston's strong interest in Soroush made me research more. What struck me was that Soroush's 'distinctions' on Islam as a 'religion' sounded strikingly similar to arguments advocated by current leading Insider Movement (IM) thinkers, among whom Woodberry is a significant voice. Soroush distinguishes between 1) religion and our understanding of religion; 2) between essential and accidental aspects of religion; 3) between minimalist and maximalist interpretation of Islam; 4) between religious belief and religious faith; 5) between religion as an ideology/identity and religion as truth. Are Soroush, Johnston, Woodberry and other IM advocates all drawing from similar sources, or from each other? This merits further research.

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Editor Reisacher's essay will interest you in that she draws overwhelmingly from

female scholars to speak about the ‘blame game’ in literature about Muslim women; that is, to what do different authors attribute the blame for the perceived oppression of Muslim women. This genre promises to be a fruitful new branch in Islamic missiology, something Reisacher’s role in the Islamic Studies program at Fuller may well encourage.

Warren Larsen, recently retired director of the Zwemer Center for Muslim Studies at CIU’s Seminary & School of Missions, will engage you on whether there is a case for ‘evangelical optimism’ in Islamic missiology. Woodberry would be an example.

Joseph Cumming, director of the Reconciliation Program at the Yale Center for Faith and Culture, offers the loftiest question in the book: should Woodberry be ranked in the scholars’ hall of fame along with Moses, Daniel & Paul? You are the jury. Cumming also draws us into an essay on Ashari who, along with the two other greatest Sunni scholars, al-Ghazali and Hanbal, together banished the very open-minded Mu’tazilite movement. Cumming, who is known to us through his efforts to promote a common ground in response to the ‘The Common Word’ 2007 text, explores the option of whether we can discover a Christian meaning in Asharite theology. In particular, he is searching for common ground or bridgeable differences between Ashari’s doctrine of Allah’s ‘attributes and essence’ and early Trinitarian formulations of *hypostasis* and *ousia*. This too you must read, weigh and render your verdict.

The recently deceased Anglican Islamic scholar, Rev. Kenneth Craig will request you to “sit where they [imams] sit” and build bridges using metaphors in our conversations with them. The one he will recommend to you use in his essay is the Khilafah-custodian-husbandman metaphor.

SIL missiologist, Rick Brown’s essay is a thorough and vigorous explanation of the historical origins of the Arabic name for God—Allah. He categorically rejects the arguments of non-Arabic speaking Christians who refuse to accept the name ‘Al-lah’ for YHWH. Brown clearly demonstrates that ‘Allah’ originated with pre-Islamic Syrian Jews & Christians, not with Muhammad. All Arab Christians use ‘Allah’ for ‘God’. While most missiologists will agree with Brown, a different question looms—is it only in Arabic that Allah is used? Is ‘Allah’ in another language a generic term for ‘the deity’ or is it the unique deity of Muhammad’s faith? Do Brown’s arguments still apply outside of the Arabic language? This issue is very hot and reading Brown will provide valuable context for this wider discussion.

Woodberry’s interest in ‘Folk Islam’ is well celebrated by contributions from Gilliland concerning the Hausa rituals in Nigeria; from Stephen Sesi concerning the Digo mosques in maritime Kenya, and from Caleb Kim concerning the spiritual power struggles between jinn and practitioners in Swahili Kenya. Woodberrian scholars are welcome experts in these realms.

David Greenlee’s article reflects Woodberry’s zeal for respectfully witnessing to

Muslims. Greenlee invites you to see Muslim *conversion* to the Good News through seven mostly sociological lenses. Woodley's colleague, Phil Parshall, revisits the amazing contextualised work of Sadrach in 1835 (Indonesia) and then his own contextual pilgrimage in the alias nation of 'Quristan' before saluting Woodberry's gentle contribution in seeking to calm the waters in the divide that has recently polarised Evangelical missiologists. Appropriately, John Travis (nom du plume) follows Parshall by generously outlining the contribution of Wilder, McGavran and Woodberry in the recent Jesus Movements among Muslims.

Finally, Christine Mallouhi closes out the Festschrift by addressing her favourite passion: the nature of witness for Christ as peace-making relationships with Muslims carried out in humility and with love.

Because many in Woodberry's community of scholars are respectfully exploring the dynamics of Insider Movements, both the advocates and detractors of this experiment do well to study both the movement and the proponents. This book does the proponents credit. Not all of Woodberry's former students have joined him in promoting Insider Movements. The book would have been stronger had they also been featured. Yet it remains a significant missiological testament of both Woodberry and of Fuller's remarkable contribution. Since these voices will be among the leading writers in the coming decade, I say you give yourself a free weekend to read them and salute Woodberry and his company for their outstanding innovative labours.

Reviewed by Benjamin Lee Hegeman

Benjamin is a colleague and friend of the editor. He teaches part-time at Houghton College in the Islamic Studies concentration and spends part of each year in Benin, West Africa, where he serves with SIM as the Academic Dean of the Baatonou Language Bible College.

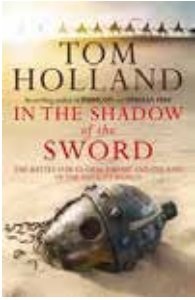
In the Shadow of the Sword: The Battle for Global Empire and the End of the Ancient World

by Tom Holland

Little Brown, London 2012, ISBN: 978-1408700075, 544 pages(!)

Tom Holland is the historian who has written a number of historical novels and three previous non-fiction works of historical scholarship: *Rubicon: The Triumph and Tragedy of the Roman Republic* (2004), *Persian Fire: The First World empire, Battle for the West* (2006) and *Millennium: The End of the World and the Forging of Christendom* (2009). Tom Holland has also presented this 'revisionist view' in his television presentation on the BBC, which is available on YouTube (See: [Tom Holland: In the Shadow of the Sword](#)). Mr Holland has a flair for presenting the details of ancient history in a great storyteller's manner. Most

likely your previous Arab & Muslim history reading has been with Philip Hitti, Bernard Lewis or Nicholson, who were very impressive with the facts but did not venture into a critical examination of the ‘facts’ approach.



In his opening chapter, Holland describes the battle of Yusuf As'rar Yath'ar with the Ethiopian Christians as a battle between the Jewish cause and the Christian cause. Yusuf's contemporaries believed the forces of heaven and hell had clashed. This seems to present a new concept of the identity of that battle. In this way, Holland sets out his purpose: to trace the origins and the progress of the revolution and the patterns of how peoples came to be altered. In his view, this is a significant change from earlier epochs of history. In writing on this theme, he senses that he has entered in a field full of landmines, as he

seeks to delve into facts and details of supernatural activity that are not usually discussed in the public arena. Even if as a Christian you do not appreciate his denial of the supernatural, he seems to have a deep insight into the spiritual thinking of these people particularly the relevance of how each people group believes that God speaks to them, and the sound, music and importance of the ‘word’ of God. In reading his account of the rise of Islam, I was reminded a bit of idea of a clash of civilisations by Sam Huntington.

In the first chapter, ‘Known & Unknown,’ Holland introduces his purpose and views in greater detail. He holds the ‘revisionist view’ of Islam—that there are no historical document about the events in the life of Mohammed, nor have any early manuscripts of the Qur'an been found. He stresses that the sources on the early history of Islam that are available are mostly late 8th and 9th century documents (150-200 years after Muhammad's death). This ‘revisionist view’ was first held by prominent scholars such as Dr Patricia Crone (*Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*, 1980; *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*, 1980 & 2003; *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism*, 2012), Dr Gerald Hawting (*The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History*, 2006 and *The Development of Islamic Ritual (Formation of the Classical Islamic World)*, 2006) and John Wansborough (*Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, 1972 and *Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, 1978).

The other view, known as the ‘traditionalists view’, accepts without critical questioning that Muhammad was born 570 A.D. and received the Qur'an as we have it today from 610 to 632 in Mecca and Medina. This view was the only view for many years and is often still taught in Christian schools and of course is the view held by Muslims.

As for *In the Shadow of the Sword*, I found chapter two, ‘Transhahr,’ very inter-

esting and for me, personally, a useful study of Persian history and of Zoroaster. It gives one a bigger picture of the background and influences in the development of Shi'ism. It also made me realise I should probably read the authors earlier book, *Persian Fire*, (2006). The next chapter is a more in depth look at the 'new Rome'—Byzantium. It is a different approach than thru the eyes of the church fathers. I think at times Christians will be irritated with the author, but looking at how others see world problems can stimulate more critical thinking. In fact chapters 2-5 build the pre-Islamic background of these people.

The heart of the book, for most Christian workers, is most likely the opening chapter and then chapters six and seven. It would be worthwhile at least to read these chapters if one cannot give time to this mammoth book.

Chapters six: 'More Questions Than Answers', covers the beginnings and rise of this people group to power and formation of Islam. He explains his revisionist views under the following headings: When? ... (Attempts at finding a clear precise date or timing... Is it early 7th century by Muhammad, or later into the 8th and 9th centuries by someone or someones else?) 'Is there any evidence for an early date?' 'What does the Examination of the documents which are available and are from a later date show?' 'Where...?' (Looking for geographical evidence for a flourishing city at Mecca and the other places named in the Qur'an) . Why? (What brought these people together and led them to conqueror the Middle East and North Africa?)

When did the saying, 'there is no Allah but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah' begin? This statement appeared for the first time under Abd-al-Malik ibn Marwan, the Fifth Umayyad Caliph (646-705A.D). Also the statements on the shrine in Damascus and the Dome of the Rock inscribe the Lord is God alone. Mr Holland includes a story of Jewish rabbinical influences on how the Hadiths come into being.

The last chapter, seven, is 'The Forging of Islam'. This section is looking at the evidence for the formation of Islam, its structures, practices and institutions as we know it today. When did the saying, 'there is no Allah but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah' begin? This statement appeared for the first time under Abd-al-Malik ibn Marwan, the Fifth Umayyad Caliph (646-705A.D). Also the statements on the shrine in Damascus and the Dome of the Rock inscribe the Lord is God alone. Mr Holland includes a story of Jewish rabbinical influences on how the Hadiths come into being. Although Holland did not find conclusive answers to all his questions, he raises the concerns about the Shadow of the Sword.

My personal suggestion would be that you consider reading at least part of the book. I think it is a worthwhile read. Do not let its size put you off. It is also good for us to sometimes listen to journalistic views which may take us out of our comfort zone. I personally find it amazing the number of new people who are writing about Islam, without having had years of previous interest in this subject. It is a global topic these

days. If you have not read any revisionist material, Tom Holland is an easy place to start.

Reviewed by Elsie Maxwell

Having completing her PhD in Tunisia in Islam and African Literature in the '70s, Dr. Elsie Maxwell has lived and ministered in England since the mid-eighties. She taught courses in Islam for several decades at the London School of Theology and served a member of AWM's ministry team in London until her retirement a couple of years ago. She continues to live and minister in London.

Qur'anic Geography: A Survey and Evaluation of the Geographical References in the Qur'an with Suggested Solutions for Various Problems and Issues

by Dan Gibson

Vancouver: Independent Scholars Press, 2011

The book is available on Starting Point Books (www.stpt.ca) in hardcover & PDF.

For most Muslims, their faith is defined more by orthopraxis than orthodoxy. At the heart of Islamic practice stand the five pillars and one in particular, *Salat*, daily unites millions of Muslims around the world as they pray facing Mecca.

Why is Muslim prayer focussed on Mecca? The obvious answer is, because that was where Islam began and where the Ka'ba and its Black Stone have always been, ever since Muhammad's day. *Everybody* knows this, don't they? Yet, an interesting thing about Islam is that there is much that we *assume*, but often very little that is actually *known*. Historians have long realised there are massive questions concerning Mecca – for example, Patricia Crone in *Meccan Trade* (Princeton University Press, 1987) notes that descriptions of the original Holy City of Islam in the early Islamic sources do not fit well



with where Mecca is today. Thus Dan Gibson's book, *Qur'anic Geography*, sets out to explore these questions in detail: Where did Islam actually begin and was Mecca the original Holy City?

Three Northern Civilisations

Gibson begins his study by noting that the Qur'an contains little geography: just 65 references with only nine places mentioned by name, including 'Ad (23x), Thamud (24x) and Midian (7x). This immediately tells us these three civilisations were important to the Qur'an's original audience – so where were they located?

Beginning with 'Ad, the Qur'an offers a few clues: the people of 'Ad built altars, monuments and strongholds in the rock. They had gardens and springs and lived in lush mountain valleys. So where was 'Ad? Gibson suggests 'Ad is the Arabic rendering of a word from the ancient language from which the Semitic languages developed and that it is actually identical to biblical 'Uz, which was in Edom (Lamentations 4:21). Biblical descriptions of 'Uz match those of 'Ad in the Qur'an whilst the Qur'an and Bible agree the people of 'Ad / 'Uz were destroyed by fierce winds (Q. 89:6-8; Job 1:18-19). The Qur'an also sees a connection between 'Ad and Pharaoh (Q. 89:6-14) and Gibson offers extensive evidence that the Edomites were also the people known as the Hyksos, who invaded Egypt sometime between 1500BC and 1800BC. He writes, 'The moment we link the Hyksos, 'Ad, and Edom as one, many puzzling bits of history begin to fit together.' We suddenly realise their importance and understand why the Bible and the Qur'an mention this ancient civilisation so frequently.

Moving on to Midian, Gibson notes that this was another powerful empire that united the Arabian tribes. Their mention in the Qur'an again tells us that Muhammad's audience must have remembered them. Yet they, like the people of 'Ad, were a *northern* Arabian tribe, who appear to have lived between Tayma (their southernmost point) and the northernmost tip of Wadi Sirhan. The Qur'an also reports that the prophet Shueyb came to them (Q. 22:43-45; 29:36) and the traditional site of his tomb is in central Jordan, locating the Midianites even further north.

Turning to Thamud, Gibson suggests the Qur'anic word derives from *thuma* + 'Ad = 'after 'Ad'. According to the traditions, they were a people centred on al-Hijr, a northern Arabian city known today as Meda'in Salih. For centuries, its inhabitants were known as the Nabataeans. The Qur'an tells of how they were a people who had cut dwellings into the mountains (Q. 7:73-79; 11:61-68; 26:141-159; 27:25) and indeed Nabataean cities like Petra are famous for their rock cut tombs and palaces. When one visits Petra and wanders among the rock-cut buildings and fabulous architecture, one is struck by how rich and powerful this civilisation must once have been.

The Nabataeans achieved their immense wealth by dominating all three trade routes (the Incense Route, the Silk Road and the Red Sea ocean route). However, like all empires, their power eventually declined and following a golden age between 100BC and 100AD, their power waned. First through economic decline and then through disaster, as a series of earthquakes in AD363, AD551 and AD713 first weakened and then finally destroyed Petra. By the time of Muhammad, the Nabataeans were simply remembered by the Arabs as those 'after 'Ad' who were destroyed by earthquakes.

All three of these Qur'anic civilisations, Gibson argues—the people of 'Ad, Midian and Thamud—share some commonalities. All were powerful empires that

Muhammad's audience remembered. But most importantly, *all occupied the same area*—northern Arabia. So if these three major Qur'anic civilisations were located in the north, what about the Holy City itself. What about Mecca?

Where Was Mecca?

The Qur'an names Mecca just once (Q. 48: 24). The Ka'ba is mentioned many times, but nowhere are we told its location. Gibson believes there are many difficulties with the idea that its original location was Mecca. For example, the Qur'an describes the Ka'ba as residing in the 'Mother of Cities' (Q. 6:92) yet the archaeological record at Mecca is blank before 900AD — we have no evidence of an ancient walled city with houses, gardens, buildings and temples. No maps before 900AD mention Mecca whilst the first literary reference only appears in 740AD.

There are also problems with descriptions of the Holy City found in early Islamic literature. The Qur'an and Hadith describe it as being in a valley, with another valley next to the Ka'ba and there being a stream. None of this fits Mecca. We also read that the Holy City had fields, trees, grass, clay and loam. Once again, this is not true of Mecca, which is arid and inhospitable; there is no archaeological evidence that agriculture ever took place at Mecca.

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Qiblas and Confusion

So what about the *qibla*, the direction indicated for prayer? Surely, Muslims have always prayed toward the Ka'ba and its Black Stone, located in Mecca, haven't they? The answer is no. It is well known that the *qibla* changed early in Islam, the Qur'an mentioning the change (Q. 2:143-145), without explaining where it was changed *from*. (Most Muslims believe the original *qibla* was Jerusalem, but this idea is not recorded until 300 years after Muhammad).

Gibson believes archaeology backs up the *qibla* change, only much later than traditionally thought. Surveying over a dozen early mosques, Gibson found a surprising number have their *qibla* orientated not on Mecca but on *Petra*. Sometime during Islam's second century, Mecca began to be introduced, and then, by Islam's third century, all new mosques' *qiblas* were pointed at Mecca.

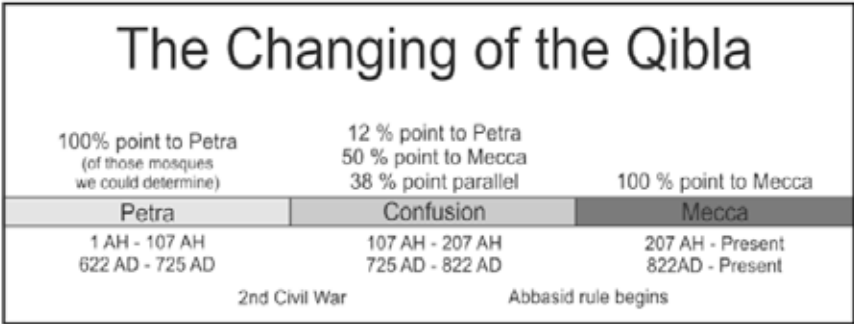


Chart borrowed from Qur’anic Geography, p. 274.

Gibson thinks archaeology can help date the change in *qibla*. The earliest buildings on the Amman citadel complex, built around 700AD are aligned on Petra, whereas later construction, circa 740AD, is orientated on Mecca. What happened between 700AD and 740AD that began to cause a change?

The Historical Context

In 64AH (683AD), Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr rebelled against the Umayyads in Damascus. Declaring himself caliph in the Holy City, Al-Zubayr destroyed the Ka’ba, removing the Black Stone for safekeeping. The following year, Tabari reports, Al-Zubayr claims to have discovered the foundations of the true Ka’ba, laid by Abraham. Gibson thinks this was at Mecca, a location chosen because it was far from Umayyad power.

The rebellion spread and in 71AH, Kufa in Iraq joined Al-Zubayr, claiming ‘we are people who turn to the same *qibla* as you’. In 73-74AH, Syrian armies attacked the Holy City, using a trebuchet (a large catapult) against it. (Archaeologists have unearthed masses of trebuchet stones in Petra, but none in Mecca.)

Around about 85AH, mosques begin hanging signs to indicate a new *qibla* and then in 89AH, the *mibrab* (prayer niche) was introduced to show worshippers which way to pray. In 94AH, the last of a series of earthquakes more or less destroyed Petra. Gibson thinks this would have been seen as divine judgement on the former Holy City. Finally, in 132AH the Abbasids begin to rule from Iraq and follow the pattern set by Kufa, formally adopting the new *qibla*. Henceforth all new mosques are now orientated toward Mecca.

Conclusion

Gibson’s thesis that the *qibla* changed in 70AH and not from Mecca, but from Petra, blends Qur’anic exegesis, a careful reading of the Islamic sources, along with archaeology, literature and history. Multiple lines of evidence, he argues, support the idea that the original Holy City was Petra. One significant observation is that the Qur’an’s overall

focus is on northern Arabia which contributes to the mismatch between descriptions of the Holy City in the literature, which fit Petra perfectly, and the present location of Mecca. There are other fascinating lines of evidence, such as the reports in historians like Tabari that when military interactions occurred between the Medinans and the Quraysh (the Meccan tribe), they happened *north* of Medina. Yet if the Quraysh came from Mecca, 300km to the south, why does the action take place to the north?

Gibson's thesis is a bold one, but his argument steers between both 'traditionalist' and 'revisionist' approaches to early Islam. Too many 'traditionalists' ignore the Qur'an's context and merely parrot the early sources, whereas 'revisionists' often mistrust the Islamic sources entirely. Gibson's book, however, attempts to take the Qur'an, hadith and Islamic sources seriously. Rather than ignore them, he simply argues they are more

coherent if one reads 'Petra' for 'Mecca' before 700AD, a conclusion that history, literature and archaeology strongly suggest.

Part of the challenge of engaging Muslims is finding ways to generate good questions from within Islam itself and Gibson's book is a wonderful example of how to do just that. ...The book offers a wealth of material that can be turned into questions that one can raise with Muslim friends to help gently insert a wedge between them and their trust of the Muslim tradition and 'what they've always been taught.'

The book is not without a few weaknesses. At times Gibson attempts to cover too much ground, with some sections feeling a little rushed. For example, his treatment of early Qur'anic manuscripts is a little thin and might have benefited from interaction with some of the critical literature, such as Keith Small's work

on Qur'anic textual variants. Overall, however, *Qur'anic Geography* builds a powerful case. Much of Islamic history appears to make more sense in the light of Gibson's thesis, which arguably sheds light on other issues too, such as the Qur'an's apparent strong connection to another northern phenomenon, Syriac Christianity.

Who Should Read This Book?

I believe that *Qur'anic Geography* is a book that all that live or work amongst Muslims would benefit from reading for three reasons. First, to understand our Muslim friends we need to understand the Qur'an and Gibson's book is tremendously helpful in that respect. It is a timely reminder that the Qur'an has a *context* — geographically as well as historically — and when one reads the Qur'an with an eye on that context, much more makes sense. The book especially helps connect the Qur'an to a *place*. I visited Petra earlier this year and now having its canyons, streets, and rock dwellings in mind as I read certain Qur'anic passages helps one see them in a new light and obtain a fresh perspective on the background to the earliest years of Muhammad's career.

Second, part of the challenge of engaging Muslims is finding ways to generate good questions from *within Islam itself* and Gibson's book is a wonderful example of how to do just that. Indeed, early on in *Qur'anic Geography*, he explains that what first got him thinking about this issue was talking with Muslim friends who were freshly returned from

the *hajj* and were disappointed that Mecca did not match up to their mental picture of it. The book offers a wealth of material that can be turned into questions that one can raise with Muslim friends to help gently insert a wedge between them and their trust of the Muslim tradition and ‘what they’ve always been taught.’

Finally, as I finished reading the book, I realised it was also a reminder of an area of profound theological difference between Muslims and Christians—that the God of the Bible is both bigger *and* smaller than the God of Islam. On the one hand, in the incarnation He stepped into geography and history, limiting himself to time and space, getting His feet dirty with Middle Eastern dust. But, at the same time, He is far bigger than geography and history—Christians do not need to pray to a particular location, in a particular language, for us to talk with our Father. If Gibson’s thesis in *Qur’anic Geography* is correct, perhaps we can use the book as a conversation starter as we seek to introduce Muslims to the God who desires not to be encountered through a Black Stone, but to transform our hearts of stone.

Reviewed by Andy Bannister

Dr. Andy Bannister is the Director of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries in Canada (www.rzim.ca) and lives in Toronto with his wife and baby daughter. He speaks regularly throughout Canada, America and further afield on Islam, apologetics, philosophy and culture. Before moving to Canada, Andy lived and worked in the UK, where for ten years he was involved in evangelism and outreach amongst Muslims in London. His PhD was in Qur’anic studies, developing computer software tools to analyse the Arabic text of the Qur’an, demonstrating that it shows all the signs of having been generated live, in oral performance. This explains a number of features of the Qur’an, including its high use of formulaic language and phraseology, performance variants (multiple versions of the same stories, each differing slightly) and its allusive use of Jewish and Christian traditions. Andy’s book, based on his dissertation, Retelling the Tale: An Oral-Formulaic Study of the Qur’an should be published in late 2013 or early 2014.

Miraculous Movements: How Hundreds of Thousands of Muslims Are Falling in Love with Jesus

**By Jerry Trousdale
Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012, 208 pages**

How can anyone *not* be excited and curious when reading a subtitle that tells us that ‘Hundreds of Thousands of Muslims Are Falling in Love with Jesus’? Curiosity is stirred even further when the subtitle promises to tell us ‘How’ this is happening!

Miraculous Movements delivers on that promise, giving clear descriptions of truly miraculous ways God is at work in our day in many Muslim communities in Africa. Trousdale notes that the stories shared in the book are based on research



and personal interviews with more than 130 leaders from primarily Muslim backgrounds and a few from Christian backgrounds. The large number of interviewees from Muslim backgrounds underlines that the amazing fruit being described is not the result of Western missionaries winning numerous converts, but rather of movements taking place *within* families and groups. This is largely occurring when a local ‘person of peace’ becomes the instrument God uses to open a door for the gospel into their household or network (their *oikos*) and from there the gospel is received in culturally appropriate ‘clothing’ and thus spreads rapidly to others within that group.

In his opening chapter, Trousdale notes that, as incredible as the stories may sound, these amazing movements are indeed taking place:

When one reads or hears of all that has transpired and continues to transpire...none of this seems really possible. Yet everything you read in this book is happening through a highly intentional focus on making disciples the way Jesus did, informed by the Bible, and somewhat counterintuitive to the types of ministry that most of us have experienced before. (31-32)

The next chapter describes in some detail ‘Jesus’ Counterintuitive Disciple-making Strategy,’ some elements of which are:

- Go slow at first in order to go fast later.
- Focus on a few to win many.
- Engage an entire family or group, not just the individual.
- Share only when and where people are ready to hear.
- Start with creation, not with Christ.
- It is about discovering and obeying, not teaching and knowledge.
- Disciple people to conversion, not vice versa.
- Coach lost people from the beginning to discover and obey biblical truth.
- Expect the hardest places to yield the greatest results.

The book’s concluding chapter presents ‘Biblical Practices for Engaging Lostness.’ Among these are:

- Pray abundantly
- Gain access to the community
- Find the Person of Peace
- Start a Discovery Bible Study with the Person of Peace and the members of his network.
- Baptize and start a church

- Develop leaders

Those who have read ‘Exponential Disciple-Making: A Fresh Approach to Church Planting Movements’ by Steven Steinhaus (in *Seedbed*, Dec 2011) or have attended Pioneer’s ‘First Steps’ (Level 1) training in the Discovery Method of CPM, will recognize the similarities in approach. In fact, the approach being described in *Miraculous Movements* is the model that constitutes the ‘DNA’ of our recent Pioneer’s CPM training seminars. While recognizing the essential similarity in approach, readers may note a slight difference in descriptive title. While some find the description ‘Church Planting Movements’ exciting, others find it off-putting. Thus other aspects of the model are sometimes highlighted, with titles such as ‘Disciple-Making Movements,’ ‘Exponential Disciple-Making,’ or ‘Discovery Method.’ Each description highlights an aspect of the marvellous work the Lord is doing in bringing hundreds of thousands to himself among groups previously unreached by the gospel.

Miraculous Movements is written at a popular level, so it bypasses exposition of the theological underpinnings of the approach being used. That foundation could easily fill another book. Trousdale has chosen to start with the stories and the basic outline of the approach through which the Spirit of God is working to bring hundreds of thousands to a saving faith in Christ. The book succeeds admirably as a popular introduction to a church planting approach that many workers are finding to be a breath of fresh air in their efforts to reach Muslim peoples with the gospel.

What is more, I believe that the approach described in *Miraculous Movements* holds great potential to help resolve some of the issues of current debate concerning contextualization in Islamic contexts and ‘Insider Movements.’ Consider a few of the strengths of the IM approach:

1. It focuses on bringing people to faith in groups, rather than as isolated individuals.
2. It tries to minimize unnecessary social dislocation as people come to faith.
3. It allows for a certain amount of ‘messiness’ and even ‘out of our control-ness’ in the CP process.

However, I believe that the Insider approach also has a number of significant weaknesses, which I have discussed in other articles.¹¹ I see the Disciple-Making Movements model having all the strengths listed above, without the weaknesses. Those who dislike or have concerns about the IM approach generally stress that a sound church planting work should have the following characteristics:

11. See: ‘Do the Roots Affect the Fruits?’ *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, Summer 2007; ‘Contextualization: A Few Basic Questions,’ *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, April 2008; ‘What is Church?’ *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, October 2010

1. A soundly biblical ecclesiology.
2. Followers of Jesus coming to a clear understanding of their identity (in their heart and in their social context, sometimes after a period of time), so that they are no longer religiously Muslim.
3. A mechanism of viable connectedness to the global and historic body of Christ.

However, those who express concerns with IM approaches also often have some weaknesses in their approach, such as leaning toward traditional (Western) models of church and tending to force beginning works into mature church patterns prematurely.

The Discovery model illustrated by Trousdale in this book has potential to open a path for the strengths listed above without falling prey to some of the weaknesses. In addition, to the extent that either pro-IM or anti-IM workers seek to push new believers

The Discovery model illustrated by Trousdale in this book has potential to open a path for the strengths listed above without falling prey to some of the weaknesses. In addition, to the extent that either pro-IM or anti-IM workers seek to push new believers toward their own views on contextualization, I believe they tend to diminish the potential for truly indigenous church planting and multiplication.

toward their own views on contextualization, I believe they tend to diminish the potential for truly indigenous church planting and multiplication. So I am a big fan of Trousdale's recommendation that in CPMs 'Outsiders deculturalize the gospel; insiders contextualize the gospel.' I believe that the Disciple Making Movements (CPM) approach, as Trousdale has described it, contains the best wisdom of both sides of the contextualization debate and

a marvellous way forward toward a resolution of that debate. I am hopeful that with the publication of *Miraculous Movements* more people may begin to realize this.

As I carefully read this book, each chapter provided new things for which to praise God and new fodder for intercession. I found myself pleading with God that what he is doing in Africa and beyond would also happen among other Muslim groups all around the globe.

I highly recommend *Miraculous Movements* – for inspiration, for stimulation of strategic thinking and for pondering and delighting in the great works of the Lord. The Psalmist grounded his appeal for God to work mightily in the works God had already accomplished: "Then I thought, "To this I will appeal: the years of the right hand of the Most High." ... I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds' (Psalm 77:10, 12 NIV). I welcome *Miraculous Movements* as a testimony from faithful brothers and sisters still alive today – an inspiration and challenge to us all.

Reviewed by L.D. Waterman

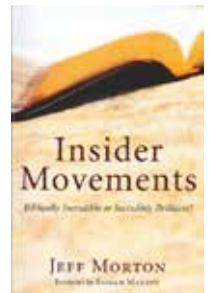
Insider Movements: Biblically Incredible or Incredibly Brilliant?

by Jeff Morton

Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2012. 126 pages

This short introduction to and critical assessment of Insider Movements (IMs) proponents' biblical support is written for those who may have limited previous exposure to the thinking behind IMs. At the outset, Morton states his objective as being threefold: (1) to help readers grasp the extent of this problem, (2) to convince us that support for the activities of those advocating for IMs must stop, and (3) to demonstrate that the theologizing being done among IM proponents is generally not consistent with the Scriptures (p. 2). Morton believes that much is at stake in this important missiological and theological debate, and that if the Bible does not support IM approaches, then neither must we support them. Morton attempts to bring 'clear biblical thinking' that honestly deals with these issues while treating fairly those with whom he disagrees (p. 3).

Quoting definitions of IMs by Kevin Higgins and Rebecca Lewis, Morton notes that the common elements in both definitions are: (1) focus on movements as opposed to individuals, (2) stress on effective contextualization, (3) stress on faithfulness to Jesus among insider believers and (4) the desire to for movements to occur within believers' existing cultural and *religious* identities (4). Morton says that IM advocates' major concerns are (1) socio-religious identity, (2) socio-religious community continuity and (3) certain forms of religious practice (6-7), all of which he sees as anthropological concerns that are secondary to the gospel itself.



In the first chapter, Morton presents what he believes to be three *hidden or undefined assumptions* that underlie the IM advocates' approaches (6-7). The first assumption is that they are operating out of an *inadequate theology of religion*—that is, he believes that IM advocates do not view the false religion of Islam as the Bible would have us view it. Here is one of his colourful charges: 'Reading about Islam from some of the proponents of IM is like opening a jar of mayonnaise that is just beginning to spoil. It looks fine. It doesn't smell bad, but when you taste it there's something not quite right' (8). Unfortunately, in the initial elucidation of this charge (pp. 7-9), I noticed several misunderstandings of IM perspectives. For example, he quotes Mazhar Mallouhi saying that when Muslims come to Christ they do not have to renounce *everything* they have known about God as Muslims. Morton insists that, since the character of Allah in the Qur'an is different from the character of Yahweh, Muslims are worshipping a different God. Yet, Mallouhi's comment was simply that when a Muslim comes to faith in Christ, there are some things that they already

know about God that are true—such as that God is the creator, that he is sovereign Lord, the sustainer of all creation and the final judge of all human behaviour. Morton misunderstood Mallouhi here, and I find that he has similarly misunderstood IM advocates on a number of points in this section.

The second assumption Morton ascribes to IM advocates is inappropriately allowing principles from *anthropology* to influence their interpretations of Scripture. He suggests that IM advocates see Scripture as containing practices and patterns that ought to serve as models to be copied in the 21st century. They see the book of Acts, for example, as a series of stories that illustrate and confirm approaches to contextualization (10-11). He believes that IM advocates tend to twist scriptural accounts in their attempts to make them relevant to 21st century contexts in the Muslim world.

Morton does not quote any IM writers in this section (pp. 9-11) except Rebecca Lewis, whose point in the quoted passage Morton acknowledges to be valid (10). Therefore, it is not possible to see, in this chapter, where Morton sees the inordinate influence of anthropology on their exegesis. When I engage with IM advocates and read their articles, I typically find that they are seeking to exegete Scripture according to principles similar to what Morton or I would use. Whether their exegesis is sound is another matter (and Morton shows point by point in chapters 3-10 that it is not). However, Morton's claim that their basic approach to Scripture allows too much influence from anthropology seems dubious.

The third assumption Morton believes IM advocates consistently make, is that those who oppose their IM perspectives believe Christian conversion is primarily an attempt to make Muslims become westernized Christians (12). In this case, I believe Morton's argument is sound. IM advocates often do argue that non-IM practitioners insist that converts convert to Christianity *in addition to* converting to Christ (11-13). With Morton, I believe that IM advocates have created a straw man. Most missionaries to Muslims that I know personally do not force converts to Islam to come to Christ through a Christendom model into non-contextualized churches, though this approach is still common in national churches.

To sum up, I believe Morton has somewhat overstated his case on two of the three assumptions that he believes lie behind IM thinking. I do not think IM advocates generally have a *deficient theology of religion* with respect to Islam even though they often have a more positive perspective on Islam than both Morton and I would be comfortable holding. Nor do they bring substantially different assumptions to the way that they exegete Scripture (even though I also disagree with their exegetical conclusions). However, I believe that they often do misconstrue or exaggerate the way that non-IM missionaries understand and encourage conversion to 'Christianity'.

In chapter 2, Morton goes further in presenting and then critiquing the theology of religion that Kevin Higgins has articulated in several articles. Morton presents Higgins'

view that though the biblical perspective generally is that religions are an expression of the rejection of God's truth and a realm of demonic deception, God can sometimes choose, as examples in the Bible suggest, to *be in relationship with* adherents of other religions while they are still in those false and demonic religions. Morton finds it impossible to envision God working *within* religions, such as Islam, that are explicitly rejecting truth and clearly under the influence of demons. In a rather vivid picture, he compares God working in Islam to someone searching for a valuable watch in septic tank full of waste! While I can almost agree with Morton, that there is *nothing* of value in Islam, I find it harder to dismiss entirely all the truth about God that Islam affirms. In addition, God is using the truths about Jesus and God in the Qur'an as bridges to draw many men and women to leave Islam and follow the Christ of the Bible. There is some truth there for God to work with in Islam, so I cannot affirm that there is nothing of value in Islam.

Clearly, there is not enough space in this review to go through each of Morton's arguments in detail. Let me quickly summarize his arguments in Chapters 3 – 10. Morton devotes a chapter to each text that IM proponents use to support their approaches. He goes through each text and argues against IM interpretations.

The bulleted list that follows is a summary of the interpretations that IM proponents give of key texts and the points that Morton makes in refuting their interpretations.

Ch 3. The story of Melchizedek, king of Salem in Gen 14 is used to suggest that God is working in other religions. Morton's response is that this is a *unique* account that cannot be viewed as parallel to 21st century work among Muslims.

Ch 4. The story of Naaman, the Syrian whom Elisha sends in peace to continue to bow down to his king's god Rimmon in 2 Kings 5:15-19, is used to argue that in some cases it is ok for believers to stay within their religion. Morton says that this is too much of an argument from silence to be truly parallel to IM contexts. Naaman *was asking forgiveness* for something that he knew would be wrong.

Ch 5. In Jonah 1, Higgins uses the account of the pagan sailors praying to Yahweh to argue that the pagans are in relationship to God. Morton replies that it is Jonah who has the *relationship* with God—the sailors' prayers were answered by God as they called out in ignorance and fear.

Ch 6. Many IMers argue that just as the Samaritans, in John 4:39-43 and Acts 8:14-17, remained in their religion after they believed in Christ, so Muslims can worship him *as Muslims*. Morton says that this *is an argument from silence*. We do not know, from the NT text, how the Samaritan believers worshipped.

While I can almost agree with Morton, that there is nothing of value in Islam, I find it harder to dismiss entirely all the truth about God that Islam affirms. In addition, God is using the truths about Jesus and God in the Qur'an as bridges to draw many men and women to leave Islam and follow the Christ of the Bible. There is some truth there for God to work with in Islam, so I cannot affirm that there is nothing of value in Islam.

- Ch 7. IM proponents argue that the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 shows that people did not have to go *through Judaism* to Christ and so neither do Muslims need to go *through 'Christianity'* to Christ—they can stay Muslims and worship Christ. Morton's response is that IM proponents are simply using the story as a proof text while completely misunderstanding and misapplying it.
- Ch 8. Proponents argue that the way Paul used pagan scriptures or poets in Athens, in Acts 17:22-28, illustrates that Paul used truths in pagan religions to point people to Christ. Morton argues that this text is not an example of valuing pagan religions but of using their own teachers to confront them with their rebellion against the Creator.
- Ch 9. Insider proponents argue that in 1 Cor. 7:17-20 Paul encourages believers to remain within their birth religions and follow Christ there. They suggest that Jews remain Jews, Gentiles remain Gentiles and Muslims remain Muslims while following Christ. Morton responds by arguing that placing *Islam* into the passage changes the intent of Paul's teaching which is that our larger unity in Christ is more important than our *cultural* differences (p. 69).
- Ch 10. IMs proponents believe, based on 1 Cor. 9:19-23, that Paul would encourage Muslims, like he had encouraged Jews, to remain in their religion and use Muslim worship forms as they worship Jesus. Morton asks why we would want to 'reuse' the forms of *Islamic* religion when 'everything about it is anti-Christian, anti-Trinity, anti-Father, anti-Son, anti-church, anti-cross, and anti-Bible' (84).

Having dealt with the Scripture texts, in Chapter 11 Morton carefully describes and thoroughly challenges IM advocates' understanding and teaching about conversion. This is Morton's longest chapter and his best. Morton's understanding of IM perspectives on conversion is accurate and his critique is penetrating and compelling. Far from being ashamed of Christianity, as some IMers appear to be, Morton rejoices that Muslims become *Christians*. 'The religion of Christianity is not something of which I am ashamed. It is in fact the religion of the authentic Jesus. Biblical Christianity proclaims Jesus. Jesus' followers and disciples today are called Christians and they practice Christianity' (89).

In the last chapter, Morton concludes with a strong appeal to those who are convinced that his perspective is accurate, that they act on their convictions, investigate the positions of missionaries and mission agencies and support only those who are *biblical* in their missiology. He stresses that the differences between these perspectives are *not* superficial: 'The disagreements over what the critics of IM and its advocates believe about the insider movements goes to the heart of how we understand scripture, how we handle and interpret scripture, the way we understand religions, and how we disciple new converts. No, this is not simply a matter of semantics' (100).

The book finishes with two important appendices that merit mention. The first is a reprinting of a statement of concern about these very same contextualization issues issued at a conference in Pennsylvania, USA, in July 1985. The second is a fascinating and often disturbing first person account of how IM thinking developed in West Java, Indonesia. This appendix is written by Roger Dixon, who served there for more than 30 years. I highly recommend this appendix for anyone who wants further chronological insight into how insider thinking has developed. Here is one sample of Dixon's analysis:

In the last chapter, Morton concludes with a strong appeal to those who are convinced that his perspective is accurate, that they act on their convictions, investigate the positions of missionaries and mission agencies and support only those who are biblical in their missiology. He stresses that the differences between these perspectives are not superficial.

The essential mistake of the new mission agencies was their failure to understand that indigenous converts are the ones who are supposed to develop contextual models that agree with scripture. It is not the job of the missionary to tell them what to do to contextualize the gospel.... In the successful model developed among the Javanese in the late 1800s, the missionaries simply taught the scriptures and probed their meaning with the Javanese. The indigenous people then applied Bible teaching to their culture and developed the strong Javanese churches of today. The process took many decades. (118)

So what are we to make of Morton's critique? Though there are some significant points upon which Morton and I differ in our understanding of the perspectives of IM advocates, I find his analysis of the arguments and positions of IM proponents helpful. Morton undertakes some very important analysis, especially of the exegetical foundations for IM advocates' approaches to ministry. If you are involved in a ministry context where these issues are of ongoing concern, I encourage you to read and reflect on Morton's analysis.

Reviewed by Don Little

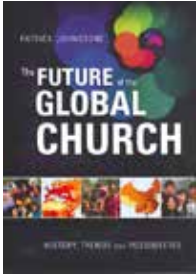
The Future of the Global Church: History, Trends and Possibilities

By Patrick Johnstone
Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2011, 240 pages

As one would expect from having read *Operation World* or *The Church is Bigger than You Think*, Patrick Johnstone's newest book is edifying, challenging, filled with interesting data and brimming with optimism. In *The Future of the Global Church* we learn afresh that God is powerfully at work and intending to do even greater things in answer to the

prayers of his people. In fact, I am truly amazed at the breadth of the topics addressed and the depth of detail and analysis.†

This book, which Johnstone describes as ‘the fulfilment of a 30-year dream,’ is very edifying and practical. The introduction includes a whole page describing ways the book is designed to be used by Christians passionate about the extension of God’s Kingdom, Christian congregations, disciplers and teachers, mobilizers, missionaries and researchers and academics. I feel confident that members of all those groups would certainly benefit from the material in the book. And as if the 240 pages rich with charts, maps and diagrams weren’t enough, there are also expanded electronic supplements available to accompany the book.



The opening section covers ‘Demography: Nine Global Challenges.’ This is followed by a 40-page overview of Christian history from the 1st through the 20th Century. Each two-page summary of a century includes maps, pie charts, significant dates, setbacks, key statistics, points of special interest, and two sidebars with a ‘Burning Question for Today’ and ‘Food for Thought.’ These sidebars help the history come alive with distinct applications and challenges for us today.

The next sections cover the major streams of the world’s religions and the six megablocs of Christianity. These are followed by an overview of Christian renewal and revival, and ‘The Evangelical Explosion.’ In the seventh section of the book, Johnstone examines the needs, challenges and opportunities among the unevangelized of the world.

The concluding sections round out the book with ‘Christian Missions and the Future’ and ‘Finishing the Task.’ Johnstone radiates a passion for the glory of Christ among the nations, a sense of the urgency of cross-cultural missions to reach the lost, a strong confidence in the power of prayer and an optimistic assurance that God’s Kingdom will come to the earth, according to Christ’s promises and provision.

Johnstone has done an admirable job of combining compelling data with insightful analysis, biblically rooted exhortation and educated projections of likely future trends. Perhaps a few other writers could have provided us with two or even three of these elements. I believe Patrick Johnstone is uniquely gifted to have provided all four elements in one monumental yet very accessible volume. Some readers may occasionally disagree with an opinion of Johnstone’s or the slant of an exhortation. But overall I believe evangelicals with a passion for completing the great commission will consistently find their hearts warmed and their minds stimulated by page after page of facts and prayer material. Johnstone does a fine job of consistently acknowledging that the future could unfold differently than projected and of noting the potential of God’s answers to prayer and of human effort (or lack thereof) to result in a different future than that which he is projecting.

As useful descriptors, Johnstone coins two acronyms: AfAsLA (for Africa, Asia & Latin America) and EuNAPa (for Europe, North America & countries of the Pacific). These do seem to be more helpful than the current alternatives of 'third world' vs. 'first world,' 'developing' vs. 'developed world,' or 'global south' vs. 'the West.' Time will tell if others will adopt these acronyms and give them wider use.

To give a glimpse of Johnstone's insights and observations, I include several excerpts:

- 'Nearly 60% of all Christian martyrs lost their lives in the 20th century. How many will be martyred in the 21st century? How can we prepare for this?' (27)
- 'Muslims do not need to be in a majority to Islamize a country. They need only to be able to manipulate or control the legal and taxation systems.' (40)
- 'Only two religions [sic] will continue to grow until 2050, Muslims and Christians. The others will dwindle, largely as a change of allegiance.' (67)
- 'Muslims comprised just one-eighth of the global population in 1900, but by 2050 they are expected to comprise well over one-quarter. Their growth rate will be highest in countries where they are a minority, boosted by immigration.' (74)
- 'The 21st Century is likely to be defined by a three-way contest for the hearts of humankind between evangelical Christians, Muslims and secularists. Evangelicals will probably have the edge over the other two. Basically, biblical Christians have a cultural flexibility and a core message of present assurance of future salvation that Muslims could never have, while secularists will ultimately decline because of their very low birth rates and their unsustainable dependence on affluence. However, harsher conditions of opprobrium and persecution are likely to become more common for Christians.' (94)
- 'It is not far-fetched to think that every person on earth could have a meaningful chance to hear the message of the gospel in a culturally appropriate manner in our times.' (97)
- 'Pressing issues in the 21st Century: (1) The disparity between rich and poor countries, (2) Violence and war, (3) Islam, (4) Discrimination and persecution (119).
- 'If present projections prove accurate, by 2050 charismatic Christians will comprise one-third of all Christians and one-tenth of the world's population.' (125)

But overall I believe evangelicals with a passion for completing the great commission will consistently find their hearts warmed and their minds stimulated by page after page of facts and prayer material. Johnstone does a fine job of consistently acknowledging that the future could unfold differently than projected and of noting the potential of God's answers to prayer and of human effort (or lack thereof) to result in a different future than that which he is projecting.

- ‘The various forms of Christian renewal highlighted here constitute the only fast-growing religious movements in the world today.’ (127)
- ‘Liberal, traditional, Constantinian Christendom is dying. Present trends indicate that future Christians could be more spiritual, dynamic and prophetic, but also more persecuted.’ (129)
- ‘Are the very successes of Evangelicalism sowing the seeds of its spiritual demise by grieving the Spirit of God through pride, division, disobedience, carnality, moral laxity, theological error or prayerlessness?’ (141)
- ‘In 1900, fewer than 2% of all Evangelicals were Asian. However, by 2000 this figure had increased to over 29%, and by 2050 it could exceed 33%. Asian Evangelicals are still the most persecuted.’ (148)
- ‘It is very important to consider the world’s peoples by affinity bloc and people cluster. It is strategic to reach out to people groups in many countries by evangelizing local immigrants-who in turn can evangelize those from other less accessible groups in their cluster. (171)
- ‘The old, Western ways of forming relationships and strategies and working in the field will no longer do now that missionaries are being sent out from all over the world. Increasingly, everyone will need to deal with multiple initiatives aimed at the same populations; agencies and networks will have to cooperate across cultures, and multicultural teams will become the norm. This is no longer an option, but essential.’ (228)

I highly recommend *The Future of the Global Church* to anyone interested in earnest prayer or strategic thinking about the completion of the great commission.

Reviewed by L.D. Waterman

What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission

**Kevin DeYoung & Greg Gilbert
Wheaton: Crossway, 2011**

Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert have given the church a great gift. Through an exegetically careful analysis of the whole Bible they give the church, lay leaders and scholars alike, an understanding of these issues that will help us all keep ‘the main thing the main thing.’ They grapple with ‘this whole issue of mission...the most confusing, most discussed, most energizing, and most potentially divisive issue in the evangelical church today’ (25) and give their answer to this vital question: ‘What

is the Mission of the Church?’ Their approach is refreshing, since they are ‘...writing for the average Christian and the ordinary pastor trying to make sense of a whole host of missiological questions.’ (10)

The book’s three parts challenge the reader to consider varying definitions of common terms and to look to scripture for clarity: (1) Understanding Our Mission, (2) Understanding Our Categories and (3) Understanding what we do and why we do it.



Part I Understanding Our Mission

DeYoung and Gilbert ask some great questions, such as-

- What do we even mean by *mission*?
- Is the mission of the church the same as the mission of God?
- Is the mission of the church distinct from the responsibilities of individual Christians?
- Is the mission of the church a continuation of the mission of Jesus?
- If so, what was his mission anyway?
- Does God expect the church to change the world, to be about the work of transforming its social structures?
- How does the kingdom relate to the *gospel*?
- And how does all this relate to *mission*? (16)

Before addressing the mission of the church, they give this simple, working definition of mission—a task a person or group is sent to accomplish.

In the section ‘A Correction to the Correction’, they laud the missional lifestyle, or getting out of your holy huddle, but they express concern about how missional thinking changes the conversation about the church’s mission. I share their concerns, especially ‘...that in all our passion for renewing the city or tackling social problems, we run the risk of marginalizing the one thing that makes Christian mission Christian: namely, making disciples of Jesus Christ.’ (22)

Part one continues with chapter two asking ‘What does Jesus send us into the world to do?’ Before answering this by looking at the Great Commission texts, they look at some passages that are commonly used to support a broader definition of missions. Part one ends with a preliminary conclusion that the church’s mission, or task, is to make disciples.

They clarify with ‘Though we do not believe that the mission of the church is to build the kingdom or to partner with God in remaking the world, this does not mean we are against cultural engagement. Our point is simply that we must under-

stand these endeavours in the right theological categories and embrace them without sacrificing more explicit priorities.’ (12)

Part 2: Understanding Our Categories

This part of the book, ‘Understanding Our Categories,’ begins

It’s never a good idea to make a biblical case for something—especially something as monumentally important as the mission of the church—from just a few texts. The bible isn’t just a potpourri of pithy sayings from which we can pick up a nugget here and a nugget there. No it’s a grand sweeping, world encompassing story that traces the history of God’s dealing with mankind from very beginning to very end. If we really want to understand what God is doing and what he would have us do as his people, we need to have a good grasp of what that story is, what its main themes are, what the problem is, what God’s remedy to the problem is, and what it all looks like when the story ends. (52)

I appreciate that before they look at theological categories they highlight the importance of grasping the whole story first. I have been passionate about reading the bible as one narrative, finding many benefits personally and in ministry. I had not considered that this big picture view is also helpful in organizing our thoughts about mission into categories. The authors choose four categories that most often affect how we think of missions: gospel, kingdom, social justice and shalom. In three of these, they discuss the definition and go on to compare different views. Two chapters are given to social justice, one on exposition and one on application. I appreciate the fair, scholarly exegesis throughout the book but especially in this exposition chapter. In the application chapter, they put forth some proposals for those involved with social justice. Learn what the Bible says about the poor and social justice, but do not undersell it or oversell it. Be careful with the term social justice. The call to love, rather than a call to action, is always biblical. The authors believe talking in terms of love will make the discussion less controversial and therefore more profitable.

The chapter on the kingdom of God is the heart of the book. After summarizing what the kingdom of God is with these words ‘So the kingdom of God then, we may say, is God’s redemptive reign, in the person of his Son, Jesus Messiah, which has broken into the present evil age and is now visible in the church,’ (111) they go on to ask when and how the kingdom will be finally and fully established. Again, relying on sound exegesis, rather than anecdotal stories and personal experience/passion, they make the biblical case that the kingdom is not built by human effort. Drawing from conversations Jesus had with the disciples, and from Revelation they conclude ‘The final events—the defeat of the nations arrayed against the lord and his anointed, the defeat of Satan, the creation of the new heavens and the new earth— it all happens when *and only when*, King Jesus returns in glory, and not before’ (113). They cite a lengthy quote from *The Presence of the Future* by George Eldon Ladd, on

the kingdom, what it is and is not, including scripture references.

They summarize with ‘...the disciples were not simply to sit and enjoy the fact that all authority now belonged to Jesus; they were to go and proclaim that fact to a dark world that had no idea of that reality. They were to ‘witness’- not build, not establish, not usher in, not even build for the kingdom—but bear witness to it. They were to be subjects and heralds, not agents of the kingdom.’ (122)

Part 3 What We Do and Why We Do It

This last part suggests that a new category is needed between that of utmost importance and that of no importance, ‘The thinking seems to be that good works have to be motivated by the highest imaginable reasons—We’re building for the kingdom! We’re doing the gospel! We’re joining God in his mission! We’re spreading Shalom!—or else people will think they’re not important at all’ (230). They give the example of marriage, not of utmost importance in heaven, for sure, but not by any means unimportant!

They also address the difference between what scripture says an individual Christian should do and what the church should do. Humorous examples are given that really drive this point home. Lastly, they point out that the church must keep the main thing the main thing.

The danger is real. If we do not share the gospel—with words!—the story will not be told. Just as bad, if our priorities mirror the Millennium Development goals, we will be redundant. (220)

Decisions have to be made; trade-offs have to be done. You have to decide not just if something will further the mission, but also *how directly* it will do so, and therefore whether it is worth doing when there are five other things on the table. (238)

For the missions teams grappling with tough decisions I suggest they read and discuss the whole section in chapter nine ‘So What Should We Do, as Churches?’ Their main point is this: ‘Ultimately, if the church does not preach Christ and him crucified, if the church does not plant, nurture, and establish churches, if the church does not teach the nations to obey Christ, no one else and nothing else will’ (219).

Who should read this book?

Workers will find this book refreshing as so many ‘tasks’ present themselves on the field. One of the quotes from the chapter on the social justice would be well for missionaries to recall on their long days. ‘If we need fifty hours in every day to be obedient, we’re saying more than the bible says’ (172). Workers are encouraged to remember, whether directly or indirectly, that their main task is to make disciples.

Mission agency leaders would do well to read this book often, evaluating their

fields for ‘mission creep.’ Pastors should read this and consider if maybe they are asking their ‘Missions Leader’ to do too much. Church leaders should be clear about what the mission of church is while making room for individual’s callings/passions for other kinds of outreach. In light of the popularity of the contemporary *missional* movement, all Christians should seriously and humbly consider the questions DeYoung and Gilbert posit.

Lastly, missions leaders in churches should read this book and ask their elders to discuss some of the questions with them. ‘Making Sense of Social Justice, Sha-

‘So What Should We Do, as Churches?’ Their main point is this: ‘Ultimately, if the church does not preach Christ and him crucified, if the church does not plant, nurture, and establish churches, if the church does not teach the nations to obey Christ, no one else and nothing else will’

lom and the Great Commission’ is exactly what is needed to responsibly, faithfully and biblically serve the church as a missions leader. I have grappled with definitions trying to bring clarity to the task remaining. In order to raise these issues gently I drafted a handbook for my church to define missions and to guide the team in the difficult task of prioritizing mission opportunities. I needed a tool that would help us make decisions less subjective. I

thought a rubric would do the trick but I could not define the categories. After reading this book, I have some new categories to help me complete the rubric.

I pray that readers will rethink their theological categories and consider whether their endeavours could more *directly* further the mission of the church, making disciples among all nations.

Reviewed by Pat Noble

Pat is the news editor for [Missions Catalyst](http://missionscatalyst.net) online magazine. She has been the Missions Team leader at her church for about 15 years and loves working with international students and with IVCF. Her greatest passion is to see churches catch the vision for church planting among unevangelized peoples. You can read her bio here: http://missionscatalyst.net/?page_id=615, and visit her blog here: <http://www.flavors.mc/patnoble>.