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THE PLANTING OF THE CHURCH IN THE CITY OF "X" A CASE STUDY

by the Editor

IMPORTANT: THIS ARTICLE MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED IN ANY SHAPE OR FORM WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION; DO NOT DISPLAY PUBLICLY.

This past summer, I had the opportunity to interview "A" and "B" during the brief period of time they were in town. Snatches of information about the growth of the church in "X" where they have been ministering for years had reached us from time to time, so I was keen to discover some of the main factors behind this growth. I was especially interested in finding what role the *Visualized Bible* materials might have played, knowing that they have been using these materials extensively. The following represents my own summary and rearrangement of the transcript of the recorded interview; it has been reviewed and corrected by the interviewees. Quotation marks and indented blocks indicate direct quotation. For a more complete and perhaps more balanced picture, it would have been good to have also interviewed some of the Christians of "X" as well, but that was not possible for the present.

[Note: After publishing the article, *Basics of a Sound Approach to Contextualization*, in the last issue (SEEDBED IX/4), I realized that a tenth important truth should be added to the *Basics Theological Principles* (p. 53f). I suggest that you attach the following at the hinge between pages 54 and 55.]

It is Scripture, the Word of God, that is the effectual agent in planting and preserving the church (Isa 55:10-11; Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 3:15-16). Methodology, important as it may be, is secondary, the Word of God is primary. Whenever considerable attention is focused on our contextual methods there is the temptation to begin to think and act as if getting the right method were the key to planting the church. We need always to remind ourselves that the Word of God is the key element in the equation. This is why in church planting it is crucial that every church be given "the full counsel of God" (Acts 20:27); this includes an adequate understanding of the history of redemption—from Genesis to Revelation—in relation to the worldview of that society.

Background on the City and the Ministry

I began by asking for a little background information on the city of "X," a predominantly Berber city in North Africa, where they have been ministering. I was told that it was founded in the late 1920s as a French Foreign Legion outpost. The ladies describe the lay-out of the city as a central town, or "*casbah*," surrounded by a number of "villages," or "*douar*." Some of the *douar* are separated somewhat, while others more or less run together. The people of the town are predominantly Arabic-speaking and originally from other parts of the country, whereas the people of the *douar* are predominantly Berber-speaking. There is a distinct difference between town life and village life.

The ministry in "X" began in the early 1960s. Initially, the expatriate workers lived in the town, but since the medical and midwifery work which developed focuses mainly on the poor in the villages, they now live in one of the villages. Over the years, through midwifery they have developed relationships with many women and children, especially young girls, in the villages. In 1983, when "A" was left alone following the departure of her previous co-workers, "B" joined her in the work. By this time "B" already had twenty years experience in medical work and church planting elsewhere in the country. Several years ago they were joined by the "C" family with their four children.

There are restrictions, of course. As one of them put it, "You don't need telephones or fax machines in the village; everybody knows what everybody else is doing. Our lives are an open book, which has both advantages and disadvantages to us as Christians. The other comments, "I can't do in 'X,' for example, what I could do in the large city where I lived previously, such as distributing literature, and the like; in midwifery work we have to be careful. But the homes are very open to our ministry." She went on to explain that the midwifery work gives them a wide scope of outreach; they are able to go back in many of these homes, and talk with the family, leave cassettes, and the like.

Asked about the comparative openness of Berbers as compared to Arabs, one of the ladies replied that having spent 20 years in the country before going to "X," she feels that the Berber people are more open and frank in general, and because of that they are more open to the gospel. In this connection, she cites a National Arab brother who had been invited to minister to the group in "X." Quoting the Arab proverb, "Politeness before Truth," he had commented, "I think that the people here are more open. They say what they think rather than just trying to please people."

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The Role of Prayer in Planting the Church

The two ladies made it clear that they consider prayer to be the main factor in the growth of this church group. In 1984 they attended a country-wide prayer conference where setting specific prayer targets was the focus. One remarks that in her prayer group, each was to set a prayer goal for which he or she would be praying during the coming year. Hers was that God would raise up at least one male believer in the church in "X" by 1985. She comments:

By the next year there were at least two. ... From then until now we could be in the homes day and night if we had the personnel and the time, whether with families within the flock or outside, from the poor to the educated. The ground is ripe. I think the key has been prayer.

Two of the Christian girls were engaged by their families to non-Christian young men who were at least nominally Muslim. We asked prayer partners and friends to pray specifically for these two girls and the two young men by name. Both young men became believers in Christ. One of them has been baptized, and has married the girl concerned. They have since had a child whom they have dedicated to the Lord. The other couple is not yet married, but is still unofficially engaged.

During our conversation they told of occasions when new believers were added to the church as a result of specific prayer. They described what happened when several churches in the homelands joined them in upholding the work regularly in prayer.

We have prayer cards for each of the believers; people were praying for them by name, just as we do. Then we try to send them updates for prayer, and SOS requests. At the time of their mission conference in the Spring of 1992, the Sunday School director of a church in the US wrote saying that they wanted biographical sketches of three families in "X"; we sent them sketches of three boys. At the end of June, one of those boys became a believer, and in July another boy did as well; their parents were already Christians. The children who were praying for those boys/families were 5th and 6th graders. The previous fall when I was in the country, they and their parents attended our conference. They took prayer cards for children in "X," with pictures of the child and family, a biographical sketch, and prayer requests. Last summer in England we especially requested prayer for the third family who is also Berber speaking, and now four of those children have become Christian. Again it was specific prayer.

The "Waiting List" and "Lamb of the Month Club"

At one point the two began talking about what they called their "waiting list." When queried they explained it as the list of those for whose salvation they pray specifically on a regular basis. They report, "We have seen one person after another come to the Lord

this way." Some co-workers have referred to it as the "Lamb of the Month Club," because they claim one person for the Lord each month. Said one, "It doesn't always work out, of course, but people have been praying specifically for different ones, and they come to the Lord. We now have six or more people for whom we are praying." The following story illustrates the idea of the "waiting list."

One man, originally from the city of "Y," is teaching at a lycée in a town about two hours away. He married a girl from "X" who is high on our "waiting list." They would very much like to be transferred to "X." She's a primary teacher. She's not a believer yet, but through the years she has had Bible teaching, has been to camps, and "A" delivered her two children. Although she's not yet a believer, shortly before we left for the US she made this request: "When you get to America, find a large church and tell them please to pray that we get teaching jobs in the city of 'X.'" She would like "a large church to pray for that please." She's been close to salvation different times with tears in her eyes. Something is holding her back. Her husband was baptized last year; he and we continue to pray for her salvation. Admittedly he must not push; it must be a work of the Holy Spirit, and through the Word.

The Role of Christian Families in Reaching their Extended Family

Another emphasis has been reaching the family unit. The medical midwifery service has been especially important in this regard. The case of one extended family is especially noteworthy. The husband was one of the two men about whom they were able to report to the prayer conference in '85 that he had become a believer that year. The one relates the following:

We had been taking care of his little boy who had a severe burn. One summer when my colleague was out of the country, I had gone to their home to dress the burn. It was early in the morning, and hot. He said, "Oh! you came early." I said, "I came early because it's hot and I get up to read and pray." His wife jumped up saying that she reads the Qur'an and prays. I said, "No, I don't read the Qur'an; I read the Bible." At that he jumped up and pulled a little suitcase off his cabinet; it was loaded with BCC lessons and literature, etc., dating from 1978 until '82 [this was '85]. He said, "I got 10 out of 10 and I can't even read or write."

It turned out that his nephew, who was a lycée student at the time, was doing the answers. So I talked to that couple about the Lord. I was getting ready to go away also. But I left them cassettes because they couldn't read, and as they live with wall-to-wall neighbors I cautioned them not to turn up the sound very high. They said, "we wouldn't have told you if you hadn't told us; we know to be careful." He said "you know what's on the radio; one night a week it's in Berber." They have been listening to the programs through some years. They had accepted Christ as far as they understood Who He is, but since then when we returned to "X," we had them once a week for Bible teaching, and

reading through the Gospels. And we began using the *Visualized Bible* written materials and cassettes with them. That is one unit in the family.

Since then their daughter began coming to Bible study. She became a believer, and then her younger brother aged 10 or 11 became a believer. She was married this spring at 15 and a half years of age; her young husband (age 21) became a believer before their marriage. She has a step son who has made a profession of faith, as well as a sister in another village and her daughter. Likewise the nephew, who had done the lessons for him and had gone on to university, he and his wife who are teachers are believers and live a little way from us. That is one extended family.

In the larger area there are ten equally yoked couples, but in the immediate vicinity there are about five family units—children, brothers and sisters. I think the family units are a big key to the planting of this church.

The Role of the *Visualized Bible* Materials

We spent quite a bit of time discussing how they use the *Visualized Bible*¹ and other Bible teaching materials to ground the new believers in the Word of God; I was particularly interested in the role of consistent Bible teaching in the growth of the group. What they said reminded me once again of something written by Peter Beyerhaus which had so impressed me years ago. He wrote: "The Church is both created and preserved by the Word. ... The young Church grew because of the Word, not because of some inherent spiritual faculty which developed through its own natural power."² I found that, contrary to common misperceptions about these materials, they are using the VB to teach Bible doctrine at all age and educational levels, and not just with children or illiterate women. They even use the VB to teach lycée teachers who have become Christians. Of course, the way they use the VB to teach children or illiterate women is different than the way they use it with the educated.

For those who are not familiar with the *Visualized Bible* let me summarize by saying that it is a series of large format books with illustrations (78 volumes in English) designed to facilitate the teaching of Bible doctrine. Very few of the volumes were put into Modern Standard Arabic, however. About 45 have been into the North African colloquial. These are mostly in mimeographed form, however, and not widely available or used. Most of the colloquial volumes are available on audio cassette. There also exist the VB "minibooks," with illustrations only, which may be taken home by the student or left with the cassettes so that the students may look at the illustrations as they listen. (For more on these materials see *SEEDBED VI/4* [1992], pages 59-64). Here is how these ladies described the way they use these materials.

We use the VB materials (cassettes and minibooks) a lot when we are teaching illiterate, uneducated women. They will take cassettes home from our lending library, and bring them back to get a new one when they're finished. In this way they are getting consistent teaching. Those who are

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educated will usually take the printed or mimeographed lessons as well as the cassettes; they prefer the printed ones where they exist as they are much easier to follow than the mimeographed materials, and much nicer anyway.

We mentioned a lycée teacher. He is a professor; he had studied Arabic literature at the university. When he became a Christian he was quite happy to study the *VB* materials. He got his teaching mainly at home. He reads a lot, and has read a lot of Christian literature. He borrowed the *VB* cassettes and printed lessons quite regularly over a period of time, and has found them very helpful in his own learning process.

So the *Visualized Bible* is not just for children and the uneducated. We use it for most of those we disciple. Six or eight of the believers happen to be teachers and we have used the *VB* materials in teaching all of them. And then, we often use a segment from a *VB* lesson in conjunction with teaching some subjects along with other material. In addition to the *VB* materials, we also use the Navigator materials in Arabic³ for nearly all literate believers from the age of fourteen and up.

We have placed cassette machines in about 15-20 homes. In our Audio-Visual library we have all the *VB* cassettes, all the cassettes from Malaga, and almost all of the cassettes from Markaz ash-Shabiba. Now its Christian video also. A number of homes in the village have their own VCRs, so they are not just watching our machine. We didn't have a television, but we were given a VCR and then a TV set with which to use it.

The age and education levels of those being taught have a lot to do with the way one uses the materials and ones choice of teaching methods. The *Visualized Bible* deals in rather complex "adult" ideas but it brings them down to a level where even a twelve-year old can understand them. Even so, one cannot use them with twelve-year-olds the same way one would use them with adults. I therefore tried to get some idea of how they adapt the way they use the materials to the age group. I found that actually much of their teaching is highly individualized. It seems that much of the time of one of these ladies is given to the midwifery work, while the other spends much of her time teaching the ones and twos, or the small groups. The way she uses the materials depends on the individual; each one different.

This year, for the first time, I had more children than ever to teach. We prayed for these kids last summer, and had people in England and the States praying for them. There was a nucleus of six children that came for teaching. The afternoons I was free I'd have them by ones or twos, most of them twice a week, and also on Sundays. During the week I used the *Visualized Bible*, and in addition had one or two boys studying the Navigators materials. On Sundays we might do a *VB* lesson together or show a Christian video, and pray and sing. We also did a lot of Scripture memorization; this particular group learned the Lord's Prayer or prayed through a Psalm together, such as

Psalm 1. One young girl who has had no education kept up with all the memory work except that I did not have her memorize the books of the Bible. We hit memory work hard. We are trying memory work with the adults too.

There is one family where the husband and wife are illiterate, and the children read the Scripture passages for their parents. (We have the children doing that in a couple of situations because the VB cassettes usually just give the reference; the student must look up the verse for himself or herself). In this one household, when the father had borrowed a cassette and we'd ask "Do you want to exchange it yet or not?" he would often say, "I've heard it but I haven't learned it yet."

Asking questions and discussing what the text means are a big part of my teaching of adults. For the children, I do not use questions much; they like little quizzes about the lesson, that is oral quizzes. Of course the VB lessons have their own questions built into them, but you can ask other questions as well. I think that's an important part of teaching the Bible.

The fact that the VB materials being used are in the North African dialect could raise a barrier, however. So I asked how this has affected the attitude of the more educated folk in "X" toward these materials. Here was their reply.

In "X" it has not been a problem. Those who are educated have entered in well and have not objected, although I'm sure they would prefer the classical. Most of the Christians here are Berbers. One of the two lycée teachers is an Arab, but he doesn't have a problem with the lessons being in colloquial. In the large city on the coast it *was* a problem, however; they have gone back and forth on it. Some of the educated Christians oppose the colloquial materials, but others do not; they were not all negative. Some really didn't mind it. But with their children becoming more educated I can see the need, particularly in the cities, for the materials to be in the literary language also. It may become that way in "X" as well. However, it appears that at times the colloquial is actually better understood than the classical.

Mind you, even if it is a Berber family, their education will have been in classical Arabic. But I find that too many of them learn by rote, and often do not understand what they've learned. A friend of mine who is a very good linguist says that although many read classical Arabic they may not understand what they have read. She describes an occasion where she was reading the Bible with two or three girls; one girl could manage to read the colloquial but not the classical. The others would read a passage in the classical and then say, "What does it say in yours?" They hadn't really understood what they had read. Then again, one of the educated girls who had studied two years in another city, when the audio-cassettes of Scripture came out in her language she would follow the reading in her Bible, but was thrilled to hear it read in the Berber. Here in "X," in a conversation between

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four people, you might hear in one sentence both Berber and colloquial Arabic, classical Arabic, French and English.

The Problem of a Team Made Up Only of Single Women

At this point, I audaciously asked whether as single women living in a Muslim society they were themselves teaching the men in the city of "X." For a number of years, before the arrival of the "C" family, there were no male Christian workers. During this time, however, men were coming to Christ and were studying the VB and other materials. In a society which is more or less strict on the segregation of the sexes, however, single women find themselves in the delicate situation of needing to teach male converts, and at the same time to reflect the Biblical model on the roles of men and women in the church. It is true that Berber society is generally less segregationist than Arab society, but whether or not this helps the church planter is uncertain. The reply of "B" who has carried most of the teaching load is illuminating.

Yes, I was teaching the men; I'm not a teacher but because of time and priorities this became my responsibility. When you get older and your hair grayer, and there are no men to do it, it becomes more acceptable for women to teach men. Where we live it has not been a problem, but younger women should not be teaching men, nor women living alone. Even if it were acceptable it would not be wise. Now that Mr. "C" is here he can do this.

To complete the picture, however, it must be said that these ladies were very wise in their approach to meeting this need (they certainly are not radical feminists). They have made every effort to expose the church in "X" to as many male Christian teachers as possible. For one thing, the teacher on the *Visualized Bible* cassettes is a man (a Berber in fact, although on the cassettes he speaks in North African Arabic). In addition, four times a year they have had mature Christian men come from elsewhere in the country to teach the believers in "X"; most of these have been National Christians, and two are Berber. Now that Mr. "C" has come they would like to see cell groups developing in the church and the different groups getting together perhaps once a month. They are hoping that as he becomes adept in the language he will be able to train the men to preach, teach and reach out, and increasingly take over local leadership. They also desire to train someone to teach the children.

The Lack of National Christian Homes where Believers can Meet

One of the problems the young church faces at this point is that it is mainly in the two expatriate homes that the believers must meet for Bible study, etc. Last year the men started rotating for their weekly meeting between an expatriate home and two National Christian homes. But if a visitor drops in during the Bible study they have to stop and entertain the visitor. There's not the measure of privacy that is needed.

In the village next to where we and family "C" lives, there are three brothers who are all Christians; two are now married, one is single, and their two married sisters have also become Christians. One of the married brothers has

moved with his wife out of the parents' home. The single brother and the married brother living with his wife at home are all baptized believers, but the parents are not. So at the sheep feast, during Ramadan, and at other such times it is very difficult; they would like to have people in their home but they cannot. The one brother has a real pastor's heart, but because of living at home with his parents he cannot invite the believers to meet in his home; he is not free to do that. Two of the teachers in the church are unofficially engaged, if God should bring this marriage into being that may be a home where the believers could meet together.

Finally ... To conclude, the ladies had this to say about their experience in "X."

Although there are problems and restrictions, and we see lukewarmness as well as commitment, basically we're encouraged. We're not oblivious to the fact that there could be a 'Judas' in the group, and acknowledge that they have their ups and downs. Some are not 'running' as well as desired, a couple show 'stunted growth,' some are fearful or cold, but God is working and what He begins He perfects. He is a Faithful God and Master Teacher, Holy and Just, Loving, Forbearing, Forgiving, Able to convince, convict, save, heal the wounded, and pick up the fallen. He sifts and He purifies. Our God is the Almighty, Eternal God. He is the Potter and we the clay.

¹Published by Bible Visuals International, PO Box 153, Akron PA 17501-0153 USA. Tel: 717/859-1131.

²Peter Beyerhaus & Henry LeFever, *The Responsible Church and the Foreign Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), pp. 126, 127

³The *Studies in Christian Living* series in Arabic, available from Ecole Radio Biblique, BP 2014, 13012 Marseille Cedex 01, France.

RESOURCES FOR LEARNING GULF ARABIC

by R.B.

For those wanting to live in the Gulf and meet Gulf Arabs, a knowledge of spoken Gulf Arabic is very helpful. However, one is not likely to learn it just by being "immersed" in the culture, as one could in Egypt, because the citizens tend to live apart from the many expatriates. One can study Arabic elsewhere, prior to moving to the Gulf, but in that case one is learning a "foreign" dialect. So for those wanting to learn Gulf Arabic, whether they have studied elsewhere or not, it is essential to have some helpful resources, both written and audio. And for those who have learned to speak one particular variety of Gulf Arabic, there may still be a need for resources to help them learn to understand the other varieties. Here are some of the most useful resources, identified by author.

John Kirkbright

The study of Gulf Arabic will be greatly aided by a new (1993) book entitled *Spoken Arabic Step-by-Step, a beginner's course in the Spoken Arabic of the Gulf and Saudi Arabia*, by John Kirkbright. It is published by Motivate Publishing (P.O. Box 2331, Dubai, UAE). It comes in two attractive, spiral-bound volumes of about 90 pages each, with four cassette tapes of 45 minutes each, and costs about \$40.

The following introduction to the author is provided: John Kirkbright first started the study of Arabic as part of a B.A. Honours Course at Durham University, graduating in 1961. Since then, he has taught Arabic and other languages to a variety of students from diverse parts of the globe, besides being involved in business and banking. He has an M.A. in Linguistics and English Language Teaching from Leeds University (1974) and has written on Arab dialects. He is an Associate of the Institute of Linguists, U.K., and a member of the British Association for Applied Linguistics. He has lived in the Arab world for 25 years, of which the last 16 have been spent in the Gulf.

The author has both training and experience in the pedagogy of language teaching, and his expertise shows in the way he has developed this course. He does well at presenting patterns and providing substitution drills, without depending on a lot of grammatical terminology and rules. The vocabulary is kept as practical as possible, and numerous dialogues are included.

The book provides for review while avoiding the boredom of repetition. In volume one, after the first nine lessons, there is a review lesson. After that are 20 pages of supplementary exercises, which can be done as a review or with their corresponding lessons. After that there are 8 pages of dialogues to learn or translate, in both directions. This gives considerable flexibility to the course, enabling one to adapt it to the needs of complete beginners as well as the needs of those who know another dialect. Volume two follows the same pattern, but also includes appendices, each of which gives a vocabulary list for a particular semantic domain, such as the family, shopping, professions, the body, adjectives, etc.

Kirkbright presents the first-person imperfect form of the verb as the base form, which simplifies his approach considerably. For example, he can classify all kinds of roots and all derived forms into just two or three conjugation classes for the perfect and two for the imperfect (although he doesn't use these terms).

Since there are small differences among the Gulf dialects, both in vocabulary and in phonetic realisations, he often provides variant forms in brackets after the given forms. As for the given forms, they are usually those of what is called "Educated Gulf Arabic," meaning the leveled and cultivated spoken language of the region in which highly localised forms have been replaced by the more common forms or by standard forms. The voices in the tapes represent different dialects as well, to prepare one to understand speakers from different parts of the Gulf. He even includes a few notes about pronunciations in western Saudi Arabia and in Oman, although the book is mostly oriented to the regions bordering the Gulf.

This is a book I can highly recommend for anyone wanting to learn Gulf Arabic, regardless of his/her previous knowledge of Arabic or linguistics. Another linguist who worked through it describes it as follows:

The course has a practical design and the books are in an attractive modern format. It is deliberately thin on grammar, which may be a little frustrating for those who are analytical, and the phonetic symbols (especially the vowels) are different from the Abdo/Kelsey system. There is a short 1-page, but very interesting, summary of dialectal differences within Gulf and Saudi Arabic, and some dialectal variants are provided in the lessons, though generally it seems to be the Kuwaiti variants that are identified. The tapes are done by different speakers from various dialects, though this (and the resulting variation) can be a little confusing at first. Nevertheless, this is an excellent beginners' course.

Clive Holes

It would be good now to compare this book with the popular textbook by Clive Holes, a well-known descriptive linguist and sociolinguist who has written many books about Gulf Arabic. It is entitled *Colloquial Arabic of the Gulf and Saudi Arabia*, and was published in London by Routledge & Kegan Paul in 1984. It has over 300 pages and one cassette of about 45 minutes. It focuses on Educated Gulf Arabic, especially as spoken by Sunnis in Bahrain. Although the book is published in a popular series, the linguistic bias of its author shines through. For example, the first lesson on the tape consists of extensive practice of pronunciation, using lists of words that exemplify sounds in different word positions. This part would be good for all beginners.

Throughout the book, the lessons are thorough and the vocabulary is extensive. The author has evidently chosen words that he can use to illustrate grammar and to build vocabulary. Dialogues are provided as exercises to be read and comprehended. There are translation exercises in both directions. There are also substitution exercises. The last 45 pages contain the answer key.

This is an excellent book. The pronunciation drills will be of benefit to beginners, but the rest of the book might best be reserved for those who already know another dialect of spoken Arabic and for those who have already mastered Kirkbright's book.

Hamdi Qafisheh

Hamdi Qafisheh has written a three-volume set of textbooks with the following titles:

A Basic Course in Gulf Arabic
Gulf Arabic, Intermediate Level
A Short Reference Grammar of Gulf Arabic

All were published in the 1970s by The University of Arizona Press in Tucson, where Qafisheh is evidently a professor. The dialect taught is basically the Educated Gulf Arabic of speakers from Abu Dhabi, although some variety is present. Each volume has

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almost 500 pages, but not many words per page. The first volume concentrates on simple, effective drills of various kinds, without overloading the student with too much vocabulary or grammar. The grammatical patterns are well presented through comparisons and substitution drills. The vocabulary is basic and practical, and the book should be fairly easy to use. However there are not, to my knowledge, any tapes to go with it, so it might best be used as a supplement to Kirkbright and to Holes.

Aramco

People interested in the spoken Arabic of the Gulf coast of Saudi Arabia will want to acquire *Spoken Arabic (Saudi)*, by Van Wagoner, Satterthwait, and Rice, which was published by Spoken Language Services in New York in 1977. It comes with five cassette tapes of about 45 minutes each. This book was developed over the years for teaching Arabic to Americans working for Aramco. Most of the vocabulary and dialogues are taken from the field of petroleum operations, so it is very practical if that is your line of work. Since there are not many Arab women in the oil fields, it is not surprising that there are not many feminine verb forms in the book.

Others

It would be good to mention here two other books by Clive Holes. His *Gulf Arabic* is a reference grammar written for linguists. Those without training in descriptive linguistics will not find it useful; linguists will find it useful as an advanced reference work, but not as a textbook. The second book is entitled *Language Variation and Change in a Modernising Arab State, The Case of Bahrain*, published by Kegan Paul International in London and Boston in 1987. This is must reading for anyone who wants to understand the social dynamics of language use in the Gulf, particularly in Bahrain.

For any who want to know more about the Shi'ite dialect spoken in Bahrain and a few other locations, a serious linguistic description is available. It is *Language and linguistic origins in Bahrain: the Baharnah dialect of Arabic*, by Mahdi Abdalla Al-Tajir. It was published by Kegan Paul in 1982.

There is a somewhat dated but useful work in the manner of traditional comparative descriptive linguistics by T. M. Johnstone. It is entitled *Eastern Arabian Dialect Studies*, and was published by Oxford University Press in 1967. The author provides useful comparisons of grammatical features of the different Gulf dialects. While it is not a textbook for language learning, it will be useful for those wanting to become more familiar with other Gulf dialects. Another good technical book in the comparative vein is *North East Arabian Dialects*, by Ingham, Bruce, published by Kegan Paul International, London and Boston, 1982.

BOOK REVIEWS

John Kelsay. *Islam and War: A Study in Comparative Ethics*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press [100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396], 1993. Pp 149. \$14.99 (paper). Reviewer: Bassam M. Madany. Reprinted with permission from *Calvin Theological Journal*, November 1994.

A new era in world history began when the United States dropped two atom bombs – one on Hiroshima, August 5 and the other on Nagasaki, August 9, 1945. The subject of war and peace assumed a critical importance as man had now at his disposal the ability to make the earth a wasteland.

Even though the danger of nuclear war has diminished with the fall of the Soviet Empire, our world is not entirely safe from nuclear conflicts. Several countries such as North Korea, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, and Libya have shown a great interest in pursuing research that will enable them to join the nuclear-bomb club. We are therefore indebted to John Kelsay who teaches in the Department of Religion at Florida University in Tallahassee, for offering us such a timely study of *Islam and War: A Study in Comparative Ethics*. It was occasioned by the Gulf War and, as the events in Somalia and Bosnia have shown, there is an urgent need to conduct a serious discussion of the ethics of war. Since we live in a global era when all nations have become our neighbors, our reflection must take into account other traditions. Specifically, we need to acquaint ourselves with the Islamic view of war.

The author divides his work into six chapters dealing with: *The Gulf War and Beyond: Thoughts on the Legacy of Saddam Hussein; The Islamic View of Peace; Religion As a Cause of War; Resort to War in the Islamic Tradition; Islam and the Conduct of War: The Question of Jus in Bello Restraints; Soldiers Without Portfolio: Regular War in the Tradition of Islam; and Religion and World Order.*

Even though Saddam Hussein is regarded as a "secular" Arab leader following the nationalist *Baath Arab Socialist Party* ideology, his rhetoric during and after the Gulf War has shown his appropriating Islamic symbols. He wants to be known as the believer president fighting for the cause of Islam. Upon his instructions, the Iraqi flag now carries the Islamic assertion of the greatness of God, *Allahu Akbar*, which has always served as the war cry of this faith. Whether the Iraqi leader is a true believer or not, one thing is certain, he must appear as a Muslim leader fighting within the tradition of Islam in order to legitimize his actions before, during, and after the Gulf War. Thus it becomes very important for the West in general and for Christians in particular to learn about the basic view of Islam regarding war and peace. John Kelsay offers us this description of the classical Islamic teaching regarding war:

The territory of Islam is theoretically the territory of peace and justice. ... Islam provides the best and most secure peace available to humanity.

The peace of the world cannot be *fully* secure unless all people come under the protection of an Islamic state. Thus there always exists an imperative for Muslims: to struggle to extend the boundaries of the territory of Islam.

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Thus ... the classical Sunni perspective on peace involved a program of action. The struggle to extend the boundaries of the territory of Islam is the jihad. (34)

Before the advent of Islam, Arab tribes fought each other. Now that they embraced the new faith and have become brothers, they were no longer to raid and plunder each other. Their energies had to be spent in the territories of the Infidel. Following the death of Muhammad in 632 A.D., his successors, the caliphs, presided over the conquest of the world. By 732, the Arab Muslim empire extended from Spain to India. Theorizing on the subject of war among Muslims *followed* their conquests. The lands belonging to them were known as *Darul-Islam (Household of Islam)* and the lands outside that realm were designated as *Darul-Harb (Household of War)*.

Since in Islam there is no distinction between "church" and state, religion and politics, the faith may be spread by preaching or by war.

[For] Sunni intellectuals, a "normal" war is connected with the effort to extend the boundaries of Islamic territory. This struggle, for which the preferred means is the spread of the Islamic message through preaching, teaching, and the like, may nevertheless take on the character of war.

... the territory of Islam – really, the world – could not be a secure place until and unless Islamic hegemony was acknowledged everywhere. To secure such hegemony was the goal of the jihad, or "struggle in the path of God." According to the Sunni theorists, war or jihad by means of killing is justified when a people resists or otherwise stands in opposition to the legitimate goals of Islam. (61)

But what about today's Muslim thinkers? On the one hand, they realize that to live in our modern world, they cannot simply hold on to the classical Islamic view regarding the legitimacy of war as a means for the expansion of the faith. They can quote the Quranic verse "*There is no compulsion in religion*" (2:256) to support some type of *modus vivendi* with people and nations living outside *Darul-Islam*. While John Kelsay's irenic spirit is clearly detectable throughout his study, he could have stressed the fact that whenever circumstances are in their favor, both Muslim intellectuals and rulers justify their involvement in wars such as the conflict in southern Sudan. For almost two decades, the Muslim dominated government in the north has waged a brutal war against the Christians and animists of the south. This action has been portrayed as a war against a secessionist movement, but the majority of the Southerners as well as some Western observers perceive it as a planned effort to Islamize the south!

In any treatment of the topic of Islam and War such as in the book under review, I find it rather strange that the comparison restricts itself to Islam and the West. The underlying thought is that we are comparing two distinct *political* traditions. But this is partially true. While Islam has always been regarded as much more than a religion, as this word is understood in the modern West, yet fundamentally, it is a religious faith. It ranks itself among the heavenly (i.e., theistic) world religions such as Judaism and Christianity. Thus, when a comparative study is made with Islam as one side of the comparison, the other side must also include Christianity. Should such a theological and

ethical pursuit be undertaken, the comparison would readily appear as a contrast between two widely different worldviews.

For example, the New Testament does not sanction theocracy within the present world order. The contrast is not between "Christendom" and some other political realms but between the Kingdom of God and the world, understood as an organized opposition to God. In early Christianity, converts were either citizens, subjects, or slaves within the Roman Empire. Their faith spread through proclamation, witnessing, and martyrdom. As Christians did not exercise political power, they did not face seriously the subject of war and peace. Eventually following the conversion of Constantine and the gradual "Christianization" of the Roman Empire, it became necessary for Christians to reflect on the subject of war. Thus, it was within the Christian community that the *just-war tradition* was born. As our author reminds us in his Introduction:

Over the last thirty years, perhaps no issue in religious ethics has attracted more consistent attention than the use of force in war. Inspired by the attempts of Fr John Courtney Murray and Paul Ramsey to recover the just-war tradition for theological ethics, more recent writers have been interested in philosophical and historical inquiries concerning the ethics of war.

Both Murray and Ramsey are churchmen and dealt with the subject from within the Christian tradition. It is the responsibility of Christian theologians and ethicists to pursue their studies on the subject building on the rich heritage handed down to us since the days of Saint Augustine. In our reflection on our past, we do confess that the church has not always been consistent with New Testament teaching. For example, it was Pope Urban II who launched the First Crusade in 1096 claiming a divine right to reclaim the Holy Land. But today, no responsible Christian church leader or theologian of whatever communion, would advocate the resort to war for the spread of the Christian faith or the reconquest of a lost territory!

While moderate Muslims do acknowledge today the interdependence of all nations and no longer think in terms of *Darul-Harb and Darul-Islam*, radical Muslims still cherish this outlook. It becomes the responsibility of Christians to point out to Muslim intellectuals, many now living in the West, that it is their duty to speak loudly about the necessity for all people and nations to live in peace. The global situation requires the recognition that we face unique challenges that must be met without resort to war. And it is specifically Muslim nations facing problems of gigantic proportions that need to realize that history does not repeat itself and past conquests and exploits cannot be duplicated. For them to cope with modernity in this high-tech era, they must not waste their resources in a pursuit of more sophisticated armaments. They need to tackle such real problems as population explosion, unemployment, scarcity of water supplies, and weak agricultural output.

We thank John Kelsay for his serious initiative in the study of the ethics of war bringing to our attention the teachings of a major "other" tradition about this subject. We hope that similar studies will be conducted in the future, enabling us to face the challenges of what was hoped to have been a new world order and that unfortunately has turned into a frightening world disorder.

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Was Jesus Really Crucified? by Faris al-Qayrawani. Light of Life [P.O. Box 13, A-9503 Villach, AUSTRIA], 1994. 95 pages, paper. [Available in the USA from Good News for the Crescent World, P.O. Box 13217, Arlington, TX 76094. Price: \$5.00 per copy, quantity discount.]

The author, a Middle Eastern Christian, approaches his subject dispassionately and builds his case in a carefully reasoned manner. He is well acquainted with the Muslim mindset and manner of reasoning, and with classical Arabic literature. He is able to draw extensively from the writings of classical Muslim authors, such as al-Baydawi, Ibn Hisham and al-Ghazali, and to make use of Arab Christian authors of the quality of Professor Haddad and Awad Simaan. One thing I especially appreciated: the book appears to be free of the typographical errors and inconsistencies in transliterating Arabic words and names that are so common in books of this type. I understand that the book is in process of being published in Arabic.

An introduction briefly contrasts the Muslim and Christian perspectives on the Cross and salvation, and outlines the approach the author will take to establish his thesis. The remainder of the book is given over to establishing the reality of the crucifixion. It is divided into three chapters which treat, respectively, "*Reasons for the Crucifixion*," "*The Historical Documents*," and "*Christ's Crucifixion in the Qur'an*."

The author shows that the evidence all favors a *real* crucifixion. For Muslims, of course, no amount of historical evidence can outweigh the testimony of the Qur'an. In a section on "Logical Evidence," the author therefore patiently shows, in a way that I believe Muslims can understand, why it cannot be so easily dismissed. He answers the six problems raised by Imam Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi. Here, he deals extensively with the theory of the *Shabih* (the one said to take Jesus' place). He shows, from the Bible, why Christ *had to die*, especially the Biblical teaching on stonement in relation to that of Islam, and the story about God commanding Abraham to sacrifice his son. He brings out the fact that Jesus' death and resurrection are prophesied in the Old Testament, and foretold by Jesus Himself. This is an excellent section.

The author's treatment of the historical evidence is likewise very thorough. He covers every conceivable ancient writer who ever wrote on the subject—pagan writers such as Tacitus and Pliny the Younger, Jewish sources such as Josephus and the Talmud, Gnostic documents, and Christian sources—and even cites such evidence as catacomb drawings and Christian ritual. He also thoroughly examines Muslim opinion about the crucifixion, including interpretations of the Qur'anic expression *mutawaffika* ("one who causes you to die"). From the wealth of evidence, which I cannot begin to cite, he shows that the Muslim rejection of the crucifixion is traceable to the influence of several ancient heretical sects, notably the Docetists, Ebionites and Gnostics. The early Muslim commentators received their information about Judaism and Christianity from these sects, and some adherents of these sects embraced Islam and brought their heretical ideas with them. To my knowledge, this is one of the best treatments of the crucifixion in answer to Muslim objections that we have.

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