

# SEEDBED

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Editor: Sam Schlorff

SEEDBED is a publication focusing on church planting in the Arab World. Its purpose is to serve as a forum and channel of ideas and information useful to those involved in church planting in the Arab World. Subscription is by invitation, to those associated with the missionary enterprise. Nothing contained herein may be published except by permission. Correspondence, articles or book reviews should be sent to: SEEDBED, P.O. Box 96, Upper Darby, PA 19082 U.S.A.

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\*Author's names are pseudonymous

## RESULTS OF 1990 READER QUESTIONNAIRE

At the end of 1990, a questionnaire was sent to the field missionary readers, soliciting feedback to help us evaluate the first 5 years of publication of SEEDBED, and ask for their suggestions to help us plan so as to better meet their needs in the future.

I want to thank all who took the time to share their thoughts and suggestions; 43 replies were received altogether [a few took up to a year to reply]. Your comments have been very helpful to our evaluation, and your suggestions and ideas have been recorded for future

reference. I will not attempt to list them here, but suffice it to say that they have already helped shape the present issue, as well as a number of future issues that are "in the works." I may not be able to use every idea or suggestion for various reasons [for one thing, there must be writers willing to write on the subjects requested], but they have nevertheless been much appreciated.

Let me share an idea from one respondent which others may want to use in their situation as well. He writes: "I have recently made up a list of SEEDBED articles and EMQ articles of particular interest to us here in (...), and we have begun a colloquium/discussion time once a month. The most important contribution that SEEDBED makes to us is to keep our thinking and vision stimulated. Its brief format achieves this purpose in the best way." Editor.

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### CHRISTIAN MEDIA AND THE ARAB WORLD

by Barnaby Mount \*

#### Introduction

Those of us who work in the Arab world are familiar with the fictitious character of Ghohar (also known as Nasr Eddin Hodja - depending upon which end of the Mediterranean you come from). The stories told about him reflect truthfully, humorously, and with insight Arab society and mentality. The following story illustrates the Pandora's box which we open when we talk about media and the Arab world.

Ghohar's wife was woken in the middle of the night with her birth pains. The midwife arrived quickly to help her. Naturally, Ghohar wanted to escape, but the midwife stopped him, and asked, "Don't you want to be present for the birth of your child? Take this candle, you can give us some light."

So, for better or for worse, Ghohar saw his first-born son come into the world. He was very impressed, but as he was moving away the midwife called him back, "Stay there! I think another one is coming."

Ghohar saw the birth of the twin. Then he blew out the candle. The midwife shouted out angrily, "Light it again, Ghohar, we can't see anything."

Ghohar replied, "No, no, it is better to leave it out. Can't you see the light is attracting them."

Since our subject is vast, I have confined myself to issues of principles which will undoubtedly dominate the media agendas for the next five to ten years. These will be the issues that foreign and national church agencies will encounter as they harness media in church planting and Christian education. It is my vision that all interested parties will strive to work together in harmonious cooperation, wherever and whenever possible, in order to accomplish the task to which God has separately called them.

### 1. Preliminary observations

The following table indicates which media are best suited to the different stages in the "process" of church planting, i.e, from leading a person from an indifferent or negative attitude toward Jesus Christ and the church, to being a committed Christian active in the Christian community. The **highlighted media** are those which have been observed experimentally to be the most effective at the stage indicated. These are not of course watertight compartments. Neither does the table indicate the complex synergistic relationships between the different media ministries. The vertical integration of "mass media" and personal face-to-face ministries has to be explored and developed, in order to maximize the potential of each so that the end result for the Kingdom is greater than the mere sum of the parts.

<b>COMMUNICATIONS AND THE MEDIA</b>			
<u>Proclamation/Knowledge</u> <b>.....→</b>	<u>Decision</u> <b>.....→</b>	<u>Implementation/Discipleship</u>	(Sanctification in community)
(Conviction)	(Regeneration)		
<b>AUDIO-VISUAL</b>			
Television	—		Television
Video	—		Video
Film/cinema	—		—
<b>AUDIO</b>			
Radio	—		Radio
Cassettes	—		Cassettes
Recorded Telephone Messages	—		—
Visualized Bible	—		Visualized Bible
<b>PRINT/VISUAL</b>			
Literature		Literature	Literature
Bible Correspondence Courses	BCC Decision Sheet		BCC
Computer software	—		Computer software
<b>PERSONAL/PLUS...</b>			
Telephone	Telephone		—
Correspondence	Correspondence	Correspondence	Correspondence
Face-to-face	Face-to-face	Face-to-face	Face-to-face
Traditional forms	Traditional Forms	Traditional forms	Traditional forms
—	—	TEE/Short-term Bible Schools	TEE/Short-term Bible Schools
—	—	Bible School	Bible School
—	—	Christian Community	Christian Community

Based on Engel-Sogaard Scale

This schema reminds us that priorities for media projects for the Arab world must be considered in the context of all approaches to proclaiming the Gospel and in relation to the overall objective of church planting. Because "mass media" by its nature engages the individual, the corporate aspect of the Christian faith is often marginalized. The church must not be forgotten; it is all too easy to

look at "mass media" as the be-all and end-all of evangelistic tools for saving "the masses."

The schema also reminds us that personal contact is the normal thing at all stages; the media are both a complementary dimension and an environment into which the Gospel is proclaimed and Christian truth taught. Since Arab society is a deeply wounded society, "mass media" agencies need to maintain personal relationships with their audiences. The ivory-tower mentality is all too easily inculcated in "mass media" practitioners. Even when "mass media" has been the only means of proclamation, the decision making stage invariably requires some sort of personal encounter.

Church planting in the Arab world is very complex because of the multiplicity of variables. Many Arab countries are restrictive of traditional missionary activity. Several have no known active ex-Muslim church or proto-church on their soil. Other countries, such as Egypt, have substantial Christian minorities. Some have well-developed national Christian media ministries with minimal foreign Christian agency support, while others have none.

## 2. Guidelines for evaluating priority media project proposals

Funding agencies should be asking the following sorts of questions of media proposals:

1. Who is the target audience? [make a complete profile.]
2. What is the "Christian" history of the people group?
3. What are the present active means of reaching the target people?
4. What resources already exist and what have been the results?
5. What partnership activities exist. If none, what is the potential for partnership activities?
6. What is the background of the local or regional group or partnership making the proposal?
7. What interaction has there been with similar ministries in other language, people, and geographical areas?
8. Is there a clear proposal of objectives, including the long-term objectives.
9. What is the budget? [a comprehensive budget, covering personnel, capital investment, operational expenses, training and networking expenses, and maintenance/replacement provisions.]

## 3. The Media

### **A) Audio-Visual Media**

**Television:** TV production and distribution is expensive. Statistics show that in the mid-80's there was one TV receiver to 3.5 radio receivers in the Arab world. In Egypt in 1985 there was one television for every 12.5 people. There is thought to be rapidly increasing ownership of television receivers in the Arab world and it has been observed in Algeria that local illegal cable television systems are already capturing satellite programming from Europe.

**Video:** There is a growing demand from the church and mission agencies in the Arab world for evangelistic and teaching videos. There is a great interest in video throughout North Africa and the Middle East. This is accentuated by the rather monotonous quality of the television programming in some countries. A substantial number of North Africans now either have VCRs or have access to them. A survey in the mid-80's revealed that in one major Arab-world Muslim country the ownership of VCRs was as follows: 42% among urban literates, 38% among urban illiterates, 0% among rural illiterates.

**Film/cinema:** This writer has no experience with film. Film is rather different from video with its high definition in strong colors on a large screen. These factors give it total impact. Film has been used effectively in the Sudan and recently in Jordan among expatriate refugees fleeing the Gulf conflict. The equipment tends to be heavy and bulky but, unlike television and video, films can be screened to large audiences. There is a community dimension which can be important in Arab countries, i.e., an acceptance of one another by the audience - a sense of all being in it together.

#### B) Audio Media

**Radio:** Radio is extensively used in the Arab world as a pre-evangelistic, evangelistic, and teaching tool. In May of 1991, 122.7 hours per week of Arabic broadcasting were being transmitted from seven Christian stations. It has been said that radio will remain the predominant "mass medium" in the developing world until the year 2,000, before television begins to surpass it in popularity. Its role will change, but foreign broadcasting will probably still be perceived as a source of "reliable information." A survey by one country's world-service indicated that over 50% of the adult population in a Arab country listened to their broadcasts in a recent moment of crisis.

The cost of airtime should not be the determining factor in radio strategy. There is always the danger that strategies can come under the domination of sponsors who say, "We will fund this airtime if you translate our materials." This sometimes works well, but in restricted Arab countries it often does not because foreign programs aim at a Christian listenership which does not yet exist. However, and more importantly, many of these programs only relate to the Implementation / Discipleship stage, and not to the Proclamation / Knowledge and Decision stages. The permission to adapt program material scripted in a non-Arab-world context greatly improves the situation but in order to promote good relations between all parties, precise but flexible guidelines need to be mutually agreed.

**Cassettes:** The Iran revolution proved the effectiveness of an aggressive cassette ministry launched from outside the country. In the early 80's, I witnessed Egyptians being searched and stripped of all cassette materials at Baghdad airport as they left Iraq to return home. Yet, in some parts of the Arab world there is a dearth of appropriate materials.

**Telephone Phone-in Ministry:** This is being done with the Arabic programming to North Africa. A French telephone number is announced on the programs and listeners are encouraged to contact the program presenter in the evening. It is popular, with several calls being received each day (an average of 25 per week).

It is important to note that the majority of the listeners who telephone are in, or have had, higher education. In descending order, the calls come from listeners in Algeria, followed by Morocco, and then Middle Eastern students studying in France. This may reflect the available private access to telephones in these countries and by this section of society.

Financially, this is a very cost effective ministry, as the caller pays for the telephone call, so indicating the level of his or her interest. A "reverse charge" option could be offered.

**Telephone message ministry:** To my knowledge there are three such systems operating in France in Arabic (Marseille, Montpellier, and Toulouse). Messages can be 1.5 or 3 minutes long depending on the system used.

### C) Print/Visual

**Literature:** Karl Marx is reputed to have said, "Give me twenty-six lead soldiers and I'll conquer the world." Marx knew the power of the printed page. Couple this with the Arab's near veneration of the printed word in their theology of the Qur'an as being the divine "Word of God", much as Jesus is the "Word of God" for the Christian, and we have a clear mandate to better use this strategic medium in the Arab world. The Lebanon and Egypt have been traditional centers of Christian publishing for the Arab world.

If Christians in the Arab world are going to begin or expand indigenous literature publishing, there needs to be an increasing tempo of encouraging national literature projects. This involves encouraging the development of current and new Arab-world Christian writers to write for their own people on subjects relevant to their everyday lives in a narrative, experiential, and illustrative style. The key to this is the recruiting and appointment of facilitating editors, men and women, who can come alongside writers and help them develop their writing abilities. The resources of people, equipment, and finances exist, but creative writers are few.

**Bible Correspondence Courses and Personal Correspondence:** Bible correspondence courses are dependent upon the free flow of mail in and out of restricted Arab countries. Political upheaval has taken its toll on these ministries in the Middle East. BCC provides a vital link between the "mass media" and personal face-to-face visits. The courses enable viewers, listeners, and readers to chose to learn more about Christianity, and enable us to give them the Biblical information which becomes a basis for decision making.

This ministry is very people intensive, demanding a long-term commitment. It has to be institutionalized because of the need for detailed record keeping and continuity. To give credibility to the

Gospel a BCC center's promise to send new courses for corrected courses has to be honored. However, it is not an expensive ministry to maintain, postage being the highest operational cost.

Presently there is a lack of adequate computerized cross-referencing between like-minded agencies working in the same language, people, or geographical area. Such systems would streamline follow-up procedures and avoid duplication of visits which in restricted countries can endanger both the person being visited and the visitor. At least one agency I know is generating more quality on-the-ground follow-up opportunities than can be taken advantage of. This would suggest the need for the training of national Christians in follow-up, more appropriately trained expatriate personnel, and the provision of travel subsidies.

#### 4. Issues and Priorities

I have extracted the following issues from the preceding discussion which I consider deserve priority attention from resource agencies. If I seem to emphasize activities that only indirectly affect production this is deliberate. The discipline of the media is so complex and often the investment of human and material resources so large that unless we build on solid foundations we build in vain.

**a) Research:** In almost every Arab-world situation there is a lack of professional research on the target audience of each of the above media. There are individual attempts at research in the areas of producer, consumer, and distribution but pitifully few. This sort of research requires permanent teams of trained researchers in language, people, and geographical areas.

**b) Training:** Existing media production teams, recently recruited staff, and local and regional media groups need training in order to maximize the effective and appropriate use of the media in which they are working or want to work.

**c) Personnel and Recruiting:** The essential resource required in most of the preceding media areas is trained and experienced expatriates and nationals. The fostering of informal fellowships of missions-aware Christians who are professionally working in the arts, media, and communication, would be beneficial. In many instances the emphasis needs to be upon experienced and skilled media personnel who can facilitate national media initiatives. The goal of these fellowships would be to act as catalysts and as a pool of expertise for the provision of production, advice, training, and personnel. These fellowships could be established both in the Arab world and in the countries of the mission agencies. They could also establish a professional network in order to penetrate the impenetrable secular/Islamic filter.

To recruit and equip Arab-world Christians for media appointments may need new procedures or the revision of old. There will inevitably be a diversity of procedures depending on the situation. Here are some possibilities:

- (a) Voluntary staff
  - Arab-world Christians who are presently involved in the media on a professional basis
  - Arab-world Christians who have potential media/communications skills.
- (b) All-salaried staff - commercially based groups, i.e., Christian media companies which make sufficient profits to be able to pay their staff,
  - supported by indigenous churches,
  - supported by a mission agency or a partnership of agencies,
  - mixed systems.
- (c) Missionary status - short-term and career

Presently, the self-supporting system is only viable in the area of literature publishing. Even then, it is still far from being realized in areas where there are few Christians, e.g., North Africa. Where video and cassette ministries can be an integral part of "publishing," this enhances the possibility of financial independence. It is not, however, always expedient to be identified with a known Christian publishing house. Another possibility is for Christian literature to be marketed alongside secular, educational material; classical, contemporary, and educational English and French literature is in much demand.

The other media ministries will probably never be able to be self-supporting. There is no income to be made from television and radio unless commercial advertising is made acceptable or programming is re-issued either on video or on cassette (e.g. the BBC has effectively been able to market TV programming on video for the British expatriate). Other ministries (e.g. BCC and telephone ministries) are basically service ministries which will always require outside funding. Perhaps in the future, when the "publishers" are commercially self-supporting, they could sponsor BCC ministries on the grounds that BCC students who come to Christ will become consumers of Christian literature. I envisage that there will always be a "missionary" dimension to some of these ministries and therefore financial support will always be required.

I would advocate that supporting national Christian workers should be another key objective of the resource agencies. The recruiting and training procedures of national groups and Arab-world "mass-media" agencies should be carefully evaluated according to guidelines established by the sponsoring, recruiting, and sending agencies.

To achieve this goal I would encourage national groups, churches, and international mission agencies to join together in establishing personnel recruiting strategies for their media activities. At all cost, competition in recruiting should be avoided, as this has caused bitterness in the past between agencies competing over limited Arab-world Christian personnel, especially when one group trains and another benefits. In addition, when and where the indigenous church can be consulted in the appointment of national staff to foreign "mass media" mission agencies, this should be done. To disregard

this procedure can put trust relationships between national Christians and foreign agencies under strain.

d) **Partnership:** I would recommend that like-minded national groups and agencies in language, people, or geographical areas unite in strategic evangelism partnerships (SEPs). These partnerships provide the framework for presenting comprehensive and coherent priority project proposals.

e) **Vertical Integration of Ministries:** It has been the tendency for each "mass media" agency to view its ministry "horizontally," i.e. exclusive of other forms of mission activity. The smaller multi-ministry media agencies who are often part of traditional missions have been forced to think "vertically" for many years. Each medium is vertically related to and integrated with the next medium in the progression of contact with a Arab-world seeker. These interwoven relationships eventually lead to the on-the-ground "tentmaker" or national Christian and through him or her to the planting of a church.

f) **Cross-fertilization:** Partnerships, consortiums, and vertical integration consultations provide the environment for cross-fertilization. However, it is also necessary that such creative interaction should happen beyond the immediate language, people, or geographical area. Conferences are one way to facilitate this interchange.

g) **Evaluation and Funding of Current Media Production and Distribution:** In the main, new initiatives are built on current ministries. However, not all that has proven effective in the past may be appropriate for the present or the future. Jesus warned us of what can happen when new wine is poured into old wine-skins. The resource agencies can well serve national groups and the media agencies by encouraging them to evaluate their ministries, both internally and by outside professional mission-orientated consultants. This will put the resource agencies in a better position to know which priority projects to sponsor.

h) **Maximization of the Personal Follow-up of "Mass Media"**  
**Contacts:** I would encourage the resource agencies to support current face-to-face follow-up ministries which bridge the gap between the "mass media" and the on-the-ground tentmaker missionaries and national Christians involved in follow up.

i) **The Next Step:** The next step is up to you. Discover what "mass media" resources are being targeted for your country. Familiarize yourselves with them. Use them. Discreetly publicize them. See whether you can become involved in the follow up of media contacts. Are there Christians you know who could make a contribution to any of the media? - writers, television producers, radio voicers, people willing to do follow up . . .

Above all remember that the Christian media are there to help you, the on-the-ground Christians (whether national or expatriate of whatever nation) to do your job better, so that by His grace non-Christians might come to a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His church might be established.

SOURCES AND RESOURCES

by the Editor

Some readers have suggested that it would be of helpful if from time to time we featured publications and sources of materials that may be of use to the Christian worker in the Arab world. This is our first attempt. The various sources or resources will be listed alphabetically (name, address and other relevant information) along with the specialties of each and/or types of materials they provide; where the source distributes a wide variety of materials, it will not be possible to list every title. Included are distributors of Scripture, books, magazines, cassettes, videos, posters, etc, Additions, corrections or suggestions for improving this list are welcome. When the agency to which you write does not know you, identify yourself and your business, and let them know that you read about them in SEEDBED.

BACK TO GOD HOUR: ARABIC BROADCAST

6555 West College Drive  
Palos Heights, IL 60463, USA  
(Tel: 708/371-8700)

Also known as Saatu'l-Islah, this is the Arabic radio program of the Christian Reformed Church. Some past messages are available in series of booklets in Arabic: e.g. Truth and Life [3 booklets on John], A Commentary on Romans [2 booklets], etc. There are also around 20 Arabic tracts [English translation available]. Cassettes, and an excellent book, The Bible and Islam: Sharing God's Word with a Muslim are available in English.

CALL OF HOPE

P.O. Box 100827  
D - 7000 Stuttgart 10  
WEST GERMANY

This is a major publisher of evangelistic and apologetic materials especially for Muslims --in Arabic, English, French, German, Russian, Turkish, Urdu, and braille for the blind. Materials include books, booklets, tracts, cassettes of teaching, Scripture and music, a few videos, posters with Bible verses

in beautiful Arabic calligraphy, and more. Write for their latest list of available titles. Some new titles are:

Christians in Chains.  
World Muslim Population  
Growth 1970-2000.

ECOLE RADIO BIBLIQUE

B.P. 2014  
13201 Marseille Cedex 01  
FRANCE  
Tel: 91/660007 Fax 91/708116

ERB is the media dept. of Arab World Ministries. The ERB Literature Center offers hundreds of titles in Arabic, French, English and Kabyle. These include Arabic Bibles and portions [Van Dyck, TAV, LAB versions] and some Kabyle portions, other books and printed materials [a wide variety of Bible study materials, Bible commentaries, reference and theological works, materials on evangelism, the Christian life, apologetics, witness to Muslims, novels, childrens books, etc.], cassettes of music or messages in Arabic [classical & dialects] and in Kabyle, as well as videos (e.g. Jesus Film). For more information write for their list of titles available and prices.

LIVING BIBLES INTERNATIONAL

351 S. Main Place  
Carol Stream, IL 60188, USA  
(Tel: 708/510-9500)

LBI is publisher of the Living Arabic Bible (LAB), a modern language translation that is widely used in the Arab world. Available in the following:

- ME-100 Arabic NT
  - ME-107 Arabic-English NT
  - ME-106 Arabic Bible
  - ME-109 small Arabic Bible
  - P-112 Luke, P-119 Acts
- Cassettes of John and Acts are also available.

MALAGA MEDIA CENTER

Apartado 570  
29080 Malaga, SPAIN  
Fax # 34 52 432923

MMC is the Media department of the Gospel Missionary Union. MMC also publishes in Arabic a number of evangelistic booklets, tracts, Bible Study materials [both evangelistic and for teaching believers], a 5 booklet series, "Learning to Follow Christ," for use with converts from Islam, and children's materials, as well as audio-cassettes [music, testimonies & teaching]. Write for a descriptive list of materials available. They also supply the Visualized Bible materials--high quality culturally adapted Bible lessons in North African Arabic. There are 36 lesson books and corresponding cassettes [4 lessons ea.]. A list of VB titles available is sent on request.

MECO LITERATURE

Box 662  
Larnaca, CYPRUS  
(Tel: 3574 628865)  
(Fax: 3574 628849)

MECOLIT is another major distributor of Arabic Christian literature, both for use with the Arabic Christian community and for Muslims. They distribute for most Middle East publishers, including Clarion, Baptist Publications, MELM, MEM, GEF, CLC, etc., as well as the Bible Society. Literature includes fiction, biography, evangelistic books, Christian life and teaching, commentaries (IVF New Bible Commentary in Arabic in 6 Vols.), devotionals, children's books and youth activities. They also sell cassettes of Arab Christian music, teaching videos in English and Arabic, and greeting cards. Price lists are available for all publications. There is a special catalogue for those ministering among Muslims. Here are several titles from that list:

- Seven Muslim-Christian Principles by F. Accad
- Beliefs & Practices of Christians by Wm. Miller
- What do You Think of One Who Rose from the Dead? Marsh

MIDDLE EAST MEDIA

(Distributor for Europe):

STL Wholesale  
P.O. Box 300  
Kingstown Broadway  
Carlisle Cumbria CA3 0JH  
ENGLAND (Tel: 0228-512512)  
(Fax 0228-514949)

(MEM - N. America)

Box 359  
Lynnwood, WA 98046, USA  
(Tel. & Fax: 206/778-0752)

MEM is an international fellowship of mostly Arab Christians, who are committed to producing high quality media materials for reaching Muslims. Its three ministry divisions are Magalla magazine [a monthly newstand magazine for Arab young people],

a book distribution program, and an Arabic TV ministry. Materials are available in Arabic for outreach to Muslims: Bible story picture-strip books, several comics and other magazine format materials. For details write for a catalogue. Sample copies of Magalla may also be obtained by writing MEM.

NOOR UL HAQ

P.O. Box 583279  
Minneapolis, MN 55458-3279  
USA

A part of the Assemblies of God ministry to Muslims, Noor Ul Haq is a small evangelistic magazine (3.5"x11" format) for Muslims, with English and Arabic front to back. The articles are of high quality, and are sensitive to Muslim thought as they communicate the gospel message. The magazine is sent free of charge, but for quantities a donation is appreciated. Some of the longer articles that appeared serially are available in book form.

REACH OUT

Box 18478  
Boulder, CO 80308-8478 USA  
(Tel: 303/442-3333)

Reach Out is a periodical (3"x10.5" format) which seeks to inform Christians in the West about Islam and encourage them to minister to Muslims. There are 4 numbers yearly and the subscription is \$10 in the US, \$18 elsewhere. Missionaries will also find the magazine instructive, as the editor is a Middle East Christian with considerable experience in Muslim evangelism. Reach Out also supplies some materials--Arabic Bibles [LAB], books, booklets, teaching cassettes, etc. Each issue has a

order form of things available.

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

UBS Service Center/New York  
1865 Broadway  
New York, NY 10023 USA  
(Tel: 212/581-7400)

Bible Society in Australia  
GPO Box 507  
Canberra, ACT 2601 AUSTRALIA

Bible Society in the Gulf  
P.O. Box 830  
Larnaca, CYPRUS

The Bible Societies are the principal source of Bibles and New Testaments in Arabic [both Van Dyck and TAV versions], and other languages. However, they also produce special materials with selections of Bible passages grouped by theme for use in person-to-person witness with specific audiences. Following are some materials that are well-suited for use with Muslims. [A = Arabic, E = English, F = French.]

WS-004 Messages from the Taurat, the Zabur and the Injil.  
[AEF. Bible Soc. in Gulf]

WS-005 Bible Characters (The Prophets Series) A series of 7 on Adam, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David and Solomon [E only so far, Bible Soc. in Australia]

Special Study Editions [E only so far, from UBS Service Ct./ N.Y., c/o Vartan Sahagian]

WS-017 The Gospel of Jesus Christ  
According to St. Luke.

WS-025 The Gospel of Jesus Christ  
According to St. John.

WS-032 The Followers of Jesus the Messiah Acc. to (...) Acts

WS-033 The Life of Faith in Jesus the Messiah Acc. to (...) Romans (available 1992)

## GOD USES TV AND VIDEO TO HELP PEOPLE "SEE" THE GOSPEL

by Mark Matthew\*

As the world population keeps increasing year by year the Christian Church is faced with the challenge of how to reach the masses with the Gospel. This is a particular concern in the Third World where most of the unreached peoples live and where missionaries are in short supply. Only 5% of the world's missionaries are working among the 60% of the world's population which make up Asia and the Third World countries. Needless to say with that poor showing we are not going to get the job of world evangelism done very easily.

Many ministries have a vision and calling from God to use Video and TV to reach the masses. Here in the Muslim World, CBN has a desire to reach the Muslims with the Gospel in their own language. We own a television station which is based in Southern Lebanon that broadcasts ten hours a day in Arabic and English to over ten million people in six countries. We see fabulous responses to these programs and God is moving on the hearts of many as they watch the programs.

We also have a desire to reach those people who cannot receive our TV signals. For this reason we have set up video centers in fourteen Arabic speaking nations. These centers receive our master tapes, usually in Arabic, and copy them and distribute them to churches, fellowships, Bible study groups, missionaries and others who will use them in an evangelistic way. In most cases we provide these video tapes for free to make it easier for all concerned to get the tapes out to the unreached. These tapes are then given as gifts to Muslim neighbors and friends to introduce them to the Gospel. The results have been very encouraging in countries like Bahrain, Saudia Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, etc.

The wonderful thing about video is that it can reach a lot of people who cannot be reached with literature or radio. Video also has a very long life span and can be used over and over again to reach new people.

The Muslim world is composed of cultures that are all community oriented. That means they do things as families or groups, unlike the West where we tend to be more individualistic. This means that a video tape might be watched by up to ten or fifteen people at one time and then passed onto others to watch.

In the past year we have seen over 10,000 video tapes distributed in the Muslim World. These tapes are then copied by others and watched by an even bigger group.

God is using this tool as one way to reach the masses with the Gospel. CBN along with other groups like AWM, is working on producing more videos and TV programs which will be culturally sensitive and more apt to reach the people in a way that they can relate to. Already CBN, AWM and three other groups have worked on two such projects and we hope to do more in the future.

The word video is a Latin word which means to see. We want the Muslim world to "see" the Gospel through TV and video. Nothing is impossible with God but we must put our prayer, finances and time into seeing that the Great Commission is fulfilled in our generation.

CBN, WOSC 334  
CBN Center  
Virginia Beach, VA 23463  
USA

  
B O O K R E V I E W S

Fuad I. Khuri. Tents and Pyramids: Games and Ideology in Arab Culture from Backgammon to Autocratic Rule. al-Saqi Books [26 Westbourne Grove, London W2 5RH, United Kingdom], 1991, 168pp. Reviewer: P.J.B.

When hiring a taxi is it better to sit in the front next to the driver, or in the back? What difference will it make? When a stranger addresses you as ra'is [chief, president] is he honouring you or putting you in your place? If your Arabic teacher decides to adopt you as a son-in-law what implications will this have for the rest of your ministry in the Middle East? How should you respond? In what circumstances should you bargain?

As with any real questions about culture, the answers to these simple puzzles are not straightforward. Here however is a book that gets beyond the superficiality of many anthropological studies and begins to orientate you to the world of the orient. Who knows, you may even be able to begin to answer some of the above questions.

The basic thesis is summed up in the introduction and first chapter. Reality is perceived as a collection of tents scattered across the surface of the desert, with no visible hierarchy, no pyramidal structure of authority. All actors start equal, and power comes only through being able to dominate ones peers. Thus the need to be first has dominated Arab thinking to such an extent that they have "never been able to develop a clear and lasting pyramidal, formal structure of government" [p19]. And "the outward emphasis on group achievement in Arab culture is only meant to camouflage and suppress the strong drive for individualization" [p20].

Following a deceptively simple chapter in which Khuri describes how these principle apply in Arab games (the Arab's play backgammon, not chess) he then goes on to describe how the same elements dominate the rest of life.

In chapter two he describes the intricacies of Arab family relationships, and how relational language is 'extended' in manipulating the world outside. Those who are studying Arabic will find this chapter, with it's analysis of Arabic terminology, particularly interesting. In the following chapter he discusses the 'politics' of marriage and why it is that still many Arabs prefer to marry a cousin, or more

precisely their Father's Brother's Daughter (bint 'ammi). Inevitably these chapters are not easy reading, but Khuri's lucidity helps disentangle some very complex relationships.

In a short chapter, Khuri shows how some of the same principles apply in the bazaar, and in particular, how the establishing of fictitious relationships may facilitate or hinder the completion of the sale.

Chapter five contains a fairly detailed discussion on the role of Family Associations in Beirut. It is based on field work done in the Chiyah and Ghobeire between 1967 and 1969. It shows why such associations were formed, and how they provide a platform for an individual's political or social advancement. In the course of the discussion he challenges some Western assumptions about urbanization, arguing that Arab cities are not the same as western ones. There is no real heart, no real down town area. Thus it is very easy for them to fragment into opposing groups.

At first sight the argument that all are equal, that there is no pyramidal structure of authority, might seem to be at odds with the structure of society found in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. Here at least the Amir is supreme. But in chapter six he shows that the same principles apply even here. The Amir's authority derives from his ability to dominate his constituency. In such a situation any movement towards democracy becomes problematic, in that democracy implies recognition of a 'public' whose objectives are in conflict with the Amir's dominance.

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Three Books on Justice (Reviewer: I.L.)

Khadduri, Majid. The Islamic Conception of Justice. Johns Hopkins University Press 1984 L20.50

Al Hakim, Tawfik. Maze of Justice: Diary of a Country Prosecutor. Saqi books 1989 (reprint of 1947 edition). L5.95

Rosen, Lawrence. The Anthropology of Justice: Law as Culture in Islamic Society. Cambridge University Press 1989 L7.50

If we who work among Muslims are going to understand them with a view to intelligently presenting the gospel, we are going to have to know more about the Muslim sense of justice, not just in the Law courts, but in every day life. These three books offer complementary, though partial help to us.

The Islamic Concept of Justice is a thorough academic tome, dealing with the notion of justice, and various kinds of justice such as political, theological, philosophical, ethical and social. The book is mainly historical in its approach with just a short chapter at the end on justice in the modern world. A good book for the academics.

Tawfik al Hakim's Maze of Justice is a short Egyptian novel, easily read, and with fascinating incidents and insights. Do not expect more than that.

Rosen should be well known, as author of Bargaining for Reality: The Construction of Social Relations in a Muslim Community (Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1984). His work, The Anthropology of Justice, is firmly rooted in Moroccan society, and is up to date. He starts with the basis of his previous work, well summarised in this book, which showed how much of truth and relationships are negotiable. He explores and explains the court procedures of various courts old and new, which are not at all like our disciplined courts. Truth, and how to establish it, receives extensive treatment as does the importance of the social consequences of a judicial decision. There is much much more in this short book; if you only have time and money for one book I would recommend this one.

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Casper, Robert. Traite de theologie musulmane - Tome I: Histoire de la pensee religieuse musulmane [Islamic Theology - Vol. I: History of Islamic Religious Thought]. Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica [PISAI, Viale di Trastevere 89, 00153 Rome, Italy], 1987, xii + 495 pages. [Vol. II in preparation]  
 Reviewer: I.L.

This book is one of the best summaries of the origins and subsequent developments of Islam that I have seen. Combining readability with vast and up to date scholarship the book is an excellent reference source. The format is that of expanded lecture notes, with plenty of headings, a detailed table of contents, and index. The bibliographical material is annotated. Starting with a summary of Mohammed's life and the origins of the Qu'ran, he goes on to discuss some of the questions such as his prophethood, and the inspiration of the Qu'ran. The middle chapters cover Islam up to the present with the various groups and debates within Islam explained. The second half of the book covers the renaissance of Islam from the Turkish empire onwards, not forgetting Christian Arabs and their place in early Arab nationalism. India is not forgotten. The final chapters cover modern Islam including the rise of the Muslim brotherhood, secularisation, the declaration of Human Rights and modern exegesis of the Qu'ran.

Although the author's theological perspective is Roman Catholic, the material is excellent. I look forward to the second volume which unfortunately is only still being written.