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Editor: Wendell Evans

Contributing Editor: Stephen Kelley

Production Editor: Christine Ford

PO Box 4006, Worthing, West Sussex BN13 1AP UK

Understanding Expectations in Discipleship

by S.R.

*When they came [to visit me] they often brought singers and musicians to entertain me. The only hitch was that [the Moroccans] went to such lengths to treat me as one of them that they also assumed I was not interested in going out into the city. During the entire fortnight I spent with them I never once found my way out of the house. For long hours I sat in the patio listening to the sounds of the city outside, in the hope that someone would come, something would happen. But as I say, if I was bored, that was my own fault. They were doing everything they could to please me. (Paul Bowles in *The Art of Crossing Cultures*, Storti, Craig, (1990) ___. Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, Inc., page 16.*

Even when we do our best to please someone else, a spouse, teacher, parent, or boss, we fail more frequently than we would like to admit. Our own assumptions about life, rooted in our mental software, can blind us to the expectations of others. As cultural distance increases, so does our blindness. And though we are well aware of the fact that people are different, when confronted with this differentness in real life, there is always an accompanying element of surprise.

It's a funny thing: the French call it a "couteau," the Germans call it a "messer," but we call it a knife, which is after all what it really is. (Richard Jenkyns, Ibid, page 85)

I heard a story about an American teacher who wanted to build a good rapport with his North African students. On the first day of class he

loosened his tie, sat on his desk, and began to "get acquainted" with the students. They were unimpressed. In fact they were shocked and offended. It wasn't long before they walked out of class and demanded that the administration provide them with a real instructor.

What did the students expect? They expected a professional, an authority who knew the subject well and who could articulate it clearly. They had no time for chitchat. They wanted a lecture they could write down and from which they could learn.

The teacher on the other hand had hoped to get to know his students so that he could effectively guide them and lead them in discovery. He wanted to meet them on their level and coach them.

This was rather incomprehensible to the students. Why should the expert act like a student, unless he doesn't know the material? And why should they be expected to discover, deduce, and infer what the teacher already knows? Fortunately, this teacher was able to adjust to the culture and kept his post, though he never returned to his first class.

Before we consider the student/teacher relationship further, let's look at some of the different underlying assumptions about learning in the East and the West.

Westerners emphasize learning how to think. Education is based on discovery, problem solving, and the Scientific

Method. Children are taught to make inferences and deductions. Students expand their knowledge through questions, experimentation, and debate. Truth is assumed to be consistent. There is little room for contradiction.

Easterners emphasize learning a body of knowledge. Memorization and recall are key abilities. Truth is passed down from the teacher to the student. Students are not encouraged to question their teachers. If they are diligent they will in time come to understand the wisdom they have received.

Instead of analyzing and systematizing, Easterners pay much closer attention to the whole context. The speaker, the situation, and the spoken message all constitute a given meaning or idea. These ideas can stand independently and may seem disorganized or contradictory to the Westerner. They often include elements of emotion, imagery, and subjectivity. Requiring them to be objective would strip them of much of their force.

Westerners like to discern truth by judging its consistency. The Easterner is more apt to consider the context (the speaker, the situation, and the message). The resulting implication for discipleship in the Arab world is not to focus primarily on convincing the disciple of the truth of a given study, but rather to gain the disciple's confidence. Is the truth evident in the discipler's life? The Bible study is of secondary importance. The main focus should be on the discipler, the model.

The disciple may expect to memorize a creed or learn a ritual, and one might take advantage of this propensity. However, we are teaching living truth.

Discipleship is not simply passing on a body of knowledge or teaching a logical system. Discipleship is relational. God's truth is relational.

I would recommend that the discipler think of himself or herself as a senior partner or a serious older brother or sister, a role model. An expert or authority role is too high and a personal friend or coach is too low.

Life speaks. Even before any formal teaching begins, much has already been taught. The discipler's attitude toward God and the Bible is largely communicated non-verbally. I believe it is crucial that our attitude be one of fear and humility. By fear I mean a holy reverence and awe of God: We are under His authority. Humility is a response to the knowledge that we are recipients of God's grace and that He alone is God, and we are not.

Secondly, we need to approach God's word with expectancy. God speaks through His word. It's alive. It calls us to respond, to follow Him. God's word is fresh and challenging both for the new believer and the experienced believer. We cannot exhaust its depths. The disciple needs to see the discipler meet God in the Scriptures and respond in obedience. The disciple as well needs to hear God's voice and follow Him. True knowledge of God comes through believing and obeying. Teaching biblical principles and content is not enough. We have to model a dynamic relationship with God, to teach it, and to expect it.

Fruit That Will Last

by W. Evans

The initial goal of discipleship must be the **survival** of the new believer. A lifetime of ministry among Muslims leaves a pathway strewn with spiritual wreckage, individuals who made a clear profession of faith, but got side-tracked short of spiritual maturity and fruitful integration into a believing community. In my ministry the number of those who have fallen away exceeds the number of those remaining steadfast.

The terms "spiritual wreckage" and "fallen away" need qualifying. God alone knows the true spiritual state of a person, both at the time of apparent conversion and at that of apparent "falling away". There have been relatively few, in my experience, who have formally renounced their Christian faith and returned to Islam. Some have retreated to "belief in God" without overt allegiance to either Islam or Christianity. Others have isolated themselves from Christian fellowship, but seem to maintain a level of personal faith and, in a few cases, a quiet personal witness to that faith. The most common syndrome is that which I call "neutralization," i.e. internalization of Christian faith with little or no interaction with other believers, little or no overt testimony, and tacit acceptance of being considered Muslim. Although in most such cases, they will act like a secular Muslim who will only observe those aspects of Islam which carry serious social implications, such as outward observance of the fast of Ramadan.

In order to orient our initial discipleship toward the survival objective, we need to look briefly at some of the common *causes of falling away*.

Family and social pressure would probably top the list. I know of relatively few Muslim-background believers who have taken the brave step of an open confession of their Christian faith before their immediate family. I have worked with individuals who have taken such a stand too quickly and have either been crushed or neutralized by the ensuing opposition. I have ceased encouraging such overt witness until the groundwork has been laid by the observable change in character of the new believer. This will be dealt with more fully below under the "salt and light" principle. I have also known individuals who have been professing and practicing Christians for years without verbalizing their faith to their father or other authority figure in the family.

Closely connected with the above is **fear**, fear of the consequences of ostracism from the security and comfort of family and society, fear of potential professional and economic catastrophe, fear of the unknowns of the Christian life, fear of reaping the potentially fatal consequences of becoming an apostate in the eyes of Muslims.

The sense of **isolation and lack of community** is overwhelming for some. Satisfactory integration into a Christian community is often not easy and the consequent social void is difficult to live with. I well remember a conversation

with a then strong and active MBB during which he said, "Because of my faith, I feel more alienated and alone in my own society and among my own people than you feel as foreigners in my country." The individual in question has since become effectively "neutralized".

The new believer from a Muslim background often has definite **expectations**, sometimes unrealistic, **of those who have brought him/her to faith and of the Christian community** which he feels should meet the needs which are no longer met by family. When these expectations are not met, a bitter disillusionment often sets in, causing a breakdown in relationships and withdrawal from Christian fellowship and activities. A believer we knew well in a North African country was quite poor and initially received considerable food and financial aid to support her family. Then the time came when several of her children were working and the spiritual advisers of the small MBB fellowship decided that such aid should cease. The woman was so hurt and offended by the action, or possibly by the way in which it was taken and announced to her, that she withdrew from fellowship and has been out of touch since.

Another major cause is that of **marriage to a Muslim**. In face of the difficulty of finding suitable Christian mates, both men and women MBBs often succumb to the pressure, either that of their own personal sense of need in this area, or, more commonly, to family pressure for marriage to a "suitable" Muslim. There are a few happy cases where the Muslim spouse

has been brought to faith; there are many more where the Christian spouse has been torn away from, or at least neutralized in his/her faith.

In light of the above, we need to give consideration to certain *categories of need* to be addressed in discipleship. Too often we think of and seek to deal primarily with the need for imparting Christian truth. Ignoring other categories will likely abort the discipleship process.

First there is a profound **psychological need**. The transition from the known and 'comfortable' to the unknown of Christian identity often entails a deep level of trauma. The sense of having betrayed family, nationality, country, as well as religion, is latent in the new believer and reinforced constantly by interactions with family and surrounding society. The sense of isolation alluded to above adds to the trauma, as does the sense of vulnerability in a now hostile Muslim environment. One promising individual progressed encouragingly through the initial stages of discipleship, concentrated primarily on the area of spiritual need, and was seriously considering baptism. Then suddenly he seemed to do a complete turnaround and began to defend Islam vehemently. A considerable period went by when we could not progress further in discipleship. I left the door open for continuing contact and friendship, but took no initiative to talk about spiritual issues. Gradually he himself began to ask probing questions concerning the Trinity, etc. Finally he asked that we begin to pray together again and soon he asked that we renew Bible studies. He has since been bap-

tized and at least partially integrated with a beginning MBB community in his city. Unless we are aware of, and prepared to work through the psychological trauma until the disciple reaches relative tranquillity in his own spirit and conscience, the discipleship process will likely abort. Dealing with this area of need will entail preparation for surviving in the face of opposition and persecution.

The next category is that of **social need**, which I would define as healthy relationships, both with the background Muslim society and with the new Christian community.

As concerns the former, we must encourage and facilitate new believers to remain in their family and societal environment, there to be the "Salt of the Earth" and the "Light of the World". This implies restraint in verbal testimony until a foundation of change in character and conduct begins to call forth questions from family and friends. I remember my first encounter with a Bible Correspondence student who, while seeming to have a good beginning grasp of faith, poured out a tale of woe in family relationships when he tried to convince them, his brother especially, of the truth of Christianity and of their need for conversion. The young man was obviously hoping that I had come to take him out of that uncomfortable environment and offer him shelter in some Christian refuge. I asked a few probing questions concerning other aspects of family relational dynamics and then advised him to cease talking about Christianity in the home, but to concentrate on being more productive

and helpful in meeting the family's economic and other needs. I made another appointment with him for several weeks later, but left wondering whether I would ever see him again. He did meet me at the subsequent appointment. When I asked him how things were going, he thanked me for the counsel given and said that the home atmosphere had drastically improved and that his brother had asked to read the Gospel. I could recount a number of other similar experiences where following that general principle has enabled the MBB not only to remain in the family, but to gain their respect and in several cases to win other members of the family to like faith.

As to healthy relationships with the Christian community, the emphasis needs to be on the national Christian community, especially that from Muslim background, rather than the expatriate Christian community or even the national ethnic Christian community. As important as the two latter may be, they carry a much greater danger of extracting the new believer from his Muslim environment and effectively preventing him from exercising the salt and light influence described above. There are also increased dangers of an exclusive relationship between disciple and discipler which becomes unhealthy for both, of a spirit of opportunism in which the MBB expects to profit materially from his affiliation with Christians, and of over-dependence on the community to meet his needs, to the point where his own initiative is neglected and stunted.

In developing healthy relationships with the Christian community, the MBB needs to experience acceptance, understanding of the traumatic period he may well be passing through as a new believer, patience in helping him work his way through that difficult period, and firmness in spurring him on to true Christian character and conduct.

Another area of need is that of **economic viability**. The fear of loss of job, professional status, educational opportunities, and all that goes to make up a minimum of economic security is very real to most MBBs. It is an area where there are often not obvious and easy solutions, especially in countries where the job market is very competitive even without the handicap of having become an apostate in the eyes of those who control the market. Dealing with this area is fraught with pitfalls, from the danger of creating a climate of dependence to the accusation of using "means of seduction" in having brought a Muslim to faith in Christ as Savior and Lord. But unless this area can be satisfactorily addressed, preferably within the context of the believer's society, progression to spiritual maturity will not likely happen.

We tend to concentrate primarily on the **spiritual need** in our discipleship process, emphasising the imparting of doctrinal truths. I believe that we need to place an even higher emphasis on the development of experiential faith than on cognitive faith. This subject will be considered more fully in the following article.

The average Muslim inquirer views becoming a Christian as merely a

change of religion. A colleague with long experience in Muslim evangelism and discipleship once made the observation that there are three stages of conversion for the average MBB. The first is a conversion to the missionary or prime Christian figure by whom he is attracted to Christianity. The second is a conversion from Islam to Christianity as a religion. The third is a conversion to **allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior**. Unless the third stage is consolidated in a sincere commitment to Christ and an experience of new life in the Spirit, ongoing discipleship will be unfruitful.

In closing, I would like to mention a few points concerning introducing the Bible to inquirers or new converts.

1. I believe that a basic understanding of the Old Testament is essential to a true understanding of the New. Therefore, I seek to get a copy of the whole Bible, rather than just the New Testament, into the hands of an inquirer as soon as possible.
2. As I introduce the Bible, I explain first of all its composition—Old Testament and New Testament—and the basic component parts of each. This can be done in five to ten minutes, Bible in hand, to show him where these parts are.
3. I then explain the unity of the Bible by briefly showing in Gen. 1-3 how God created the world as perfect, then how that perfection was destroyed through man's sin. I then take him over to the end of Revelation and show him how God will finally bring the world back to His original design. I then simply state that all that is between the first

chapters of Genesis and the last chapters of Revelation is the record of what God has done to effect that process.

of the Bible to be able to read and study profitably any part of it.

4. I then give a suggested list for an initial reading of the Bible. That list is designed to give the reader an overall understanding of the message of the Bible without getting bogged down in some of the more difficult texts, which would be nearly impossible to understand in an initial reading, and would likely discourage him from continuing with the reading. My proposed list is as follows:

Old Testament: Genesis (the complete book), Exodus 1-20, Psalms (the whole of the book is valuable; however, I often give a shorter selection of some of my favorite Psalms, including particularly some of the Messianic Psalms, such as 2, 22, 69 and 110.), Isaiah 9:1-7; 53; 64-66, Daniel 1-6; 9, Malachi (the complete book).

This gives the reader a taste of all the different styles of literature in the Old Testament and an overview of its message, particularly as concerns the coming of Christ.

New Testament: Luke, Acts, Romans, I John, Revelation 19-22.

This gives the reader the story of the life of Christ, the results of His work in the planting and spread of the Church, a strong doctrinal epistle, a very practical-living epistle, and an overview of end-time events.

I then tell the prospective reader that reading these passages from Old and New Testament will bring a good enough understanding of the message

Experiential Faith Discipleship

by W. Evans

Our dependence in discipleship must be on God the Holy Spirit, not on methods. Methods will vary according to circumstances and individuals, both the discipler and the disciple. A number of methods are available. You may find that one of these suits your personality and approach to discipleship. Or you may want to develop a method of your own. Rather than advocating methods, I would like to suggest some goals of discipleship, what we will want to see produced in the lives of the disciples through the process.

Effective discipleship should bring the believer to the following:

1. **A meaningful understanding of the Gospel.** This implies a biblical understanding of oneself as a sinner, of what God has done to save him from sin, and an experience of the miracle of new birth. These three points are particularly important for those coming out of Islam, where they are unknown or denied and where conversion is seen as mere change of religion. I begin with a study of the first three chapters of Genesis, along with Genesis 5:1-2, as the groundwork upon which these truths can be understood and received. Then we move into the first ten verses of Ephesians chapter two, to help the disciple understand the implications to himself as a son of Adam. And thirdly, we look at John 1:12,13, and John 3:1-16 to underline what Christ has done, how he must respond, and what happens when he does. This obviously is only a bare foundation upon which much building must yet be done, but I have found it to be a very helpful beginning.
2. **A meaningful submission to the Lordship of Christ.** It is important to make clear to a Muslim that Christian faith is not merely assent to a doctrine, but rather relationship to a person. He must understand and experience that that relationship involves a total committal of himself to his Lord; a true "Islam" in the sense of submission to the true God through Jesus Christ.
3. **An experiential appropriation of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.** This implies knowledge of His Person, recognition of His indwelling in the believer, and sensitivity to His ministry of convicting, guiding, teaching, sanctifying, and empowering for service. Only as the new believer is responsive to these ministries will he or she make significant or sustained growth as a Christian. Many of us as western Christians have been strong on teaching the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but weak in modeling the experiential life of the Spirit.
4. **A vital experience of worship,** rather than merely replacing Muslim rituals with Christian rituals. Unless that element of spirituality is obviously demonstrated in the life of the discipler it cannot

effectively be inculcated in the disciple. In the Arab country where growth of the MB church has been the most successful, the atmosphere of worship in church gatherings has been a key factor. This has developed largely through the living example of a national Christian woman who developed strong habits of prayer and worship during a period when she was largely isolated from Christian fellowship and which she passed on, probably largely unconsciously, to younger believers when she was again in a situation where she was able to have church fellowship.

5. **A living experience of prayer,** rather than just saying prayers, even though they may be Christian prayers rather than Muslim ones. One of the first questions a sincere inquirer will ask is "How do Christians pray?". While he is probably thinking at that point of a Christian ritual which would replace the Muslim ritual, it is an excellent starting point for teaching and modeling prayer as sincere and extemporaneous dialogue with God, as well as meaningful usage of the Lord's Prayer of Matt. 5:5-12. I have also found it helpful to show scriptural examples of multiple postures in and forms of prayer, emphasizing the spirit of prayer as infinitely more important than the form.

6. **Meaningful fellowship with other Christians,** i.e., positive participation in the Body of Christ, especially with those of his own country and background. There are multiple

examples of believers in the Arab-Muslim world who have a seemingly sincere committal to the Lordship of Christ, and yet very minimal or nil committal to the Body of Christ. Breakdown in inter-personal relationships is probably the single greatest factor hindering the establishing of ongoing churches in this part of the world. Widespread mistrust, and especially mistrust of an ex-Muslim who now professes to be a Christian, militates against such fellowship. Replacing such negative attitudes with positive ones, coupled with positive experiences of meeting and relating to fellow believers, is essential. Unless the barrier is overcome, there cannot be healthy growth into being a productive member of the Christian community.

7. **A viable pattern for spiritual growth.** This will imply the disciple's ability to derive his own nourishment from God's Word, rather than rely on being spoon-fed by the discipler's teaching. The most effective way I have found to do this is in using a simple inductive study method, asking questions which require careful thinking through of the text in question until the disciple himself discovers the answer in the Word. I do this in the context of specific passages, rather than isolated texts, so enabling the believer to discover the truth in context. The majority of our western discipleship programs are topic-oriented, with proof texts chosen willy-nilly from the Bible.

This may be an effective way of teaching Christian doctrines, but it leaves the disciple with a weak knowledge of the Bible as such, and ill-prepared to study it on his own. The uncertainty of how long any particular discipling process might continue was a significant stimulus to me to bring the disciple to the Bible as a whole, to study passages or books rather than looking up proof texts. The discipling relationship might be terminated at any time by any number of circumstances, often beyond the control of either one of us. I seek to bring the new believer as soon as possible to the point of being able to glean spiritual truth and nourishment from his own independent reading and study of the Bible without me there to explain it all to him.

8. **A viable pattern of witness.** In the Arab-Muslim world, this pattern will not likely be an immediate, verbal proclamation of faith on the part of the new believer. Such will almost certainly have negative rather than positive results in ostracizing the new believer from his family and friends. It may also put him under such intense opposition so soon in his faith that he is unable to stand the pressure, and is forced back into the acquiescence of Islam. A viable pattern of witness will be that which will permit the new believer to develop in his new faith, will allow him to exercise a positive influence in the context of his witness, and will evoke, inasmuch as possible, positive rather

than negative reactions to that witness. Jim Peterson, in his book *Evangelism As A Lifestyle*, emphasizes the importance of affirmation of the Gospel to proclamation of the Gospel. This concept is extremely important in the Arab-Muslim world. Proclamation of the Gospel is very unlikely to produce positive fruit unless prepared by consistent affirmation of the Gospel. I use Matthew 5:13-16 and 1 Peter 3:15-16 as the biblical basis for affirmation of the Gospel before proclamation of the Gospel. I discourage the new disciple from immediate verbal proclamation of his faith. I encourage him to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" through changed attitudes, speech patterns, and actions in the context of his home and neighborhood. As those around him see the change in his life, questions as to the reason for that change will almost certainly be evoked. Those questions, according to 1 Peter 3:15, give him the opportunity for verbal proclamation of his faith.

In conclusion we sum up some measures to be taken to realize these objectives in discipleship.

1. It has been said that character and conduct are "caught more effectively than taught". In other words, **the discipler must model in his own life the principles he hopes to see reproduced in the disciple.** Teaching without modeling will almost certainly be ineffective. Remember that it is the living experience of the Christian faith that we are aiming at, rather

than the perfect understanding of its doctrines.

2. **Always be available, but guard against possessiveness in the relationship.** I have found that Arab world people tend to be possessive in their relationships, creating the type of exclusiveness mentioned above. Introducing the new believer to other Christians, especially from among his own compatriots, and involving them with him in the discipleship process should be normative practice. Needless to say, this must be done carefully and sensitively to allay mistrust and fear and build godly relationships.
3. **Train the new believer to use the Word,** rather than just "spoon-feeding" in teaching the Word.
4. **Utilize natural relationship networks** as much as possible. I have found in working with media contacts that an inquirer will often appear at our first meeting with a trusted friend to whom he has already confided at least some of his interest, or faith, in Christianity. In one instance, the correspondence course student whom I first contacted has emigrated to the U.S. and I have lost all contact with him. The friend who was with him at that first meeting has continued in the faith in his native land, bringing several others to faith in the course of his pilgrimage.
5. **Think and plan for community right from the beginning, don't just deal with individuals.** I have observed too many cases where the discipling process has produced 'show-case' Christians with little allegiance to or involvement in the Christian community in their vicinity.
6. **Be patient but firm in insisting on biblical standards of honesty, purity, etc., in the life of the MBB.** Anything less will produce sub-standard believers who will sooner or later turn back or be neutralized.

A Discipleship Case Study

by L. Evans

Twenty-four years old Aisha (not her real name) was born in North Africa to devout Muslim parents. Her father closely adhered to the teachings of the Qur'an.

Because Aisha was educated, she had the privilege of working. She was employed by a Russian shipping company in a large city. This brought income to the family which outweighed the disadvantage of her exposure to the streets and men at work.

Aisha's father didn't really approve of her Western dress and often requested her to wear her *jalaba* on the street. She frequently 'forgot' and left the house in her stylish clothes.

Aisha was an independent girl, a self-thinker. She wasn't happy with her strict religion and all its stringent regulations. She basically didn't like her culture. In the midst of all this, she began to take stock of her life and the ways of her family. Somehow she didn't fit. Something was missing. She wanted out...

One evening she heard a Christian program in French, aired over Radio Monte Carlo. She heard the Gospel clearly presented for the first time. She felt this was what she had been searching for. After listening (she had her own room and transistor radio) several times, she decided to enroll for Bible Correspondence Courses. She completed 12 lessons.

One day she arrived on our doorstep and announced herself as a Christian. This wasn't the first time such an

announcement had been made to us. We were a bit taken aback but we asked questions and tried to get acquainted a little bit. She had been sent to us by a French Christian who felt inadequate to deal with Aisha's Muslim background. Aisha said she had been searching for the Truth for a very long time. The radio broadcasts and Bible courses had convinced her of her need of salvation through Christ. We had heard this before too. Was she real? The more we talked, the more convinced we became that this was for real.

We began regular Bible studies which Aisha really appreciated. After work she would stop at our house to continue the studies. I began to realize that she was doing this secretly and tried to be sensitive to her home situation. I didn't want to cause problems or offense. Often I would run her back to her place in our car. Eventually I met the family and found them cautiously friendly. At least the family had some trust in me.

Aisha was thoroughly enjoying Bible studies and her understanding was excellent. But there was one issue which she needed to deal with: she was secretly meeting a young Muslim man who was proposing marriage. Although we talked seriously about the fact that such a relationship was wrong and dangerous, she carried on the relationship without her family's knowledge. We also discussed the implications to her new faith of marriage to a Muslim, but the weeks passed and

Aisha continued to avoid meeting the issue.

At that juncture we were asked to take on a new ministry in France, which meant I had to cease discipling Aisha. When I suggested introducing her to someone else who could continue the discipleship, she wasn't very interested. After we moved, a friend from France visited her on one occasion. Although Aisha was pleased to see her, she was not at all open to meeting someone else living in her city.

The principle that I want to leave is this: when discipling new believers, we must be sure to introduce them to other believers. This gives a sense of community and a much stronger likelihood of continuing discipleship in a case like Aisha's.

God can keep Aisha. She has the Holy Spirit to guide and teach her. The 'work' doesn't depend on us. But we have a responsibility to do all we can to facilitate the discipleship of new believers.

Use of Genesis 1–3 in Bible Study with Muslims

by W. Evans

We have mentioned several times in Seedbed the importance of Genesis 1-3 as the starting point for communication of the story of redemption. A narrative study prepared in Tunisia primarily for illiterates is available upon request to *Seedbed*. The following is a study on the same passage, developed on a different level for inductive study with literates.

These first three chapters of the Bible contain the seedbed of all biblical truth. They lay the foundation for understanding the character of God, the purpose of creation, the nature of man, sin and its consequences, the need of redemption and the way God has provided for this need. Failure to present this section of the Bible effectively will have serious implications for adequate understanding of the whole. What it emphasizes and how it is handled is, therefore, of supreme importance.

Doctrines Revealed, Explicitly Or Implicitly

1. *Concerning God*

His eternal self-existence, creatorship, omnipotence, sovereignty, wisdom, goodness, mercy, self-revelation, personal nature, transcendence, immanence, quality of redeemer/savior.

2. *Concerning man*

He was created as a distinct species rather than evolved from lower species, created with both physical and spiritual qualities, created with the ability to communicate with his

Creator, created free from defect or sin, created a rational being, created a moral being, created as God's vicegerent to the rest of creation. - He is a fallen creature in present state as a consequence of disobedience, rendering him spiritually dead and incapable of achieving his own redemption.

3. *Concerning Satan*

He is a created being, a rational being, the enemy of God and man, seeking to thwart the purposes of God and the destiny of man, operating by craftiness and deceit, destined to final destruction.

4. *Concerning sin*

Sin is disobedience to the revealed will of God, entered into by deliberate choice, abetted by Satan's deception, alienating man from God, calling forth the judgment of God, infecting the entire human race, resulting in death (first spiritual, then physical).

5. *Concerning redemption*

It is at God's initiative, involving both the coming of a redeemer and the means of a vicarious substitute.

Common Muslim/Christian Understandings Existent in the Narrative

The eternal existence of God—1:1

God as unique Creator—1:1

The omnipotent word of God—"God said ..." reiterated throughout chapters 1, 2

Creation of Adam from dust—2:7

Perfection of original creation—1:31
“very good”

The interdiction given as to partaking of the tree—2:17

The broad outlines of Adam’s sin—ch. 3,
i.e. Satan’s character and role, Eve’s initiative, Adam’s compliance, God’s judgment of expulsion from the garden

Unknown or Unrecognised Factors to Emphasize

1. In the creation

- The logically orderly progression from simple to complex, each act preparing for the succeeding act, i.e. light as basic to all the rest of creation, dry land as basic to vegetation, vegetation as basic to animal life.
- Creation according to defined and closed species (many of today’s Muslims will have, consciously or unconsciously, imbibed the theory of evolution from the western-model education in which they have been trained).
- The uniqueness of God’s creation of man
 - Contrast in language = “let the land produce...” vs. “let us make...”
 - Dual action of 2:7 = “...dust of the ground...” (physical nature, giving affinity with the rest of creation), “breath of life” (spiritual nature, giving affinity with God)
 - Definition of “...in the image of God...” as imparting dominion over the rest of creation (1:26,27), moral responsibility (2:17) and spirit nature, i.e. capacity to know and relate personally with God

2. In the Fall

— Tactics used by Satan

- suggestion/insinuation = “Did God really say ... any tree ...?”
- denial/lying = “You will not die ...”
- deceit/false promise = “... eyes will be opened ... become like God”
- impugning the character of God = “God knows ...”
- promise of something better than God had given = “You shall become as Gods”

— Steps in act of disobedience

- giving attention = Eve answered Satan, rather than ignoring him
- altering God’s word = “You must not touch it.”
- looking at the forbidden = “When the woman saw ...”
- lusting after the forbidden = “... good for food ... pleasing to the eye ...”
- taking the forbidden = “... she took some ...”
- ingesting the forbidden = “... and ate it”
- involving another in partaking of the forbidden = “She also gave some to her husband ...”

— The definition of sin

- disobedience to God’s revealed will
- turning from God to Satan
- seeking to improve on what God has declared perfect
- self-dependence, rather than God-dependence

— The consequences of sin

- frustration = their eyes were

opened, they saw only their nakedness

- * shame = effect of nakedness, implied by ensuing action, 3:7
 - * fear = v.10
 - * alienation from God = 8, 10
 - * self-justification, i.e. shifting the blame to others
 - * divine judgment upon the serpent, upon Eve, upon Adam
 - * spiritual death for Adam and Eve personally (cf. 3:19 w/2:17 & 2:7) and for the race of mankind descended from them (5:1-3)
- The futility of man's efforts to compensate for his sin and make himself acceptable to God.
- * Adam's statement, "I was naked", when garbed in the clothes of their own making

3. *In God's redemptive actions*

- Taking the initiative to seek out Adam-3:9
- Promise of a deliverer-3:15
- Providing a covering for sin-3:21

The above points are outlined as guideline helps for the study leader. He/she should keep in mind, however, that these truths are imparted implicitly through animated narration or inductive dialogue rather than explicitly through enumeration of doctrinal points.

Presentation

Keep constantly in mind that this is an introduction to the Bible story of redemption. One should not expect or attempt to try to explain and apply all the truths implied in the narrative. Much will be left as foundational

mystery which will be explained later. For instance, I would make no reference to 3:15 being a prediction of Jesus Christ at this point, or of the coats of skin being typical of His redemptive sacrifice. It would be better at this point to leave the specific application vague, i.e. 3:15 being a prediction that someday a descendant of Eve would destroy the Serpent and that the coats of skin typify redemption by sacrifice. Chronological study allows understanding of biblical revelation to develop progressively, even as that revelation was given progressively. We must studiously avoid a western tendency to explain and apply everything immediately from the first lesson.

This passage can be used effectively in either narrative or discussion study modes. Narration would be most effective for illiterates or larger groups. Inductive discussion will be most effective for literates, especially one-on-one or with small groups. I have most commonly used it in the latter form. In this mode the narrative is developed through leading questions to which the interlocutor finds the answers by reading and reflecting on the passage. He should be led by question/discussion to draw his own conclusions, rather than the leader of the discussion imposing his. I include a tentative list of questions below. Remember, however, that the study should be living, with questions and sub-questions formed and rephrased to enable the participants to grasp the meaning of the text in the context of the dialogue. Therefore, use the questions as a general guide, not as a canned formula.

Study Guide Questions

Chapter One

1. When did God begin? (1:1)
2. What is His first action recorded for us? (1:1)
3. What agent(s) did He use in creation? (1:2, 3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26)
4. In what order were the elements of the earth created? (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26)
5. What significance do you see in the order of creation?
6. What repeated phrase in 1:11, 12, 21, 24, 25 indicates how the different species of plant and animal life came to be?
7. What was God's evaluation of His work at the end of each day (1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25) and of all the completed work at the end of creation? (1:31)
8. What does the phrase "very good", pronounced by God, indicate as to the original state of His creation?
9. Is the created universe as we find it today still in that original state?

Chapter Two

1. Why did God rest on the seventh day? (2:1-3)
2. How does this reinforce what we saw in chapter one as to the original state of Creation?
3. Chapter one gives a brief story of all of creation, including man. Chapter 2:4-25 seems to review the material. On what or on whom do the details of chapter 2 concentrate? (2:5, 7, 15-25)
4. From what was man's physical being made? (2:7)

5. What action imparted life to this being? (2:7)
6. How does this differ from the creation of plants and the rest of animal life? (compare 2:7 with 1:11, 20, 24)
7. What provision did God make for man's living environment and sustenance? (2:8, 9, 16, 17)
8. What single restriction did God place on man's consumption of what God had provided? (2:17)
9. What was the judgment promised if this restriction was not observed?
10. What responsibility did God give to man in the environment in which He placed Him? (2:15) What does this teach us as to our responsibility for the environment in which we live?
11. What provision did God make for man's social need? (2:18, 21-23)
12. Why was the formation of a new creature necessary to meet this need? (2:21)
13. From what was woman made? (2:21, 22)
14. What was to be her position and role alongside man? (2:20-22)
15. What does 2:25 indicate concerning the relationship between the first human pair and between them and God?

Chapter Three

1. What do we learn about "the serpent" in 3:1-5?
2. What steps did he take to get the woman to eat of the forbidden tree?

3. What does his action indicate as to his attitude, both toward God and toward mankind?
4. What progressive steps do you see in the woman's response to the temptation?
5. Was the serpent's promise of v.5 realized when Adam and Eve ate of the fruit in v. 7? How did the reality differ from the promise?
6. How did they respond to the new awareness that their disobedience to God's command gave them?
7. How did their sin affect their attitude toward and relationship with God?
8. What does the man's response to God's question in v. 10 indicate as to the worth of what they had done in v. 7?
9. Were either of the pair ready to accept his/her responsibility for what they had done? How did they seek to evade their own responsibility?
10. What judgment did God pronounce on the serpent?
11. What judgment did He pronounce on the woman?
12. What judgment did He pronounce on the man?
13. Carefully compare 3:17-19 with 2:17. What apparent contradiction do you find?
14. What kind of life is referred to in 3:19?
15. What aspect of man's originally created life was missing at this time? What had happened to this aspect of his life?
16. What evidences of God's mercy do you see, in spite of their disobedience?
17. Comparing v. 21 with v. 7, what can we conclude as to the only initiator and provider of a covering for the result of sin?
18. From what did God make clothing for them? What had to happen for these clothes to be made? What does this indicate as to the price to be paid for covering of sin?
19. Why do you think God banished the pair from Eden? Was this a banishment from heaven to earth, or an expulsion from a perfect earthly environment?

I then turn to Gen. 5:1-3 and contrast the phrases "When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God," and "Adam ... had a son in his own image ..." I ask what had happened in the interval between the realization of these two statements, emphasizing that what Adam reaped as the consequences of his sin was passed on to succeeding generations of mankind.

Book Reviews

Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ by Trevor McIlwain with Nancy Everson, New Tribes Mission, \$25.00. Catalogue available from New Tribes Mission Bookroom, 1000 E. First St., Sanford, FL 32771-1487, USA.

McIlwain's "Chronological approach" has been mentioned before in Seedbed. This book is based on his series of eight textbooks, and is in the form of material for adult study groups and Sunday schools. Part one is a summary of the approach. Part two contains detailed advice on how to use the material. Part three consists of fifty lessons, from creation through to the promise of Christ's return. The presentation of each lesson includes lesson goals, outlines, and supplementary material for the teacher. The 582 page book comes with several excellent maps and charts (which are available separately, and a special edition without words, so that someone can write in the words in the local language). Also published are a set of over 100 drawings, available as black and white line drawings or as full colour pictures, and supplied in a range of sizes, or as colour slides, or on disk. The drawings I found to be too few to be of much use in a teaching programme (which I reckon would need at least ten pictures per session to be effective), but could be used by children for colouring. A students' book is available separately, and the material is being translated into many other languages. There is also a five volume edition for children of third and fourth grade (9-11 years).

I was greatly disappointed by this book. I write as one who has enthusiastically embraced and practiced the approach of teaching Scripture chronologically from the time of first contact with someone who shows interest. The quality of the material is excellent, but the book is a denial of the principles of the chronological approach. The book sets out to be "chronological", but includes a lot of extra verses in each lesson in order to support the point being made. There are so many that the lessons are a series of verse studies which are used with little reference to their original context. While it is acceptable to quote and refer back to what has already been studied, surely it is unacceptable in the chronological approach, especially with those studying it for the first time, to do a lot of jumping around the Bible. It is also unacceptable to quote verses out of context. In using the chronological approach we are also teaching students to consider whole passages in their historical context and genre. This book fails to do that.

The main approach of the book is to provide material for exposition by a teacher. If someone is expecting to find questions that can be used to teach the material inductively, they will be disappointed. The questions section is short, with frequent use of pedagogically unsound, yes/no questions.

The book lacks some basic tools, essential for a book of this size, such as an index of Scriptures, and an index of topics. I was also amazed to find that Isaiah 53, this key passage that pre-

prepares students to understand the necessity for a sinless Messiah to come and die for our sins, did not get a lesson. Once unbelievers grasp the need for a Saviour, they are more willing to consider the Scriptures explaining Christ's death. Finally, the book lacks a framework, such as the covenants.

In short, this book might give good outlines for the preacher, provided the cross references are rigorously trimmed, but is a poor application of the principles of the Chronological approach. Buy the charts, but not the book.

Reviewed by I.L.

Knowing and Doing the Will of God by Blackaby T & King CV, 1990, Lifeway Press. Available in English (and Arabic???)

This book was enthusiastically recommended to me as a course for intermediate believers. It consists of a thirteen week course, combining individual and group study, and by study, this means several hours of hard work. Daily passages are set, with questions and a detailed exposition of the theme. The theme is expounded using propositions, backed up by illustrations and evidence from Scripture, and other material such as the experience of other Christians. The book is strong on application and open-ended questions encouraging reflection.

If you are looking for a book that explains propositions and arguments, and stops to consider biblical material, (instead of just giving references) then the book makes an excellent change. But because the book sets out to be a

course of instruction in the Bible, the chosen format is misleading. It is NOT a Bible study course as I know it. Instead, it is yet another book that perpetuates the approach to Scripture in which isolated verses and passages are used to support arguments, instead of deriving propositions from the text. There probably is a very limited place for this approach. But we who teach others must get away from the "proof-text" approach to teaching. Unfortunately, too much material being made available in Arabic seems to use this approach. This fatal flaw renders the book almost unusable, except perhaps as a resource book, especially for the application questions.

Reviewed by I.L.

Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues by Hiebert, Paul G., Baker Books, Grand Rapids MI 49516-6287, USA, 1994, pp. 272.

"Reflections" is an apt phrase to describe the contents of this book. Little new material is presented, as concerns either anthropology or missiology. Rather, the author, both an anthropologist and a missiologist, reflects on materials presented by him and others in those fields in recent years and then applies his conclusions to missions and the church.

The book is divided into three main sections: Epistemological Foundations, Planting Churches, and Spiritual Encounters.

The first section traces the development of epistemological positions from "naive realism" to either "idealism" or "critical realism. In relating this development to missions, he traces the

development from colonialism to anti-colonialism to globalism. He underlines the need for a critical contextualization which will allow for a metatheology, true to the Bible but shaped by the multi-cultural context of the worldwide Church and mission task.

In the second section, Dr. Hiebert addresses first the question of criteria by which a person is deemed to be a Christian. He gives a hypothetical illustration of an illiterate Indian peasant who, after hearing the Gospel presented on one occasion only, opens his heart to Jesus Christ. He knows practically nothing of Christian doctrine or practice. His conduct will continue to be largely dictated by his Hindu context. Can he be termed a Christian, and if so, in what sense?

He then moves into a consideration of different models or 'sets' of determining who belongs, or does not belong, to a group. He defines "well-formed sets," and "fuzzy sets," with two sub-categories of each. Well-formed sets, largely espoused by western culture, have a clear demarcation line that one must cross to become part of the group. Fuzzy sets, leaving the belonging or not belonging much less clearly defined, would be more common to non-western cultures. He gives the illustration of an American mission executive who became upset because the leaders of an Indian church could not give him the exact number of members. The Indian leaders responded that this would not be appropriate in Indian villages where people range from those casually interested, to seekers, to believers, to baptized members, and elders and leaders. To

draw too sharp a line would drive people away. He closes this chapter with a helpful critique of the different models and their application to missions.

Chapter 7 reflects on order, so important in Western culture, versus relationships, which take priority in most non-Western cultures. The relative chaos which may accompany relational-based dealings and decisions is seen as potential for creativity. I found this chapter to be the best in the book.

Chapter 10 has some excellent thoughts on the importance on training leaders, rather than merely followers. Further expansion on this theme would have been helpful. As is, the chapter is only two and a half pages long.

The third section, "spiritual encounters," presents a balanced critique of the present-day emphasis on spiritual warfare and healing in the evangelical church. Unfortunately, Dr. Hiebert makes little application of the reflections in this section to cross-cultural missions and the resulting churches. Application to the church in America is helpful in laying general principles, but more specific application to specifically missiological issues would have strengthened the section.

Reviewed by W. Evans

Islam, Muhammad and The Koran, A Documented Analysis, by Dr. Labib Mikhail, PO Box 2581, Springfield, VA, USA, 1996, 187 pp.

Dr. Mikhail is one of the foremost Arabic Christian scholars in the study and analysis of Islam. He is the author of fifty books in Arabic and seven in

English. In that Arabic is his native language, he brings to us the wealth of access to Islamic Arabic sources which would be beyond the reach and comprehension of most of us.

As suggested by the title, the book is presented in two main divisions, the first dealing with the man Muhammad, the second with the Koran. There is a relatively short closing section containing the testimony of a converted Muslim and a call for decision on the part of the readers.

As he considers the life of Muhammad from birth to death, the author poses some searching questions concerning his call to prophethood, the motive of his first marriage, his apparent licentiousness in the multiple marriages after her death, the purpose and nature of the battles he fought, and the ignominious circumstances of his death. The obvious intent is discrediting of the man as an authentic prophet and apostle of a new religion.

The section on the Koran is largely composed of comparison (or contrast) between it and the Bible. The author begins with a chapter on the history of the Koran. Two chapters follow calling into question the miraculous nature of the Koran and seeking to document from its text that it actually teaches polytheism. The truthfulness of the Koran is then measured against the Bible as to source of inspiration, inimitability, internal consistency, ability to provide the basic spiritual needs of mankind and the fruits borne by true religion.

Although agreeing with the major conclusions of the book's analyses, I feel that the generally negative and

derogatory tone of the book detracts from, rather than adds to, its value. Statements such as the following, whether true or not, could better have been omitted or stated more objectively:

"Muhammad accepted her (Khadija's) proposal of marriage as her wealth was more important to him than her age" (p. 8). "According to the Koran, marrying many wives was the privilege for the Prophet of Islam. What a prophet!" (p. 30). "The Muslims think that they are the agents of Allah on earth, and that their duty is to promote Islam by force and terrorism" (p. 38). "Every Muslim shall enter hell" (p. 142).

Reviewed by W. Evans