



STATEMENT DI-200-1

ISLAM'S WORLDWIDE REVIVAL (Part One in a series on Islam from Forward magazine)

by Joseph P. Gudel

La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadu Rasool Allah.

—There is no deity except God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God.¹

This is called the *Kalima* and is the Islamic confession of faith in a nutshell. They are the first words that every Muslim baby hears and they are often the last words a Muslim utters upon his deathbed. For nearly *one billion* people this is not merely a doctrinal creed—it is the foundation for every facet of their lives.

The Islamic faith is not simply an exotic Arabic religion. For many centuries it was virtually dormant, but over the last 50 years it has awakened and is spreading worldwide at an almost unprecedented rate.

If the Lord's "Great Commission" is to be fulfilled it is essential that we, as active, concerned Christians, understand what Islam is. We must know both how to relate to the Muslim, and how to "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3), "with gentleness and reverence" (1 Pet. 3:15).

Josh McDowell, well-known Christian author and apologist, has succinctly summarized the situation:

There was a time when only specialized Christian missionaries needed to be able to defend the gospel of Jesus Christ against the attacks of Islam. Today every Christian has an opportunity and obligation to present the gospel effectively and in Christian love to the Muslims who have permeated our Western society. When your neighbor, your mechanic, your favorite basketball player, your employer or employee, or even your children's friends could very well be Muslims, the need for proper understanding and an effective Christian witness is abundantly clear.²

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Before we begin our examination of Islam and its burgeoning worldwide influence, we need to have some understanding of Muhammad's call to prophethood and the subsequent origin and growth of Islam. It is not possible to investigate the Muslims' truth claims simply by looking at the Qur'an (pronounced Kor-an) and the teachings of Islam. The reason for this is twofold. First of all, much if not most of the Qur'an is unintelligible without an understanding of the background against which the surahs (chapters) were delivered. The Qur'an, unlike the Bible, has very little historical background within its pages. Therefore, to really understand the Qur'an one must know Islam's early history.

In the second place, a great deal of Islam's apologetic rests on various historical events connected with its origin and growth. Hence, in order to know why they believe what they believe we must first of all know Islam's "roots."

Muhammad was born in Mecca (in Saudi Arabia) around AD 570 and was raised by his uncle, Abu Talib, a traveling merchant. Muhammad often accompanied his uncle on caravans to Syria and possibly to other locations as well. Little more is known with certainty about Muhammad's childhood. At age 25, he married a rich 40-year-old

CRI, P.O. Box 8500, Charlotte, NC 28271
Phone (704) 887-8200 and Fax (704) 887-8299

widow named Khadijah.³ Muhammad's marriage to the wealthy widow "gave him rank among the notables of Mecca"⁴ and, as the years passed by, allowed him more and more time to devote to spiritual matters. He began to retire regularly to Mt. Hira, a solitary place where he could pray and meditate. One night, during the month of Ramadan (a sacred month for the pagans which was also made sacred for Muslims), Muhammad was on Mt. Hira praying when he heard a voice which commanded him to "proclaim" or to "read."⁵ Later he heard the voice again speak, saying, "Thou art the messenger of God, and I am Gabriel."⁶ This was the beginning of Muhammad's ministry: at this point he realized his calling and prophetic mission.

The early message of Muhammad was that there is only one God, and that a judgment was coming upon the people of Mecca if they refused to turn away from their idolatry and polytheism. Also included in his preaching was a catalog of some of their other sins, such as female infanticide.⁷

A slowly-growing but intense persecution began after Muhammad's public preaching commenced. The locals were antagonistic to his message because Mecca was the main religious center throughout the Arabian peninsula. Their only substantial source of income was the many pilgrims who would come from all over to worship the multitude of idols in the Ka'aba.⁸

John B. Noss, in his widely-used textbook *Man's Religions*, summarizes the feelings of the people in Mecca at the time:

Unimpressed though they were at first, his hearers, especially those of the Quraysh tribe, at last became seriously disturbed. They did not object so much to Muhammad's insistence that there is but one God and he (Muhammad) was God's prophet—that might be laughed off—but they stiffened with hostility at his forthright denunciation of the worship of their idols. He could talk all he liked about his belief in the resurrection of the dead, but when he condemned the religion of Mecca and the worship of the Ka'bah idols as leading to perdition, their ancient traditions (and the revenues of the Ka'bah) were thereby threatened.⁹

Things remained like this for several more years. In spite of increasing persecution and danger, the indefatigable Muhammad continued his preaching in Mecca, albeit with only a few people becoming Muslims. It was at this time that some residents of Yathrib, a city a little over 100 miles north of Mecca, invited Muhammad to come and live in their city. He agreed to do so and began to make plans to leave.¹⁰

Hostile elements of the Quraysh tribe in Mecca became aware of what was happening. They decided that Muhammad would be much more dangerous as the leader of a neighboring city than he had been in Mecca, so they planned to kill him.

Alerted to the situation, Muhammad and Abu-Bakr (one of his earliest followers, who became his first successor or "Caliph") fled and hid in a cave of Mt. Thaur, located only three miles from the city. They remained there for three nights while the Meccans fruitlessly searched for them.¹¹ After this they continued their journey to Yathrib, using "unfrequented paths" until after many days they reached their destination safely.¹²

This flight is called the *Hijrah*, which literally means "emigration." Muhammad began this flight on June 16, AD 622. The Muslims date their calendar from the Hijrah, just as the Christian world dates its calendar from the birth of Jesus. So, in the Muslim world "...AD 622 is 1 Anno Hegirae (AH)."¹³ Yathrib was later called "Madinat al-Rasul," literally "the city of the Prophet," and is the modern city Medina.¹⁴

Over the next eight years the Meccans waged an intermittent war with Muhammad and his growing group of followers. Finally, in AD 630 Muhammad marched on Mecca with a force of 10,000 men and entered the city almost unopposed. Only 28 Meccans and two Muslims were killed in the fighting. Muhammad magnanimously declared a general amnesty for the entire city, with just a few exceptions.¹⁵ He then proceeded to the Ka'aba and destroyed all of the idols one by one. The inhabitants of Mecca swore allegiance to the prophet and for the first time the "Muslim call to prayer" was heard in the "holy city."¹⁶ Two years later, in June of AD 632, the tenth year of the Hijrah, Muhammad died at his home in Yathrib.

ISLAMIC BELIEFS

Dr. Robert Ernest Hume, in his book *The World's Living Religions*, defines the names "Islam" and "Muslim" for us:

CRI, P.O. Box 8500, Charlotte, NC 28271
Phone (704) 887-8200 and Fax (704) 887-8299

The name which the founder himself used for designating this faith expresses exactly the central principle—"Islam," meaning "submission" to God. Another word derived from the same Arabic verbal root is the participle, "Muslim"... which is used as a technical term to designate "those who submit."¹⁷

The main tenets of Islam are listed as "articles of faith." I will discuss them here in the order that most Islamic sources give, although the Qur'an itself does not specify any sequential order.

1. God (Allah)

The Qur'an has many beautiful passages describing the varied attributes of God. However, the most important single quality that the Qur'an stresses when speaking of God is His absolute unity. The term for the opposite of the unity of God is called "*shirk*" in the Qur'an: this is asserting that others share God's attributes or that He has a partner. This is such a detestable sin that it is considered unforgivable.¹⁸

Whoever joins other gods with God,—
God will forbid him
The Garden, and the Fire
Will be his adobe. There will
For the wrong-doers
Be no one to help.
They do blaspheme who say:
God is one of three
In a Trinity: for there is
No god except One God.

(Qur'an 5:75– 76)¹⁹

Concerning this, Alhaj A.D. Ajijola, the former Attorney General of Nigeria, wrote that, "The greatest service Islam rendered to humanity was the exaltation and purification of the concept of God. Islam strove to deliver humanity from a multiplicity of gods on the one hand and from incarnationism on the other and to bring man back to the Unseen God."²⁰

2. Angels

Islam, like Christianity, believes in the existence of angels, though some of the qur'anic teaching on this differs from that of the Bible. In Islam angels are intelligent creatures who have been created of light, do not possess free will, and have a multitude of duties to fulfill. "They are sent to protect men, to administer God's punishments, to carry His messages, and to perform various other functions."²¹ Each human being has two angels who list all of his or her deeds, both good and bad, to be brought forth on The Day of Judgment.²²

Besides angels God has created, according to the Qur'an, other beings called jinn. They are intelligent, sentient creatures, possess freedom of choice, and are able to propagate their species. Some are good and others are evil. "According to Islam, Satan (Iblis or Shaytan) and his kind are jinn (not fallen angels) to whom God gave leave to try to tempt man, to lure him away from submission and obedience to Him."²³

3. The Scriptures

The Qur'an mentions in various places

that God had previously sent down revelations or Scriptures to man. The Qur'an says that God "sent down the Law (Of Moses) and the Gospel (Of Jesus) before this," that is, before the Qur'an.²⁴ It states elsewhere that God gave the Psalms to David. These three revelations are called the *Taurat* (Torah), the *Zabur* (Psalms), and the *Injil* (Gospel).

CRI, P.O. Box 8500, Charlotte, NC 28271
Phone (704) 887-8200 and Fax (704) 887-8299

However, the Qur'an is believed to be God's final and complete revelation to man. For Muslims it supersedes these previous Scriptures in beauty, depth, and authority.

4. The Prophets

The Arabic word "*rasul*" means "one who is sent" or "a messenger," and the word "*nabi*" means "one who carries information or proclaims news...." There is no implication of "prophecy" or knowledge of future events in the word "prophet" as used in the Islamic sense.²⁵

The Qur'an enjoins every true Muslim to believe in and honor all of the prophets of God. According to Alhaj A.D. Ajjola, "The number of the apostles of God is said to be more than a hundred thousand but 25 of them are more important than the others and these are distinctly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an."²⁶ These 25 consist mostly of the Old Testament patriarchs, prophets, and kings, with only three coming from the New Testament (Zacharias, John the Baptist, and Jesus). It is interesting to note that of the non-biblical prophets two who are accepted by many Muslims are Alexander the Great and Aesop (of Aesop's Fables).²⁷

There are many places in the Qur'an where stories of Old Testament personages are given, though oftentimes changed from the biblical accounts.²⁸ Nowhere, however, are there more differences between the Qur'an and the Bible than in the sections speaking of Jesus. His proper name in the Qur'an is *Isa*, perhaps coming from "the Syriac Yeshu which derived it from the Hebrew Yeshua."²⁹ He is always spoken of in the Qur'an with great respect and honor, as are all of the prophets of God. Indeed, when referring to any of these prophets the Muslim will always add a phrase of respect, such as "Jesus, peace be on him."

In the Qur'an three surahs are named after references to Jesus, and He is spoken of in 15 surahs (93 verses) altogether. The Qur'an has much to say about Jesus, but the one thing that it emphasizes more than anything else is that He was only a man, a messenger of God, not the Son of God, or God in human flesh.

O People of the Book!
Commit no excesses
In your religion; nor say
Of God ought but the truth.
Christ Jesus the son of Mary
Was (no more than)
An apostle of God,
And His Word.

(Qur'an 4:171)

The Jews call 'Uzair a son
of God, and the Christians
Call Christ the Son of God.
That is a saying from their mouth;
(In this) they but imitate
What the unbelievers of old
Used to say. God's curse
Be on them: how they are deluded
away from the truth!

(Qur'an 9:30)³⁰

Orthodox Muslims maintain that Jesus did not die on the cross, believing instead that another person was substituted for Him, and that He was taken up bodily into Heaven by God. Most Muslims also believe that He will "come again at the last day, slay anti-Christ, kill all the swine, break the Cross and remove the poll tax from infidels. He will reign as a just King for 45 years, marry and leave children, then die and be buried near Mohammad at Medina."³¹

Of course all Muslims believe that Muhammad was the greatest apostle and prophet of all, being the messenger of God's final revelation. Maulvi Muhammad Ali states, in a footnote within his translation of *The Holy Qur'an*, that the "excellence of the Holy Prophet over other prophets was... immeasurable."³² The Qur'an states that:

CRI, P.O. Box 8500, Charlotte, NC 28271
Phone (704) 887-8200 and Fax (704) 887-8299

Muhammad is not
The father of any
Of your men, but (he is)
The Apostle of God,
And the Seal of the Prophets.

(Qur'an 33:40)

5. The Hereafter

All orthodox Muslims believe in the resurrection of the dead, a terrible "Day of Judgment," the existence of hell with eternal punishment for all non-believers, and in Heaven, where true believers will exist forever in a garden of beauty and joy.

Concerning the sometimes very sensual descriptions of heaven that we find in the Qur'an, J.N.D. Anderson, a Christian who is a renowned expert on Islam,³³ believes that "it is only fair to add that the sensual delights of paradise are interpreted in metaphorical terms by more spiritually-minded Muslims."³⁴ This is confirmed by looking at the comments on these verses by both Maulvi Muhammad Ali and Yusuf Ali in their own translations of the Qur'an.³⁵ However, as we read the verses, letting them speak for themselves, these descriptions appear to speak of very literal rewards for the righteous.

In them will be (Maidens),
Chaste, restraining their glances,
Whom no man or Jinn
Before them has touched;—
Then which of the favours
Of your Lord will ye deny?—

(Qur'an 55:56-57)

And We shall join them
To Companions, with beautiful,
Big and lustrous eyes.

(Qur'an 52:20)³⁶

Samuel M. Zwemer, the Christian church's greatest missionary to the Muslims and a man who lived almost his entire life among them, comments on this, and then quotes from a revered Muslim scholar:

What commentators say on these texts is often unfit for translation. The orthodox interpretation is literal, and so was that of Mohammad, because the traditions give minute particulars of the sanitary laws of Heaven, as well as of its sexual delights. According to Al Ghazzali (AH 450), Mohammad said: "The believer in Paradise will marry 500 hours,³⁷ 4,000 virgins and 8,000 divorced women" Al Ghazzali is one of the greatest theologians of Islam, and no orthodox Muslim would dispute his statement."³⁸

And finally, salvation in Islam is based on good works, primarily on the true repentance of one's sins and fasting. Suzanne Haneef sums it up: "The Living and Merciful God is able to and does forgive sins if repentance is sincere, and every human soul has direct access to...His forgiveness without any intermediary or intercessor whatever. Consequently there is no need for a Savior, and in any case God Most High alone can save."³⁹

6. The Divine Decree

The last article of faith pertains to the total sovereignty of God. Since He is all-powerful and controls all things then "Nothing can take place without His ordaining it, nor is there such a thing as a random, chance event."⁴⁰

CRI, P.O. Box 8500, Charlotte, NC 28271
Phone (704) 887-8200 and Fax (704) 887-8299

Now surely Allah makes err
whom He pleases
and guides aright
whom He pleases.⁴¹

(Qur'an 35:8)

Concerning this "Divine Decree" Al Ghazzali wrote the following:

He willeth also the unbelief of the unbeliever and the irreligion of the wicked and, without that will, there would neither be unbelief nor irreligion. All we do we do by His will: what He willeth not does not come to pass....In creating unbelievers, in willing that they should remain in that state; in making serpents, scorpions and pigs: in willing, in short, all that is evil, God has wise ends in view which it is not necessary that we should know.⁴²

Thus in Islam God is the author of both good and evil. Muslims loudly deny the biblical doctrines of the fall and original sin, leaving them with no other alternative than that which we have just seen.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

There are five "pillars" of Islam or ways in which the Qur'an enjoins the Muslim to worship God. The first we saw at the beginning of this article, the Kalima or "declaration of faith": "There is no deity except God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God." This is the only declaration of belief needed for one to be accepted as a convert into Islam.

The second pillar is prayer (*salat*). The devout Muslim is called upon to pray five times a day, facing Mecca. The day of public worship is on Friday, when all the adult males gather together at the mosque.⁴³

A period of fasting, called *sawm*, is the third pillar of Islam. It is to be observed throughout the entire month of Ramadan (the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar) from dawn until sunset.

Zakat or the "poor due" is the fourth pillar. This is a type of institutionalized alms-giving which consists of two and a half percent of the Muslim's total savings. The money may be given to the poor or go towards furthering Islam (e.g., mosques, religious schools, salaries for the mosque's *imam* or teacher, etc.).

The final pillar is the *Hajj* or the pilgrimage to Mecca. This is required of all Muslims at least once during their lifetimes, provided they have the means to do so.

ISLAMIC SECTS

Before we turn to a consideration of Islam's current worldwide expansion, we need at least to mention that there are a multitude of different Islamic sects. The two largest groups are the Sunnites and the Shi'ites, of whom the Sunnites make up about 90 percent of all Muslims. Most Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, are largely Sunnite. They derive their name from *Sunnah*, which "refers to the deeds and words of the prophet."⁴⁴ Hence, they are the traditionalists of Islam, following the traditions of Muhammad (which were passed on orally for 200 years before they were committed to writing) as authoritative only behind the Qur'an itself.

The Shia or "sect of 'Ali" broke off from the main body of Muslims in the first century A.H. The division arose over a dispute concerning the succession of leadership after Muhammad's death. The Shi'ites, who favored Muhammad's son-in-law and nephew Ali, believed that the caliph should have been divinely appointed, not elected by mere men."⁴⁵

Besides the bitter controversy over the caliphate a second major difference between the Sunnites and Shi'ites concerns the doctrine of the imam. For the Shi'ites imams are "divinely appointed and divinely guided" leaders, and new ones appear from time to time when most needed. Several times in Shi'ite history men have claimed this position. The Sunnites believe the imam to be merely the leader of the Friday prayer service.⁴⁶

CRI, P.O. Box 8500, Charlotte, NC 28271
Phone (704) 887-8200 and Fax (704) 887-8299

Today the Shi'ites are most populous in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and parts of Africa. The consequence attached to the office of *ayatollah* shows the tendency Shi'ites have of putting "confidence in a charismatic figure rather than in a book."⁴⁷

WORLDWIDE REVIVAL

In the Middle East

Less than a decade ago the emerging world power appeared to be the Arabs. Between 1973 and 1979 the price of a barrel of oil rose from less than \$3 to as high as \$39. "With daily production of 32 million barrels the 13 countries of OPEC—The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, six of which are Arab—were earning \$8.7 billion a day, \$262 billion a month in 1979."⁴⁸ The Camp David accords hinted at the possibility of an eventual peace with Israel. In addition, "the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of neighboring but non-Arab Iran had treated both the US and Soviet governments with contempt and gotten away with it."⁴⁹ Things could hardly have appeared more promising for them.

However, things did not work out as expected. *The Los Angeles Times* recently commented on this in a front-page article entitled "What Went Wrong?":

Oil did not produce political power. The Camp David accords and other initiatives did not bring peace to the Middle East. Today, Lebanon is engulfed in self-ignited flames. Iraq and Iran are using poison gas and aerial bombardments to destroy each other. The Palestinians are in their third diaspora—first expelled from Israel in 1948, then from Jordan in 1970 and from Lebanon in 1982. Five wars with Israel have brought 3,000 square miles of Arab land under Israeli occupation but yielded not an inch of Palestine for Arabs. Khomeini, who briefly symbolized the hope of the Islamic revival, has become, in the eyes of most Arabs, little more than a scoundrel, a brutal old man who manipulates religion for political purposes. And the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, dominated by the Arabs, is unable even to agree on how to shore up world oil prices or how to maintain its own slipping share of the market."⁵⁰

Most of the 157 million Arabs in the Middle East are not financially well off. Of the 18 Arab countries only five (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Libya) can be considered super-rich. The rest of them are struggling to get by (e.g., the per capita annual income in Egypt is only \$560).

Nevertheless, in spite of all these problems, the Middle East is experiencing a revival of Islamic fundamentalism which is the harbinger of a worldwide Islamic revival. The resurgence varies from country to country. In the countries dominated by Shi'ites it is much more militant.

The Shi'ites, with a predisposition towards martyrdom and following charismatic leaders, are usually the ones who dominate the headlines. They believe in the *jihad* or "holy war." For example, the recent hijacking of the TWA Flight 847 was executed by members of the radical Shi'ite group *Hezbollah* or "Party of God." After the ordeal was ended one of the two hijackers lamented that they were not killed during the crisis:

We did not think that we would go back to our kin and brothers, but we were hoping that God would allow us martyrdom for the sake of defending our nation and pride.⁵¹

However, the majority of the Muslim countries in the Middle East are most heavily populated and ruled by Sunnites. The Islamic revolution or revival in these countries is more moderate in temperament, although just as deep in zeal. The excesses and crimes of some Shi'ite groups (and even Shi'ite countries, such as Iran) are not a genuine reflection of the character of the majority of Muslims.

Worldwide

A recent survey of world religions states that Islam is the world's fastest-growing religion with nearly one billion followers. Thus, Islam is the faith of one-fifth of the world's population. Over the past 50 years Islam has increased

by about 500 percent. During this same period Christianity, also with about one billion adherents, grew by only 47 percent.⁵²

According to Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi, the director of the Islamic Society of Orange County (California), 85 percent of the world's Muslims are non-Arabic.⁵³ Today 67 different nations, encompassing a seventh of the world's total land mass, make up "The House of Islam."

Amazingly, there is no indication that Islam's growth has reached its apex. Forty percent of Southeast Asia is Muslim. In South Asia 31 percent of the population is Muslim. Over 92 percent of the Middle East and North Africa is Muslim. Nearly 50 percent of West Africa is Muslim.

The largest Islamic nation in the world is Indonesia with 153 million Muslims. The next four largest are Pakistan (86 million), India (82 million), Bangladesh (78 million), and the USSR (50 million). Demographic studies of the Soviet Union indicate that by the year 2000 their Muslim population will be about 100 million."

Great inroads also have been made in the West. In Western Europe Islam is the second largest religion. Two years ago *Al Islam*, an Islamic magazine in West Germany, confidently predicted that within two decades Europe would be won over to Islam.

In Greece there are now nearly 300 mosques. In France, there are about one and a half million Muslims, "about six Muslim residents in France for every born again French Christian."⁵⁵

Even in Great Britain impressive inroads are occurring. Saudi Arabia has bought an Arabic language paper in London called *The Middle East*. Backed by an annual budget of \$75 million, the magazine's purpose is to spread the Arabic political view and to propagate Islam. England now has about 300 mosques, many of them former Protestant churches which were bought by Muslims. In 1983 Queen Elizabeth attended the dedication of a newly-constructed \$7.5 million mosque in the affluent Regents Park.

In the USA

The United States has not been immune to Islamic expansionism. The first mosque in this country was built in 1934 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.⁵⁶ Today there is at least one mosque in virtually every major American city. There are an estimated three million Muslims in America, nearly two million of which are converts." Detroit alone has 250,000 Muslims. In Chicago a new \$15 million mosque was just recently completed. In all there are more than 200 mosques and Islamic groups in this country.

The Muslim Student Association is probably the most active Islamic organization in America. Their stated objectives are:

... producing and disseminating Islamic knowledge, establishing Islamic institutions, providing daily requirements, initiating *daawah* (the propagation of the faith), recruiting and training personnel, [and] promoting and nourishing the unity of Muslims.⁵⁹

Several years ago a fledgling Islamic community, named "Dar al-Islam" or the "Place of Islam," began in northern New Mexico. It is a former 1,100-acre horse ranch which is being converted into a "showplace of Islamic culture in America."⁶⁰ It features a kindergarten, grade school and high school, and there are plans for a college and a postgraduate school. The multi-million dollar project is being funded by numerous wealthy Muslims, mostly Saudi Arabians, including members of King Fahd's own royal family. Dar al-Islam's president is Abdullah Nooridin Durkee, previously known as Steve Durkee, a former Catholic who converted to Islam in 1973.

The funding of Islamic outreaches in the US may be most evident in the large gifts and grants given to numerous American universities. A few examples:

\$1 million to endow the King Faisal Chair for Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Southern California, from the government of Saudi Arabia; \$200,000 for a program of Islamic and Arabian development studies to Duke University, from the government of Saudi Arabia; \$750,000 from the government of Libya for the al-Mukhtar Chair of Arab Culture at Georgetown University, and \$88,000 to help fund an interdisciplinary program on Arab development at the

CRI, P.O. Box 8500, Charlotte, NC 28271
Phone (704) 887-8200 and Fax (704) 887-8299

University of Utah;...An annually endowed chair at Harvard University, the only chair in the history of Islamic science in the world, from the government of Kuwait.⁶¹

We could continue our examination of Islam's penetration into this country at great length. However, from even the few cases we have noted it should be more than evident that Islam is rapidly becoming a significant religious force in America.

OUR RESPONSE

Is Islam then an unstoppable juggernaut? Can the church of Jesus Christ reach the Muslims? The answer to these questions is that Islam's continued expansion is not inevitable: Muslims can be reached with the gospel. The fact is that "Muslims are not so resistant to God's love as they are neglected and uninformed!"⁶²

The Christian church has never seriously attempted to reach the hundreds of millions who are Muslims. The great missionary Samuel Zwemer stated, "One might suppose that the church thought the Great Commission did not apply to Muslims."⁶³

This is easily demonstrated by looking at some statistics concerning missions. Only one percent of the church's entire missionary force is ministering to Muslims. This means that there is about one Christian missionary for every one million Muslims. The church has more missionaries working among Alaska's 400,000 residents than in the entire Muslim world!

But even if we devoted more time and energy to reaching Muslims would they respond to the gospel? The answer is yes. Over the last few years the church has just begun to increase its work among Muslims. With this new attention more Muslims have become Christians over the last four years than during the previous 20 years.⁶⁴

The "typical" Muslim is not an imposing, bearded sheik floating in oil, nor a militant, gun-toting terrorist, nor a modern-day "Sinbad the Sailor." Rather, he or she is usually a devout person, attempting to reach God through a man-made religious system, totally unaware of the grace available through Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul's words echo down to us today with an unmitigated urgency:

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10:14).

Joseph P. Gudel is a professor in the M.A. in Christian Apologetics program at the Simon Greenleaf School of Law in Anaheim, California.

NEXT ISSUE: An analysis of Islamic apologetics in the light of Christian apologetics.

NOTES

¹ Suzanne Haneef, *What Everyone Should Know About Islam and Muslims* (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1979), p. 3.

² Josh McDowell in a foreword to a manuscript this author has written, presently being considered for publication.

³ 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Azzam, *The Eternal Message of Muhammad*, trans. Caesar E. Farah (New York: The New American Library, 1965), pp. 27-30.

⁴ Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (New York: The New American Library, 1963), p. ix.

⁵ 'Azzam, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁶ Pickthall, *op. cit.*, p. 10. Also, 'Azzam, *loc. cit.*

⁷ Qur'an 81:8.

⁸ 'Azzam, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

- ⁹ John B. Noss, *Man's Religions* (New York: The Macmillian Co., 1956), p. 695.
- ¹⁰ 'Azzam, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
- ¹¹ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary* (Qatar: Qatar National Printing Press, 1956), p. 452.
- ¹² Pickthall, *op. cit.*, p. xv.
- ¹³ 'Azzam, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman* (reprint ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 204-205.
- ¹⁶ Pickthall, *op. cit.*, pp. xxiv-xxv.
- ¹⁷ Robert Ernest Hume, *The World's Living Religions* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), p. 213.
- ¹⁸ Maulvi Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam* (Lahore, Pakistan: The Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha'at Islam, 1950), p. 145.
- ¹⁹ All quotations from the Qur'an are from the translation by Abdullah Yusuf Ali unless otherwise noted. This is important to remember when looking up specific quotes from the Qur'an because the numbers of the verses often differ from one translation to the next.
- ²⁰ Alhaj A.D. Ajjola, *The Myth of the Cross* (Lahore, Pakistan: Islamic Publication Ltd., 1975), p. 170.
- ²¹ Haneef, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
- ²² Qur'an 50:17-18.
- ²³ Haneef, *loc. cit.*
- ²⁴ Qur'an 3:3.
- ²⁵ The Muslim Student's Association of the United States and Canada, *The Prophet of Allah* (Chicago: Medina Printers, 1976), p. 5.
- ²⁶ Ajjola, *op. cit.*, p. 160.
- ²⁷ A. Yusuf Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 763. Also, Maulvi Muhammad Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Containing the Arabic Text with English Translation and Commentary* (Lahore, Punjab, India: The Ahmadiyya Anjuman-I-Ishaat-I-Islam, 1935), p. 802.
- ²⁸ Cf. Qur'an 11:25-49 and Genesis 6:9-10; 7:1, 5.
- ²⁹ Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 16.
- ³⁰ Also, cf. Qur'an 43:59; 5:19; 10:68; 19:35; 88-92.
- ³¹ Samuel M. Zwemer, *Islam: A Challenge to Faith* (New York: Laymen's Missionary Movement, 1907), pp. 93-94.
- ³² Maulvi Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
- ³³ J.N.D. Anderson is the Professor of Oriental Laws and the Director of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies at the University of London. In addition to his teaching responsibilities he has also authored numerous books and articles dealing with Islam and other world religions.
- ³⁴ Norman Anderson, *The World's Religions* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), p. 117.
- ³⁵ A. Yusuf Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 1352. Also, cf. Maulvi Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 1009.
- ³⁶ Also, cf. Qur'an 56:22-24.
- ³⁷ The "Companions" just mentioned in the above verses are literally "houris" in the Arabic.
- ³⁸ Zwemer, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95.
- ³⁹ Haneef, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- ⁴¹ This is taken from Maulvi Muhammad Ali's translation of the Qur'an, *The Holy Qur'an: Containing the Arabic Text with English Translation*, *op. cit.*
- ⁴² Quoted in Abdiyah Akbar Abdul-Haqq, *Sharing Your Faith with a Muslim* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship Inc., 1980), p. 152.
- ⁴³ In some countries the women also may gather together with the men for public prayer. Where this is allowed the women are required to sit together at the rear of the mosque.
- ⁴⁴ C. George Fry and James R. King, *Islam: A Survey of the Muslim Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), p. 112.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ David Lamb, "Arabs-No Climate for Intellectuals," *Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 1985, part 1, p. 12.
- ⁴⁹ David Lamb, "'What Went Wrong?' Arab Power on the Wane Despite Oil," *Los Angeles Times*, July 14, 1985, part I, p. 1.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

- ⁵¹ "U.S. 'Bowed to Demands,' Hijackers say," *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1985, part I, p. 4.
- ⁵² "News," *Christianity Today*, January 8, 1985, p. 61.
- ⁵³ John Dart, "Assimilation Perils Immigrant Muslims," *Los Angeles Times*, November 24, 1984, part II, p. 4.
- ⁵⁴ "The World of Islam," *Time*, April 16, 1979, p. 46.
- ⁵⁵ "Islam: It's Their Turn," *Frontiers*, Urbana '84 Issue, p. 13.
- ⁵⁶ Philip Harsham, "Islam in Iowa," *Aramco World Magazine*, Nov.-Dec., 1976, p. 35.
- ⁵⁷ Yvonne Y. Haddad, "The Muslim Experience in the United States," *The Link*, Sept.-Oct., 1979, p. 2.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁰ Charles Hillinger, "Islam Center Aims to Bridge Cultural Gap in America," *Los Angeles Times*, December 26, 1983, part VII, p. 1.
- ⁶¹ "America as Alma Mater," *Aramco World Magazine*, May-June, 1979, p. 9.
- ⁶² Don M. McCurry and Carol A. Glasser, *Muslim Awareness Seminar* (Altadena, CA: Samuel Zwemer Institute, 1981), p. 13.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁴ Sharon E. Mumper, "New Strategies to Evangelize Muslims Gain Effectiveness," *Christianity Today*, May 17, 1985, p. 75.