

Editor's Comments

Again we apologize for the lateness of this second issue for 1999. I have undergone both radiation and a bone marrow transplant for treatment of Myeloma cancer, and have been laid aside for most of the quarter. Strength is now beginning to return and I am slowly picking up the strands of ministry which were left unattended.

In this issue you will find articles on several different subjects. P.G., a field practitioner in the Arab World, considers in two articles how best we can respond to persecution of Christians in the Muslim world and can help those who are victims of such. A bibliography for both articles is attached to the second. R. B., a linguist with long experience in the Arab World, challenges our thinking as to the minimal content of belief necessary to salvation. Do you agree with him? We invite your feedback! We hope that future issues of *Seedbed* will contain other articles on his research into the significance of linguistic, biblical, and Middle-Eastern usage of different messianic titles and especially the term "Son of God." We hope also that Donna Smith's report will stimulate greater input to *Seedbed* on women's ministries in the Muslim world.

What one must believe about Jesus in order to be saved by faith in Him

Rick B.

It has not been uncommon in some Christian circles to say that belief in the divinity of Jesus is a requirement for salvation.¹ As a result, well-meaning Christians have argued themselves to exhaustion trying to convince their non-Christian friends that Jesus is God, to no avail. Or they try to convince them He is the offspring of God, not realizing how offensive that remark is, and not understanding it themselves.² They are then confounded to see people give their allegiance to Christ after an encounter with Him through a Scripture tape or a dream, and then being quite open to learn about the Trinity and the atonement. This should not seem strange; it is how the Lord is working and it is Biblical. The problem is with us, because we follow evangelistic traditions rather than the Word of God. Where, for example, does one find the sinner's prayer in the Bible as the way to receive Christ? It is a useful tool, but it is not a ritual required for salvation.

Faith in Christ is adequate for salvation.

But what does saving faith entail? It is clear from the Scriptures that a person is saved, not by doctrine *per se*, but by personal faith in Jesus as Christ his Lord.³ The requirement for salvation is to believe *on* or *in* Jesus, but this relational faith is nevertheless based on what one believes *about* Jesus. One believes that Jesus has a particular role or status (called his name in the Bible), and one trusts him and personally accepts him in that capacity. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God (John 1:12).⁴

But what must one minimally believe about the role (name) of Jesus in order to put faith in him adequate to enter the Kingdom and be saved from condemnation?

There are many Scripture passages that state what people should believe to be saved or did believe when they were saved. These passages utilize a

¹ So MacArthur (1988:208): "That Christ is God is a fundamental component of the gospel message. No one who denies the deity of Christ could be saved (cf. 1 John 4:2-3)." That is not what the verse says, however: "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already." These verses concern discernment of true prophecy and oppose the docetic view that Christ was not truly human. The Scriptures present the deity of Christ, generally with some subtlety, but they do not make an understanding of his deity a requirement for salvation, and it is not mentioned in the earliest creed, that of the Apostles. In fact, it took about 300 years for the church to work out a statement on the metaphysical nature of Christ, which is carefully worded in the Nicene Creed of 325 AD: "And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds [God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father...."

² See the author's article on "Son of God."

³ MacArthur (1988) deals extensively with this issue.

⁴ Biblical quotations are quoted from the Revised Standard Version, 2nd edition 1971, except where otherwise indicated.

variety of titles for Jesus, but the important thing to note is that not once does it state that one must understand the divinity of Jesus to be saved.⁵ Biblical passages on the divinity of Christ are addressed to those who have already believed⁶ in Jesus as the Christ their Lord and Savior. In fact, it is quite clear from the passages listed below that what is required for salvation is a personal decision to accept and follow Jesus as the Lord Christ, who rules from heaven and is coming again to judge the living and the dead and to usher his people into the Kingdom. Those who put their faith in him receive the forgiveness of sins, the regeneration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and assurance of eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

The passages below are presented in Biblical order. They were chosen, not just because they gave names to Jesus or talked of someone's faith, but because in some way they indicated criteria for salvation with regard to faith in Christ Jesus. The focus is on saving faith, not faith to be fruitful or move mountains, and not on beliefs in other issues. Statements about Jesus are included only if they bear on the

issue of criteria for salvation. Criteria such as repentance and baptism are not included unless they bear on what one must believe about Jesus. For example, in the long ending to Mark it says, He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:16). This fails to say what one should believe about Jesus, although it could be argued that since the Gospel is about the Kingdom, what one must believe is that Jesus is the King, a title Jesus uses of himself rather sparingly (Mt 25:40; Jn 18:36). Luke records that at the birth of Jesus the angels proclaimed him a *Savior*, who is *Christ the Lord* (Lk 2:11), and that soon afterwards Simeon recognized Him as *the Lord's Christ* and *God's salvation* (Lk 2:26-32), but these are not presented as necessary or sufficient beliefs for salvation. Jesus tells the woman in Luke 7:50 that her faith has saved her, but the content of the faith is not mentioned (although it must have been directed towards Jesus). Statements of faith by disciples of Jesus have not been included, even if Jesus affirmed them, unless they are combined with assurances of salvation.⁷ Similarly, statements about following Jesus have not

⁵ For that matter, it is not stated that one must understand the atoning value of Christ's death in order to be saved. His atonement benefits his believing followers whether they understand it or not. The closest thing to mentioning the atonement in evangelism is found in Acts 8. Since Philip began his message with the text in Isaiah 53 that the Ethiopian official was reading, it seems likely that Philip explained to him not only the death of the Messiah but also the sacrificial value of that death. Elsewhere in Acts, the death and resurrection of Christ is presented as an act of power that demonstrates that Jesus is the Messiah; it is the sign of Jonah that Jesus foretold, but it is not generally proclaimed as a sacrifice for sins. Its redemptive value is explained to believers in the Epistles and in John's writings (e.g., John 11:50-51; 1 John 1:7; 2:2; 4:10; Rev 1:5).

⁶ "And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit." (1 Corinthians 2:13) "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13).

⁷ "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32)

"... rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20)

"They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.'" (John 4:42)

been included, even though they bear on faith in him as one's lord and master, unless they bear on the question of what one must believe.⁸ Italics have been added to highlight the roles of Jesus in which one must believe, and the word name has been italicized as well, where it means Jesus role in general.⁹

The thief on the cross "said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into *your kingdom*'. And he said to him, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'" (Lk 23:42-43) [i.e., the thief believed that Jesus is *Christ the King*.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must *the Son of man* be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave *his only Son*, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:14-16)

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears *my word* and believes *him who sent me*, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. (John 5:24; cf. 6:29; 16:30)

Simon Peter answered him, *Lord*, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are *the Holy One of God*. Jesus answered them, Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil? (John 6:68-70) [In Acts 4:30 Jesus is called God's *Holy Servant*.]

"...*for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he*.' They said to him, 'Who are you?' Jesus said to them, 'Even *what I have told you from the beginning*.'¹⁰ ... When you have lifted up *the Son of man*, then you will know that I am *he*.'¹¹ ...' As he spoke thus, many believed in him." (John 8:24-30).

Jesus asked the blind man he had healed, "Do you believe in the *Son of man*?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you.' He said, '*Lord*, I believe;' and he worshipped him." (John 9:35-37)

Jesus said to her, "I am *the resurrection and the life*; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and

* "And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life." (Matthew 19:29)
Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 16:24-25)

⁹ But if one looks at all of the verses on this issue, one is impressed that the emphasis is on personal faith in Jesus Christ, with little focus on his role or nature.

¹⁰ Note that what Jesus had called himself from the beginning is 'the Son of Man'.

¹¹ NIV: "if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins." It is often suggested that this statement is intended to allude to the statement of God recorded in Exodus 3:14, where he tells Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, I AM has sent me to you." The similarity, however, lies mostly in the English. The Greek phrase in John differs completely from that used in the Greek Old Testament, and if John's Greek is back-translated into Hebrew or Aramaic, it is also quite different from Exodus 3:14.

believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are *the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world.*" (John 11:25-27)

but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is *the Christ, the Son of God*, and that believing you may have life in his *name*. (John 20:31)

"Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both *Lord and Christ*, this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the *name of Jesus Christ* for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:36-38)

Acts 3.14 *the Holy and Righteous One ... the Author of life ... his Christ ... the Christ appointed for you, Jesus....* God, having raised up *his servant*, sent him to you first, to bless you in turning every one of you from your wickedness." ... But many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to about five thousand. (Acts 3:14-4:4)

But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the *name of Jesus Christ*, they were baptized, both men and women. (Acts 8:12)

You know the word which he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace by Jesus *Christ* (he is *Lord of all*), (Acts 10.36)¹² ... And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that he is *the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead*. To him all the prophets bear witness that every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his *name*." While Peter was still saying this, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. (Acts 10:42-44) ... " ... God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in *the Lord Jesus Christ* ..." (Acts 11:17)

And they said, "Believe in *the Lord Jesus*, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of *the Lord* to him and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family. (Acts 16:31-33)¹³

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent, because

¹² While there were many kings in the Roman empire, there had been only one Lord-Caesar. Now Jesus was recognized to be not just "King of the Jews" but "Lord of all." In the context this is based on Psalm 110:1, the most quoted verse in the New Testament: "The LORD says to my lord: 'Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.'" "LORD" is of course a translation of God's name in Hebrew, YHWH, but "lord" becomes a Messianic title.

¹³ MacArthur (1988:28) judges that Acts 16:31 and Romans 10:9 provide "the two clearest statements on the way of salvation in all of Scripture...." He goes on to add Acts 2:36 as well.

he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by *a man whom he has appointed*, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead." ... But some men joined him and believed, ... (Acts 17:30-34)

... When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully confuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that *the Christ* was Jesus. (Acts 18:27-28)

... testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance to God and of faith in *our Lord* Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:21)

And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in *the one who was to come after him*, that is, Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the *name of the Lord* Jesus. (Acts 19:4-5)

if you confess with your lips that Jesus is *Lord* and believe in your heart that *God raised him from the dead*, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

[We] know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus *Christ*, even we have believed in *Christ* Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in *Christ*, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. (Galatians 2.16)
... I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the

life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in *the Son of God*, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2.20)

Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing *Christ* Jesus *my Lord*. ... , not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in *Christ*, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; (Philippians 3:8-9)

Every one who believes that Jesus is *the Christ* is a child of God, and every one who loves the parent loves the child. (1 John 5:1)... Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the *Son of God*? (1 John 5:5)

The reader can see that the salvation is offered to those who put their faith in Jesus as their Lord Messiah, and that a number of different Messianic titles are acceptable. These include *the Christ*, *he who is coming into the world*, *the Son of God*, *the Son of Man*, *the Lord*, and others. All of the Messianic titles refer to Christ's roles; none refer to his divine nature, (although the "Son of Man" title is suggestive of this.) There is no statement saying that people must believe that Jesus is God before they can be saved, and it is quite clear that most of the early Christians had little understanding of the Trinity.

In fact, it seems unlikely that many people would be able to understand the divinity of Christ before their minds have been regenerated and enlightened by the Holy Spirit. They need first to receive Christ personally

as their Lord the Messiah, and then the Holy Spirit can help them understand His divine nature. Jesus hinted at this when He said,

I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16:12-14) ... the Spirit of truth ... will bear witness to me (John 15:26)

And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit. The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:13-16)

Jesus accepted his disciples and the thief on the cross because they accepted Him as Christ their Lord. That was enough. Although Jesus disciples marveled at His godlikeness, they did not understand His divinity until they had received the Holy Spirit. We cannot demand more of pre-believers today.

On the negative side, those who reject the King cannot be in the Kingdom:

But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to *reign* over them, bring them here and slay them before me. (Luke 19:27).

He who believes in *the Son* has eternal life; he who does not obey *the Son* shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him. (John 3:36)

Beloved, being very eager to write to you of our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For admission has been secretly gained by some who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly persons who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny *our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ*. (Jude 3-4)

But if Jesus died and did not rise, then he could hardly be "Lord of all", so after the ascension of Jesus to the throne in heaven, faith in his saving, Messianic lordship required faith in his resurrection as well:

If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9) [repeated from above]

The God of our fathers raised Jesus whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:30-31; cf. Acts 2:32-33)

Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

(Note, however, that Paul's remarks in 1 Cor. 15 are intended to introduce the topic of resurrection rather than to give a full account of what one must believe to be saved; they are addressed to people who already believe that Jesus is the Christ but are confused about the resurrection of the dead.)

Although Paul's partial summary of the Gospel in 1 Cor. 15:1-4 includes the fact that "Christ died for our sins," there is no Scripture passage saying that belief in this fact is a requirement for salvation. Romans 5:25 has sometimes been understood this way, but the context shows that the value of the sacrifice is received by those who have faith, faith in Jesus Christ.¹⁴ The sacrifice benefits those who put their faith in Him, whether they understand it or not. That is presumably the reason it is not generally mentioned in the

Gospel proclamations recorded in the Scriptures.

The presentations of the Gospel found in the Scriptures are all Christocentric; they focus on the role of Jesus as Savior and Lord. By contrast some modern traditions in evangelism are quite anthropocentric; they focus on the human condition and on the benefits of salvation. As for the minimal facts about Jesus which one must believe in order to be able to accept Him with a saving faith, most books on systematic theology and soteriology fail to say anything. Hoekema (1989), in his book on soteriology, gives one sentence, which however says nothing about Jesus and focuses on human sinfulness and redemption:

We must have enough knowledge to realize that we are sinners who need redemption, that we cannot save ourselves but that only Christ can redeem us from sin and from the wrath of God, and that Christ died and arose for us. (142)

These are Scriptural teachings and can help people to understand the Gospel message, but there is no Scripture saying that a person must believe any of them to be saved, other than the resurrection of Christ.

MacArthur (1988) concludes his book on soteriology with a much fuller statement that emphasizes acceptance of Christ as Lord:

¹⁴ "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; it was to

This, then, is the gospel we are to proclaim: That Jesus Christ, who is God incarnate, humbled Himself to die on our behalf. Thus He became the sinless sacrifice to pay the penalty of our guilt. He rose from the dead to declare with power that He is Lord over all, and He offers eternal life freely to sinners who will surrender to Him in humble, repentant faith. (210)

This statement is more Christocentric; it mentions the facts one must believe about Jesus, including His lordship, and it mentions the saving act of faith one must take on the basis of these facts. It also mentions facts which are Biblical but not basic to the Gospel; they are true and beneficial to know but belief in them is not a prerequisite to saving faith. These include the divinity of Christ and the penal substitutionary sacrifice accomplished by the death of Christ.

By contrast, the articles of faith listed in 1 Timothy 3:16 focus entirely on Christ, who is the subject of every clause.

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

These make little mention of Christ's divinity¹⁵ or death or substitutionary sacrifice, but they mention the vindica-

tion of His claim to be the Lord Messiah, which occurred with His resurrection, and they mention His ascension to His throne in glory. His exalted position as Lord is everywhere implied.

In conclusion, it could be said that the Gospel is very simple and does not require one to have a great depth of theological understanding. That may come afterward, but it is not a prerequisite. What is required is simply to put one's faith personally in Jesus as the Messiah, meaning the Lord and Savior.¹⁶

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God. (John 1:12)

After that begins the growth in the Christian life and understanding.

References

- Hoekema, Anthony. 1989. *Saved by Grace*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1988. *The Gospel according to Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

¹⁵ Actually, it only mentions his preexistence, which was expected of the Messiah anyway, but later manuscripts made the incarnation explicit by changing "he" to "God" in the first clause.

¹⁶ Receiving Jesus as Lord entails repentance from sin, since sin by definition is that which contrary to the will of the Lord.

REACTING TO PERSECUTION

by P.G.

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Tertullian's statement of defiance towards the persecuting Roman authorities has perhaps become the most common Christian statement on persecution. Tertullian was accurately describing what he saw happening in North Africa in his day, and he was so impressed by the suffering Christians he saw, that it answered his doubts about the faith and he became a believer.

This study aims to show that Tertullian's defiance may not be the only way a church should react to persecution. Wisdom is required. The history of the Early Church and the church under Communism and in the Arab world shows that there are many different ways to respond to persecution. In Matthew 10 v 23, Jesus tells his disciples, "When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another." This suggests that his followers should not go out of their way to provoke persecution. At times they should escape it if possible. We also note that, although Tertullian praised the bravery of Christians who offered themselves to the authorities in solidarity when one of their number was sentenced, Cyprian, Origen and others advised against it. In their view, a Christian should not oblige anyone to persecute them and thereby commit a sin. Moreover they noted that many of the enthusiastic volunteers were not mature enough in their faith when their turn came to face the wild

beasts and denied Christ, which resulted in a negative witness.

The response to persecution, then, will depend on the circumstances in which the local church finds itself, and this changes from one country to another and from one year to another. It is hoped that the factors outlined here might help church leaders decide wisely how to respond in their situation and at a particular time. Maybe we will also find that there are some factors which are in our power to change or influence.

The unchangeable factors throughout will be that we should expect persecution and that we must hold firm to our faith (or 'Confess' Christ as the early Christians expressed it). On this there can be no compromise. Persecutors will try every means to attack and make us deny Christ. It was Tertullian who pointed out that Christianity was the only crime which the judge tried to make the defendant deny—all other criminals were tortured to make them confess! So when suffering comes, we must stand firm. (If we do fall and deny Christ, however, Peter's example shows that there can be forgiveness.)

1. The Size Of The Church

Size is a significant factor, especially when we want to use the Early Church or Eastern European churches as an example for the Arab world. When a church is already large, it wields much greater power: persecution cannot take place in secret and so governments

have to be more careful; there are more believers to encourage each other; and mass resistance could overwhelm the legal system. In short, large numbers of people cannot simply be wiped out. Or, if they are, it cannot be done in secret and so the number of martyrs may even result in church growth.

The problem we face in the Arab world is that the church is tiny in size. It could be wiped out relatively easily by a ruthless government, which is unlikely to face opposition from within the country. Volunteering for martyrdom, then, may not be appropriate. Persecution will not usually bring much benefit. Lack of support may also mean there is less incentive for believers to stand firm, since few others would know or care whether they were 'heroes' or not.

2. The Legal Status Of The Church

Persecution can happen to a legally recognised church, as it does to the Coptic Church in Egypt. Other churches could be said to be semi-legal in the sense that they may exist, but only on certain conditions, such as agreeing not to proselytise. This is a form of persecution.

In many Arab countries the church has to exist underground and so is constantly under threat of persecution. This was the status of the church in the Roman Empire until AD 313. Attack from the 'top' came in waves, but, because they were 'outlaws', Christians were always liable to be denounced by someone with a grudge against them, and the Roman governor

would be obliged to judge and condemn them, even when it was not current Imperial policy. Does this not seem familiar?

In some cases it may well be best to remain underground, even when the government invites the church to become legal. Once declared and open, the government can keep control over or manipulate the church or its leadership. The leaders may be put under pressure to compromise, may be subject to blackmail or could even be government appointees or secret agents. Lists of members could be misused to discriminate in various ways against them. Such subtle attacks could be more effective than straight oppression, while international opinion is appeased by the 'legalised' church..

An underground church is much harder for a government to watch and control. It can be de-centralised. It is not limited to a building. It is not obliged to accept anyone as a member or a leader and it does not have to sign compromises on doctrine in order to exist. On the other hand, it will remain outside the law and any protection that the law might give, so that believers will have fewer rights in the legal system. This leaves us with a dilemma: we pray and campaign for legal recognition for Christians in the Arab world, but if our prayers were answered we should welcome it with some suspicion. It may just be a sign that those in power have changed their tactics. Attack will probably continue in other ways. It would be very important to set up safeguards to prevent compromise

groups. Recent cases seem to show that international pressure is effective in many such cases and recent books on the subject all strongly support such an approach. The question arises of whether this could make matters worse for believers and the response is to ask how it could get any worse. A Russian Christian said that 'they' can only persecute in the shadows, so the best thing to do is to shine a light on what they are doing.

What about publicity in the country itself? It could give value and significance to the suffering, which might otherwise feel so pointless. However, this is asking a lot from those who might suffer, so I will only leave it as a question for each church to weigh up for itself.

When Christians are attacked by Muslim groups, and more commonly by their own families, such pressure will not be so successful. In such cases the internal strength of the church will be more important in a supportive role, but this will not come by chance. Churches need to prepare themselves to take on this role.

5. The Forms Of Persecution Being Used

Most non-Christians, including persecutors, think that death is the worst thing that can happen to you. But what about when someone is not afraid to die? Then you have the ultimate weapon, according to Romanian pastor Josef Tson. He says, "For years I wanted to save my life and was losing it (i.e. he stayed cautious and low-key). Now that I wanted to lose it, I was

winning it. Someone had said those words before, but they had not sunk in." (Schlossberg, p125). If we are able to really say and believe that we are not afraid to die, then the church would be much stronger. Perhaps we should teach believers more about the realities of heaven and hell. Consider the story of a woman who was about to give up the struggle and deny her faith under extreme torture, until she suddenly realised that what she was experiencing was a foretaste of hell itself. She reaffirmed her faith instead. (Eusebius, p197).

Threats are probably the most common form of oppression in the Arab world. One certainly gets the impression in many countries that fear is perhaps the main government policy used to control the mass of the population. The Church suffers in the same way. "The extent of the persecution has nothing to do with how many are in prison. It is the effect of the imprisonment on those who are walking around on the outside," (Schlossberg, p72). FEAR paralyses and intimidates. In giving in to fear we are giving the victory to the enemy. Jesus commanded us not to be afraid (Matt 10 v19,26,28,31). He knows of each sparrow which falls to the ground and He holds the world in His safe hands.

6. The Spiritual Maturity Of The Church

The issues already considered must be looked at in the light of the maturity of the church. We need to recognise that not all churches are mature enough to

grow under persecution. Many of the churches under communist rule seem to have shown and be showing exceptional ability to stay faithful and even grow in very hostile surroundings. They have a lot to teach us in the Arab world. However it is probably true to say that they were planted and had taken root before persecution set in, giving them a chance to become established. In many Arab countries, young believers are threatened when they have only just begun their walk with God. It is easier to trample on or pick out a new shoot than to pull up a well established bush. Schlossberg commented that, "when the quality of faith is weak or uninformed, the Church is vulnerable out of proportion to the severity of the pressure arrayed against it."

It seems that we all need to be realistic about the maturity of the church when assessing the whole situation and how to respond to it. One aspect of maturity is wisdom, and it is clear from this study that wisdom is needed in each situation, rather than rules or assumptions which have come out of quite different situations. But wisdom also seeks to learn from the past and from each other, and it is hoped that we will continue to learn and always be faithful to our Lord who died for us.

Warning: Persecution May Have Harmful Side-Effects

It is simplistic to state that persecution equals blessing, and history shows us that it can have other negative side-effects. Some of these can be listed briefly:

Intimidation and fear, leading to insularity and losing the vision to grow.

Hatred and distrust of Muslims.

Distrust and division within the church, especially between those who have and have not suffered, or who denied their faith one time. Two levels of believers may emerge.

Inability to move on and change. This may be seen as betraying those who died for their beliefs. Churches become identification as what they are not, rather than what they are. (Think of Catholics and Protestants in certain places where blood was spilled so that they feel justified in retaining attitudes from the 17th Century.)

Conclusion: What Do We Do?

There are a variety of possibilities, although not all will have the luxury of much choice in the matter.

At one extreme there is the possibility of denying Christ or saying the Shahada. There are plenty ways of compromising such as saying things with mental reservations, but a church which does not hold firm to its faith will not need much attacking to make it collapse. (This should be a warning to churches in some western countries).

Hiding, fleeing and exile have biblical backing in the words of Jesus and the actions of Paul and many Old Testament characters. These cases tended to be temporary measures. Missionaries should beware of judging Arab believers who choose exile, since most of us would leave if we were facing severe problems. The problem is that exile abroad will not help the

church to grow stronger in the country itself. Maybe we can help to change that through more publicity, literature and media seeking to bring the attention of others in the country to the reality of Muslims finding Christ and their suffering for him.

Imprisonment, torture and martyrdoms will continue. They are not to be sought, but they must be prepared for. All churches should prepare them-

selves spiritually to suffer for Christ. With wisdom and spiritual preparation, combined with the grace and power of God, the enemy's attempts to uproot the church can actually end up scattering the seed more widely.

It is hoped that this paper will help local groups a little in thinking about and preparing their response to persecution in their own situations.

HELPING VICTIMS OF ANTI-CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

by P.G.

This study aims to raise awareness of the pastoral needs of persecuted Christians, recognizing that torture and other traumas may have long lasting effects on the victim. Human beings are able to survive terrible experiences, but few are not damaged by them. The critical question is the degree of damage and how long it lasts. More recent medical and counseling attention has been focussed on helping victims of traumas and torture and this study identifies four stages where missionaries and national Christians could be able to help minimize the damage that can be caused. My own experiences of persecution are limited to minor threats which have made me afraid. This fear has led to a kind of paralysis which gradually subsides. In my own experience I can now see how I have been through these four stages following the moment of shock. For more serious persecution it could be much worse. Missionaries and national Christians who experience persecution all need help from other members of the body. I hope that this short article may help equip people to give that help.

Hamid was involved in a relatively active Christian group linked with a much appreciated missionary. Fifteen years ago, police moved to break up the church and this man and other leaders were arrested and spent some time in prison.

Since then the church has not been re-established. Believers live in fear of the police and are reluctant to meet with each other and totally refuse to meet with new believers, who they do not trust.

(It should be stated that, as in most dictatorships, the whole population lives in fear, since it is a government policy and their main method of keeping the population under control. Secret police operate everywhere and have been known to infiltrate the churches. Human rights are not highly respected. Prisons have a terrifying reputation. Becoming a Christian is treated as a crime.)

I was privileged to have been able to help translate when a lawyer from the Jubilee Campaign came on a fact-finding tour of the country and Hamid spent an evening talking with him. Clearly he really appreciated the chance to talk to the lawyer about his experiences and views, which were full of insight and understanding. Hamid seemed to sense that the lawyer knew exactly what he was talking about and appreciated his intelligent questions. I feel that this was an important step along the road to Hamid's recovery. But it had taken twelve years and he was still not back to the level at which he had been before the persecution.

In this study, I will suggest that there are four stages in a case of persecution and that at each stage a missionary

needs to be actively, even if not always directly, involved. The aim is to help the victim survive persecution and reach re-integration as quickly as possible.

The four stages

1. Preparation and the initial shock.
2. During the Persecution itself
3. Healing Process following the Persecution
4. Integration and Further Growth

Preparation And The Initial Shock

It is interesting to note that while no modern writers appear to have written on the pastoral needs of persecuted believers, the Bible itself has a great deal to say on this very subject. Jesus continually sought to prepare his followers for the opposition they would face. He was realistic and did not hide anything. In John 16, he states that "a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God." In a Muslim context that time is here. Paul, Luke and all other New Testament writers echoed the same message, many living out these promises of Jesus in their own lives. Clearly the missionary and the local church need to be preparing people by teaching a theology of persecution.

Let us look at how this might make a difference by considering the initial reactions of three believers who begin with different levels of preparation:

When there is a high level of preparation, initial shock is inevitable, but reflection on suffering for Christ will lift the victim.

With less preparation initial shock is strong and faith may or may not survive torture or threats.

If there is very little preparation the shock will probably be too strong for faith to hold and many new believers will deny faith under pressure.

The initial shock and after shocks of any encounter with persecution will include feelings of fear of being put in prison, of 'disappearing', of giving others away under interrogation and of physical torture. Every human being must instinctively fear these things. There may be a feeling of shame at arrest, prison, humiliating treatment and so on, especially in a Muslim culture where family honour is at stake. If the family is not Christian it will be an extra pressure on them to deny their faith and so save the family name. Probably there will be a sense of regret about having done something foolish or about lack of caution. Regret may be mixed with anger at someone else. This will very quickly turn to recriminations if they believe someone else has given them away. I believe that for the believers in the case given above, this feeling of betrayal may never have been fully dealt with and has crippled the whole church in that city.

These feelings, then, will be common to all normal people. How deeply they penetrate will depend on how prepared the person is for suffering. We can see from the Bible that Paul suffered on many occasions, but his sense of privilege at sharing in the sufferings of Christ gave him great

strength. The Early Church martyrs were similarly inspired, expecting persecution and even glorifying it. Early Christian writers also noted, however, that long periods of peace dulled the churches' resistance when the next wave of persecution broke.

Others suffer more from the initial shock, but later are able to draw on resources of their own and God's strength. A Moroccan ended up in an Egyptian prison with three other Christian friends and later wrote how after some time in the terrible conditions, "We started to lose hope. We felt as if we were undergoing a slow descent towards death, as if we were dying one bit at a time. Our morale kept sinking until we began to pray together and recite Bible verses. This became the best medicine for our mental state. As we learned to rejoice in our terrible circumstances, our spiritual state improved. As we accepted our situation we learned to accept other things also, such as the food."

Many who are younger in their faith may not have these spiritual resources to draw on and may not have the luxury of friends who are with them in prison. Even the early church discouraged young believers from volunteering for persecution because many denied their faith later. Hamid said several times that all new believers deny their faith the first time they are persecuted (and for this reason he remained unwilling to trust them). The church should be wary of being too judgmental, because Peter denied his Lord three times when he was in a

state of shock and found himself put on the spot.

For someone who has denied their faith, it is probably helpful to think in terms of the four basic personality needs. Jesus accepted Peter, in spite of his denial. He gave him significance in the church and in His plans and through the Holy Spirit, gave him sustenance and a sense of achievement in delivering the message on the day of Pentecost, with so many saved as a result.

This will probably make all the difference as to whether someone who has denied their faith will regain it. The early church again provides a model, with a system whereby the 'Confessors', who had stood firm, took the cases of those who had denied their faith and presented it to the church, urging that the person be re-integrated.

The encouraging thing is that those who deny their faith once, but are re-integrated, then become highly prepared for persecution in the future and will probably stand firm. Those who avoid contact with Christians, or who face a church which disowns them—perhaps because in their weakness they betrayed other secret believers—will not have their basic needs met and will probably never recover. If this is the case, the missionary should actively try to find a way of meeting these needs. This may often be extremely difficult to do.

During Persecution

We have already begun to see how preparation can help to lead to a more rapid recovery from the initial shock. If

the persecution lasts for a period of time, such as a prison term, it is again helpful to consider the four basic personality needs of the victim, and how these can be met. In countries with terrifying prisons and no access to prisoners this is not easy, so once again one can see that preparation is vital.

A prisoner may be experiencing fear, humiliation, overcrowding, pain from tortures endured and is probably sharing his cell with dangerous criminals. He may be doubting his faith, regretting mistakes made and feeling guilty, even when he is not guilty in any way.

The foreign missionary may not be in a position to give help directly, but should assess what they can do and help the local believers to give that help as much as they are able.

Sustenance

This might literally be food, since prisoners awaiting trial may not be fed. The family is expected to bring food, so believers could make sure the family has enough, especially with the bread-winner in prison. Hamid said with some bitterness that when he had been in prison, missionaries had not thought to help out his family. But before judging them we need to realize that often missionaries have no other contact with the believer's family anyway and that the family may be hostile to them. In any case it should be the local church rather than the missionary which is seen to be helping the family.

Acceptance

The victim needs to see that the church is proud of him or her, not ashamed. This may mean some taking risks to get this message across. Where possible, those words should be said, in order to reassure and encourage.

Significance

Paul was glad to find that God considered him worthy to share in the sufferings of Christ. Here is an essential difference between most traumatic events and the terrors of persecution. Both may involve great suffering, but as Schlossberg says, "The difference between hope and despair is not in the degree of suffering, but rather in the meaning of the suffering." (p123). Those who suffer for Christ become heroes of the faith. This was certainly the attitude of the early church, which glorified martyrdom and suffering. It has also been true of some churches under Communism.

Where persecution is carried out in secret, it will be much harder for the victim to feel any significance for the stand they are taking. Nelson Mandela said he did not know if he could have resisted had he been alone in prison. This may help us to see why the isolated believers in the Arab World have so often been broken by persecution. Once again preparation is essential so that the victim alone in his cell will know that efforts are being made for his release.

Probably this will take the form of human rights publicity or diplomatic campaign abroad. It may involve hiring a defence lawyer in the country.

In other cases, letter-writing campaigns have been able to communicate significance to the prisoner. The four prisoners in the Egyptian prison had a letter passed on to them by a sympathetic fellow prisoner. He told them a huge pile of letters for them was building up in the guards' office. Terry Waite, a hostage kept in solitary confinement for years, also somehow received a post-card which indicated to him that probably thousands had been sent. Nelson Mandela wrote that "There is nothing so encouraging in prison as learning that the people outside are supporting the cause for which you are inside." (Mandela, p.471) Hamid, speaking to the human rights campaigner, said how much difference knowledge of a campaign abroad would make when facing torture and pressure to deny one's faith.

Achievement

For someone suffering alone for the first time it will be hard to feel a sense of achievement. Only the most mature will be able to see the significance of their battle on the church's long walk through the 'valley of death'. But there may be small victories, especially if backed up by knowledge that they will one day be released. Several victims have testified to opportunities to share their faith and see other prisoners come to Christ. They should be encouraged that such conversions have actually taken place. It is also known that torturers can be as badly affected psychologically by their activities as the victim is. Saul/Paul is surely an example of this.

A person's reactions to persecution will be noticed by a number of people and it will have a significant and lasting effect upon those lives. Knowing this will help someone feel a sense of achievement and victory even when isolated. Mandela testifies to this, "There are victories whose glory lies only in the fact that they are known to those who win them. This is particularly true of prison, where you must find consolation in being true to your ideals, even if no one else knows it." (p.376)

The Healing Process Following Persecution

So far the role of the missionary has been almost confined to counseling before the persecution occurs and this is indeed a vital role. After persecution has occurred, the missionary should try to ensure that there is follow up for the victim.

There should probably be some form of 'psychological de-briefing', although this may take a less formal form than that now being regularly used for all kinds of post-traumatic stresses.

Countless testimonies have now shown that people emerging from a major traumatic event have a host of feelings associated with what they have experienced. These include pain, guilt, fear, shame, anger, bitterness and so on. These are "The normal reactions of normal people to events which, for them, are unusual or abnormal." (Parkinson, p.24).

A problem arises, however, when the person who has suffered is not able to communicate their feelings and feel

that no one can understand what they have been through. A P.O.W. held by the Japanese for four years in the Second World War arrived home. His girlfriend told him how tough it had been for them in Scotland with the rationing. She had no idea about what he had been through and neither could she see beyond her own story. So he never shared his experiences with anyone. In his book 'The Railway Man', Eric Lomax describes how for forty years these experiences clouded his life until he finally received treatment. If traumatic experiences are not talked about soon after the event, "The feelings and emotions become buried away in our minds and lie there slowly affecting all around them, waiting for the opportunity to emerge and influence other areas of our lives." (Parkinson).

The Gulf War provides more such examples, with hostages who came home and appeared normal at first. Problems then began to develop. Four of the 'human shield' hostages have since committed suicide and many marriages have broken up.

The structured de-briefing session may not be appropriate without further training, but what missionaries can do is to ensure that between one and five days after release, the victim has the opportunity to talk to someone about all that they have experienced and FELT. This should include as many aspects as possible, including the worst things. Trying to be 'macho', brave or 'super-spiritual' will not help the person, so the listener must avoid being judgmental or in any way

encouraging defensiveness. Move on to how the person feels now and to how others have reacted, especially the family, after release. Listening is the key to helping the person. It may be helpful to have someone there who has been through similar persecution, but remember that the aim is to give the recent victim the chance to talk, not the experienced one a chance to lecture, so those involved need to be carefully chosen.

A structure for this one-off session could be as follows:

- Explain the aims of the de-briefing.
- Encourage the victim to talk about what happened.
- Encourage them to talk about their thoughts, reactions to what happened.
- Move on to emotional reactions, including after the event, the next day, and now
- Any symptoms during the experience or now? (e.g. sleepless nights, nightmares)

What emerges will probably be completely normal reactions, so a final part of the de-briefing is to comment on this and re-assure the victim that they and their reactions are normal. Spiritually, too, their experiences are normal and were promised by a Saviour who himself suffered for us. Put the blame for their persecution firmly on the persecutor, because that is where it belongs. The victim must never feel guilty for being caught. Re-assure them that they have done nothing which deserved such treatment.

A note of caution here: Medical opinion would restrict such a de-briefing to trained medical counselors. This is partly because what emerges may be so horrific that an inexperienced person could not cope with what they hear. Nevertheless, many experiences of persecution will not be as awful as, say, a genocide event and so I feel that time with a victim shortly after the event should always be sought. Obviously, the choice of the person who does the de-briefing is very important. If the horrors of the event are likely to be beyond the ability of members of the local fellowship or missionary team, then outside help from a more experienced person should be sent for.

It will be helpful to be aware of some of the stages of reaction which may occur afterwards:

Re-experiencing

The victim may experience the same feelings again, as though they are going through the same event. It can be triggered by all kinds of things such as a uniform, a noise, a threat, or an anniversary. Understanding this helps the victim realize that they are not going mad, but are quite normal. If these are very severe and continuous, however, medical help should be sought.

Avoidance

The person may avoid risks in the future. In the case of Hamid, this led to an avoidance of fellowship with other national believers. Denying fears is not the answer, so look to ways of allowing

the person to share their fears and work them through rather than quoting verses at them.

The process of healing also requires that the person's basic personality needs are met. For a believer who has endured persecution, there should be a sense of significance and achievement, but other believers may be afraid to associate with the victim. Who will take the risk? Clearly the church and the missionaries need to think seriously about what risks they can and should take, bearing in mind the needs of the victim.

Integration And Further Growth

The stage of integration is reached when the victim is no longer controlled or dominated by the effects of the persecution and they are able to move on in life. These events will remain painful and significant, but will now be acknowledged as past events. Do not put a time limit, such as six months or one year, on the process. Allow it to take its own course. During this stage counseling can be effective and support from the church is important. If the church has been broken up, we can see that full integration may not be able to happen at all, as seems to be the case with Hamid even more than ten years later. We need to look at how we can help or arrange help in such situations. The same needs apply to missionaries who have experienced persecution. Team-mates, missions and home churches have an important role to play.

We will finish with a brief look at the vital process of FORGIVENESS. This is primarily of benefit to the one who

forgives and involves giving up the right to hate. The opposite is bitterness, which will never lead to healing.

Jesus was able to forgive his persecutors whilst he was being punished. Others have been able to do the same, but for many it is a longer process. "We cannot force forgiveness. It is a choice that only the wronged person can make", says D.H. Schumm, who worked with child victims of the war in Liberia. He has identified four stages of forgiveness, seeing it as a process of 'letting go' that may take time.

1. Acknowledging the depth of the pain. It matters. (But the listener should avoid reinforcing the feelings of hatred or revenge)
2. Refusing to seek retribution or to repay the one who did you wrong.
3. Realizing that the persecutor is human too.
4. Restoration of the relationship.

The book "The Railway Man" referred to above, provides the most fascinating example of this process over more than forty years, matched only by process of repentance by his torturer, who had been so affected by the same incident that it changed the course of his life. (This shows, incidentally, that 'blessing those who persecute you' is always worthwhile.) What a pity that it took forty years or more of pain. No wonder that the Bible urges us to forgive, rather than allow hatred and feelings of revenge to destroy our lives. Christ on the cross, forgiving those who

crucified him, provides us with the best example to follow.

Conclusion

The Integration stage, for a Christian, should see the victim growing to a higher spiritual level than they were previously. This is the message of the Bible's teaching about persecution. Their suffering has a purpose, both for themselves and for the church, and so it is unlike most other forms of suffering.

But we are all human, and if others are anything like me, we are pretty weak and fearful. We all need help from each other. This includes preparation, practical help, solidarity, encouragement and counseling. It is this which can make the Church and the individuals in it strong in faith. Then our faith will endure the fire and emerge purer and stronger from it.

A plan of action for helping a victim, might begin like this:

When someone you know is persecuted, get together with others straight away and think about every possible need that the person — and all those affected — might have: practical, spiritual, physical, emotional, etc. This will enrich prayer for the person immensely. Then think about every possible way that you or others could help. Then act on it.

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MINISTRY TO MUSLIM WOMEN

by Donna Smith

New Impetus

Forty-five missionary women met in Mesa, Arizona from 13 to 16 May 1999 for the first inter mission consultation on ministry to Muslim women. Fran Love challenged the participants by her opening address, "God's Passion Released Through Us."

Muslim women

Other speakers looked at current issues affecting Muslim women and at what brings them to Christ and helps them grow spiritually. Workshops covered topics such as: "Muslim women and the occult," "Muslim women in crisis," "Islamic reformation & fundamentalism's impact on Muslim women," and "Understanding the spiritual hunger of Muslim women."

The spiritual needs for evangelism and growth were studied in small groups. They discussed "Discipleship through the story telling method," "Evangelism to and through family networks", "Building community", and "Developing leaders."

Missionary women

The needs of the workers were also examined. Missionary women shared lessons learned—sometimes through personal pain and frustration. Suggestions were made on thriving and serving in their Muslim contexts.

Formation of Task Forces

The participants identified several concerns related to ministry to Muslim women and formed working groups. They looked at the need for publica-

tions & translations, training of women workers (pre-field & ongoing), mobilization within the USA, and other tools & resources.

Training

One of the projects identified by the task force on training is to compile a list of books and other resources to circulate to women who are concerned about ministry to Muslim women. Anyone wishing to contribute to this list or to receive a copy is invited to correspond with Donna Smith through *Seedbed* or by Email: donna@wornet.org

Resources

Samples of books, articles, and other materials were available during the consultation. Tapes of all plenary sessions can be requested from the international and home offices of the participating missions. A printed compendium, including the papers presented for the discussion groups, is to be published by the autumn.

Future

Women left the consultation with a renewed vision of the significance of their ministry. They are looking for ways to improve the support of the ministries of the women in their agencies. Requests will be made for funding and time for women's events, training, and publications. One way to increase an emphasis on these ministries will be to print more articles related to work with women in *Seedbed*. Contributions are gratefully received.

BOOK REVIEW

God and Woman, By J. O. Terry, First Printing Test Edition, June 1998, Singapore. 189 pages. Can be ordered through the author or from national/international offices of agencies. Reviewed by Donna Smith

God and Woman is a chronological Bible storying model with a focus on the worldview of Muslim women.

In his introduction the author gives an explanation of the reasons for developing the lessons. He refers to *Women and Mission*, an article by Bryant Myers in MARC Newsletter, No. 93-3, Sept. 1993, p. 3. Myers noted that two keys for evangelism were "to recognise the possibly critical importance of women as a responsive entry point to resistant people groups" and "to recognise the importance of women as the ones most likely to have opportunities to speak to unreached women and to present the Gospel in ways they understand."

The introduction also includes an analysis of the worldview of Muslim women. 'Relationships' is first in the list. Although the Good News is the same for both men and women, there is a difference in the approach to telling it. "For women there was much greater interest in relationships than in doctrine."

Specific instructions on the preparation of the lessons are provided. These conclude with a reminder to train an assistant as soon as possible so that she will tell the story to her own listeners.

God and Woman is a collection of 90 lessons laid out in a workbook format.

They cover passages from Genesis through the Gospels. The first 3 lessons are on the themes of the **Bible**—"God's Precious Word," **God**—"The God Who Sees and Hears," and the **Spirit World**—"God Created the Spirit World." Then the chronological storying series begins with a lesson on creation from Genesis and ends with making a decision after stories about Jesus Christ.

Each lesson has a background section with notes for the teacher, questions on review and preview, a Scripture base with relevant verse references and a list of major themes to be covered. Then introductory questions and a story text are suggested. The story is followed by a session of 'Let's Talk' with possible questions to ask. The lesson concludes with a memory verse and a preview of the next story. This information is kept to 2 sides of an A4 sized paper.

This material appears to be carefully reasoned. I would like comments from someone who is using it. Have they found all the lessons equally important or do they choose only certain ones? On what basis do they make their choices? It would be helpful to designate a core of the most significant lessons for those storytellers who have limited opportunities to follow the entire programme.

Storying is an important way of reaching Muslim women. Terry has made a very helpful contribution to resources for evangelism.