

RECENT SIGNIFICANT JOURNAL ARTICLES

[Note: Since this feature is new, a few significant articles over 2 years old were included. I wish to thank readers who sent clippings or photocopies of published articles of possible interest to readers (may I encourage others to do so as well). If you would like to obtain an article abstracted here, we will be happy to send you a photocopy (reimbursement is requested for long articles).]

Apologetics/ Relationship of Christianity to Other Religions

"Exclusivism, Tolerance and Truth," by Harold Netland, in Missiology 15/2 (April '87):77-95. An excellent article for those wrestling with the problem of the relationship of Christianity to other religions. Today, influential voices are attacking Christian exclusivism, which maintains "the uniqueness and normativity of the person and work of Jesus Christ," as inherently intolerant or based on faulty notions of religious truth. The author examines these arguments and shows them to be deficient. He concludes that if we are to have an understanding of the relation of the religions that is epistemologically sound and accurately portrays their values and beliefs, something like traditional Christian exclusivism is unavoidable.

"Truth in Other Religions," by Ajith Fernando, in ERT 11/4 (Oct '87):292-301. From the book, The Christian's Attitude Toward World Religions, published by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton IL, in 1987. The author is National Director of Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka. Another helpful article that seeks to give an evangelical perspective on other religions, this one looks at the question of truth in other religions. The author holds that other religions teach truth we can affirm, but that these truths cannot save and do not have the divine authority of the Bible (special revelation). He briefly goes into what this means in terms of the Christian being open to learn from others (our perception of God's revelation is always incomplete), but rejecting the religious system itself.

"The Thermodynamical Triple Point: Implications for the Trinity," by Michael J. Bozack, in JASA 39/1 (March '87):39-41. The one who sent us this article comments: I am convinced that the best way to present the Trinity to a Muslim or any serious inquirer is to show him the Biblical verses upon which the doctrine is based. However this does not preclude the use of a good analogy. Over the years, many have used the three states of water to illustrate the Trinity, and I have heard one convert mention that the Lord used it to help him. I praise the Lord for this, but personally I have always had trouble with this analogy because it really represents trimodalism. We all know it does not really illustrate what we mean, but how to explain the Trinity is difficult. Therefore, I think that this ar-

ticle can be helpful to those who work among Muslims. It may be a bit complicated for the average person but we should all have a copy for the occasional serious inquirer with a scientific background who could benefit from it. The phenomenon described comes closer to illustrating the Trinity than other analogies so far.

Contextualization--the Church

"Early Asian Christian Approaches to Non-Christian Cultures," by Samuel H. Moffet, in Missiology 15/4 (Oct '87):473-486. A study of the models of mission/contextualization in the Nestorian church before and after the Muslim conquest. After a brief look at two early theologians, five models are examined in some detail. Some of the details are fascinating; e.g. Asian ascetics, unlike their counterparts in the west, led the movement for renewal and mission because their sense of call to go out and minister was greater than the monastic urge. Of greatest relevance to the missionary to Muslims is the model he calls "the Patriarch in His Christian Ghetto," in which a hostile society segregates the Christian minority into a subject ghetto community. This system, forced upon the Persian church by the Sassanid Empire in the 3rd and 4th centuries, was continued by the Arab invaders in 642 and became the "millah" system of Islam. It is still operative in the Middle East despite tremendous political and social changes that have occurred over the years.

"Fitting Third-World Believers with Christian Worldview Glasses," by David Hesselgrave, in JETS 30/2 June '87):215-222. Many Christians, in the West as well as in the Third World, often retain a sub-Christian worldview after their conversion. The author addresses what he feels to be a main reason for this. He shows how a Christian worldview may be effectively communicated, drawing upon a case study of a work among illiterates in Indonesia by H. R. Weber. He feels one main reason is the way we have approached translating the Bible and have catechized new believers in a rather theoretical topical manner. He then proposes some principles to be observed in teaching new believers which will help them acquire 'Christian Worldview glasses.' Helpful.

Islam

"Autour de l'Islam," an interview with Sheikh Imam Mohamed al-Ghazali, by Mustapha Chelfi, in Algerie Actualite No. 1057 (16-22 Jan. 1986):37-39. In this interesting exchange with a leading Muslim theologian [current position not given], the interviewer does not hesitate to ask difficult questions: Why the backwardness of Muslims vis-a-vis the West? What about the non-separation of the spiritual from the temporal as one reason, as Renan has said? Why the inability of Muslim thinkers to engage in a healthy self-criticism? How can political adversaries go to war against each other and claim to be Muslim? etc (he brings up the death of Sadat). The Sheikh seems to be well-informed, and his answers are interesting but typical.

"Articles from Islamic Journals: An Islamic Perspective on Dialogue," by Penelope Johnstone, in Islamochristiana 13 ('87):131-171. After a five page introduction, the author translates twelve articles from Arabic, published in Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar and the U.A.E. over the last two years, on the subject of Christian-Muslim dialogue. Although it concerns mostly Vatican efforts at dialogue (similar in many ways to that of the W.C.C.), it is always instructive to see what the other side is saying.

Islam--Male-Female Relationships

"Women in Islam: Equity, Equality, and the Search for the Natural Order," by Jane I. Smith, in JAAR 47/4:517-537. One of the best studies on the subject I have seen, the article gives an even-handed evaluation of male-female relationships in Islam, avoiding the exaggerations of apologetics on the one hand and of hyper-criticism on the other. After a brief exposition of the Qur'anic position--that God has given men authority over women, the author summarizes the situation of women in Arab society before the advent of Islam and after. Islam made certain improvements in relation to marriage, divorce, inheritance and religious rights and duties. It is nevertheless recognized that major problems were also created for women through their seclusion, lack of education, and certain provisions in marriage and divorce law. The author lists the principal reforms that have been introduced in the last century to correct these problems. Finally, after examining what a number of Muslims, including women, have written, she concludes that little true understanding of the situation of women in Islam is possible unless one looks at it from within the Islamic perspective.

Islam in Europe

"La France, banlieue de l'Islam [France, Suburb of Islam], by Gilles Kepel, in Le Nouvel Observateur, No. 1196 (9 to 15 Octobre 1987). This article represents 5 pages of extracts from the book by the same title, published in October 1987 by Editions du Seuil, highlighting the reverberations of the Islamic revolution in France in the last few years. The author is a government researcher with the CNRS. In his introductory remarks, the editor of the N.O. states that there are now more than 1000 mosques and over 600 Islamic associations in France, and that all this has happened since 1970! France now has some 2 1/2 to 3 million Muslims, mainly North Africans. Extracts from the book follow: the description of a certain "quartier" of Paris now become a center of Islamic activity; how the Muslim population, most of them blue-collar workers, has been transformed into militant propagandists for Islamic revolution; the impact of the success of the Iranian revolution; the proliferation of groups competing for petrodollars from the Arabian peninsula; the explosion of violence between two competing Shiite groups. The article concludes by giving us a look at some of the discussion going on about

the "integration" or "insertion" of such a cultural-ideological "bloc" into a pluralistic society such as exists in France.

North Africa--The Early Church

"The Death of a Church: Remarks on the Presumed Reasons for the Disappearance of the 'First Church' in North West Africa," by Ulrich Schoen, in TR, 2/1 (April '79):3-20. An important study on the reasons for the disappearance of the early church in North Africa after the Muslim invasion, by a professor at N.E.S.T. and former Reformed Church pastor in North Africa. After surveying the relevant historical facts (includes a list of the different cultural groups involved), Schoen examines and evaluates ten theories that have been put forward to explain this mystery. This section is a gold-mine of bibliographical and other information on the subject, with summaries of scholarly works in French, German and English. Schoen then draws some conclusions, but is unfortunately totally pessimistic about prospects for planting Muslim convert churches in North Africa.

Dealing with Terrorism.

"On Your Guard--Meeting the Threat of Terrorism," and "Kidnapped! A 'Successful Hostage' Will Emerge Alive," by Chester L. Quarles, in EMQ 23/3 & 4 (July & Oct '87):258-267, 342-349. The way things are going, expatriate Christians living or traveling in the Arab world may find themselves increasingly the targets of terrorists. If you fall into that category, these two articles are for you. The first article focuses on understanding terrorists and simple precautions you can take, especially when travelling, to lessen the chances of being a victim. The second focuses on what to do in a hostage situation to survive. By a law enforcement expert.

Journals Mentioned

Evangelical Missions Quarterly. EMIS, 25W560 Geneva Rd, Bx 794, Wheaton IL 60189, USA
Evangelical Review of Theology. Paternoster Press, 3 Mt. Radford Crescent, Exeter EX2 4JW, UK
Islamochristiana. PISAI, Piazza S. Appolinare 49, 00186 Rome, ITALY
Journal of the American Academy of Religion. Scholars Press, 819 Houston Mill Rd. N.E., Atlanta, GA 30329-4218, USA
Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation. American Scientific Affiliation, P.O. Box 668, Ipswich, MA 01938, USA.
Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society. c/o Dr. Kistemaker, RTS, 5422 Clinton Blvd. Jackson, MS 39209, USA
Missiology. 616 Walnut Ave., Scottsdale PA 15683-1999, USA
Theological Review. Near East School of Theology, P.O. Box 11-7424. Beirut, Lebanon.