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## THE MUSLIM ARAB WOMAN AND POWER

Part II - Ministry Implications

by S. M.

[Part I of this article was published in the last issue (IV/4). We saw that, both in traditional society and often in our modern times, Arab Muslim women tend to find identity and power, or the means to bring change into their lives, through relationships within the family, especially with sons, or by dabbling in the supernatural and the occult in one form or another. Part II concludes with reflections on the implications of this for ministry. Ed.]

It becomes obvious from what we have learned about Arab Muslim women that Christian women trying to minister to them must meet them where they are. This will be, for the most part, in the home, regardless of whether they stay at home or are involved in education or other work outside the home. Visiting and becoming friends will be the primary vehicle for getting close to them.

Great effort is required, however, for the sustaining of friendships that lead to in-depth conversations and real conversions. There is a spiritual battle of prayer and a physical one of language expression and cultural understanding. (D.S. 1987:28)

This means that a great deal of time will be spent getting to know their culture, so that both the missionary and the Arab Muslim woman will feel comfortable around each other, and the missionary can build bonds of trust. This will lead to learning about their problems and needs, which will in turn open natural opportunities to suggest Biblical answers to human needs, and to introduce them to Christ.

It is the love of Christ that will speak most urgently to the Muslim woman. Yet the Muslim women also see that respect comes before love... Surely our highest respect to the Muslim woman can be seen in acknowledging the goodness of her values [see paragraph preceding quote] and accommodating to her ways (Hoffman 1979:591).

Valerie Hoffman makes five proposals concerning ministry to Muslim women that should help make it effective. These are suggestions that need serious consideration and which, on the whole, should build trust and respect:

1. That we respect the code of modesty and sexual segregation in classes and countries where this prevails.
2. That in addition to worship services for both sexes, women's activities in their homes are important, that women may feel at ease to participate and express themselves freely.
3. That we recognize and respect the authority of men who are heads of households, and attempt to witness to entire families at once.
4. That we attempt to find out what women are recognized as religious or community leaders, and work through them.
5. A Christian alternative to demonic influence in the lives of women must be presented in a demonstration of the power of Christ. (Hoffman 1979:591)

Since identity and power are key issues in the lives of many Muslim women, I feel that it is important to introduce them to Christ through those events related in the Bible that reveal God's concern for, and interest in women, especially the stories of Jesus' dealings with women. They need to come to realize that God values them for who they are, as women and as individuals. As they begin to see that Jesus did not ignore them, or treat them as inferior in any sense, but was constantly responding to their needs--physically, emotionally, and spiritually--they will be drawn to Him. One woman writes:

I think that as Christian women we need to make two particular statements to our Muslim friends. One is related to our identity as members of God's family; the other is to the victory of Christ over satanic power. Introduce into conversations wherever possible the parables, stories, encounters with Christ that are found in Scripture. At the same time listen carefully to what the women are saying--use questions and find topics which interest them. Since their family honor and identity is so important, the teaching of Christ and the epistles relating to the family and the value of women may intrigue them. The object lessons that Christ gave from everyday life in the Middle East are still very close to their style of living (D.S. 1987:28).

Asking permission to pray with these women about their needs has an important part to play in their coming to realize who Jesus is, and the power He has. The very fact that they often seek out the help of a "holy" man or woman will make this seem a natural thing to do, and a practical way to find out what power Jesus does have. I once asked an Algerian Christian friend what seemed to be most appealing to her friends when she was witnessing to them; she replied that the fact that Jesus answers prayer was very important. I saw one woman's whole attitude change after God answered our prayer to supply the housing she needed. Before, she would only occasionally allow me to read Scripture with her. Now, she began reading on her own and asked me to explain more.

This of course means that we must know the power of prayer in our own lives, and have a well developed prayer life. Our knowledge of prayer must grow, not only in order to find answers to our own needs, but also as a means of knowing God better and communing with Him, and as a strategic weapon in spiritual warfare. Yet this is perhaps one of the weakest areas in our spiritual lives. Whether we are single or married, the demands on our time by others, in the domestic realm and in our work outside the home (e.g. as nurse, secretary, church planter, etc.) is constant. In prayer is where the spiritual battle is fought. It takes a definite decision on our part to make it a priority and to look to the Lord to help us as we pray.

Sooner or later we will come up against our Muslim friends' involvement in the supernatural, whether it be their use of charms to protect a baby, or, more seriously, spirit possession itself. My experience is that we women are often reticent to become involved in power encounter. Our male co-workers, however, are generally unable to be present to help us in these situations because of the segregation of the sexes in Muslim countries.

This situation calls for us to go beyond sex roles to learn and appropriate the authority and power which our position in Christ grants us to wage spiritual war. I am convinced that until we achieve a breakthrough in this area, we will never see the Kingdom of God strongly established among Muslim women. Others also have expressed the conviction that it is in this area of folk Islam that the real battle is to be waged, whether one works among men or women. Bill Musk advocates that:

a process emanating from power encounter be sought. ... The ordinary Muslim understands the power of the Qur'an to heal, or the use of the rosary to divine and guide. He needs to discover that Christ can heal, can give power, can defeat demons, can speak supernaturally to man to guide him, etc. (Musk 1979: 214,213).

Women seem to be in the majority of those involved in folk Islam. We women, who want to minister to them in a holistic way, must in humility and with strong faith and courage in our victorious Saviour, ask and allow Him to teach and equip us for this part of the battle. We must allow Him to cast out fear and let His love be perfected in us. This does not mean that we are to go looking for battle in power encounter, rather it is a call to not neglect being prepared when the Lord brings us into contact with those with such need.

Looking into the Muslim woman's family relationships and involvement in the supernatural in the Arab world have given us insight into areas of need to which we might minister. These, however, are only two aspects of her life; they should not be generalized to every country and situation, nor are her power and influence limited to these. Moreover, the conditions which limit her power are changing. Further study into the ways women exercise power and influence in the Arab world is needed and could give us more insight into how to make our ministry meet their felt needs.

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#### LANGUAGE AND THE ARABIC BIBLE:

#### SOME FURTHER REFLECTIONS

by I. L.

Having read with some interest the articles in SEEDBED concerning the need to rework our approach to the problem of the language used for communicating Christian Truth to Muslims, I have been prompted to set down my rather underdeveloped thoughts on this subject. I offer them for your consideration.

Issues to be Confronted in Formulating an Approach

A starting point for our discussion is the claim made by Muslims that the Qur'an was "sent down" verbatim from heaven in Arabic, and is therefore sacred. Several conclusions are drawn from, or linked to, this claim.

a. Muslims hold that the Qur'an cannot be translated. The words are fixed; they can only be true Word of God when recited in Arabic exactly as given. Translation devalues the words. Because translating is a human activity that is not precise, translations of the Qur'an cannot be considered reliable; they do not have the same status as the original Arabic text.

This view may be changing somewhat. Muslims have translated the Qur'an, and seem to consider translations made by Muslims more credible than those made by non-Muslims. Nevertheless, it is still assumed that the Qur'an, and by extension other holy books, cannot, or perhaps should not, be translated.

When therefore a Muslim sees Christians freely translating the Bible, and using different versions, he jumps to the conclusion that it must be inferior. (We leave aside here the question of the Muslim assertion that the Christian Scriptures have been corrupted.)

b. To the Muslim, God does not reveal Himself to anyone in any way--full stop. God only reveals His will: the words of scripture reveal what God expects of man and how he is to behave in society, but God does not reveal Himself in scripture. That would compromise His transcendence.

c. In the Muslim view, "inspiration" means that God dictated the words of scripture from an eternally existing Book in heaven. This type of inspiration is considered to be far superior to the way the Bible was "inspired" because its human authors are acknowledged to have had a role in the choice of words used. Once again the Muslim interprets things so as to elevate the Qur'an above the Bible.

d. Part of the problem is the view of man in Islam. Man is a slave of God; he has a low status. Man does not bear the image of God, nor can he have a personal relationship with God. (Some of the mystics, the Sufis, do however reach out for a relationship with God. And in popular Islam we find people going to Holy men to have them intercede on their behalf.) The implications of this will be explored later.

e. Finally, there is the high status of Classical Arabic in Islam. It is hard for us non-Arabs, even those who have learnt some Classical, to appreciate what it means to the Muslim. If the Qur'an "came down" from heaven in that language, they reason, then it must be the "language of heaven." Even those who do not understand it well still have a high regard for it. This is why Arabs will not refer to their different dialects as "Arabic" at all. This is also why Muslim Arabs have such a strong prejudice against using the dialect for writing, especially anything sacred; they charge those who do with "corrupting

our language." One may use the dialect for speaking, but books must be in the Classical. How well it is understood is another matter (and a subject for further investigation).

Pointers for Dealing with These Issues

In discussing possible ways to deal with the above issues, I will treat them in reverse order, beginning with f.

e. Across the Arab world a low Classical-type spoken Arabic is developing, under the influence of the press and the radio, due to the fact that more people are learning the Classical (Modern Standard Arabic), in school for instance. It simplifies the Classical somewhat, with the result that more and more people are able to understand it. Under its influence the dialects are also changing, incorporating an increasing number of words from the Classical. Whether we will ever see it become a standardized literary language remains to be seen, as the developments are more in the area of speaking than in writing. But these trends are going to help Christian witness. The rise in the language level of the population will help translators achieve a high status translation that is also understandable. New translations of the Arabic Bible already avoid obscure words, and difficult styles and constructions.

It would seem that the North African Bible anticipates this development in spoken Arabic somewhat. It uses language that is common to the various North African dialects, incorporating simple Classical words and expressions where these differ, but unfortunately still uses "ecclesiastical Arabic." It would be helpful at this point if someone would undertake an evaluation of this translation in the light of these recent developments.

In my view, if a translation is not acceptable to the intended audience then it is of little use. The ideal of making the Arabic Bible comprehensible through use of the dialects may not be achievable if it is not acceptable even to the Christians.

d. The dignity of man as taught in Scripture needs to be explained to the Muslim. Man is not just a slave; he was created as a responsible being and given the task of governing this world in partnership with God. The difference between the Qur'anic and Biblical viewpoints are graphically depicted in the way the two books describe the naming of the animals. In the Qur'an (2:30ff), God "teaches their names" to Adam. In the Bible (Gen 3:19-20), by contrast, "God brought them [the animals] to man to see what he would name them." Here, we see God respecting the dignity of man by involving him, interacting with him, and using his personality, mind and skills. The situation is similar for the inspiration of the Scriptures.

c. The truth of the Biblical concept of inspiration and its implications needs explaining. When the Holy Spirit of God inspired the authors of Scripture, He did not use them as one would use dictating machines. Rather, the Holy Spirit guided their choice of words and approved the words they used, so that they spoke and wrote in cooperation with God the things He wanted them to write. The authority and

accuracy of the text are guaranteed by fact that the author superintended and approved what was written.

But what can we say of Bible translations? As we have seen, Muslims tend to question their authority. An analogy may help us here. On 7 November 1987 the then Prime Minister of Tunisia had the aging President Bourguiba declared incapable of doing his job, and took over the presidency. That same day a declaration was published in Arabic and in French. Presumably, the Arabic would have been the original. But the French translation was also regarded as "official" and authoritative. The authors of the declaration in Arabic knew French well, and had approved the translation. In other words, translations do share the authority of the original.

Indeed, the Christian understanding of inspiration is more akin to the idea of translation than that of dictation. The original texts of scripture are more a translation of what God wanted to communicate than the verbatim "speech of God," as Muslims understand inspiration. In this view, God takes man and his responsibility and dignity seriously. He used men to write what He wanted said. He gave men translation skills; the art of translation has now become so highly developed that one can have every confidence that in our translations one is hearing the word of God. The Scriptures are not just so many words; they are the basis for a real communication from God to men with a view to their salvation; the goal of Scripture is man's salvation. Such a goal is more important than that of preserving and venerating a form of words that is not understood.

I wonder if we might not also draw some conclusions from the way the New Testament writers quoted the Septuagint. The quality of translation in it was not uniform; it was in fact rather poor in places. And yet the New Testament writers apparently had no hesitation to quote it, even when, as in the case of Paul, it is hard to imagine them not being familiar with the Hebrew original. Can it be, then, that the goal of clear communication is more important than slavish adherence to accuracy? If this is true, then what limits should be set for such imprecisions? I personally believe there is room for experimentation in finding ways to communicate life-changing truth.

b. The battle not only concerns the mode of inspiration; it involves the nature of revelation as well. Christians believe that God has revealed Himself, both in creation and in history, in words and in the person of Christ. As we have seen, Muslims reject the idea that God reveals Himself; He is the great unknown; anthropomorphisms (using human terms to describe God) are forbidden, though practically they are hard to avoid. The Christian view, however, rests on the following considerations:

1) God created language, and chose the language forms to be used in His self-revelation. He made language such that there is a correspondence between word and thought; words really do express and reveal thoughts, attitudes and the like. Muslims know, as do all peoples, that to describe what someone does is to reveal something of that person's character. This is the basis for much of human social interaction and of our knowledge of each other. The nature of lang-

uage is such that to use it involves self-revelation as well as communication. God can be known and known truly, not just described, even though our knowledge of Him is not comprehensive.

2) There is a popular assumption out there, both in our own thinking and in that of Muslims, that needs to be dealt with. This is the assumption that a person thinks in words. Words, however, are only the outward expression, the concretisation, the externalization of thought; they are not "thought" per se. Some Muslims might go along with this to a certain extent, but then go on to argue that mere words cannot reveal God Himself. This, however, ignores the other fact stressed above: that words correspond to, and reveal, what a person is thinking in a consistent and reliable way. Words are a translation of thought in their own right. This is why Muslim opposition to translation, and their argument that words do not mean the same when applied to God as when applied to man, are not convincing.

3) God has given man the responsibility for the use of language, and the dignity of sharing in His self-revelation in Scripture, by using him to write it down by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

4) God has sent His Holy Spirit into the world to take the words of Scripture and make them come alive to the readers, in the same way a letter comes alive to one who knows the author. The words of scripture are given in order to be the means of a personal encounter with the living God.

In sum, although Muslims may argue that words used to describe God do not mean the same when used to describe men, I maintain that they do. The words of Scripture find their real meaning when they are placed in the context of God establishing and continuing a relationship with man. To deny that words are revelatory of the person in the context of a personal relationship is to deny an essential part of the nature of man and of God. The inspiration of the Scriptures took place in the context of God's relationship with people, a relationship of friendship and not of slavery, and the Scriptures are only understood today in the context of such a relationship.

God uses words about Himself and draws conclusions for man in such a way that there is a solid link with what they mean when applied to man. Even if the details are not fully understood, the link is still there. For example, "Be Holy as I am Holy" would be meaningless were God's holiness totally different from ours. Such statements makes sense only if words used to describe God mean the same as when used of men. Other passages where this argument applies include the verse "Love as I have loved you," verses describing the Fatherhood of God with implications for human fathers, those describing the husband-wife relationship in parallel with that of Christ and the Church, etc. In each case what is said about man is also applied to God, or vice versa. A classic example of God using words to reveal His nature is the "I am" passage of Exodus 3:14.

a. Today, Muslims have come around, reluctantly, to translating the Qur'an. This is in stark contrast to Christian missions, a major thrust of which is to translate the Bible into the mother tongues of

as many people as possible. As Lamin Sanneh has pointed out (1987, see SEEDBED 1V/2, p27-28), this strikes at the heart of Islam's insistence on the dominance of Arabic in religion. The Christian approach is based on the premise that "the greatest and most profound religious truths are compatible with everyday language," and that "ordinary men and women" are "worthy bearers of the religious message." It affirms the truth that no one culture is normative for communicating the message; all cultures are considered valid. Islam, of course, idealizes Arab society of the time of Muhammad as normative for all time. The problem with this, as Sanneh puts it, is that "a divinized absolutised culture precludes the possibility of change." Many of the tensions within the Arab World today arise from differences of opinion as to how much change is acceptable.

Sanneh points out that it is Christians who have transformed the vernaculars into serious means of communication; they have reduced them to writing and translated the Scriptures into them. Where no existing written language is predominant, this approach seems to have worked quite well; translations in the vernacular have been accepted and used.

But where do we find the vernaculars of Arabic origin dignified and given status? It would seem that the vernacular is respected and used primarily in Bedouin poetry, which has a "pure" status as the language of the "true Arab." Vernaculars are also used in popular forms of poetry, in music and in the theatre. In his time, former President Bourguiba of Tunisia gave speeches in the dialect; he was loved for it as one who could communicate with ordinary people. Each of these cases involve the spoken language. These need exploiting for communicating the gospel, but probably not for printed Scriptures. In this complex situation, the overall goal should be to get the Scriptures read and understood.

The events of the Day of Pentecost make it clear that the good news was meant to be heard and understood. "And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?" (Acts 2:8, cp Matt. 28:19, Rev. 5:9, 7:9) This supports the view that Scripture is by nature translation, sanctioned and approved by the author. This brings me to my main point: the Spirit and content of the good news is far more important than the letter or the exact form of its transmission. This indicates the measure of freedom that we have to be innovative as we seek to communicate life-changing truth.

Such an approach and perspective is so new and totally different from the Muslim's way of thinking, however, that it is going to take some ingenious communicating to make any impact; he will continually need to be drawn to the content and goal of the Scriptures, not just their form.

#### Finally, Some Practical Suggestions

But what does all this mean for people actually on the ground, who are struggling with Arabic and are not experts in anything. Much of what I have written would interest a serious student, but such people are few and far between. We live in a real world.

It would seem that there is much greater room for experimenting and creativity with spoken Arabic than with the written, and a greater likelihood that truth spoken in the dialect will be accepted. The situation with written Scriptures is much more complicated. Although it may not be possible to use the dialect for Scripture, it is possible to produce a comprehensible Classical Arabic translation.

Of more immediate practical use is the idea of using Islamic words and phrases to convey the truth of Scripture. I personally applaud such an attempt. But I would like to see more study done on how Muslim readers of different backgrounds understand them, rather than just taking their textbook meanings. Indeed, Arabic is so rich, a number of profitable areas of study come to mind. Could not someone, for example, ransack the various sources of Arabic proverbs and draw up a list of those especially useful to the Christian communicator?

Then there are those words, such as "grace," that are in common use by both the Qur'an and the Bible, both Muslims and Christians, but with different meanings. When a President "graces" a prisoner, does that express the Biblical idea? If not, how can we express or explain what is meant in a phrase or sentence? When witnessing we usually do not have time for long explanations.

But what of the Arab's love of stringing nouns and adjectives together in sentences; could this feature of Arabic be used to create a list of memorable one-phrase explanations of these key concepts? Some time ago, for example, we were trying to explain the phrase, "the glory of God" in Arabic, and came up with the phrase, "majd-Allaah, huwa taahir, wa-jamiil, wa-qawiy" [the Glory of God is pure, beautiful and powerful]. This is probably not a very good explanation of the Biblical idea, but it does illustrate what I am talking about, and in this case helps explain why man has fallen short of God's glory, according to Romans 3:23.

I suggest that it would be helpful, as a start, if someone would draw up a list of such problem words and concepts needing study. What are people finding difficult to explain? Where are people trying out new words and having success? Such a list would be the basis for further research and would eventually tie in with the phrase list for explaining truth, already mentioned. This, along with understanding the issues, is I believe one of the ways to go forward now.

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**POWER EVANGELISM, OR WEAKNESS EVANGELISM?**

A Review Article

by David Vos

In recent months, there has been a growing interest on the part of theologians, missiologists, and missionaries for a subject which is known by various terms--"Spiritual Warfare," "Power Encounter," and "Power Evangelism," etc. While everyone agrees that those taking the gospel of the kingdom of God into territory held by the Enemy of souls must be equipped and prepared to do battle, many have expressed concern about certain approaches and methods which have recently been advocated. No method, old or new, should ever be accepted without a thorough critical examination of the theological presuppositions which lie behind it. This writer would like to bring to your attention two books which he has found to be helpful in analyzing and evaluating the "Power Evangelism" movement.

The first is an old "classic" by B. B. Warfield, entitled Counterfeit Miracles [Reprint Ed. London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1972]. First published in 1918, it consists of the transcripts of a series of lectures given at Columbia Theological Seminary in October 1917, plus extensive notes and references. Warfield's thesis will no doubt come as a surprise to many readers. He claims that "signs and wonders" were always and only given by God to accompany and authenticate special revelation. Since this revelation has been completed in the Incarnation of Christ and the writings of his apostles, miracles are no longer needed; indeed, they must have ceased with the death of the apostles and of those upon whom the apostles had personally laid hands.

Unfortunately, Warfield does not spend much time building a Biblical case for the cessation of the miraculous gifts, perhaps because he assumes that his hearers are already familiar with this traditional Protestant position. Instead, he concentrates on exposing and examining the historical data. He begins with the fact there are no recorded instances of tongues-speaking, healing, resurrection, etc. during the first half of the second century A.D., and concludes that miraculous powers were not transferable beyond the apostolic generation. If signs and wonders were the norm, we ought to find evidence for them spread evenly throughout the history of the early church.

According to Warfield, the gradual reappearance of miracle stories in the writings of the Church Fathers of the third and fourth centuries is a result of the growing pagan influence within the Church. He cites The Life of Antony which had a powerful and wide-spread influence during the fourth century. This work was written by Athanasius with the goal of calling believers to imitate St. Antony's great discipline and devotion. It is not a biography, strictly speaking, but takes the form of a fiction which makes many concessions, says Warfield, to the half-Christianized public which Athanasius was trying to reach. It nevertheless had the effect of increasing the Church's appetite and penchant for the spectacular.

Although Irving was undoubtedly sincere, he was apparently unable to see that his insistent preaching on the spectacular gifts was planting a suggestion in the minds of his hearers, nor that the expectancy of the congregation were creating an atmosphere of hysteria. It is perhaps significant that Irving himself never received any "manifestations of the Spirit," although a few women of his congregation began to speak in tongues, and several of the men proclaimed

Next, he recounts the early history of the Irvingite sect in Great Britain. Edward Irving's "Catholic Apostolic Church" was one of many "prophetic" movements of early nineteenth century Protestantism. Along with their fervent emphasis on the immediate advent of Christ, the Irvingites taught that the extraordinary gifts were being restored in preparation for His return (this is also one of the basic tenets of many Pentecostal and Charismatic groups). Irving is described in contemporary accounts as being only a mediocre Bible teacher, but a master of drama and theatrics.

First of all, his description of the blessing of the sick at Lourdes reminds one a great deal, except for the reference to the Holy Virgin, of a typical "evangelical" healing service. The atmosphere of expectancy, the fervent prayers, and the results are all the same: people are indeed healed. But Warfield shows that in most, if not all cases, the diseases cured had psychosomatic rather than organic origins.

Although Warfield's lectures were given several years after the birth of the Pentecostal churches in 1905, he does not address himself specifically to this new movement. His treatment of three religious phenomena of the 19th century does, however, give us a clear indication of what he must have thought of Pentecostalism, and enables us to guess what his reaction would be to today's "Third Wave".

After analyzing and discarding numerous examples of miracles said to have been wrought by relics and saints of the Roman Catholic Church, Warfield makes the point that this kind of miracle-working is an integral part of Rome's idea of the Church as a mediator of grace. More importantly, he goes on to remind us that one of the distinctive of the Reformers, in contrast to the superstitious Christians of their day, was their denial of the "pretensions by any class of men to the possession and use of miraculous powers as a permanent endowment" (p. 127).

Even the testimony of the great Augustine is not proof of the existence of genuine miracles in his day, as Warfield shows. For one thing, Augustine was not personally an eye-witness to any of the incredible stories he relates, and secondly, he tended to be very glib when it came to miracles.

From a practical point of view this superstition wrought great evil, because it hindered fighting against physical illness with the weapon with which they should have been fought--that is, by God-trusting labor. Sickness was fought as if it had been sin, with prayer; while, on the other hand, sin was fought as if it had been sickness, with diligence in ascetic practices (p. 65f).

themselves prophets or apostles. (There were only a few, isolated cases of "healing," all highly suspect.) Some of the believers soon became disillusioned when specific prophecies failed to come to pass, and several of the women confessed that their "utterances" were their own conscious inventions. Irving, however, continued to believe that his congregation was especially blessed of God, and the "Catholic Apostolic" sect continues to exist to this day.

It is in the course of Warfield's treatment of the turn-of-the-century Faith-Healing movement that he makes his most important statements. The proponents of faith-healing have, whether deliberately or unknowingly, confused the issue. By equating the supernatural with the miraculous, they imply that anyone who dares to deny the continuance of miracles must be an unbelieving skeptic (just as the supporters of today's "Power Encounter" movement castigate other Christians by accusing them of having a "western world-view"). Not so, says Warfield, who gives a very helpful definition of a miracle in terms of "the immediate action of God, as distinguished from his mediate action through natural laws" (p. 161).

The supernatural, on the other hand, is a broader category which includes God's very real, definite, sometimes even startling answers to prayer through ordinary means--His "special providences" as Warfield calls them (p. 162). Whereas Christ and the apostles healed organic diseases instantly and raised the dead (remember that Warfield was one of the most able defenders of the infallibility of Scripture against the attacks of liberalism), faith-healers can at best only point to instant healings of psychosomatic diseases or gradual cures of organic conditions. We have no reason, concludes Warfield, to despise or neglect the ordinary processes and appropriate means of healing which we find in God's creation. At the same time, we can and must pray, with confidence in the loving care of our gracious Heavenly Father.

Not all readers will agree with Warfield's radical position. They would do well, however, to pay close attention to a more recent book, Signs and Wonders and Evangelicals, written by four Anglican pastors and theologians ministering in Sydney, and edited by Robert Doyle [Randburg, Australia: Fabel Distributors, 1987, ISBN 085892367X]. In contrast to Warfield's study, the historical section of this work is its weakest part, while the exegesis of key Scripture passages occupies two-thirds of the 130 pages of this collective effort.

In the first section, John Woodhouse points out that in the Old Testament, the term "signs and wonders" usually refers to the events of the Exodus. New Testament writers use the same expression to underline the importance of Christ's resurrection, thus drawing a parallel between Moses and Jesus as God's instruments in His work of redemption and revelation. Yet,

The purpose of the Bible's signs and wonders - even the resurrection of Jesus - is not to achieve what the word of God cannot achieve. Jesus says (Luke 16:31) that what the word of God in the Scriptures does not achieve will not be achieved even by a resurrection" (p. 25)

Woodhouse examines other passages where "signs and wonders" are mentioned in Scripture, pointing out that in some cases, miracles are performed by false prophets. These are used by God to test the maturity and faithfulness of His people (Deut. 13; Matt 24:24, etc.). On the other hand, true prophets sometimes perform signs and wonders which are not miracles at all (cf. Isa 8:18; 20:3). Turning to the miracles recorded in the book of Acts, Woodhouse points out that they were performed only by the apostles (if we consider Barnabas an apostle), and by Stephen and Philip who were closely associated with them. Furthermore, the apostles never exhort other believers to heal the sick or raise the dead. Woodhouse concludes that the function of those "signs and wonders" was not so much to authenticate the gospel as to emphasize the unique foundational role of the apostles.

Proponents of "power evangelism" assume that the signs and wonders recorded in the book of Acts are normative for the Christian life. Those who question this assumption are accused of "dispensationalism." That this equation of historical particularism with dispensationalism is utter nonsense is ably shown by Woodhouse, who asks rhetorically if every Israelite was required to meet God at a burning bush, or only Moses (the covenant mediator). A similar assumption is sometimes based on Matthew 10:7-8, where Jesus commands his disciples to raise the dead and to cure leprosy and other diseases. Aren't we supposed to observe everything Jesus commanded? The refutation for that kind of argument, as Woodhouse points out, can be found by simply reading verses 5 and 6 of the same chapter, where Jesus also said, "Do not go among the Gentiles ... Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel."

Finally, Woodhouse examines a key text: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. Isolated from its context, verse 4 could be understood to mean that "Power Evangelism" is more effective than "just preaching". That is far from Paul's intention, however. We know that on some occasions Paul, as an apostle, did perform miracles (Acts 13:9-11; 14:3, 8-10; 28:3-9). To the Corinthians, however, he writes, "Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (I Cor 1:22-24). That is the context in which Paul goes on to declare: "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified ... so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" (I Cor 2:2-5). According to Woodhouse,

For Paul the power of God is the word of the cross (I Cor 1:18; cf Rom 1:16). His point is that what appears weak to the Jews and foolish to the Greeks, that is the gospel message, is itself the power of God" (pp. 64-65).

Paul Barnett picks up where Woodhouse leaves off, examining the description of true ministry which the Apostle Paul gives in Second Corinthians. Although his adversaries, the "superlative apostles," may have been able to perform signs and wonders, Paul rejects their legitimacy, calling them "peddlers" of God's Word (2 Cor 2:17). At

the same time, he defends his own apostleship, not by pointing to power, but to weakness, the willingness to suffer for others.

After a brief and inconclusive historical section by Bishop John Reid, the book is drawn to a close with a few comments by Robert Doyle. He admits that the advocates of "power evangelism" raise important questions and have legitimate concerns. He rejects, however, their proposed solutions as unbiblical.

The signs and wonders movement expects to meet God in Word and event, to be responded to with faith, and emotional and physical effects. But this is not the expectation towards which the Bible's promises and commands direct us. God is encountered in his Word. The expected response is faith. This is because God is a person, not a force" (p. 118).

This reviewer is convinced that the only legitimate and necessary methods of Spiritual Warfare are fervent prayer and faithful proclamation. The following paragraph taken from a paper on George Whitefield and the street preachers of 18th century England, read by Graham Harrison at the Westminster Conference of 1985, will serve as an appropriate conclusion:

They did not work up a meeting and after an hour of repetitious chorus singing start preaching in a psyched-up atmosphere that they then mistook for the presence of God. Indeed, often they preached from 'cold', as it were, to hostile gatherings of people who had come to mock--and worse. There is not much atmosphere about a windswept hedgerow or a wall in a market place with the stones and clods of earth flying about your head. I grant you, it must have got the adrenalin flowing! But it was in situations like this that these men preached and God manifested his power. Multitudes were humbled, not at a psychologically predictable moment, but as the Word of God in the hand of the Spirit and from the lips of these great preachers penetrated their hard hearts and broke them. That, in my book, is 'power evangelism'.

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#### BOOK REVIEW

Annemarie Schimmel. And Muhammad was his Prophet: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina, 1985. xii + 377 pp. Reviewer: P.J.B.

This book is a study of Muslim veneration of Muhammad, especially in Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Much of the material, however, goes back to Arab sources, and will also interest those concerned with Arab Islam. Those who were puzzled by the furor over Salman Rushdie will find here help in understanding the deep offense many Muslims felt.

Prof. Schimmel begins by exploring the origins of Muslim esteem for Muhammad in the poetry, al-maghazi, Sira and Hadith literature. In

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Chapter two she turns to a detailed consideration of his portrayal in the traditions as the "beautiful model" (uswa hasana). Muslims came to think of him as the perfect interpreter of the Qur'an and the perfection of all physical and spiritual qualities. Chapter three examines his unique position in Islam, especially the doctrine of his "sinlessness" (asma). We learn that there has been, and continues to be, considerable disagreement among Muslims on this question.

In chapter four, Schimmel discusses the various legends and miracles associated with Muhammad in Qur'an interpretation, in particular the so-called opening of his breast (Sura 94), the splitting of the moon (Sura 54), and his illiteracy. This leads, in chapter five, to a consideration of Muhammad's role as intercessor, the use of charms, and the practice of calling down blessing upon him. The author is sensitive to both popular practice and to the reservations held by some Muslims about these practices. This is evident in chapter six where the use of the names of Muhammad is discussed.

One of the valuable features of this book is that it helps one to enter the mind of the Muslim, and understand some of the wilder ideas, such as the use of the letters of Muhammad's name. Chapter seven looks at the concept of the "Light of Muhammad," tracing its origins in the Qur'an and early Islamic poetry, and its later mystical developments. Chapter eight describes the celebration in the Prophet's birthday, from its origins to the fully blown Mawlid celebrations in the Middle Ages. It is natural at this point to consider the legends about Muhammad's supposed night journey and ascension (asra' wa-mi'raj), and their use by the mystics' to illustrate their own experience.

In later chapters, Prof. Schimmel examines in more detail the evolution of poetry in honor of the prophet, and especially its development into complex theosophical speculation. She also looks at more recent developments, such as the idea of the "Muhammadan Path" in India, and modern interpretations of Muhammad in the Arab world. The final chapter is reserved for Muhammad Iqbal, in whose work "all the different aspects of the veneration of the Prophet seem to converge."

I liked this book, not only for its easy style, but also for its many detailed examples and extensive footnotes and indices. This is probably the most comprehensive study of the veneration of Muhammad to have been published in English. I would recommend it to those who want to get to grips with Islam from the inside.

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