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ANNOUNCING A NEW EDITOR & CHANGE OF ADDRESS

This is the last issue of *Seedbed* to be published in this office. Editorial and publishing duties are being handed over to a new editor, and beginning in 1996 *Seedbed* will be published in the UK. The format and subscription rates will need to be changed as a result but as this goes to press I have no information as to what they will be. As for me, I will be retiring December first (1995). This marks the tenth year of publication of *Seedbed*, and the twenty-sixth year since its predecessor, the *Bulletin of Church Development in North Africa*, was launched at the Radio School of the Bible in Marseille, France

The new Editor will be Wendell Evans who is no stranger to most of you. From now on, readers should address subscription correspondence and submit new articles and book reviews to him at: **SEEDBED, P.O. Box 4006, Worthing, West Sussex, BN12 1AP, UK.** (Back issues for Volumes I through X are still available from this office: SEEDBED, P.O. Box 96, Upper Darby, PA 19018, USA. See Vol. V, No. 4 (1990) and the end of this issue for 5 year indexes.) You will soon be receiving a renewal letter describing the changes and giving the new subscription rates. Sam Schlorff.

CHURCH PLANTING FORUM FEEDBACK

[Since the last issue discussing the *Jesus Mosque* idea came out, I have received the response of John Mansour to the article by Warren Chastain, along with two brief replies from readers who responded to the invitation to send us their comments and critiques. I would like to extend to them my sincerest thanks for taking the time to write, and to remind other readers that the invitation to send in comments and critiques is still valid. The Editor.]

A HORSE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR? A RESPONSE TO CHASTAIN

by John Mansour

I appreciate Warren Chastain's comments on my article in the last issue because they indicate that I wasn't clear enough in presenting certain understandings and assumptions that underlie what I have written about. When we discuss or debate with someone who agrees with us, it is easy to use intellectual shorthand, but often a critic can help us to see points we take for granted that others do not share. In this response I will begin by discussing semantic problems, then go on to cover a few other important issues.

First, I understood from Warren's response that often we were using the same term to discuss very different concepts or levels of meaning. I found an article in *Seedbed* by Kurt Wood, "Semantic Confusion and the 'Three Islams'" (IV/2 ['89]:24-27), to be helpful. However, I feel that we run into this semantic confusion not just when we talk about Islam, but also when we talk about Christianity.

Semantic Confusion with "Islam"

Wood maintains that it is possible to look at "Islam" on several levels of meaning. He sees that there are three ways we can refer to Islam. There is "Lived Islam", which would be saying that "Islam is what Muslims do." Another is "Document Islam" which defines Islam by the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Finally, there is what he calls "Value Islam" which defines a certain set of ideals and values as Islam, even though many of these values did not originate in traditional Islamic sources. Confusion arises when those in discourse do not realize that they are using the same term to refer to different concepts.

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: Editor of SEEDBED, P.O. Box 4006, Worthing, West Sussex, BN12 1AP, UK.

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It is possible to give these semantic categories different labels. "Lived Islam" I would term "Islamdom", "Document Islam" we could call "Classical Islam" or "Muhammadan Islam" while the last category could be labeled "Modernist Islam". Whatever the labels, we need to recognize the potential for confusion in our discussions of Islam. It is possible to think that because "Document Islam" teaches a certain doctrine or practice, that all Muslims must therefore believe it. However, "Islamdom" (how Muslims live) is no more monolithic than "Christendom."

So, to respond to Warren's question, yes, I have met Muslims who do not believe in Muhammad as a prophet. Yes, there are Muslims who do not uphold the Shariah, as we can see by perusing writings of thinkers from the Muslim world. There exist in Islamdom non-orthodox Muslims (Ahmadiyya, Druze, etc.) who somehow deny or qualify his prophethood, Sunnis who are modernists, secularized, etc., as well as Sunnis who are truly "Muhammadan" and uphold "Document Islam." Those who are "non-Muhammadan" would define themselves as Muslims under another category than the "Document Islam" category, and most of them are not challenged as to their identity.

Semantic Confusion With "Christianity"

The term "Christianity" can likewise be confusing. There seems to me to be at least three levels of meaning indicated when this word is used. As an aside, keep in mind that these categories do not parallel the semantic categories used to describe Islam. First, the term "Christianity" can be used to refer to an abstract body of doctrines. The difficulty is that because this is an abstraction, it is hard to find people who perfectly believe in and apply the classical teachings of their religion. Another problem is that faith in Christ is not strictly definable by assent to a list of propositions. Second, I see the word used to refer to all those who use the name "Christian" to refer to themselves. I feel that we would be better describing this level of meaning as "Christendom." This is often what non-believers think of when we refer to "Christianity." At a third level of meaning a living faith in the person of Jesus Christ would be called "Christianity."

There is a danger that as we communicate with non-believers, we may use the term "Christianity" to indicate faith in Jesus Christ as experienced and taught by the apostles, while our hearers understand us to refer to Christendom. Again, it is possible to refer to a set of abstract doctrines, which may be largely irrelevant to our listeners if they cannot see a visible embodiment of these doctrines in their vicinity (an *ekklesia*), or which may create dissonance when compared with the behavior of "Christians" that they know of.

It is interesting to note that Christ and the apostles chose to refer to faith in Him and their community in terms that did not indicate that he was bringing a new religion. Jesus preached the Kingdom of God rather than a new sect or doctrine. The apostles spoke of repentance and faith in a person rather than of changing one's religion. As an aside, it is worthwhile to do a study of the terms used for faith and belief in the NT. The term "a convert" (*proselutos*) is only used to refer to pagans who formally converted to Judaism, while the terms used for belief in Christ are, "believe," "repent," "turn," and so on.

Divisibility of Culture and Religion

Warren maintains "we should contextualize in the direction of their [Muslims'] *culture* in harmless areas, rather than toward their *religion*--which is inherently harmful." How do we understand this statement? If we define Islam as "Lived Islam," or what Muslims do, then it seems that there are many areas that are clearly harmless or beneficial, and we can contextualize towards them. If we define their religion as "Document Islam", it still seems that there are many areas when the Qur'an and Sunnah teach ideas compatible with the Bible, and we would not be wrong to affirm those things. However, I think that Warren's objection may be in the area of *authority* - in other words, to be within the religion of Islam (however defined) or to use a practice also found in the religion of Islam is *ipso facto* to give supreme authority to someone or something other than Christ. We will examine this objection in more detail below.

Is it being unnecessarily complex to "mix religion, culture, Christianity, etc." as Warren says? Is it fogging the issue? Can we make a clear-cut distinction between religion and culture? Well, it seems to me that it is not possible to say "this is a good thing, but since it carries a religious label ("Islamic") rather than a cultural label, it is wrong or inherently dangerous to use it." It is also not a Scriptural dichotomy. The Scripture rather emphasizes the need in such circumstances to test things on a case-by-case basis (1 Thess. 5:21, 1 Cor. 8, Rom. 14). There are Islamic practices that are detrimental to believers (such as chanting the Qur'an, polygamy, and so on) but there are others that when tested against the Bible will be seen to be acceptable (bowing to pray, using Islamic proper names for prophets, etc.).

It seems that a rejection of practices or ideas simply because they carry the label "Islamic" or "Muslim" is no more justifiable than accepting a practice because it is understood to have the label "Christian." For example, veiling, praying in a certain direction, praying five times a day, etc. were all originally "Christian" practices (see Tertullian, *On Prayer* and *On the Veiling of Virgins*). The Christians who practiced these customs did not feel that they directly contravened the Scriptures. That they now carry the label "Muslim" does that mean they should be rejected?

Let us look at some practices labeled as "Christian." The Easter egg tradition was taken from paganism. Eventually, however, the practice was filled with meaning more amenable to Biblical teaching and no longer questioned. The use of a Christmas tree was taken from Druid practices, but Christians eventually filled the practice with a more acceptable meaning and interpretation. Many of the practices of traditional Christian denominations date from the time of Constantine, and yet they are unquestioned.

Our attitude toward cultural and linguistic forms is often motivated by a desire to retain the purity of the truth, or to keep the truth gloriously unsullied by "primitive", "inferior" practices. The ultimate model and example for our presentation of the gospel cross-culturally, however, is the Incarnation of the Lord Christ. He did not hesitate to give up his glory and to identify with sinful and unclean man -- an inherently dangerous step. He was willing to take the chance of being misunderstood. He knew full well that some people would take him to be simply a rabbi, a freedom fighter, etc. Yet he fully glorified God within the confines of a human body, a fallen human culture, and a corrupt religion.

Lordship and Authority

Warren is absolutely right when he says that a believer cannot have two lords; one cannot serve Christ and Muhammad. Jesus must command his full allegiance, and any practices or beliefs from his past life that are contrary to Christ's teachings or Scriptural principles need to go. There are nevertheless many things from his background that are not contrary to following Jesus. They are either good or neutral. Therefore, why should a believer from a Muslim background who wants to serve Christ also serve Western or Arab Christian tradition, if the particular practice from his own culture is acceptable and good.

What does it mean that I cannot have two lords? It means that there is only one person with supreme authority in my life. It does not mean that there is no other authority in my life. Thus, if my parents tell me to do something that Christ forbids, I must obey Christ and disobey my parents. But if my parents tell me to do something that is not contrary to following Christ and I disobey, both God and my parents rightly hold me guilty. In the same way, I should reject certain things that my community teaches that are contrary to following Christ. However, that does not mean that I reject everything from my community and all authority of tradition. If my community says that wearing shorts is immoral, I should respect the authority, even if the teaching is labeled "Islamic".

This means that a growing dynamic church will *always* have two allegiances. The first and most important is allegiance to Christ. The second is allegiance to its own people and culture (see Mark 12:29). While the greatest commandment must always be in first place, it cannot stand apart from the second one. Obedience to Christ leads to loving those in the world. When one distances himself from those in the world (even out of so-called "obedience" to Christ) he is in fact denying Christ's full lordship. When one tries to "fit in" to his culture to the extent of ignoring the preeminence of the teachings of Jesus, again he denies the Lordship of Christ.

There are no holy cultures or holy traditions. Islamic understanding of Arabic practices as superior to those of other people groups is plainly wrong. Arabs who are "ethnically" Christian (i.e. born into a given Christian tradition) are not culturally inferior to Muslims. However, while one cannot say that Arab Muslim culture is superior to African or Korean culture, one *can* say it is best for an Arab Muslim. Those things that are not harmful and contrary to the Lordship of Christ should stay and be affirmed.

What about Arab Christians? There is no reason that Arab Christians need to become culturally Muslim, but I do believe that those who desire to faithfully and effectively witness should at the point of witness adapt to the religious forms of their listeners in order to fully incarnate faith in Jesus Christ.

The "Jesus Mosque"

One reason I avoided using the term "Jesus Mosque" in my article is that it leads to confusion. We are called to help people from all nations and people groups come to faith in Christ, gathering together in meetings that are called in the New Testament "*ekklesia*". It may be that believers choose to meet in a purpose-built building, but the building does

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not define God's people--the first centuries of the faith saw believers meeting in homes and other locales adapted to their needs.

For the *ekklesia*, the *manner* and *locale* of meeting are secondary to following the authoritative teachings of the New Testament. It may be that a meeting that meets all New Testament norms *looks* very Islamic, just as in the first century the meetings of Jewish believers *looked* very Jewish. If there are cultural aspects that do not contradict the express commands of Scripture (sitting on the floor, praying by bowing, etc.) they should be utilized. A useful test for contextualizing specific practices is: Will this help me to obey Jesus, and make faith in him comprehensible, practicable and reproducible for others in my community?

It may be that an "*ekklesia*" (meeting) of believers from a Muslim background meets in a form that looks like a mosque meeting. It could also meet in a form that looks like a study group, social gathering, or so on. What is important is that it is faithful to Scripture and comfortable to people in the culture.

Centered versus Bounded

Unfortunately, both in the Muslim world and outside of it, faith in Christ is often defined by boundary markers, or "highly visible, relatively superficial practices that serve to distinguish people inside a group from those outside."¹

As John Ortberg points out in a penetrating article in *Christianity Today*, "While the religious experts focused on clarifying boundaries, Jesus focused on what lies at the center of faithful life. ...Consistently in the New Testament we see the spiritual life determined by what is at the center, not by the boundaries. It was a "centered approach" to Christian life. This explains why so many of the conflicts between the religious experts and Jesus and Paul revolved around the issues of Sabbath, eating, and circumcision. Jesus was not simply differing with them on applications of the law. He was threatening the foundation of their very understanding of themselves as the people of God."² The Pharisees and Judaizers had made their faith into a sort of exclusive preserve with shibboleths and trivial tests of belonging. Yet the Kingdom of God is designed to be "radically inclusive" (Rev. 5:9-10).

What is really central to following Jesus? What is the supreme qualification to enter the kingdom of Heaven? It is to believe in and participate in the sacrifice of Christ, which totally annulled the Law and the barrier between Jew and Greek (Col. 2:14, Eph. 2:12-16). Thus Paul instructs us, "in view of these tremendous facts, don't let anyone worry you by criticizing what you eat or drink, or what holy days you ought to observe, or bothering you over new moons and Sabbaths. All these things have at most only a symbolical value: the solid fact is Christ" (Col. 2:16-17 Phillips translation).

¹ "Why Jesus' Disciples Wouldn't Wash Their Hands", *Christianity Today Online*, August 15, 1994,

p.1

²Ibid, p. 1-2

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE ISSUES RAISED

by P. B.

John Mansour's article in Seedbed 10/3 and Warren Chastain's response to it raise a number of interesting points.

My own sympathies lie more with Warren. I would agree with him that John does not really describe what he is trying to sell us. It is not enough to talk vaguely about contextualized churches without describing precisely what is on offer.

On the other hand, I did detect in John's article a recognition of the continuity between Christian and Muslim Arab culture that is often lacking in contemporary Evangelical missiology. While Christian and Muslim Arab cultures do differ, there is not a radical discontinuity between them. Often our studies of necessity focus on the differences, but this should not blind us to the shared presuppositions, language, social mores and institutions of the two communities. Christian and Muslim Arab families are more alike than different. Any contextualization theory that makes absolute the differences fails to recognize that cultures are not well-bounded, static phenomena.

In the light of this, any claim that Christians and Muslims have little in common and that real communication between them is impossible is patently absurd. Muslim and Christian Arabs often share the same social space and occupy similar noetic universes. The amount of inter-communal exchange will of course vary from country to country and from class to class, but it exists nonetheless. For this reason we would expect contextualized Arab churches to exhibit common features regardless of the background of their members.

I think that we need to be more careful about our labels--*Jews for Jesus*, or *Muslims for the Messiah*. Why not Christians for Christ! Seriously, the first two slogans are not equivalent. The term 'Jew' points to both ethnicity and religion, while the terms 'Muslim' and 'Christian' do not carry this same ambiguity. As Warren points out they define religious orientation and allegiance. Thus the phrase 'a Muslim Christian' is a contradiction in a way that a 'Jewish Christian' is not.

Not that I am entirely happy with the phrase '*Jews for Jesus*'. I do not share the assumptions of many Evangelicals who seem to think that Jews are in some sense 'anonymous Christians.' The adoption of the name 'Christian' makes clear my allegiance. That it may carry other connotations may be an embarrassment, but I cannot turn my back on two thousand years of history. Belonging to Christ entails identification with his Church. The only churches we know are human and fallible. Identification with a kind of idealized Church is not really an option.

This raises more acutely the whole issue of the nature of the Church. Because the word 'church' is used to translate the Greek word *ekklesia*, our 'biblical' view of the Church will inevitably begin with the idea of the Church as a congregation or assembly. But if that is all, we are failing to be fully biblical. The Bible speaks of God's people in other terms; 1 Peter 2:9 comes readily to mind, where the church is described as "a chosen race

(*sulāla*¹), a royal priesthood, a holy nation (*ummatan karrasahā*), God's own people (*sha'b*)". The connotations are quasi-ethnic. Just as Muhammad sought to replace Arab tribalism with a Muslim *umma*, Christ offers us an alternative *umma*. It is more than a mere assembly. It seems to me that you cannot be a part of the Muslim *umma* and the Christian *umma* at the same time. Forgive me if the statement sounds glib. The implications of this for our brothers and sisters from a Muslim background are serious, and should not be dismissed lightly.

The Church has other dimensions also. Avery Dulles, if I may be allowed to cite a Catholic writer, gives five models for the Church: the *institutional* (Church as a perfect society), the *communal* (Church as community, the body of Christ), the *sacramental* (Church as a sign to and sacrament for the world), the *kerygmatic* (Church as herald), and the *diaconal* (Church as servant).² Each model has some biblical warrant, although the scriptures point more frequently to the kerygmatic and communal models. Protestants have accordingly emphasized these, while Catholics have perhaps stressed the institutional and sacramental dimensions of the church. However a fully biblical view of the church should try to embrace all these aspects; and must do so in a way that does not ignore the past. It is not being biblical to simply plunder the text of the new Testament for sociological models and attempt to transplant them as if society has not changed. Are some of our contextualized approaches too shallow?

In this context the issue of Christian unity is important. John Mansour's reference is surely not accurate, and somewhat out of touch with the current tenor of WCC thinking. As I understand it, the goal of organizational unity has been replaced by one of fellowship between culturally diverse churches. It is an aim with which we can all identify, even if we do not allow quite the same theological latitude as is found in some WCC circles.

The Bible stresses unity. It is an important attribute of the Church (John 17:11). We are to act and behave in a way that fosters such unity. We cannot be content with second best (Eph. 4:3ff). Churches may be culturally diverse, but that does not mean that we should erect artificial barriers from the outset. I am not against diverse Christian groups adopting culturally appropriate forms of worship, but I do question approaches that seem to decide what is culturally appropriate before the event. As outsiders we need to sit and observe a bit longer.

The essence of contextual theory is that the same solutions are not always and everywhere appropriate. It is therefore good that we can debate these issues openly, and I welcome the opportunity this gives for discussion.

¹The Arabic terms are from the Living Arabic Bible.

²Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 1976, Gill and Macmillan.

A COMMENT ON THE DISCUSSIONS

by R. B.

All modern missionaries, from the time of Peter and Paul, do or should engage in some degree of contextualization. The incarnate Word Himself exemplified a kind of contextualization. The issue, therefore, is how far to go and in what ways. For this, we need to be discussing some general principles but also some specifics. This discussion should honor Christ by being conducted without over-generalization, misrepresentation, or combative polemics.

Ultimately, it is for each group of followers of Christ to prayerfully decide for themselves what the will of Christ is for them in this regard. The outcome, however, is going to differ according to a number of factors, and what is appropriate for a particular believer at one stage may not be appropriate later. For example, in initial evangelism, the use of majority terminology is appropriate in many settings; the evangelist has to start where people are, using what they already know in order to lead them into new knowledge, a new worldview, and a new relationship with the Lord. For the same reason, new believers find majority terminology to be appropriate in their own witnessing to friends and family, and in their initial growth. For this, Scriptures in the majority language are needed.

People in our region, however, are generally quite gregarious. They want to belong to a family, a community, and an *umma* (in this case, the universal church). To that end, many need to become "bilingual" and bicultural, so that they can relate to believers from traditional Christian communities, listen to Christian radio broadcasts, read Christian books, etc. Eventually, many of them merge into the traditional Christian community, while others remain secret believers in small fellowships within their own community.

In considering appropriate approaches, therefore, no one single model is going to serve the needs of all. That does not mean there is nothing to discuss. On the contrary, it means we need to observe ways in which the Lord is leading his various followers, and take note of several possible models. This will help new believers and experienced workers to know what the possibilities are. This will also enable others to design programs and materials suitable for each of these models.

Of one thing I am certain: there is not a single, simple answer to the question of how far to contextualize. Nor is it an issue we can responsibly ignore. May the Lord guide us.

* * * * *

DRUGS AND MUSLIM YOUTH IN EUROPE

By John Haines, Toulouse.

Drugs are a grim reality of the daily life of most housing complexes where North Africans live. An article in *Le Point* magazine¹ underlines the agony of mothers of youth caught up in this web. One day they discover that their son or their daughter is on drugs. "They experience fear, anxiety, misunderstanding, and, often, violence along with them. For a long period they remain walled up in their silence..." The local cultural center in the largest public housing section of our city spoke of the need to be informed about drugs. It states: "Because the drug problem cuts people off from those around them, and from a normal lifestyle, we propose special structures to help them..." Concerned Christians in the local church have demonstrated often how they provide this "special structure." When young people are bound by the drug dilemma, love leads them out and *keeps* them there. Christ's resurrection power snaps the chain links of addiction.

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WARPED WORLD OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Arab youth is driven to drugs, as the adults are to drink. Why is this human tragedy and waste? It may begin with unemployment or a sense of rejection by the society around them. Some strive to make a name for themselves in their overcrowded housing complexes. Not only do we find that Christ is the Answer in this downward spiral. The Lord is the *only* lasting answer to drug and alcohol deliverance. Here are several examples of Christ's power over society's most pressing current problem:

- **Amin** dealt in drugs for years. His keen mind was dulled, and even a regular job could not keep him away from them. He found Christ basically on his own, remembering the witness years before of a friend. Now he teaches the Word to others.
- **Abdelaziz** was the talk of the town. This is understandable, since he was the town's drunk. Gilbert and his wife once lived in his section of town, and through the years prayed for him. Those prayers bore fruit when he accepted Christ, his physical features changed, and he grew to love and rely on fellowship with God's spiritual family. Freedom for the addict often comes through Christ's People in local churches. They accepted Abdelaziz as a brother, transformed, in spite of his many wasted years on alcohol.
- **Halim** lived in a town where drugs were a career as well as an escape. Shortly after finding God through a pastor, he went to live in a Christian camp in the mountains above his city. Here the Spirit changed bitterness and revolt to love for others.
- **Malika** lives in northern France. Her mother has experienced sorrow with the death of two of her sons through drugs. Malika escaped this slavery, and remains a pillar in her family, and a focal point of prayer that will bring forth fruit. She is supported in her difficult task by a faithful Christian friend.

¹June 3, 1995

BOOK REVIEWS

Answering Islam: The Crescent in the Light of the Cross, by Norman L. Geisler & Abdul Saleeb. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House [P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287, USA], 1993. \$17.95 USD. Reviewer: A.J.Wiebe

Personally, I'm always on the lookout for a good book that deals with the fundamental issues that separate Christianity and Islam. From the brief notice I read, this book could just do that. So many other manuscripts are half-hearted attempts which simply skirt the hard questions altogether.

Well *Answering Islam* over-all is a very commendable effort. Sections of the book are superb, especially the first part which deals with the basic doctrines of Islam. The author obviously knows his subject and the Qur'an from the inside. I was pleased to see him present the philosophical under-pinnings, not merely the facts. He quotes a wide array of Muslim authorities in support of his analysis. The second part, an evaluation of Islamic Monotheism, Muhammad and the Qur'an, tends to be tedious and spotty. The third part, a Positive Defense of the Christian Perspective, is standard material. Here he brings forth answers to the four major Muslim objections to Christianity. One gets the impression of repetition the further one reads. Only occasionally do the authors break out into conceptual clarification; most of it is fact upon fact. I had the impression that the Christian position was written by someone who didn't really understand the thrust of Islam. Nevertheless, throughout there is a clear summary of the key Muslim beliefs that pose such a challenge to the messengers of the Gospel to Islam. The answers are well put.

Unfortunately there is very little illustrative material in the book. Added to the rather dense type-setting, you get the sense of working your way through a thicket of reeds where you only rarely see the sun. I was quite surprised that in their presentation there is no reference to the absence of the "second kingdom" in Islam. The Muslim mind and culture is in bondage to another gospel primarily because the source is entirely other. I think the arguments would be much clearer had that aspect been introduced. On the other hand, the Neo-platonic influence and its position on the absolute unity of God as the source of Islam's doctrine on Allah's inassailable oneness is well presented.

I should have liked the authors to add a final brief chapter on "Therefore".... No doubt they intend to invite the reader to draw his own conclusions, but at least a series of ten key questions would assist us in doing so.

Answering Islam brings to mind Pfander's book *The Balance of Truth*. Both are far-reaching overviews on the gulf that divides the Christian from the Muslim at the revelational and doctrinal level. This is where the battle lies. As a result of this reading my heart was warmed with deep appreciation for the Glorious Gospel that regenerates and liberates all who call on the Name of the Lord

The Whole World Guide to Culture Learning, by J Daniel Hess. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press [PO Box 700, Yarmouth, ME, USA], 1994, 280 pages, \$22.95 US. Reviewer: John Hanson

Designed as a tool for the classroom one imagines that this book is a key text for an undergraduate college course. Its avowed purpose is to help students to prepare for, and experience, living abroad. Since there are study guide chapters, numerous examples of situations and people living cross culturally, the materials lend themselves to discussion and debate in a classroom. However, the format of the book does not invite a complete reading. One is tempted to flick the pages and browse.

However, to leave it there would be to lose its value as a tool for workers in the Muslim world. The first section of the book establishes a theoretical framework for the practical exercises which follow. It offers many useful insights for those who want to be more than contented and detached observers of culture in their host country. Hess knows that the traveler will find himself in predicaments of frustration, pain or anger while living abroad. He advises that we identify the difficult incident, reflect on it, re-examine in the light of new information (obtained from a local person) and the resultant fresh viewpoint can lead to changed attitudes and behaviour.

To illustrate this he relates an incident with local police who move him on when he stops his car to allow aged people across the road. He goes over the event in his mind. He goes back to talk to the policeman and finds that he was instructed to keep traffic moving by his superior and that he is available to help pedestrians in need. This gives him a new perspective on the policeman and the problem. He no longer feels angry and impatient.

In the remaining parts of the book which make up its bulk there are suggestions and activities which illustrate his recommended theory. These vary in usefulness for our purposes but some sections are worth time. Those on culture shock and the study of values, provoke thought.

I enjoyed the ten suggestions for what the author called "cultural competence" (a happy state of cultural adaptation to which we aspire!) They complement the familiar recommendations of Kohls in his book, *A Survival Kit for Living Overseas*. He proposes that someone can work successfully at cultural competence by being curious, trusting, brave, secure and teachable.

This is not a book that has much to say about the Islamic world. Learning a language hardly gets a mention in the 250 pages. The greatest motivating force for cultural competence, the constraining love of Christ, is absent. At best this book is for short term visitors and travelers and only casually for Christian workers. Otherwise selectivity is the rule.

A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature. Edited by D.L. Jeffrey.
 Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans. Hardback. 960 double column pages.
 Cost: \$79.95. Reviewer: I. L.

Many people are working as teachers of English. We know, at least vaguely, that the Bible has had a great influence on Western thought, history, and literature. We know that Golding's works such as *Lord of the Flies* are excellent starting points for discussing the depravity of man. But I have longed for a book that would set out the themes of the Bible and how they have been taken up by the famous writers of literature. In particular I have wanted a book that is scholarly, that could be held in repute by my University colleagues, and yet is easy to read, and is genuinely Christian. To have a book written by the Catholics or liberals would definitely be second best. A book that preached would be unacceptable.

This dictionary meets all my criteria. It can be used to raise the level of credibility among our colleagues, leading to positive input which does not even hint of propaganda. In addition, it is up to date and has an extensive annotated bibliography of both general works and material studying how authors used the Bible. The dictionary takes biblical themes, explains first the biblical context, and then how the themes have been used in Western Literature. The letter "I," for instance, has the following headings: "I Am that I Am," "I know that my Redeemer liveth," "I only am escaped," "Ichabod," "Icon," "if thy right hand offend thee," "Imago Dei," "Immaculate conception," "Immanuel," "Impanation," "In principio," "Incarnation," "Incest," "Inheritance," "Inspiration," "Isaac," "Isaiah," "Ish-bosheth," "Ishmael," "Ishtar," "Island," and "Issachar."

The people I work with are likely to be very suspicious of any hint of persuading people to believe something else. But when I produced this book, the Department Head gratefully welcomed it as just what was wanted, especially for its stress on literature. Material from the book was later incorporated into the courses. So the book is well worth buying, lending, and using. Even if your subject is not English literature, with this book in hand you could teach the biblical themes and images in literature.

I have one major regret. I wish the publishers had indexed the writers to the themes in the dictionary, so that whatever writers were being studied could be checked to see what the dictionary had to say about their use of biblical material. As it is, you will have to do that step yourself, identify the main images in an author and find out for yourself what the dictionary says. Similarly, biblical phrases that are in ordinary speech are explained, but not all in one section.

I have two major desires. The first is to see similar books covering the influence of the Bible on history and civilisation. The second is for something that goes more into the linguistic aspect of the Bible's influence. The book reviewed here is concerned primarily with literature, and so has less than I would like on the influence of the Authorised Version on the language itself, for example, the more important idioms and proverbs of today that have allusions to the Bible. If we had lists of such idioms we could use them to open people's minds to the wonders of Scripture. Can any reader tell us where such material can be found?