

Editorial

I appreciate the growing response to Seedbed articles. This second issue of 2006 contains interaction from colleagues on several different levels. Juan Carlos Parodi speaks for the Latinos in his recognition of Don Little's comments on affluence in AWM. As the number of AWM members from diverse ethnic groups increases, I would like to encourage you who are non-Western to send in your perspectives on ministry to Muslims. I realize that writing in English may seem to be an obstacle; but I am prepared to work with you to express your ideas. Just as we need your unique contribution to ministry in the Arab world, so we benefit from your insights as well.

The earlier article on 'Sharing the Gospel in an Honour and Shame Society' by G.K. has inspired Abu Dawood to send us his additional thoughts on that important topic. Perhaps you the reader would like to elaborate further by sharing your views and experiences. There is so much that we can learn from one another.

In his column 'That's a Good Answer', I.L. provides a timely comment based on his interchange over the Danish cartoons of Muhammad. Current events in the Muslim world can present vital opportunities for more spiritual conversations with our friends. Have you any such stories about your dialogues with Muslims about such dominant world events? How have you been able to speak or show truth about our sovereign God where there is anger, distress or suffering?

Don Little draws our attention to Kenneth Cragg's views related to ministry to Muslims. Although Little rates Cragg's approach as being directed to the thinkers of the Muslim world, he does find some value in its increasing our understanding of how Muslims see both the West and Christians. As we wrestle with the present political problems of the Middle East, we recognize our need to comprehend the underlying issues. Not that we can solve the problems, but so that we can relate to Muslims in a meaningful way in order to communicate Christ.

Today's press is full of articles with commentaries on Muslims and Islam. New books on Islam are published for Christian readers. One of the questions raised relates to the Arabic word for God. Bob Cox has written a study of the etymology and historical use of the name 'Allah'; this resource will help us when we face queries about this word from the Christian public.

The topic of church-planting is at the heart of our ministry in the Arab world. Gary Corwin takes a second look at the principles behind the goal of planting new churches. He warns against the misapplication of such principles. He comments on David Garrison's *Church-Planting Movements* and encourages us to redouble our efforts to apply essential biblical patterns. Although C.H. refers to the same book, he describes his team's reaction to it in light of their experiences in their North African city. Regardless of the team's disagreements with some of Garrison's

ideas, C.H. recommends this book because it forced them to think through important issues.

The final section of *Seedbed* includes reviews of books and materials that help us in our ministry. First we hear about the video *Dreams and Visions*. C.H. has shown it to North Africans who are either seekers or followers of Christ. The directness of the video's message is useful for those seekers and Christian believers, but it may be offensive to other Muslims because of its rather negative portrayal of Islam.

Several of our colleagues have published books in recent months. Here Michael and Janine Thomas comment on David Lundy's *Borderless Church*. This book draws our attention to the effects of globalisation, particularly in terms of the mission of the church for local and

global outreach. The church must interface with the modern world while keeping its biblical principles.

I hope that in the variety of articles and discussions in this issue you will find something to stimulate your thinking and influence your ministry in the Arab world. Better yet, why not write down your thoughts and experiences and send them to *Seedbed*? The book of Proverbs tells us: 'As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another' (Prov. 27:17).

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PS. My apologies for the printing mistake in the hard copy of the last issue where the second page of 'Minimizing the Bible' by John Piper is missing. We will reprint it in this issue.

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Letters to the Editor

Re: 'Affluence in AW – Is Bonk Right?' (Seedbed 2006-01)

I really appreciate what Don Little had to say about the dangers of living an affluent missionary lifestyle. Coming from Latin America, where we have had Western missionaries for over 100 years, we also have witnessed how affluence in missionary lifestyles has hindered the communication of the gospel and has created a tremendous barrier between *the missionaries* and *the nationals*. I really appreciate the new wave of missionaries from Latin America who have been sent to North Africa and other Muslim countries in the last fifteen years. They have shown an authentic interest in people, living like them, relating to their daily lives and going through the same struggles. The majority of Latino workers come from poor countries; they know what it is to try to make ends meet every month. I believe 'wealth' can be a stumbling block to preaching the gospel. Would not Latino missionaries be more qualified and more effective to reach the poorest areas in the world?

Juan Carlos Parodi

Hi Juan Carlos,

Your response to Donna about my Seedbed article was passed on to me. I appreciate hearing your comments and am glad that my humble reflections were encouraging. May God grant us all grace in this matter!

There is little doubt that poor people (relatively speaking) can connect to other poor people more naturally and effectively. Surely as we in AWM welcome more people from less affluent countries into our teams, these new members will have much to teach us in many ways. They will probably open up doors of influence among the poor that we Westerners are unable to enter.

Blessings!

Don