

Editorial

It has been two months since the *Time* article on Christian witness to Muslims appeared. I was in the Albany, NY area when a friend mentioned he had received it. Immediately, I looked for the nearest mall and bought my copy, rather fearing the worst. Would the freewheeling liberals in *Time* blow us out of the water? Would their ignorance of the basic issues regarding missions and the reasons the message of Christ is being proclaimed at great risk render the article as so much dribble?

However, what I encountered was a fairly even-handed approach. Of course, *Time* isn't known for writing commentaries for evangelicalism. Yet, they resisted painting those carrying the Gospel into Muslim lands as kooks or misguided zealots. It was, rather, one of their better efforts, albeit very limited in scope and depth. Nevertheless, I felt they merited a positive vote and wrote the editors to that effect. Their reply stated their appreciation for my comments, promising to let me know if my letter was going to be published. As far as I know, it never was. My strong request to *Time* was that, having done an investigatory piece on 'Should Christians Convert Muslims?', a similar focus on Muslims 'Islamizing' worldwide was now to be awaited. Whether they heard me or not, I do not know. Should anyone see that such a study is carried out, please notify *Seedbed* and send me the article.

This second issue of 2003 focuses on some of the serious concerns facing our world today. I refer to Iraq, the Middle East and what could be called the Middle East cauldron. I think you will find both 'Iraq and the Bible' and the study on 'Islam and Democracy' very interesting. Do let us know if you agree or not. 'Life at the Hub of the World' takes a new look at church planting which will make you reflect about strategy, especially if you are involved at the front lines. 'Encountering the Lost' takes us into the realm of spiritual warfare. Hopefully, there will be space to include it in this issue. If not, it will appear in the winter issue.

We envisage going to three issues for 2004. Therefore, I would welcome articles on your personal experiences, so please sit down and put finger to keyboard. As we begin to hit our stride, please let us have your comments and observations. We would like *Seedbed* to be a lively forum of serious intellectual exchange and not merely a bulletin of dry verbiage.

Abe Wiebe (Editor)

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Letters to the Editor

Where can I buy the books reviewed in Seedbed?

I finally got around to reading the First Semester issue of Seedbed. I think it is a very good and helpful issue. I note the book 'Daughters of Islam' by Miriam Adeney was reviewed by Joyce. However, it did not tell us where to obtain copies of the book. I would especially like to have one. So could you tell me where that could be purchased?

Bev McCullough (US)

Ans: Most of the books reviewed will be available via Amazon.com. Another good source is Fellowship of Faith, Box 65214, Toronto, ON M4K 3Z2. Of course, many missions that have a ministry to Muslims would also likely carry such books.

Did G.D. get it right on God's purposes for Jews and Arabs?

It was with gladness and gratitude that I received my copy of SEEDBED this morning. I am glad AWM found a new editor to continue this important ministry. Let us know how to pay for it. Is there a possibility of getting back numbers?

I believe G.D. overlooks the weight of Rom. 11:1-2 in connection with 11:29 in his article, and, in my view, mistakenly identifies 'some of the broken off branches' (Rom. 11:17) with the whole of Israel and draws the conclusion that 'Israel ceased to be the people of God'. In spite of the 'spirit of stupor' (Rom. 11:8), of being 'hardened' and of a 'hardening in part' (11:25), of having stumbled and fallen, though not beyond recovery (11:11) and of having become 'enemies' (11:28), Israel has not been

rejected, and God's covenant with them has not been cancelled out. The whole metaphor of the olive tree makes that clear. Yes, some branches have been broken off, but the tree itself (i.e. Israel) has not been cut down (cp. Jer. 11:16). Judgment, yes, rejection and replacement, no. We, the wild branches, have been grafted in among the others (i.e. branches) and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root (Rom 11:17f). In my view, G.D.'s assumptions would make God's promises in Gen. 17:7-8 meaningless.

And that would be bad for all of us.

Dieter Kuhl (Germany)

More on the Jewish-Arab Question....

In the last issue of Seedbed, G.D. initiates discussion of our view of current Jewish-Arab issues. Since our desire is to major on the majors, a main focus on such a question should be the delineation of Jewish-Arab issue findings that can be held in common among Christians of varying eschatological orientations. Paradoxically, one of the best ways of achieving this goal may be through a thoroughly premillennial examination of the whole matter.

Non-premillennials generally don't have eschatological 'hang-ups' about seeking socially just activity for both Jews and Arabs or about encouraging the exploration of land-for-peace negotiations between Israel and its neighbours. In contrast, many premillennials feel impelled [sic] by common interpretation of their eschatology by such activity.

I believe there is a strong basis, even from within the premillennialist orientation:

a) for desiring socially just activity for/ from both Jews and Arabs, and

b) for encouraging the exploration of land-for-peace negotiations.

The crystallization of this perceived basis developed through my responses to clarification requests from a number of premillennial church leaders and Christians who are deeply troubled by the current Arab plight. I encouraged these Christians to find

common cause with non-premillennial Christians regarding the two conclusions, even though the eschatological routes to these joint conclusions vary widely.'

Richard L. (Canada)

Any Seedbed reader wishing a detailed paper in this line of argument by Richard, please request the same from the Seedbed Editor.



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Iraq and the Bible

By Bryant G. Wood

We are becoming increasingly familiar with the topography of Iraq as we watch TV news reports and read newspaper accounts of events unfolding there. Iraq, about the size of California, is ancient Mesopotamia, Greek for 'in the midst of the rivers'. These rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, played a key role in the development of civilization in this region. The easternmost river, the Tigris, has its headwaters in eastern Turkey and flows past Mosul (ancient Nineveh), Tikrit, Baghdad, Kut and Basra. The Euphrates begins in east-central Turkey and flows past Karbala, Hilah (ancient Babylon) and Nasiriyah.

Iraq is called the 'Cradle of Civilization', as evidence has been found there for the earliest writing system, urban centres, literature, metallurgy, science, medicine and business, as reflected in the Bible (Gen. 2:14; 4:21-22; 10:10-11; 11:1-5). Our modern culture has its roots in ancient Iraq. Biblical names for the southern part of ancient Mesopotamia include Shinar (ancient Sumer), Chaldea and Babylon, and for the northern area, Assyria. The ancient language of the region is called Akkadian, named after the city of Akkad, one of the cities founded by Nimrod in Shinar (Gen. 10:10). The language was written in cuneiform, or 'wedge-shaped', characters impressed into clay tablets with a wedge-shaped stylus. There are tens of thousands of archaeological sites in this celebrated land. Starting in the south, we shall point out biblical connections

to some of the many discoveries that have been made in this country, so rich with ancient history and archaeological remains. These connections cluster around two time periods: the time of the Patriarchs, i.e., the Early Bronze and the first part of the Middle Bronze Ages, and the time of the Divided Monarchy, i.e. the Iron Age.

Ur

Located ten miles southwest of Nasiriyah, Ur is most famous as the hometown of Abraham. He migrated from Ur to Haran in southern Turkey, the actual homeland of the Patriarchs, and then to Canaan (Gen. 11:31; 12:1-5). Evidence for a very advanced culture from Abraham's day has been unearthed at Ur. Its restored ziggurat, or temple tower, is often shown in news reports. A temple to the moon god Nanna, or Sin, was situated on the top of the tower. The name of the Babylonian king Belshazzar (Dan. 5) appeared for the first time in a text found in a foundation deposit of the temple. Scholars once said the Bible was wrong in naming Belshazzar as king when the Persians conquered Babylon, since the known records indicated that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon. What the foundation deposit tablet, along with other subsequently found texts, revealed was that Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus and coregent with his father. While Nabonidus was away campaigning, which he loved to do, Belshazzar was left to run the country from Babylon. Thus, Belshazzar offered

Daniel the position of 'third highest ruler in the kingdom' if he would decipher the handwriting on the wall (Dan. 5:16). This was the highest available office in the kingdom since Nabonidus was number one and his son Belshazzar was number two. Instead of being in error, the Bible precisely reflected the political situation that existed in ancient Babylon at the time of its fall to the Medes and Persians.

Babylon

The expansive ruins of Babylon are located a few miles north of Hilah and about 53 miles south of Baghdad. Founded by Nimrod (Gen. 10:10), it was one of the most famous cities in the ancient world. Babylon was capital of the Babylonian empire that ruled the world from 612 to 539 BC. Five of its kings are named in the Bible: Merodach-Baladan (2 Kgs. 20:12), Nebuchadnezzar II, destroyer of Jerusalem in 586 BC (2 Kgs. 24-25, etc.), Evil-Merodach (2 Kgs. 25:27-30; Jer. 52:31-34), Nergal-Sharezzer (Jer. 39:3, 13) and Belshazzar (Dan. 5). Many important finds have been made at Babylon. These include the foundations of the 'Tower of Babel' (Gen. 11:1-8), the royal palace built by Nebuchadnezzar where God pronounced judgment on the Babylonian Empire by means of the handwriting on the wall (Dan. 5), records detailing rations given to King Jehoiachin and his family who had been taken to Babylon as captives (2 Kgs. 24:15), the Babylonian Chronicle recording the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar on March 16, 597 BC, and the Cyrus Cylinder describing the fall of Babylon

(in fulfilment of biblical prophecy) in 539 BC and the subsequent freeing of captives so they could return to their native lands as was the case with the Judeans (2 Chr. 36:23; Ezra 1:2-4, 6:3-5).

Baghdad

One of the tragedies of the war in Iraq, and perhaps the greatest archaeological tragedy of all time, was the looting of the National Museum following the capture of Baghdad by US forces. Mobs ransacked the museum, grabbing treasures dating back to the dawn of civilization in Mesopotamia. 'They have looted or destroyed 170,000 items of antiquity...They were worth billions of dollars,' said deputy director Nabhal Amin, weeping. Some of the world's most important ancient finds chronicling the achievements of the Uruk, Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Persian and early Islamic civilizations were there. Included were mankind's earliest written documents, ancient mathematical texts, ancient sculptures and other works of art. Also the riches from the royal death pits at Ur from the late third millennium BC and tablets of the Gilgamesh Epic, detailing a great flood with many elements similar to those of Noah's Flood (building an ark, taking animals on board, releasing birds). Museums in other parts of the country were looted as well.

Nuzi

Located eight miles southwest of Kirkuk, the oil capital of the north, Nuzi was a centre of the Hurrian culture. The Hurrians are called Horites, Hivites and Jebusites in the Bible. About 3,500 tablets were found there, dating from

1600 to 1400 BC. Many of the tablets deal with laws and customs and provide some of the best available evidence for the common social, economic and legal practices in the ancient world. Such things as a childless couple adopting a slave to be their heir (Gen. 15:2-3), having children by proxy (Gen. 16:1-2), deathbed blessings (Gen. 27, 48-49) and the importance of household gods (Gen. 31:19, 30) are illuminated in the texts.

Calah

Calah, 20 miles southeast of Mosul, is one of three cities referred to as the 'Assyrian Triangle'. Along with Nineveh and Khorsabad, Calah was an important centre of the Assyrian Empire that flourished *ca.* 900-612 BC. Nimrod built it when he went from Shinar to Assyria (Gen. 10:10-11). Two Assyrian kings mentioned in the Bible ruled from Calah: Tiglath-Pileser III, also called 'Pul' (2 Kgs. 15:19, 29; 16:7, 10) and Shalmaneser V (2 Kgs. 17:3-6, 24; 18:9). The ruins of the palace of Tiglath-Pileser III were found, including his annals recording his campaigns to Israel mentioned in 2 Kings 15:19-20 (740 BC) and 2 Kings 15:29 (732 BC). In addition, three Israelite kings who paid him tribute are named (Menahem, Pekah and Hoshea), as well as one king of Judah (Ahaz). A prize find was made in the palace of Shalmaneser III—the so-called 'Black Obelisk'—that depicts Jehu, king of Israel, bowing before Shalmaneser III as he presents tribute.

Tell al-Rimah

In 1967, a stela of the Assyrian king Adad-nirari III was found at Tell al-Rimah, 40 miles west of Mosul. It

records a campaign to the west in which Adad-nirari received tribute from Jehoash king of Israel.

Nineveh

Located at Mosul, Nineveh was also founded by Nimrod (Gen. 10:11). Walls nearly eight miles long enclose an area of 1700 acres. There were outlying suburbs as well, so that when Jonah went there in the early eighth century BC, it took him three days to traverse the city (Jonah 3:3). Although Nineveh repented at Jonah's preaching (Jonah 3:5), the revival was short-lived. The Assyrians were soon back to their cruel practices, and God ultimately brought the empire to an end, as predicted by the prophets Nahum and Zephaniah.

Nineveh was most famous as the capital city of Sennacherib, the greatest of the Neo-Assyrian kings. Portions of his fabulous palace covering three large city blocks have been excavated. Painted sculptured reliefs depicting his exploits lined the walls. Many records were also found. The Bible tells of Sennacherib's campaign against Judah in 701 BC (2 Kgs. 18:18-19:36). In the Assyrian version, Sennacherib states that he shut Hezekiah in Jerusalem, 'like a bird in a cage'. He could not boast of capturing Jerusalem, because an angel of the Lord decimated his army, and he was forced to return to Nineveh (2 Kgs. 19:35-36). His most significant accomplishment in 701 was the defeat of Lachish (2 Kgs. 18:14, 17; 19:8). One entire room in Sennacherib's palace was devoted to this event. The walls were lined with reliefs, now in the British Museum in London, depicting the city

and the battle. Sennacherib is seen seated on a throne, reviewing a procession of captives and booty being brought out of the city.

The next two kings, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, are also referred to in the Bible at 2 Kings 19:37 and Ezra 4:10, respectively. Their records mention Manasseh king of Judah. He supplied building materials for Esarhaddon's palace at Nineveh and troops for Ashurbanipal's invasion of Egypt. One of the most significant finds at Nineveh was the library of Ashurbanipal which comprised about 1500 different texts, some with multiple copies, including archival, literary, magical, medical, divinatory and ritual tablets. It was here that the famous Epic of Gilgamesh, with its flood story, was first discovered.

Khorsabad

At Khorsabad, 15 miles northeast of Mosul, is the site of Dur Sharrukin, 'fortress of Sargon,' ruler of the Assyrian Empire 721-705 BC. Prior to 1847, Sargon was known only from Isaiah 20:1 where it says, 'In the year that the supreme commander, sent by Sargon king of Assyria, came to Ashdod and attacked and captured it'. Since his name did not appear in classical sources, scholars concluded that the Sargon in the Bible was not a bona fide king, but rather an alias for some other Assyrian ruler. Ironically, Sargon was the first name of an Assyrian king to be read from Assyrian inscriptions when, in 1847, his vast palace of more than 200 rooms and 30 courtyards, with sculptured reliefs and written records, was excavated at Khorsabad.

Sargon campaigned in the Palestine region three times, in 720, 716/715 and 712/711 BC, turning Israel into an Assyrian province and Judah into a vassal state in the process. In 720 BC, following the initial defeat of Samaria by his predecessor Shalmaneser V, Sargon boasted of deporting 27,280 Israelites to Assyria. In 712/711 BC he turned his attention to Ashdod and the area of Philistia. According to Isaiah 20:1, he sent his commander-in-chief (*tartān*) to capture the city. Assyrian records verify that Sargon remained in his capital at Khorsabad, stating that he stayed 'in the land', no doubt to supervise the construction of his palace.

The Future of Iraq

What lies ahead for Iraq? In the short term, we pray for a quick end to hostilities, and peace, stability and prosperity for the Iraqi people. In the long term, God said through the prophet Isaiah, 'In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship [the Lord] together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt My people, Assyria My handiwork, and Israel My inheritance' (Isa. 19:23-25).

(This article has been provided courtesy of the Associates for Biblical Research, a research and teaching ministry in Biblical Archaeology. For more information on archaeology and the Bible, visit the ABR website at www.biblearcheology.org, or call the ABR office at 800-430-0008).

Islam and Democracy

By Abe Wiebe

Is democracy compatible with Islam? Can the Qu'ranic principle of 'consultation' somehow find a legitimate expression within *Shari'ah* Law? How would the traditional Muslim position on theocracy fare in so-called 'islamocracy'? Has Islamic history over the past 200 years given us any reason to believe that liberal democracy, as an accepted form of government, is progressing amongst Muslim nations?

The subject at hand has become particularly pertinent in light of American objectives in post-war Iraq, namely, seeing a democratic regime in place as soon as possible. Do they stand a reasonable chance of succeeding? Of the 46 Islamic states in existence today, only the Turkish Republic can be described as a democracy in western terms. Several others have taken half-way steps towards sharing, yet not relinquishing power.ⁱ

Muslim scholars often point to the early Caliphate, when the successor to the Prophet was chosen on the basis of consultation among his closest followers. This idea is expressed in the Arabic word *shura*, meaning 'taking counsel or advice'. Of the three verses in the Qu'ran that contain the concept, only two have a marginal bearing on the subject. Here are the Qu'ranic quotations.

They have broken away from about thee: so pass over their faults (the timid in battle), and ask for God's forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs of the moment. *Surah* 3:159

Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who conduct their prayers by mutual consultation, who spend out of what we bestow on them for sustenance. *Surah* 42:38ⁱⁱ

According to Sunni doctrine, and as practiced in the naming of the first Caliphs, an elective process after consultation may take place amongst those qualified to make the choice. However, there never has been any defining of who could participate or how the electing procedure should operate. In subsequent centuries, the ideal merely remained part of Sunni jurisprudence without being implemented. So, this small trend toward democracy in Islam was simply stillborn. Of course, common affair consultations did take place between the ruler and the *ulama* (Islamic scholars), but the principle was never institutionalised. We will see later why this was so.

Democracy, by definition, in line with its Greek roots, means 'people-rule', or 'rule by the ruled'.ⁱⁱⁱ The citizens of any democratic state either hold power directly or by virtue of their elected representatives. Another way of describing the democratic institution is 'majority rule'. In Islam, governance is based on the Qu'ran and the *Sunnah*, which together give rise to the *Shari'ah*. Anything apart from the *Shari'ah* is not acceptable in the Islamic legal system. Nevertheless, certain advocates of a democratic Islam today are insisting on the need for *ijtihad* (use of independent judgment on legal or theolog-

ical issues— re-interpretation) so as to make Islam relevant to the 21st century.^{iv} This struggle for the practice of *ijtihad* has been part of Islam from the beginning. Paul Balta says that the doors of *ijtihad* closed in 1019.^v Then, after what seemed a promising start through reform in the twentieth century toward true *ijtihad*, the last twenty years have seen a strong return to a very conservative expression of Islam in the form of *Wahhabi* totalitarianism. So we have Bernard Lewis commenting, 'Traditional Islam has no doctrine of human rights, the very notion of which might be seen as impiety. Only God has rights—humans have duties.'^{vi} In the face of such a position, the outlook for democracy does seem dim indeed.

To further substantiate that statement, it might be appropriate to quote two other authorities. Abd al-Qadir Audah (d. 1955) who was a Muslim Brotherhood theoretician and Egyptian lawyer says,

Civil law was a creation of human beings, while *Shari'ah* was a creation of God. Civil law groups temporary principles set by the community while the *Shari'ah* is based upon principles laid down by God to permanently organize the community... and... create healthy individuals in an ideal society.^{vii}

Abul Ala Maududi, the famous Pakistani thinker states,

The central principle of the Islamic State is that sovereignty rests solely in God, and not in people, hence Islam is theocratic. The Caliph is to be the head of state as God's vice-gerent to ensure that God's Law is followed in the *Ummah* (Muslim community).^{viii}

Jane Lampman of *The Christian*

Science Monitor, in her article 'Easing into Islamic Democracy', refers to Radwan Masmoudi, an MIT trained engineer and member of the CSID (Centre of the Study of Islam and Democracy, founded in 1999), as an indication that there are Muslim activists who are working toward a convergence of democratic and Islamic values.^{ix} Their aim is to build bridges between moderate Islamists and the younger generation that is seriously looking into the compatibility of Islam and democracy. Lampman quotes Masmoudi as saying that Muslims have the model they need in the Prophet's approach in Medina. The fourteen groups of non-Muslims who lived in the city, including Jews, Christians and others, were to be treated equally in all worldly matters. And in matters of religion, each was simply responsible to God.

However, the most precise analysis of the whole question comes from Bernard Lewis. For clarity's sake, I will itemize his five major observations.

i) The heart of the matter lies with Islam itself. Democracy has its origins in the West, shaped by its double heritage: Judeo-Christian religion and ethics along with Greco-Roman statecraft and law. No other culture has given birth to such a system.

ii) Every civilization formulates its own idea of good government. The institutions that arose from ancient Greek polity resulted in some form of council or assembly qualified to govern. This did not happen in Islam.

iii) Roman law created the 'legal person', a corporate entity that for legal purposes was treated as an indi-

vidual with authority to own, buy, sell and fulfil legal obligations. It took the form of the Roman Senate, the Anglo-Saxon *witenagemot*, the innumerable parliaments, synods, chambers, councils etc., that flourished in Christendom. Islam had its *waqf* (pious foundation), which existed for the moment, but it never took on a governmental role.

iv) In the vast majority of cases, Muslim government was intensely personal. In principle, there was no state, only a ruler; no court, only a judge.

v) Since the Islamic state was, in fact, a theocracy, legitimate authority came from God alone. The ruler derived his power, not from the people, but from God and his holy law. Hence, there was no need for a legislative institution, and consequently, no need for representation or any procedure of choosing representatives. Not surprisingly, therefore, most Islamic history is one continuous autocracy.^x

In addition to the above, Bernard Lewis points to two crucial impediments to the development of democracy in Islamic nations. I shall not expand on these, but they are significant enough to mention. First is the failure to liberate and empower women. Granting women certain freedoms is not the same as empowering them to play their part in the development of their society. Secondly is the failure to sustain the personal ownership of property. A rich man's property has never been completely safe from seizure by the state. This is symbolized in the many ways people in Muslim lands enclose themselves behind walls

or else dissimulate their wealth. And a corollary to this is the relationship between money and power. 'Westerners will use their money to buy power, while the Middle Easterners will use power to acquire money.'^{xi} The impact on the political systems is obvious. In the latter case, it frequently leads to intrigue and upheaval in society.

Perhaps we should add the important role of self-criticism^{*} in Western society. Because citizens are free to speak their mind and work for improvement rather than fight the opposition, problems receive the attention they deserve. In one way, the freedom to criticize mismanagement and corruption forces those in power to deal with their weaknesses. Islam does not enjoy that luxury, because criticizing the government via the media can be interpreted as disloyalty. The stifling of discontent then leads to stagnation.

If, therefore, achieving democracy in Muslim lands is so problematic, what options might exist? Dr. Ali Sina, writing from Iran, takes a strong position in favour of pluralism, stating that the imposition of any religion or doctrine including atheism is a huge mistake. He goes on to say,

I am not advocating secularism as a substitute to religion. I am advocating secular government. Let people choose the religion that they like, but the state should be free of religion. Freedom of speech must be guaranteed and the right to criticize any religion or doctrine. With that, religions will eventually die out, and reason will prevail.^{xii}

Dr. Mohammad Shahrour wonders whether the new concepts such as

pluralism, civil society, democracy and opposition can be introduced into Islamic tradition. He believes that a nation bounded by the limits of God can exercise the process of legislation through a parliament. Since God has defined the forbidden (*haram*), a parliament can define the permissible (*halal*). The field of *halal* is everything that is not *haram*, and therefore, a parliament has the task of regulating the rest, which, by extension, might include the system of government. What he seems to overlook is that, once functioning as a system, democratic principles will inevitably clash with *Shari'ah* law.^{xiii}

Rafiq Zakaria in *The Struggle within Islam* underlines that, according to the Muslim worldview, religion and politics are inseparable and that secularism is the enemy of Islam and the *Shari'ah*. He argues strongly for separation of church and state as the only way out. Zakaria believes that the secularist-leaning Muslims have contributed much to Islam in the past and are the only real hope for Islam in the future.^{xiv}

What, then, are the prospects for democracy in the Middle East and other Islamic regions?

Jane Lampman, who surveyed nine Muslim countries, says that 87 percent of Muslims see democracy as the best choice for a political system. And Sayyed Hossein Nasr notes that 'in Islamic countries, people want more freedom, but at the same time, the vast majority want to live according to God's laws, which they believe will bring them happiness in this world and the next.'^{xv} Nasr thinks that if parliament passed laws that were not in

opposition to divine laws, there would be no problem. Strange that he doesn't see that in that case, the problem simply reverts to Qu'ranic rule. Nasr is probably correct, however, that most Muslims want a moderate progressive interpretation of Islam whereby the will of the majority is respected and the rights of the minority are protected. At first reading, that would appear somewhat utopic, particularly in light of present history.

As unlikely as it may seem, however, there are voices being raised in favour of promoting democratic thought amongst Muslims. Sayf al-Dawla, writing in *Between the State and Islam*, thinks that democracy is the only effective way for people to solve their problems and for societies to evolve.^{xvi} The same volume mentions the creation of centres for the study of Arab unity and democracy in places like Beirut, Cairo and Rabat. Saad Eddin Ibrahim holds that there is no way for a people to rise from cultural under-development other than by education, knowledge and experience with the democratic process, leading to true human rights. He established the Ibn Khaldun Civil Society in Cairo, but predictably, the centre was closed and Ibrahim arrested in June 2000.^{xvii}

In recent history, Lebanon presented a notable experience as an open political system and as a functioning Arab democracy. But civil war closed off Beirut, and many Lebanese fled to Cyprus, London and Paris. Surely, the experience bears investigation, since it made Lebanon the envy of the Middle East for forty years.

I have not given enough attention to the role of Islamic fundamentalists (read Islamists) and their drive for power. They are increasingly popular in Muslim lands, simply because they cannot be held responsible for the current havoc. Once in power, they will not need popularity, since they will find ways to hold onto power. A recent Al-Muhajiroun rally in Trafalgar Square, London, illustrates their position well. At the rally, signs were held up saying 'Democracy and the West are the disease... Islam is the answer.' If their number continues to grow, the future prospects for democracy will slowly fade from the scene.

How might all this affect the work of the Gospel in the Muslim world? Is there hope that tensions will lessen and freedoms of choice in belief prevail? We cannot lose hope, for our conviction remains that the kingdoms of this world belong to God and to his Christ.

It has always been true that when the skies are the darkest, God rides his chariots to his greatest victory. Ultimately, democracy is not the long-term answer to the people of the Muslim World; only in true knowledge of God through Christ is there hope. Conflict amongst the nations will continue until the Righteous One appears with healing in his wings. Nevertheless, let us pray to the end that a door might open in Islam and that seekers for truth will find the way.

Islam and democracy, under current terms, are clearly incompatible. Only by a profound application of *ijtihad* could some form of democratic government emerge. Impossible? Per-

haps beyond the human reach, but surely our reach of faith should exceed our grasp.

Footnotes:

- i Bernard Lewis, 'Islam and Liberal Democracy,' *Atlantic Monthly* (Feb. 1993).
- ii Abdullah Yusuf Ali, trans., *The Qu'ran* (Elmhurst, New York: Tahrike Tarsile Qu'ran, Inc., 1987).
- iii *Webster's New World Dictionary* (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1984).
- iv Ali A. Mazrui, CSID Chair (Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy)
- v Paul Balta, 'L'Islam' (Paris: Le Monde Editions, 1995).
- vi Lewis, *Atlantic Monthly*.
- vii Abd al-Qadir Audah, *Government and Politics in Islam*. Tareq Y. Ismael and Jacqueline S. Ismael. (London: Frances Pinter, 1985), 44.
- viii Abul A'laa, Maududi, 'Political Theory of Islam,' *Islam: Its Meaning and Message*. Kurshid Ahmad & Salem Azzam, Eds. (Leicester, UK: The Islamic Foundation, 1980), 147-171.
- ix Jane Lampman, 'Easing into Islamic Democracy,' *Christian Science Monitor* (May 29, 2003).
- x Lewis, *Islam and Liberal Democracy*.
- xi Ibid.
- xii Dr. A. Sina, 'Are Persians Ready to Leave Islam?' Email response. (Sept. 30, 2002)
- xiii Dr. Mohammad Shahrour, 'Reading the Religious Text,' *The Book and the Qu'ran* (1990).
- xiv Rafiq Zakaria, *The Struggle Within Islam* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988).
- xv Lampman, 'Easing into Islamic Democracy,' *Christian Science Monitor* (May 29, 2003).
- xvi Charles E. Butterworth, I William Zartman, *Between the State and Religion* (Cambridge, U.K. Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001) 141.
- xvii Ibid. 141.

A 10/40 Twist

By Brian Seim—SIM Ethnic Focus Ministries

'No. I will not pastor this church. It just is not ready to accept all the people in our neighbourhood,' said John Mahafey eleven years ago. He had been a missionary and was being asked to return and pastor the church that had led him to Christ. Nine months later, the leaders were unified in their conviction that God was calling them to reach their entire community. Again, they asked him to lead Churchill Heights Baptist Church. This time he accepted. One outreach they initiated was World Fest—a party *for* their diverse community, *from* their diverse church.

After a recent World Fest at which a couple of thousand neighbours came, I was travelling by plane to a conference. A very gregarious Arab immigrant sat down next to me. For the next hour and a half, he talked—about his family, his business and his mosque. Finally, he turned to me and asked what I did. Realizing I might only get in one sentence, I prayed for the right words and said, 'I am going to share with some churches how they can care about all the people in their community, not just those who are like them.' Without missing a beat, he told me about a party that his daughter and son-in-law had gone to, at a church where people from all over the world went and were welcome. I smiled and asked if it was Churchill Heights. He said yes, and ended that part of the conversation saying, *If there was a*

church like that in my neighbourhood, that's where I would go.'

My Village is Global

Forty languages are spoken in the hundred homes on a crescent near Toronto where I live. My Afghani friend didn't know that Christians prayed. My neighbour from the United Arab Emirates is comfortable talking about God, but not Christ. The doctor from India is a high-caste Hindu and suspicious of anything colonial. The Quebecoise is doing her best to compete in an Anglo society. People, whose cultures are without an ethnic church in Canada, and who rarely have another Christian from their background living within five kilometres of them, surround me. The 10/40 window is part of the fabric and texture of the 21st Century city. In order for Christians to reach people in cities, especially those from a Muslim background, churches will have to reach their whole communities, not just the people who remind them of themselves.

Post-World-War-II immigration in Northern Europe and North America initially came mostly from Europe. Later it came from the Americas, then in the 70s, from the Pacific Rim. During the 80s and 90s, immigration began to include South Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

Islam and Hinduism are penetrating the North. Some 1.6 million residents of the UK claim affiliation with

Islam, and another 0.9 million link themselves to a Hindu-Sikh faith. Some 580,000 Canadians associate themselves with Islam and 560,000 with a Hindu-Sikh faith. US statistics indicate 1.7 million Muslim adherents, while a Catholic study shows about one million Hindu-Sikhs within America.

Major receiving countries also have animistic shamans, tribal rites and Buddhist priests. Four million immigrants from 204 nations arrived in Canada in the last 15 years (12 per cent of the population). The US has ten times as many people, and immigration has altered the country by only 3 per cent during that same time—a smaller percentage, but a greater number of immigrants, hidden by cultural walls, untouched by the Gospel. In the UK, a population of 56 million includes 4.8 million immigrants, about 9 per cent of the total population (not divided by relocation period). Diversity is the name of the game.

Newcomers used to live in *their* communities, but cultures now converge into *our* neighbourhoods within a generation. Their jobs are usually in cities. They can, and do, move next door.

Governments have sought immigrants with technical skills that are essential for competing in a world market. Our birth rates are low, and governments feel that immigration maintains critical mass. We have set up social safety nets for seniors and healthcare, and they have to be funded by someone's taxes. So the diversity we face is going to continue. The 'Global

Village' is taking on a completely new character; my village is global.

Diversity — A Divine Plan?

Many of us complain about this shift. It's easy to blame government policy, but as Christians, we need to think deeply before we place blame for these changes, especially in light of the Apostle Paul's address in Athens.

From one man God made every nation of men, in order that they might inhabit the whole earth. *He determined the time set for them, the exact places where they should live.* He did this in order that they might reach out for Him and perhaps find Him, for in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:26-28).

God is no less sovereign today than He was when that was written. He has brought these people to our countries. Here is the very best place for them to find Him. It is God's doing—not an administrative or political mistake. Paul's words indicate that God had our role in mind as they search. Yet, how can we reach them with current ministry models?

A denomination may have churches among forty-two language groups. Those churches are extensions of their successful mission programs. Those churches can't reach immigrants speaking the other five hundred languages in cities like Toronto, London, Los Angeles, New York, Vancouver and Berlin. There are simply not an additional five hundred missionaries in each of these cities. Ethnic churches are limited by two aims—to preach the Gospel among *their* people, and, unintentionally, to protect their culture.

Before we blame *them* for silly, un-Christian behaviour, let us examine *ourselves*. Evangelical movements developed out of felt needs but proceeded along cultural lines. Those of us from European backgrounds tended to reach others from our same culture. That past error in unity fragmented the church and rebuilt walls that Christ tore down at Calvary. We find ourselves defending cultural values that we have confused for Christian values. Ethnic churches may be repeating this error.

Our diverse cities challenge us. To reach these people, we will have to accept the nations into our own church. After all, Christ does.

The New Urban Church

Intercultural churches began to grow in the seventies in New Jersey and New York. In the nineties, I visited a multicultural church in London's East Side. The Spirit of God has continued to move people to this kind of church. In Calgary, several leaders merged their churches to become Gateway International Church, ministering to a gang-infested community fragmented by sixty different nation-based groups. Today, church growth leaders estimate that there are over 1,000 intercultural churches across the US. Over the last five years in Canada, 150 churches are in the process of becoming intercultural. 'It's the only way an Iranian Muslim, a late-stage AIDS patient and a Japanese Buddhist can find Christ in the same community,' said Ken Shigematsu of Tenth Avenue Church in Vancouver.

A few years ago, I invited several intercultural church pastors to a dinner in my home. As we conversed, they told me that opening their churches to the nations has brought renewed meaning to several important Christian values:

Welcome only begins with the greeting committee. It is supposed to characterise the whole church. **Love** isn't just a hug. It's **real Friendship**. **Encouragement** is essential to immigrants facing the loss of their professional status, cultural safety network and often, even their families. There is a need for **recognition of difference without judgment**. There is a need to **see other people like themselves, a church with colour & accent**.

They learned they had to have **representative (ethnic) leaders in staff & lay positions** who shared a common spiritual maturity and an ability to evaluate their own, as well as each other's, cultural values. Churches began to develop **language pods** where the pastor selected capable people to **translate** to small groups for those without adequate language skills (usually a two to three-year process for older adults). Most of all, the churches recognised that they had to **act as extended family** to people who were leaving their own national and religious cultures in order to become followers of Christ.

New immigrants, especially from the Middle East or South Asia, are cautious of colonial attitudes, especially when connected to the church. On the outside, at least, their religions require solidarity of brotherhood. They seek

not only acceptance, but also inclusion. They may never again practice medicine, but they would like to have some respect for their twelve years of training and seven years of practice before they arrived. They believe that, within religion, they are not to be second-class citizens.

If immigrants are attracted to a church, it is only because they seek a truly Christian culture, one that lives

out warmth, welcome, justice; one in which an intense love for God pervades everything that is done or said—the kind of church that breaks through cultural bias. Being a part of this kind of church is what Christ invites each of us to do. To touch the nations with His message, I suppose we will have to do what Jesus commanded: Make disciples of every nation—by loving our neighbours.



Systematic Theology

An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine by Wayne Gruden

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Life at the Hub of the World

By Abu Bethany

Did you lose something?

One delightful Arabic proverb states: 'He who has lost something cannot give it away.' (*faqid ash-shay' laa yu9tihi*) I begin with that pithy line for a simple reason. Our family will soon celebrate the fourteenth anniversary of our arrival in Cairo (the 'hub' referred to in the title of this article). I admit that I have often looked up from my plough to cast my eyes upon greener pastures in some other corner of the Arab world. However, the Holy Spirit has not yet let me leave (whether by choice or by coercion!). Over the years, my passion for this great city has gone through phases of depletion and rejuvenation. Currently, I am in a state of rejuvenation. I hope it stays that way. So, even though I have occasionally lost it along the way, I want to share with you a growing passion for ministry in a major urban centre of the Middle East. In doing so, I hope to be able to 'give it away'.

Seize the Day

I think we are at a unique moment in the history of the growth of the Kingdom of God in the Middle East. The recent wars and political shifts are producing change that is reverberating throughout the area. We are seeing the Islamic right wing scramble to disassociate itself from Usama Bin Laden. Arab world rulers are making serious commitments to improve their human rights records. Even the educational apparatus is reviewing the highly

Islamic content of its Arabic language curriculum, not to mention the radical Islamic content of its religious studies programme. When these shifts are coupled with the overwhelming intrusion of the media—in particular, Internet and satellite, of the nineties—we have the necessary ingredients for very significant social, political and even religious change in the resistant Middle East.

While these changes reflect God's providential work to extend his Kingdom here, they should be viewed in tandem with the new environment of readiness in the historic church. In Egypt, the evangelical church is half a million strong. That is a significant force within Islamic society. If you add to that number the 9 to 12 million Coptic Christians, you are looking at about 12 percent of Egypt's population. (Government figures are closer to 8 percent.) However, these Christians have been here for centuries, except for the evangelicals who are newer to the scene. Why does their presence make a significant difference today? Answer: the Holy Spirit.

When John Hogg, Samuel Zwemer, Temple Gairdner and others came to Egypt in the late 1800's and early 1900's, they sensed that God would use the native Egyptian Christians to take the Gospel to the Muslims of Egypt. Over the past century, the wisdom of that approach has been questioned. Some mission activists have felt at liberty to sidestep the

established church in their quest to see the church from Islamic background. Criticism could easily flow in both directions. The best efforts of some of the most gifted Western missionaries has produced little fruit in terms of a lasting church. Small house groups have been brought together, but the continuity of such groups, particularly in the aftermath of the missionary's departure, has been a sore spot. This has left the missionary open to the criticism that he has not fully understood all the dynamics at work in the Egyptian society. On the other hand, the evangelicals of Egypt have not been overly aggressive in their quest to see the birth of such a church. A smattering of believers from Islamic background has integrated into the church, but this could not be characterized as a movement of any great proportions. Have the evangelicals been too tied to the forms they inherited from their mother churches in the West? Has the political situation and social stigma of conversion hampered the flow of new believers into the Kingdom? Has today's mission force failed to recognize and benefit from the presence of a faithful church? Yes, yes and yes. It seems that the time is right for re-evaluation. We need to have enough humility to admit that we have not yet seen the breakthrough we looked and prayed for in this urban centre of the Muslim world.

All is not lost, and that is why we return to the Holy Spirit. Believing that God is sovereign and that the Holy Spirit is still about his work of convicting of sin, righteousness and judgment,

I have to believe that we are on the verge of something in Cairo, in Egypt and in the Muslim world.

Firstly, there is a new environment of readiness within the Egyptian church. Visionary leaders are challenging church members to go beyond their family borders. Students are busy learning how to share their faith with Muslims. Muslims are being invited to evangelistic gatherings. Writers are writing, and media is being distributed. This may sound like normal fare to the reader. However, ten years ago this was not the case. Muslim evangelism was a taboo subject within the Egyptian church. The atmosphere today is very different.

Secondly, it is small, but the Arab mission force is here to stay. Egypt is a primary sending country. Others include Sudan, Lebanon and Jordan. Surely, this is the work of God's Spirit! I have just enough experience in Arab missions to know that these brothers and sisters face many of the same battles we do. They will need us to stand with them in their calling to disciple the nations. I hope they find us ready. I have to admit my bias in saying that the Arab missionary movement is a ministry phenomenon that thrills me more than most any other. The presence of Arab workers in virtually every country of North Africa and the Middle East is a work of God that we must embrace with utmost enthusiasm and joy!

Thirdly, innovative and perceptive leaders are being added to the numbers of Muslim background believers. These believers are articulating and acting out their own vision for reaching

the Muslim world. Often, they act largely independently of the church, although not in defiance of it. They are simply pursuing the objectives they believe will impact their families and society for the cause of Christ. The result is a rich, multi-faceted ministry, authored, I believe, by the Holy Spirit. By the way, they are also networking extensively with similar believers throughout the Muslim world.

Fourthly, as mentioned previously, political, social and economic events are conspiring to create a new openness in the Muslim world. Since the political is in the forefront of everyone's mind, let us consider the economic factors. Egypt depends on the West. Egypt's government and many Egyptian institutions garner money from the West. In much the same way, the Egyptian church is partnering to a greater and greater degree with Western churches and organizations. Is this dependency or inter-dependency? You decide. What I do know is that the times are changing. The creation of the global village is a reality. Money flows back and forth across the Atlantic in great waves. When a Western company finds a suitable market in Egypt, it creates an Egyptian entity to exploit that market. Increasingly, the church is following suit. Hopefully, their investment in Egypt is not of the exploitive variety. Nevertheless, it looks remarkably similar. The reasoning goes like this: We want to reach the 10/40 window or some unreached people group. There is a potential work force in Egypt. There are also some willing Egyptian managers to manage our

resources (national churches and their leaders). We will invest our resources through a partnership with the Egyptian workforce and managers. Does this not sound like the West bullying its way into missions in the East? No, in this writer's opinion, the partnership idea is working quite well. All parties agree upon the agenda. Resources are brought to the table from the West as well as from the Egyptian church. Then the objective is pursued. Personally, I am growing more sympathetic to this kind of collaborative partnership, feeling that it is a legitimate pursuit of the Great Commission, not a new religious colonialism.

Where Do We Go From Here?

In this kind of environment, what is the role of the expatriate missionary? I will start with some wrong answers.

The first wrong answer is that we will plant the church that the Egyptian church is not willing to plant. Wrong. It has not happened yet, and that is not because it hasn't been tried. I'm not saying we should not be involved in church planting. The attitude that we will do what the church here has left undone is arrogant and unacceptable. As we plant the church, we must plant it hand in hand with the brothers and sisters who are here.

The second wrong answer is that we are the brokers between the Western church with its resources and the Eastern/Egyptian church with its potential. Wrong again. Think global village. Egyptians are quite well informed about what is going on in the West. They go there often and even minister

in Western churches. Nobody wants a broker, especially not a Western missions pastor. He should come to Egypt to deal directly.

The third wrong answer is 'go home'. The work is not done. The Muslim world has yet to be significantly penetrated by the Kingdom of God. The church keeps Kingdom momentum when it is an 'all nations' church like that of Antioch. Our perspective and approach will enrich the church in the Middle East and assist in its Kingdom-expanding mission.

So, do we just integrate into the church and serve wherever we can? Well, not exactly. A lot depends on the gifts God has given us, but generally, if we accept a regular teaching and preaching role in an established church, we stunt the growth of those within the church who should be developing their own gifts. As missionaries (sent ones), our commission is to help the church move to a new level of Kingdom expansion. How?

The Catalyst

Webster defines 'catalysis' as 'an alteration in the speed of a chemical reaction effected by the presence of an agent or substance that itself remains stable'. That agent or substance is called a catalyst—not a perfect parallel to our role as expatriate missionaries, but you get the idea. We are agents reacting with the local church and Islamic society to bring about enhanced change within this society and, specifically, within the church.

Here is how I've seen it work. The expatriate missionary comes to town.

His ideas are fresh and new but also untried and often unsuitable to the culture. As he integrates into the culture and acquires the language, he begins to react to the local people. They affect his views and alter them to some degree. He, as well, affects their views, and the change process begins. I enjoy telling new missionary arrivals in Cairo that when I came to this city, it was unwise to speak of Muslim evangelism in the evangelical churches. That was fourteen years ago. Today those same churches are running training programs on how to share your faith with a Muslim. No missionary can take the credit for that, but the overall mission effort has played a role in bringing about this change within the church.

Another area where missionaries have been change agents is the church-planting movement. Until the very recent past, church planting was viewed traditionally as buying a building, hiring a full-time pastor, etc. These days, seminars are held all over this country, advocating a new kind of church planting. Although not a majority view, church leaders are more willing to consider a flexible approach to church planting, mobilizing non-professional ministers and using existing facilities. It is fair to say that missionaries have made a notable contribution to this change in thinking. I believe the change will have a lasting impact on the Egyptian church and on the Egyptian society as a whole.

A third area where expatriate missionaries can be agents for change concerns the relationship of the histor-

ic churches with the believers who have come to Christ from Islamic background. The call of God on our lives to reach Muslims with the Gospel provides us with an innate faith that God will mature them to the highest level of servant-leadership in his Church. Often the expatriate's faith in the new believer goes beyond the level of confidence that he/she enjoys from the church. There are obvious negative and positive implications to this reality. The expatriate worker may tend toward naiveté, while the national Christian leader who has been burned a number of times may be overly cautious. The expatriate may, if he has established credibility with the church, act as a promoter and door opener for the new believer. As the church's confidence in the new believer increases, new doors will open for other brothers and sisters from Muslim background. The result can be a growing sensitivity and awareness of the unique needs of Muslim background believers in the church community. The cycle of ministry draws from this awareness in all its evangelistic discipling and church-planting activities.

Two words of caution come to mind if we are to be serious about the 'catalyst' ministry. The first is that you may be tempted to think that because you are not an up-front teacher/preacher, you can be slack on ministry skills such as Arabic, theology, Church history, understanding of cults, and counselling. Nothing could be further

from the truth. The catalyst missionary has a unique position, having the ear of local church leadership and a broad view of the Church internationally. If we do our jobs well, we will be sought out to advise and consult in the church's most critical decisions. Your ministry skills should be well honed for use when the opportunity arises.

Secondly, what I am advocating here is a distinct departure from what I read and hear in the avant-garde mission meetings. If carried out well, the expatriate will not be 'in the sun' in the ministry 'solar system'. Activities and plans will not centre on him/her. On the contrary, he will rally around local leadership, whether of Muslim or historic Christian background. To my way of viewing it, this is not a 'reactive' ministry posture as opposed to a 'proactive' one. No, the expatriate must still carefully examine his opportunities and select those that have the best Kingdom-expanding potential. We are proactive but with a servant attitude. I cannot find a better way to express it than in the words of the greatest man born of women, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' The catalyst missionary has inculcated this heart attitude. He promotes nationals, and he uses his influence to facilitate their ministry and enhance it. He acts as a Barnabas to as many Pauls as he can find. He is proactive with an attitude—the attitude of the cross.

As they say, 'If you've lost it, you can't give it away'.

My Experience in a Limited Access Country

Both Jesus and Paul provide us with models of fruitful ministry among whatever people God calls us to work. I could tap their examples from many sides, but will do so only from the angle of preparation. Clearly, Paul's life experiences shaped him for his ministry. His background as a Diaspora Jew gave him personal experience with the Gentile world, upon which he could naturally build his ministry. It seems clear that, in some way, each person preparing to enter a country of limited access will have had a period of preparation that will help him to build a ministry. This normally includes a knowledge of the language and culture. The more and the deeper one is aware of the many sides of the country one is entering, the better one is able to navigate in it.

Entry is often a challenge. In my case, I was able to contact someone who was helping a national friend in the target country. This 'foreigner' contacted his national friend who was able to facilitate my entry, providing visa and employment. Such God-given opportunities normally open before us when we are searching for them. They also come to the creative person who, with wisdom and patience, 'sees' solutions to needs and is able to put together the elements that provide entry. The key to entry will vary, but it must be found.

Entry also provided me with the opportunity to assess a broader range of opportunities from inside. I did not think that the job which gave me entry

was necessarily the one and only. Upon inspection, a better opportunity presented itself, and I took advantage of it. Not only did it provide better benefits, but also furnished a more credible image.

For me, one of the most important priorities is to have credibility at the workplace. As I have worked conscientiously, my national superiors have recognized this. Undoubtedly, a good name is worth a lot. Credibility has also meant respecting certain rules of the game. The workplace is not a platform for evangelisation efforts. It seems to me the thrust of one's faith on the job should be similar to the advice Peter gives to wives of unbelieving partners, namely that 'they may be won over without words by the believer's behaviour when they see the purity and reverence of our lives'. I must add that I have taken opportunities for witness and even created them, with the result that my stand is known and attacked by the one with whom I have been most open. In all of this, however, there is an imaginary line beyond which I do not go with some. This is the tentmaker's perennial struggle: how to best reflect the treasure he has received.

Then there is ministry on a deeper spiritual level with those whom God puts in our pathway in the context of generalized suspicion and the likelihood of a multifaceted police surveillance network. The latter should be seen as an obstacle to be avoided, as we pray to be led by the free Spirit of God rather than a block that impedes our

progress. I have found that I have been able to disciple and baptize with some success while seeking to be careful and harmless, but the covert nature of all this leaves a question mark over the depth of impact on the new converts. This, however, is not an issue any human can decide. Ultimately the kingdom of God is like the man who scatters seed that grows though he does not know how.

Limited access countries are challenging. They demand a mix of vision, timing and keeping in step with the

Spirit. The right combination of preparation and qualifications of the one seeking entry and the situation into which he/she will fit is put together by the Lord of the harvest. Although the details involved are normally ordinary and commonplace, they can lead to openings in people's lives that are amazing. Who could have predicted, as happened to me, that one man's request for baptism would lead to two others in his extended family seeking the same? The challenge is there, and so are the rewards.

*'What has been affirmed without proof
can also be denied without proof.' Euclid*

*'Spirituality is a stream, while ministry is merely the bucket
which is used to carry the water.' Sunder Krishnan*

*'Long is the time to learn. Short is the time to do.
Yet it is worth it all, if the work in the end be true.' Lillas Trotter*

*'The Church is not planted. The Word is planted,
and churches are one of the prime products.' Anonymous*

Book Review: What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response

Reviewed by Muriel Butcher

WHAT WENT WRONG?—*Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*, by Bernard Lewis, Oxford University Press, 2002.

'What went wrong?' is the anguished cry of thoughtful Middle Easterners with a sense of history. What can account for the decline of their once thriving, enlightened and powerful Islamic civilisation, and the present dominance of Western influence in just about every area of life in the whole of the Muslim World? Bernard Lewis, the Cleveland E. Dodge Professor of Near Eastern Studies Emeritus at Princeton University, addresses this highly relevant question in his 2002 *New York Times* bestseller. Some have posed the question differently, asking, 'Who did this to us?' There are many scapegoats: the Mongols, the rise of nationalism, Western Imperialism—first French and British and now American—the Jews or the inflexible nature of Islam itself, particularly the recent movement backwards to its roots. But none of these can explain the actual imbalance between Islam and the Western world.

In his useful introduction, the author traces the history of the Islamic world through its rapid geographic, military and economic expansion, its incredible advance in the arts and sciences (e.g. our Arabic numerals) and the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire. Alongside this is the early defeat of 'Christendom', followed by

the turn-around at the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation. Europe advanced by leaps and bounds in science, technology and all the civilised arts, leaving the Islamic world far behind and, for a long time, unaware of what was happening.

In the 160 pages of this book, Bernard Lewis seeks to discover the answer to his question in analysing seven different aspects of history:

- **Military** defeats forced the Muslims into the unthinkable position of having to learn from the infidel and to adopt, not only Western weapons, but also Western training, structures and tactics in warfare.
- **Wealth and power** was another area of Western superiority. Self-imposed ignorance of Europe and European languages deprived the Muslims of modern advances in discoveries, commerce and industry. The French Revolution and the radical change of sending students to study in Western countries opened eyes to new nationalistic and democratic ideas. But, in many countries, state control of the economy continued to inhibit economic growth.
- **Social and cultural barriers** were even more profound. The position of women is a key issue. Modern science is paramount. The Islamic Middle East, in spite of its vital contribution to the sciences in the Middle Ages, has been reluctant to accept and to contribute to,

what has now become, a world-wide scientific movement.

- **Social equality** was a doctrine of Islam from its inception. It recognised no aristocracies and insisted that rank and honour are determined only by piety and merit. But, although they were granted certain rights, three categories were always treated as subordinate: the slave, the woman and the unbeliever. Abolishment of slavery and equal rights for non-Muslims in Islamic states hit both ways and did not occur until the nineteenth century. Persian women began the on-going fight for emancipation in the mid-1800s.

- **Secularism** is totally foreign to Islam. Only Christendom separates God and Caesar. For the Muslims, Allah is the supreme sovereign and the caliph 'his shadow on earth'. The *shari'a* is the only law that regulates all aspects of human life. There is no equivalent to the 'church' and no recognition of priestly mediation—Muslim Imams are guides and teachers, not priests. Attempts to secularise governments and institutions have generally failed, and at present, only two Middle Eastern States have no established religion in their written constitutions. Muslim religious thinkers (and recent fundamentalist movements) have understood the threat posed by Western secularism to their religious values and have unequivocally rejected it. As far as civil society is concerned, authoritarian regimes under military control are gradually giving way to civilian governments.

- Discrepancies in the measurement of **time and space** stemmed from the use of different calendars and devices. Muslim prayer times divided the day, and European clocks and timetables were latecomers. Demarcation of territorial claims by frontiers also came from Europe. Islamic laws related to people, not states. A French writer, who travelled in the Middle East in 1947, summed up the attitude to time with this quote: 'Strict exactitude has minor advantages, but is very inconvenient. It lacks suppleness, it lacks fantasy, it lacks cheerfulness, even dignity.'

- In discussing **cultural change**, the author defines it as Westernisation rather than modernisation. He examines the effect of Western influence in the areas of music, art, architecture, clothing and language (translation and printing), and the degree to which they have been accepted or resisted.

The book finishes with a solemn warning and a challenge. The present destructive trend can be turned around if they can 'abandon grievance and victimhood, settle their differences and join their talents, energies and resources in a common creative endeavour'. Thus, the Middle East could once again become a major centre of civilisation.

I recommend this book. It is easy and interesting to read. The light it sheds on what underlies our different perceptions and attitudes—where both sides are coming from—could really help us to better understand one another.

Book Review

THE *DHIMMI*: Jews and Christians under Islam

Reviewed by M.K.

THE *DHIMMI*: Jews and Christians under Islam by Bat Ye'or, Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1985.

The inside flap of this revealing and informative book begins,

This study has been recognized as indispensable for a full understanding of the complexities of the Middle East conflicts. The author analyzes the historical realities of the *dhimmi* peoples, i.e., the non-Arab and non-Muslim communities subjected to Muslim domination after the conquest of their homelands. Separating fact from distortion in an extensive analysis of the history and destiny of these populations, Bat Ye'or also provides a large number of documents from different periods and regions, many of which have not been published before.

The writer has done her homework well, bringing to light, over the extended periods of Muslim history, the bitter realities that faced the *dhimmi* population. For example, as Muhammad secured his leadership in the city of Medina, he led his followers in subduing the Oasis of Khaybar, which was cultivated by a Jewish tribe. Following the siege of a month and a half, the victorious Muslim forces imposed a treaty called the *dhimma*, meaning 'those under special protection'. Only,

the cure was worse than the disease. This *dhimma* became the genesis of *jihad* and set the stage for the legal relationship between the conquering Muslims and the subjected non-Muslim population. Included in the stipulations of the treaty were requirements forcing Jews to walk bare-footed, dress differently and live in their own separate quarters; in sum, they were forced to live out an inferior status. As Islam expanded the experience of the Jews of Khaybar, it became the experience of all conquered peoples.

For some, 9/11 was their first and only encounter with *jihad*. But it should be no surprise that Muslims attacked in this fashion. There are many other examples in history.

The author details many places and events that would help the reader to understand the long-time humiliation of the *dhimmis*.

To really understand the Muslim mentality in its historical expression of reputed superiority vis-à-vis the non-Muslim, this is must reading. The book should not lead to a rejection of Muslims, but to a deeper reliance on the love of God for the outsider, to grace and to a conviction that, in the end, the battle belongs to the Lord.

Book Review

Lifting the Veil: The World of Muslim Women

Reviewed by Donna Smith.

LIFTING THE VEIL: The World of Muslim Women, by Phil and Julie Parshall, Waynesboro, Georgia, USA: Gabriel Publishing 2002, 283 pages.

Phil and Julie Parshall have provided us with an excellent overview of the world of Muslim women. Their examples come from a wide geographic range, including parts of the Arab world, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. The sixteen chapters mention religious beliefs (fundamentalism and folk religion), social customs, sexual practices and conversion incidents (becoming Muslims as well as becoming Christians). This book is written from great personal experience. The Parshalls have spent long years in the Muslim communities of Bangladesh and the Philippines. Phil has interacted with Muslims from other countries, and he has studied Islam in great depth.

Their varied experiences come alive in these very readable accounts. Nevertheless, this book moves beyond interesting stories to give instruction on the position of women according to the *Hadith* and the interactions between the prophet Mohammed and his wives. The quotations are well researched with attention paid to the difference between the Sunni and Shia traditions.

I particularly appreciated the chapter concerning women and heaven and hell, as I have seen little written on this subject. Phil Parshall introduces his topic: 'There is an unwavering, clear

teaching in their scriptures that makes for a basically airtight case for Muslims to either revel in a sensual Paradise or suffer horrible torment in a literal Hell' (p. 87). He then discusses how women will fare in an Islamic eternity.

Lifting the Veil provides a good study tool about the world of Muslim women. The extensive bibliography includes titles from secular, Muslim and Christian authors. For training purposes, it might be helpful to add study questions to each chapter and thus suggest further research into specific questions. No book can cover every issue, but I would have liked to see this one contain more historical material on Muslim women leaders, with information on the various emancipation movements. More women writers from within the Muslim world could be mentioned. Since many are active today as sociologists, cultural-anthropologists and creative writers, they have much to contribute to our understanding of Muslim women. Unfortunately, Phil Parshall sometimes referred to several of them as 'he'.

There are two chapters devoted to Christian outreach to Muslim women and to the discipleship of new believers. Helpful methods, including the importance of oral communication and 'storying', are suggested, and stirring testimonies are told. I would like to have seen more discussion of how women in various Muslim cultures

actually learn and are encouraged to change. I would also have liked to read more about the ministries of present-day MBB women and their roles in their families, in the church and in Christian media. In several countries, it is no longer a question of one or two isolated women believers. It would be useful if the Parshalls could cite examples of church body life and growth and not just cases of exceptional individual believers.

Another shortcoming is inadequate attention to details from resources. For example, Charis Waddy (*The Muslim Mind*) is referred to on page 88 as a Muslim Arab, but her publication says she is an Australian, a one-time student at Oxford and SOAS and a Christian scholar of Islam. In another reference on page 221, Ida Glaser is quoted as speaking to a group of young Muslims. In *Partners or Prisoners*, however, it is her co-author, Napoleon John, an Anglican minister from Pakistan, working in East London, who relates the incident. Christine Mallouhi, also an Australian, becomes a 'well-traveled Lebanese woman' on page 15, when actually the quotation is from Nadia Nouhid who is quoted by Mallouhi on

pages 46-47 (not pages 65-66) in *Mini-skirts, Mothers and Muslims*. However, these errors do not affect the development of the ideas presented. They just indicate the need for a careful checking of the original source materials.

In general, Phil and Julie Parshall are quite fair in the treatment of the obvious weaknesses in the Islamic position on women. They are careful to note that there "are weaknesses within the Christian world as well. At the end of the chapter on circumcision of women, the authors comment, 'The nominally Christian West has an abysmally poor record of dealing with abortion, pornography, and female abuse.' This attempt at fairness also led the authors to include a chapter on Western women who have become Muslims.

In the introduction, Phil Parshall states his objective in writing this book. He wants the reader 'to understand the Muslim woman in a more loving and prayerful manner' and 'to actively engage in witness' to such women. *Lifting the Veil* certainly provides the material to accomplish this purpose. It offers a good start for exploring each issue more fully.