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A WORD ABOUT THE ARTICLES APPEARING IN THIS ISSUE: Exceptionally, the articles in this issue focus on aspects of missionary adjustment to Arab culture. They may seem to be of interest mainly to newcomers to the Arab world, but I'm sure that anyone ministering there, whether newcomers or oldtimers, will find them beneficial in one way or another. The author of the first article is a sociologist from New Zealand ministering in southeast Asia. The second article is by the same person who wrote "The Arab Muslim Woman and Power" which appeared in the last two issues (IV/4: 57-64 and V/1: 1-4). Our thanks to both for their contributions. The Editor.

LIVING IN A MUSLIM COMMUNITY: A METHOD FOR ADJUSTING TO NEW CULTURAL SITUATIONS

by Wayne McClintock

Introduction

People adjust to new cultural situations in various ways. Many individuals learn by a process of trial and error, while others adopt a more methodical approach to acquiring information about their host community. Missionaries engaged in cross-cultural ministry, however, are primarily interested in acquiring knowledge about their new cultural situation for the purpose of building meaningful relationships with local individuals and families. Yet they often overlook the complex differences that exist between various Muslim peoples.

As the Islamic faith spread outwards from Southern Arabia, towards Africa in the west and Indonesia in the east, it interacted with traditional world views and social institutions to produce a wide range of variation in the indigenous expressions of Islamic belief and practice. Social behaviour in Pakistan, for instance, is manifestly different from that practiced in Saudi Arabia, even though the Muslim peoples of both nations share allegiance to a basic core of Islamic doctrine and ritual. Moreover, within national boundaries there can also be significant variations in the way the basic teachings of Islam are reflected in the everyday lives of the people. Regional cultures as well as class, ethnic, urban/rural, and sectarian differences influence these variations. Within the smaller Muslim nations such variations may be minimal but in the larger Muslim nations of Pakistan, Bangla Desh and Indonesia, they present a picture of bewildering sociological complexity to the outsider.

Outsiders commonly view Islam as a vast monolithic entity, and missionaries are by no means exempt from this misconception, with the result that they are ill-equipped for adopting a life-style that takes account of the manifold variations in social behaviour amongst Muslim peoples. Confronted with a strange and threatening environment that induces strong feelings of psychological insecurity, people often retreat to the safety of a system of rules to guide their behaviour. This emphasis on rule-oriented behaviour hampers their adaptation to the new environment, however. No system of rules can possibly ever take account of all the varying events and situations an outsider encounters when he enters another culture.

What is required, then, is a method for adjusting to new cultural situations rather than a system of rules. A method which helps missionaries build meaningful and enduring relationships with local individuals and families by enabling them to develop their own guidelines for living in a Muslim community. It is my hope that the following ten-step method will help missionaries working in Muslim countries in North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, to develop a suitable life-style relevant to the Muslim community in which they reside and minister.

A Method for Adjusting to New Cultural Situations

The first four steps in this method relate to the cultural adjustment process in general, while the remaining six steps are specially designed to help individuals develop their own particular guidelines.

Step 1. Adopt the attitude of a learner. There is much we can learn from the people around us which will facilitate our ministries, if only we have enough humility to put ourselves in the position of a learner rather than that of a teacher. This principle applies as much to missionaries with twenty years experience or more as it does to comparative newcomers. Missionaries not only need to study their host culture, but also should be aware of the cultural assumptions underlying their own world view. These assumptions are often manifested in misunderstandings and ethnocentrism when they encounter another culture.

In a recent book, Hiebert (1985) provides North Americans with a basis for making an evaluation of their own perception of reality by examining important cultural themes in their world view. Although primarily written for North Americans, this chapter could also help missionaries from Western Europe, the United Kingdom, and Australasia, to understand some of the presuppositions they bring to the task of communicating the gospel across cultures (McClintock 1989).

Step 2. Observe, evaluate, and consciously reflect about the many social situations and events that occur in your everyday life with the local people. It is wise to avoid taking these situations and events for granted, or making the opposite error of dismissing 'strange' or 'exotic' occurrences as evidence of irrational behaviour. Underlying such situations and events is a complex system of beliefs and values which regulate the behaviour of the people belonging to your host community.

Step 3. Try to develop a network of at least three or four cultural informants who are members of the particular social group which is the focus of your ministry. Initially these people will be those who are bilingual and speak some English. As your language fluency increases, you should try to find people who are more typically representative of the group as a whole, and then your inquiries can be conducted in the local language.

Step 4. Read widely about all aspects of the local society and culture, and in particular seek out published information about the specific social group which is the focus of your ministry. Begin this task by seeking out books and periodicals in your local libraries which are published in English. Eventually, if your reading ability in the local language allows it, you should try to read books published in that language. God novels by local writers, whether in English or the local language, sometimes provide insights that more academic authors overlook.

Step 5. Identify the groups of 'significant others' you relate to. For example, missionary colleagues, work colleagues, other expatriates, neighbours, the focal group of your ministry, etc.

Step 6. Assess your 'status' in relation to each of these groups and the possible impact of that 'status' on the other groups to which you relate. At any one moment of their lives, individuals occupy a number of different statuses. Thus a person may concurrently be a father, missionary, Anglican, and a friend. Each of these statuses relates to a specific social context and is associated with its own patterns of behaviour.

From our behaviour patterns, local people will assign us a status within their particular social context; this may have little relation to our own perception of ourselves as 'missionaries' (Hiebert 1985: 257-8, 263-4). Moreover, in societies where a strong emphasis is placed on status hierarchies, such as those of South Asia, the status we occupy in regard to one group will inevitably affect our relationships with other social groups in the host community. For instance, a missionary living in a village, will need to consider how his status in regard to one social group affects his relationship to other groups living in the community. Being identified too closely with a particular group may have serious consequences for developing relationships with other groups in the village.

Step 7. Identify which of these groups are Muslim, and learn about their religious practices. Are they orthodox believers or followers of folk Islam? To which Muslim sects do they belong? Try to learn as much as possible about their religious beliefs and practices by reading relevant books and articles, talking with your key cultural informants, and, where possible, observing their religious festivals and daily ritual activities.

Step 8. Draw up your own life-style guidelines for working among each of these groups. Formulate these guidelines in the light of Biblical teaching regarding the Christian's relationship to culture and your sociological knowledge of the group which is the focus of your ministry. Because man is created in the image of God, there are elements in all cultures which are in accord with Biblical values. On the other hand, there are customs and structures in all cultures which are the result of human sinfulness. Like the sins of individuals, these customs and structures come under the judgment of the gospel.

When ministering to particular groups, we are often confronted with customs which conflict with basic biblical values. Thus our participation in these activities becomes problematic, and we have to choose whether we will maintain our distinctively Christian life-style or uncritically accept indigenous values. The teaching of scripture is unequivocal at this juncture: we are to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth [Matthew 5:13-14].

Step 9. Be prepared to be incorporated into the family structure of those to whom you most closely relate in this group, through 'fictive' kinship. In many societies, outsiders are adopted as 'fictive' relatives as a means of incorporating them within the social group. These 'fictive' relationships can facilitate a missionary's access to a wide kinship network and provide many opportunities for sharing the gospel. One needs to be aware, however, that these 'fictive' kinship

relationships involve obligations as well as privileges. At times these obligations may appear to be very onerous to the missionary, but if these relationships are to be maintained they must be met.

Step 10. Modify and adapt your guidelines as experience teaches you.

Try to keep detailed notes of your observations and reflections during this ten-step process, especially in regard to steps 2, 3, 4, and 7. Make the effort to write up your guidelines once you have formulated them. Then they will be much easier to evaluate and, if necessary, adapt or modify at a later date.

Conclusion

The ten-step method presented here has considerable potentials as a technique for helping us develop a culturally appropriate and effective witnessing life-style amongst our Muslim friends and neighbours. But let us not overlook the work of the Holy Spirit in this process. Without His power, invoked by our constant prayer and submission to the Father's will, any method of witnessing we choose will remain a barren and futile task.

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RELATING TO ARABS CROSS-CULTURALLY THROUGH NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

by S. M.

[The original 24 page manuscript has been edited and abridged for publication here. Although the article uses illustrations from North America to highlight the differences of Arab non-verbal patterns, there are enough shared cultural ties between the countries of the West to make the article helpful to missionaries from other Western countries as well.]

As Christians concerned with presenting the Gospel of Christ to all the peoples of the world, we are aware of the prime importance of intercultural communication. But we generally think of communication in terms of verbal messages. When we study communication, however, we discover that 65-80% of communication is non-verbal, and most of that is unconscious.

An illustration may help us grasp the importance of the non-verbal aspect. The following exchange takes place in a conference room in a Middle Eastern city during the weekly meeting of the unit heads of an American organization.

As the men took their seats around the long table, John Smith, the American supervisor, was already in the room, engaging those present in a premeeting friendly conversation. Almost the entire staff was there. Omar Mohamed who had just arrived sat in an empty chair not too far from the supervisor. John Smith then turned around to Omar Mohamed and asked, "How's the wife, Omar?" Omar flushed, blushed deep red, mumbled some incomprehensible sound, and John Smith, smiling, nodded contentedly. At the time, the staff knew that Omar Mohamed's wife had been hospitalized for the last six weeks. However, to Omar and the Middle Easterners present, the friendliness and concern implied in the remark of the supervisor were offensive and in poor taste (Yousef 1974:384).

Mr. Smith had violated the cultural code. The subject of women and their relation to men involves the Arab's concept of honor. It is a matter for private conversation, and should not be brought up in public in a loud voice in the presence of the other men. To do so makes it impersonal, unimportant and casual. If Mr. Smith had known about and paid attention to the rules governing non-verbal communication--if he had spoken in a low voice, within two feet of the employee, while patting his arm or shoulder and listening intently to his response--his concern and his sincerity would have been unmistakable. This is what is expected of supervisors in the traditional, authoritarian Middle Eastern setting. Unfortunately, the distance between them and the loud voice changed the meaning of his message (Yousef 1974).

Not only does non-verbal behavior comprise a large part of communication, it is also of extreme importance for ensuring that the meaning we intend to communicate is properly understood. Non-verbals convey our emotions, and our perceptions of ourselves and of others. They complement verbal messages, and help them to produce the effect that is desired. They are symbols, and convey specific meaning. Each culture has its own set of non-verbal symbols, which must be learned with their meanings.

Categories of Non-verbal Communication

The purpose of this article is to help missionaries become aware of the non-verbal aspect of communication in Arab society and motivate them to begin learning this silent language which may influence whether the Gospel will receive a hearing. We will focus on non-verbals specific to Arabs, but to make it as practical as possible, we will also look at how they differ from North Americans.

Carley Dodd divides non-verbals into several categories: kinesics (body language), proxemics (spatial language), haptics (touch language), chronemics (use of time), and paralinguistics (how we say things) (Dodd 1982). Body language is what one thinks of first when

speaking of non-verbals. Understanding it is an important first objective in intercultural communication. It is involved in such things as gestures, greetings, eye contact, facial expressions and posture. Proxemics includes everything from how close one stands to another when conversing, to the way we arrange furniture in a room, or rooms in a building. The language of touch is used in greetings, showing affection, conversation, etc. Learning how a culture views time is important for lowering the frustrations of adapting to a new culture. How we say things--loudness, quality, pitch, silences--influences the interaction between persons.

Others divide non-verbals differently or perhaps add categories. The interaction and overlapping can get complicated. However, to ignore the subject may not only hinder cross-cultural communication, but may even involve communicating a message opposite to the one intended!

Although one may find material on non-verbal communication in general, there is a lack of material that is culture-specific. Edward T. Hall is one of the better known contributors on Arab non-verbals. Contributions by Arabs themselves are mostly in the form of articles; Barakat has devoted one to Arab gestures (1973), but almost no research has been done on non-verbals specific to Arab women.

High-Context versus Low-Context Communication

One important aspect of non-verbal communication concerns how information is processed. A high-context culture is one in which much information is taken for granted. A person is expected to know how to proceed; the context gives the cue to the behavior expected. Low-context cultures supply lots of information; procedures are explained in detail and expectations are frequently discussed (Dodd 1982).

High-context cultures reflect patterns and value systems of people intensely involved in each other's lives, while in low-context cultures relationships are usually looser and less binding. High-context cultures are also marked by behavioral patterns of interdependence, while low-context cultures emphasize independence (Yousef 1978: 61).

From this quote one can see why Arab culture is considered to be high-context, and American culture low-context. Let us now look at how these differences affect communication.

A high-context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low-context (LC) communication is just the opposite. ... People raised in high-context systems expect more of others than do the participants in low-context systems. When talking about something that they have on their minds, a high-context individual will expect his interlocutor to know what's bothering him, so that he doesn't have to be specific. The result is that he will talk around and around the point, in effect putting all the pieces in place except the crucial one. Placing it properly--this keystone--is

the role of his interlocutor. To do this for him is an insult and a violation of his individuality (Hall 1976: 79, 98).

Non-verbals take on added importance in a high-context situation such as exists in Arab culture. "People from HC cultures expect communicators to understand unarticulated feelings, subtle gestures, and environmental clues that people from LC cultures simply do not process" (Anderson 1988:279). Relationships and reciprocity are valued highly. Getting to the point of a conversation or transacting business takes longer; that is "simply because the people have developed a need to know more about you before a relationship can develop" (Friedman 1979: 47).

Proxemics--The Language of Space

To help us understand the differences between Arabs and North Americans, we begin with the idea of personal space which is the most important aspect of proxemics to get a handle on. One writer describes Arab communication as "mutual bathing in the warm moist breath during conversation" (Hall, quoted in Key 1975: 93). Research on Arab and American college students revealed that:

Arabs confronted each other more directly than Americans when conversing, they sat close to each other, they were more likely to touch each other (no Americans ever touched each other), they looked each other more squarely in the eye, and they conversed more loudly than Americans (Watson 1966: 976-977).

Arabs consider it impolite to view the other person peripherally, and rude to stand or sit back. When with friends, one must interact. They consider the American "social-consultative" distance of four to seven feet to be cold and uncaring (Hall 1969).

One reason Arabs stand close while conversing is to be able to watch the other persons' eyes for their response. Psychologist Eckhard Hess has shown that when a person is interested in something his eyes dilate, and when he does not like what is said they tend to contract. One cannot control the reaction of his eyes. For this reason, many Arabs wear dark glasses, even indoors (Friedman 1979:47-48).

As concerns public space, Americans tend to view Middle Eastern culture as pushy and shov. Public space seems compressed, full of people, full of noise--and various smells. This perception derives from how we view relationships and how we experience the body. In the Arab mind, a person does not have a right to a spot just because he occupies it. Hall describes how he discovered this in an incident that occurred in a deserted lobby; an Arab came up to him, close enough to touch because, as it turned out, he wanted to use the same choice spot. In public space, there is no such thing as intrusion; even the body is not inviolate (Hall 1966).

As for private space, by contrast, Arabs like spacious houses if they can afford it. The traditional Arab house, with its large rooms around a central courtyard, was designed as a single protective covering to hold the family together. Partitions are avoided. Arabs

are deeply involved with one another and do not like to be alone. They do not value physical privacy as highly as Americans (Hall 1969). In my experience, in North Africa the entire family often sleeps in one room. In this context, privacy is achieved by not talking. Silence does not mean something is wrong, but rather that one wants to be alone (Hall 1969: 159).

Haptics: The Language of Touch

In North Africa, we found that people do not mind having many people squeezed into a room, or a car. When visiting, I have often had women sit close enough to be physically touching, with a hand laid on my arm. I still remember a home in the country which I must have been the first foreign woman to visit; the ladies and children all crowded around me as we sat on a small carpet trying to communicate.

Men will often touch one another while talking together. The same holds true for women. In our experience, a hand is often laid on the arm or shoulder when a special point is to be made. It is not unusual to see men arm in arm, or even holding hands, while walking and talking together. Greeting one another with a kiss on the cheeks is common, but only between males or between females. In parts of Algeria, the number of kisses increases with the length of time one has not seen each other. In some places, male and female family members may greet one another by kissing on the cheek, but never on the lips. Embracing or kissing the deceased is also commonly practiced as a way of showing emotion (Poyatos 1983:151).

In many places in North Africa, a man and a woman do not walk side by side; the woman must be a step or two behind the man. In general, however, today only middle-aged or older couples adhere to this rule.

Male-female tactility in public, however, is frowned upon. The implications and assumptions are that such behaviors are of a sexual and hence private nature. In the same manner, contexts involving a male and a female alone smack of sexual connotations that could jeopardize a female's reputation and bring shame and disgrace to her, her family, and her clan (Samovar 1976: 234).

Eye Contact

We have seen that Arabs are conscious of the messages eyes can give. Women should not look men in the eye when walking down the street. The eyes should be lowered slightly. Traditionally, men and women on the street give no recognition of knowing one another. In so doing, the man shows his respect for the woman; her reputation could be at risk. This practice may be changing among the younger generation in some countries due to urbanization and Western influences.

However, between men or between women, prolonged eye contact is the norm. When the eye is diverted, it usually focuses on the mouth or another part of the face, and then returns to the eyes. By contrast, Americans only make limited eye contact, focusing mainly on something just to the side or behind the person, and then back to the eyes (Barakat 1973).

Chronemics: The Use of Time

There are basically two ways time is used to organize activities:

Monochronic time (M-time) and polychronic time (P-time) represent two variant solutions to the use of both time and space as organizing frames for activities. M-time emphasizes schedules, segmentation, and promptness. P-time systems are characterized by several things happening at once. They stress involvement of people and completion of transactions rather than adherence to preset schedules. P-time is treated as much less tangible than M-time. P-time is apt to be considered a point rather than a ribbon or a road, and that point is sacred (Hall 1976: 14).

Americans are monochronic. On the whole, we prefer to do one thing at a time. Scheduling is the norm, whether implicit or explicit. We are dominated by time. Time is linear, with a past and a future, and considered tangible. Monochronic time is learned, but is considered natural and logical. Life must conform to it (Hall 1976).

Arabs are considered polychronic. They value people and the event. Scheduling is difficult in this time frame (Hall 1976). Arabs do not distinguish the present from the future to the degree that North Americans do. To schedule an event at some future time is not truly possible because only God knows the future. In their eyes, the past is the basis for the present. Americans, by contrast, look to the future and do not think much on the past. They never question whether things should be planned in advance. Planning and being on time are of prime importance. Sitting is considered to be doing nothing, whereas to the Arab it is an activity (Hall 1959).

Gestures

Arabs and other Mediterranean peoples are known for their wide use of gestures and body movements to express or reinforce their reactions to events or to people, and to communicate.

Whatever an Arab has to say in words must, in a sense, be accompanied by a series of graphic illustrations with his hands and body. These illustrations usually take the form of object outlines with the hands, or peculiar body movement to represent an action being described by words. ... They may be simply gestures that mark parts of speech for emphasis, or to increase intonation and pitch through gestural activity. In other instances, gestures may be true substitutes for speech, in which case no words are necessary because the meaning of the sign has been agreed on prior to use by members of the culture (Barakat 1973:751).

Barakat stresses that all peoples use some gestures. There is a widespread, almost unconscious, misconception in the West, especially among English-speaking peoples, that those who use gestures are somehow deficient in language. There is even evidence that the upper classes discourage the use of gestures (Barakat 1973).

Barakat distinguishes four types of gestures: semiotic gestures--those which communicate thought and can substitute for speech; autistic gestures--those specific to a person and used for emphasis [i.e. they are not semiotic]; culturally induced gestures: those specific to a culture [also non-semiotic]; and technical gestures--those specific to a profession, such as referees, crane operators [these are semiotic]. To interpret gestures accurately, the context must always be considered. In all cultures, gestures have social and religious functions. In the Islamic prayer ritual, the non-verbal elements such as direction and posture seem to be just as important as the verbal elements, since the two are never separated. Gestures may be used for social control as when a mother touches her ear with her finger to threaten her child (Barakat 1973).

Much of Arab gesturing is centered in the hands. The right hand is preferred to the left, which is considered unclean from its use in the elimination of body wastes and from other evil connotations. There are many semiotic gestures that are used to express threats, insults and obscenities, but there are also many that express respect, thanks, greetings, pleas for mercy, etc. oaths. For example, to express thanksgiving to God one kisses one's own right hand and then raises it to heaven palm up. To greet a friend, a man shakes his hand and then places his hand on his heart "as though to emphasize the sanctity of the act" (Barakat 1973:761)

Some gestures seem to have a meaning common to the whole Arab world, but there can be surprises. For example, in Saudi Arabia, the thumb-finger circle has the same meaning as the American "Ok," while in Tunisia it means "zero" or carries a threat. A downward tug on the lower eyelid in Saudi Arabia implies incredulity, while in Tunisia it means that one is on the alert (Lustig 1988:1031, Morris 1979:71ff).

Hospitality: An Important Context for Knowing Non-Verbals

Hospitality is the main social context in which ministry to Arab Muslims takes place. It is therefore important to look at the way non-verbals are used in this context so as to learn how to identify with and relate to Arabs in a way that puts everyone at ease.

Greetings are very important in Arab culture; it is important to know what to expect and how to respond. Greetings vary in length and formality from place to place, but they always involve rituals of etiquette and politeness to a degree that appears excessive to North Americans. Handshakes are long, and expressions of welcome, greeting and blessing, with polite questions, are repeated over and over. God's blessing is invoked, you are asked how you and the family are doing, and are told what an honor it is to have you come. This stresses the value of group allegiance and harmony (Lustig 1988). It is important to follow this ritual of greeting, and take time for small talk before getting down to the reason for one's visit, if one is to develop friendship, trust and acceptance. One should be careful to shake hands with everyone both when one arrives and when one leaves (in North Africa, it is appropriate for women to kiss on the cheeks). And one should not leave without saying goodbye to the entire family.

You should generally remove your shoes upon entering a home, and at least before walking on the rug. This is a common gesture in the Arab world, as they must remove their shoes when entering the mosque. Sometimes, one is offered slippers when entering a house. In parts of Algeria, if a guest is to stay overnight, it is a common gesture to offer slippers for him or her to use during the stay.

Another part of hospitality, whether in or outside the home (e.g. men in a cafe), is eating or drinking something together. Drink is always offered, be it tea, coffee, or a soft drink (in North Africa, it is common to offer both cold and hot drinks). Not to accept a drink, even if it is only water, would be an insult. In some places, where coffee drinking is a complicated ritual, such as Saudi Arabia, to refuse coffee is felt to be insulting; it denies the host the opportunity to act honorably and hospitably (Lustig 1988). Guests are often repeatedly urged to take more. One should be careful to leave a little in the plate or the cup as a signal that one has been satisfied. Tradition requires that one only serve or eat with the right hand, again because the left is associated with uncleanness.

Among Arabs, invitations are much more nebulous and undefined than what we are used to. But there are definite ideas of status and even of territory. There are expectations and responsibilities for both host and guest. A guest may arrive unannounced, and even unknown. If it is mealtime, the host will insist that the guest stay and eat. The guest must politely refuse and express reluctance to intrude. Since it is his territory, the host will prevail on the guest to stay, even if he cannot afford it (Yousef 1974). I have been in homes for an afternoon visit, where a child was sent out to buy something, or something was made from scratch, or borrowed from a neighbor. Fulfilling the duty of host is highly valued. In a city where we lived on the edge of the Sahara, a first-time guest had to be served red meat, even if the family could hardly afford chicken.

Many of the rules governing host-guest relationships are intricate and unwritten. It is a good idea to make friends with someone who can help you learn what is expected. Social status or financial ability can play a part in expectations; the actual context is what determines which rules are to be followed. For example,

A chance meeting in a cafe between two friends or acquaintances of equal financial and social status makes of the one who arrives first and is at table the host and the other the guest. The host then offers his table and available refreshment to the guest who may accept, if he is free, or thankfully decline. In a situation between two persons of unequal financial statuses the individual who takes and pays the check is usually the one who belongs to the higher socioeconomic class. However, the other party offers, and even physically attempts to pay the check, but is refused by the fellow who is better off financially. Thus, "face" and social amenities are preserved. The understood assumption and underlying value are the cultural facts that the fellow who pays the check is honored by the act and his superior status is subtly recognized (Yousef 1974:386).

Understanding the basic non-verbal elements of hospitality opens up this key social context for a deeper understanding of the culture, and for ministry.

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B O O K R E V I E W S

Phil Parshall. The Cross and the Crescent: Understanding the Muslim Mind and Heart. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers (P.O. Box 80, Wheaton, IL 60189, USA), 1989. 211 pages. \$10.95

This latest book by Parshall, a study in Christian and Muslim spirituality, may be his best, if the enthusiastic Forward by Robertson McQuilken, President of Columbia Bible College and Seminary, is any indication. In any case, when you read the book you are not disappointed. Parshall does not, like the polemicists of a generation ago, compare and contrast the spirituality of Christians and Muslims with the ulterior motive of proving Christianity superior. He is scrupulously honest and fair, reporting the best as well as the worst examples of spirituality of both Christians and Muslims, and leaving the chips fall where they may. He calls it a "reflection" and not a treatise. In his usual style, Phil makes abundant use of anecdotes, mainly personal. The result is both highly readable and challenging.

The different chapters take a look at the different components of Muslim and Christian spirituality. Chapter One concerns their awareness of God, Chapter Two, the place of their respective Scriptures, Chapter Three, their approach to Worship, Chapter Four, their attitude toward Suffering, Chapter Five, Sin versus Holiness in the two religions, Chapter Six, Mysticism and Spiritual Power, Chapter Seven, the Christ and the Prophet, Chapter Eight, Heaven and Hell, and finally Chapter Nine, the Quest for Truth.

There is much material here that many missionaries will find helpful as they learn to relate to Muslims. In the chapter on Scripture, for

example, you get a feel for the attraction the Qur'an has for Muslims through a number of poignant testimonies (p46f), as well as for some of the textual problems (p52f), etc. In the parallel section on the Bible, you learn of its role in the conversion of Muslims to Christ, such as Bishop Subhan (p55f). Parshall's chapter on the problem of suffering is tops; his remarks flow from a number of heart-wrenching stories, many of them from his experience in the Muslim world. He expresses pain at the "sweeping generalizations" about Muslim fatalism that the Zwerers and others have made in the past. But is he any closer to the truth when he writes the following (p100)?

Herein lies the difference between Christians and Muslims. Christians first seek a human cause and then proceed to godly resignation. Muslims reverse the process: they begin with interaction with God and then go on to assign human blame.

A high point of the book is reached in the chapter on Sin and Holiness; it should be read by every missionary working among Muslims for its perspective and helpful comments. While he points to problems in the Muslim view of sin and inconsistencies in the lives of Muslims, he goes on to give painful illustration that Christians likewise do not live up to their lofty profession. Chapter seven is equally important; in the first part Parshall gives us a very helpful Christian perspective on Muhammad, and in the second he focuses on the centrality of the Cross, using several powerful anecdotes to illustrate its power to change lives. All in all, this is a powerful book that will be a challenge to any Christian who reads it. [The Editor]

David J. Hesselgrave & Edward Rommen. Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989. 257 pages.

Here is a book that makes a solid contribution to the contextualization debate from an evangelical standpoint. The authors are professors at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL. What makes their book so helpful is that they rise above simply attacking the idea of contextualization or an uncritical acceptance of it. They believe that a contextualization that does not compromise the gospel is both possible and necessary, but recognize the dangers involved. Their purpose is to "contribute to the tasks of distinguishing between aberrant and valid contextualization attempts, of reinforcing proposals that are scripturally sound and culturally viable, and of contextualizing the gospel in ways that will contribute to 'Great Commission mission' around the world" (p. xii).

There are twenty chapters in four parts. Part I contains three chapters of historical background, and Part II six chapters devoted to contemporary understandings and approaches. In Part III, the authors devote five chapters to analytical tools for evaluating their findings and approaches, and in Part IV six chapters to a summary of their findings and examples of contextualization said to be "authentic and relevant." Parts II and III are the most important to read. The first two chapters are disappointing and, I hate to say it, hardly

worth the reading. They purport to survey contextualization in the Old and New Testaments, and in church history respectively. One is surprised, however, to find little if anything on contextual approaches per se, whether in the Bible or in church history. Instead we get a rehash of the theory and practice of mission. Apparently, mission has been confused with contextualization.

Chapter three is the real introduction to the subject [one can safely begin reading here]. The authors trace the origin of the term "contextualization" and give a helpful summary of the different ways the term has been used in the WCC as well as in evangelical circles. Then in Part II they give us helpful summaries of eleven different contextual approaches from various parts of the world. The value of this section is that in a brief space it enables you to get a handle on the contextual methods of e.g. a Charles Kraft or a Byang Kato, and others [many of whose books you would not have and never buy]. Judging from the way they have summarized the authors I am familiar with, they have done a first-rate job.

The meat of the book is Part III which provides a theoretical framework for evaluating the different methods. I cannot begin to do justice to all it has. The authors demonstrate a thorough knowledge of a number of disciplines. They propose five critical aspects of method which need evaluation: the revelational epistemology implied in the approach, its theological or contextual method, its approach to language and culture, its hermeneutical method, and its approach to communication. Note Chapter 10 which includes a useful analysis of the Muslim understanding of revelation in relation to that of evangelicals. Those who are troubled by Kraft's approach will want to read the authors' critique beginning on page 192.

I find myself in basic agreement with the authors' approach overall. To my mind, however, there is one important element that is missing, and that is the criterion to be used in the "theological evaluation of the religions. This is an important question that cannot be dispensed with as theological evaluation impinges directly on contextual method. It also would have been helpful had the authors done something to simplify and/or explain the complex technical terminologies which they take from diverse sources; these sometimes overlap, and can be confusing. Finally, I would argue that the sample Muslim-Christian debate in Part IV is not really a good example of "contextualization for Muslims." It is no doubt typical of many debates but I certainly would not say that it succeeds in making the Christian message understandable to the Muslim mind, let alone attractive. All in all, however, I would highly recommend this book to those who are looking for something that will help them sort through the issues.

[The Editor]