

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).

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